

Paris attack similar to 2008 Mumbai carnage: Experts

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Washington: Drawing parallels between the Paris and the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks in terms of low-cost and level of sophistication, security experts today said that the mayhem will be a "game changer" for how the West looks at the threat posed by terrorism.

Over 120 people were killed as terrorists attacked sites throughout the French capital and at Stade de France stadium during a friendly football match between France and Germany.

French President Francois Hollande was also present at the stadium when the attack occurred. John Miller, Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counter-terrorism of the New York Police Department told CNN that the Paris attack resembles the Mumbai terrorist attack in terms of low-cost and low resources and it carried the various features of the 26/11.

Bruce Hoffman, head of the national security programme at Georgetown University, referred to a call given by al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden five years ago to carry Mumbai-type attack across Europe.

"The attacks show a level of sophistication we really haven't seen in an urban area since 2008 in the attack in Mumbai," Michael Leiter, former director National Counterterrorism Center, was quoted as saying by NBC News. "This will be a game changer for how the West looks at this threat," Leiter said.

Retired Air Force General Michael Hayden said the Paris violence was "certainly a terrorist attack" and that "our fears have been realised" because the assaults greatly mirror the 2008 terrorism in Mumbai that killed at least 166 people, including six Americans.

After the Mumbai attack, carried out by Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, intelligence agencies around the world had studied the carnage to prevent a repetition of such incidents.

"We had great fear that we would see copycat versions of that attack - and now, I fear that our fears have been realised, and we're seeing that carried out tonight in Paris," Hayden said.

"It shows the fragility of free societies. It shows the great danger that international terrorism presents to all of us," he said.

Brian Michael Jenkins from RAND Corporation told The Press Enterprise newspaper that the Paris attacks were reminiscent of the November 2008 assault on the densely crowded Indian city of Mumbai, where teams linked to an Islamic militant organisation carried out a series of coordinated shooting and bombing attacks lasting four days. "These sorts of attacks are a matter of determination and the ability to acquire weapons," Jenkins said.

"In some of these European countries, anyone with criminal connections can acquire an AK-47. It doesn't require a great deal of skill to shoot diners at a restaurant or spectators at a rock concert.

You don't need to go through training," he said. WBZ-TV Security Analyst Ed Davis also said the Paris attack resembles the Mumbai terrorist assault. "This is exactly what we fear most. A Mumbai-style attack with multiple teams simultaneously hitting different places," Davis said.

“What happened in Paris on Friday night is exactly what Europe’s security services have long feared, and tried to foil. Simultaneous, rolling attacks, with automatic weapons and suicide bombers in the heart of a major European city, targeting multiple, crowded public locations,” BBC in its commentary said.

“The tactics have been used before, in Mumbai and elsewhere,” it said.

The two-day G20 Summit at Antalya in southern Turkey is likely to be overshadowed by the attacks. French President who was to attend the summit cancelled his visit.

European Council President Donald Tusk said he will ensure the G20 summit in Turkey over the weekend will respond to the threat of terrorism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also attend the summit.

- PTI