

Brussels attack bomber identified as ISIS prison guard, claim French media

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Paris: Several foreign journalists previously held hostage by the Islamic State in Syria have identified one of the bombers in the deadly attacks in Brussels that claimed the lives of 31 people as one of their prison guards, a news agency quoted sources close to the investigations as saying.

According to the report, four French journalists kidnapped and held in Syria from 2013 to 2014 had identified a guard known as "Abou Idriss".

French newspapers had claimed that one of the journalists, Nicolas Henin, "has formally identified" Abou Idriss as being Najim Laachraoui. The same was confirmed by his lawyer Marie-Laure Ingouf to AFP.

According to Belgian prosecutors, Laachraoui travelled to Syria to team up with IS forces in February 2013. However, he went off the radar until he was registered under a false name at the border between Austria and Hungary in September 2015.

Laachraoui, 24, was one of the two suicide bombers who struck Brussels airport on March 22, while a third attacker blew himself up at on a metro train, with the two attacks killing 31 people.

Prosecutors have also linked him to November's attacks in Paris in which 130 people died, saying his DNA was found on a suicide vest and a piece of cloth at the Bataclan concert hall where 90 people were killed.

According to the investigators, the French police have also found his DNA on explosives used at the Stade de France, leading investigators to believe he was the bomb maker in both the French and Belgian attacks.

The former French hostages have already identified two Frenchmen as being among their jailers when they were held in Syria.