

## **Suspect shot dead after explosion at Brussels train station, incident being treated as 'terror attack'**

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**Brussels:** A suspect was shot dead by soldiers after a small explosion at a busy train station in heart of Brussels on Tuesday. Belgian authorities re treating the incident as a "terror attack" that continued a week of attacks in the capitals of Europe.

Federal prosecutor Eric Van der Sypt said authorities are treating the incident "as a terrorist attack" that was foiled when the suspect was "neutralised."

"We do not know if the man is still alive or that he is dead," Van der Sypt added.

A bomb squad performed a controlled explosion of a bomb belt the suspect had at the Central Station and established a wide perimeter near the city's famed Grand Place square while checking to see if there more hazards, VTM network reported yesterday.

It appeared no one else was injured besides the suspect and the damage from the explosion was limited, Brussels prosecutor's office spokeswoman Ine Van Wymersch told VRT. It was not clear if the suspect survived.

Belgium's Crisis Center, which monitors security threats in the country, said based on initial information it did not see a need to raise the country's terror threat to the highest level and kept it at the second-highest level.

Nicolas Van Herreweghen, who works for Belgium's national rail company, said the male suspect was very agitated, yelling about jihadists and then "Allahu akbar," Arabic for "God is great," before blowing up something on a baggage trolley.

He said the man appeared to be 30 to 35 years of age. The government agency that owns Belgium's railways was warned by a train driver who saw people running across the rail lines inside the station, spokesman Arnaud Reymann told broadcaster RTL.

National newspaper La Libre Belgique quoted the prosecutor's office as saying the suspect was wearing a backpack and an explosive belt. The information could not be immediately confirmed. Photos posted on social media showed a small fire in the station.

The center that monitors security threats in Belgium says the available information so far doesn't yet merit going to the highest possible terror alert level.

The Central Station is one of the busiest in the nation and soldiers could be seen patrolling there after the explosion. It was evacuated along with the Belgian capital's Grand Place, a major tourist site about 200 meters away.

Belgium has been on high alert since suicide bombers killed 32 people on the Brussels subway and at an airport in March 2016.

There have been incidents involving extremists in Paris and London in recent days, including the attack by a van driver who tried to run down worshippers outside a London mosque.

- (With AP inputs)