

All directly involved in Sri Lanka Easter Sunday attacks dead or arrested

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Sri Lankan army personnel stand guard at a check point as they search people and their bags at a check point in Kattankudy near Batticaloa, Sri Lanka (REUTERS/Dinuka Liyanawatte)

Colombo: Two bomb experts were among the suicide attackers who struck churches and hotels on Easter in Sri Lanka and all those directly involved in the bombings are either dead or under arrest, police said.

Acting police chief C.D. Wickramaratne also said in a statement late Monday that explosives the Islamic State-linked group stacked for use in more attacks have been seized.

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Police have detained 73 suspects for investigations since the bombings and have seized stocks of explosives, improvised explosives devices and hundreds of swords. Also they have found \$140,000 in cash in bank accounts connected to the group and another \$40 million worth of assets in land, houses, vehicles and jewelry.

Authorities had repeatedly said another attack from the extremist group was possible.

Sri Lanka's Catholic church hierarchy closed churches for a second weekend on Sunday as the faithful celebrated Mass from home watching live on television.

But on Tuesday, one of the churches targeted in the attacks, St. Anthony's Shrine in Colombo, opened a section of the church to the public for the first time since the bombing, enabling devotees to pray in the church as was customary every Tuesday.

Catholic schools remain closed until further notice after reports said two of their locations were to be attacked last weekend.

Government-run schools reopened for students of higher classes Monday but fewer students attended out of fear.

Army Commander Mahesh Senanayake on Monday urged the public to resume normal activities trusting in the security forces.

“I ask the people not to fear unnecessarily, not to believe rumors, believe in the tri-forces and police that defeated one of the deadliest terrorist organizations in the world,” he said of the ethnic Tamil separatists who fought a 26-year civil war. The conflict ended 10 years ago.

- AP