

8 people dead in building blaze in Latvian capital Riga

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Firefighters, rescuers from Latvian State Fire and Rescue Service said they were alerted to the scene on Merkela street in the heart of Riga about 5 am.

8 people dead in building blaze in Latvian capital. Image Source : AP

Helsinki : Eight people, some of them foreign nationals, died early Wednesday in a fire at a building housing a hostel that was apparently operating illegally in the center of Riga, the Latvian capital.

Firefighters and rescuers from the Latvian State Fire and Rescue Service said they were alerted to the scene on the Merkela street in the heart of Riga about 5 am.

The building's sixth floor and the roof were on fire, and rescuers found eight people dead.

They evacuated a further 24 from the premises, news agency Baltic News Service said.

Latvian state TV broadcast footage of flames pouring out of the top of the building, multiple fire engines and a ladder extending to the top, from where two firefighters were aiming a hose at the blaze.

Latvian authorities said the state-owned building was apparently housing an illegal hostel the operators of which had recently conducted unauthorized renovation work.

Some of the victims were foreigners, Riga Mayor Martins Stakis told reporters.

The building is located in the commercial center of Riga close to the city's main bus and railway stations.

- AP