

Huge blast at Italian Consulate in Cairo, at least one killed

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Cairo: An explosion Saturday morning in downtown Cairo heavily damaged the building housing the Italian Consulate.

Heath Ministry official Hossam Abdel-Ghaffar told The Associated Press that at least one person was killed in the blast.

An Egyptian security official said one civilian and one policeman were also injured. An Italian embassy official said the consulate was closed at the time of the explosion and no staff members were injured. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to brief the media.

The blast ruptured underground water pipes, flooding the area. The security official said the exact cause was still unclear.

The explosion struck one of the busiest intersections in Cairo, a major artery that connects Ramsis Square to the heart of downtown Cairo. Even before 7 am on a weekend in the middle of the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, the area around the blast would have been crowded with cars, pedestrians and mini-buses.

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