

# Death toll rises to 93 in Moscow concert hall shooting: Why is the Islamic State group 'fixated' on Russia and what is ISIS-K?

*I think ISIS is fixated on anything that isn't their type of Islam. But these are the reasons analysts think ISIS-K focuses on Russia. From the [Telegraph](#) and [ABC News Australia](#).*

Russia's Investigative Committee said on Saturday more than 60 people had been killed, raising an earlier toll of 40, according to Russian news agencies.

The scene pictured as investigations begin



The Crocus City Hall concert venue as firemen extinguish the blaze that followed the mass attack | CREDIT: Maxim Shipenkov/EPA-

Russia's Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said 115 people were hospitalised, including five children, one of whom was in grave condition. Of the 110 adult patients, 60 were in serious

condition.

The attack took place as crowds gathered for a performance by the Russian rock band Picnic.

More specifically, the attack was claimed by ISIS-K, the Islamic State's Afghan branch.

Here's what we know about ISIS-K and its motivations for attacking Russia.

ISIS-K stands for Islamic State Khorasan. Khorasan is an old term for a region that included parts of Iran, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. The branch emerged in eastern Afghanistan in late 2014 and has a history of attacks inside and outside Afghanistan.

In September 2022, its militants claimed responsibility for a deadly suicide bombing at the Russian embassy in Kabul.

...the group's claim it is behind the Moscow attack has been backed by US intelligence sources.

Islamic State's Amaq news agency posted a statement on Telegram following the deadly shooting, saying its fighters attacked on the outskirts of Moscow. The statement said they killed and wounded hundreds, "causing great destruction to the place before they withdrew to their bases safely".

The US embassy in Russia had warned on March 8 that "extremists" had imminent plans for an attack in Moscow, hours after Russian security services said they had foiled an ISIS branch's [planned shooting at a synagogue](#).

Michael Kugelman of the Washington-based Wilson Center said ISIS-K "sees Russia as being complicit in activities that regularly oppress Muslims". He added that the group also counted as members a number of Central Asian militants who had their own grievances with Moscow.

There is also a Caucasus branch of ISIS, which operates mainly in Russia's largely Muslim North Caucasus region, mainly in the Russian republics of Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria. Chechnya has a long history of rebelling against Moscow rule, with an Islamist insurgency leading to armed conflict between Russia and militants from 2007 to 2017.

Islamic State more broadly has long recruited fighters from Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union.

If Islamic State is behind the shooting, it would make it the latest of many Islamist-linked attacks in or against Russia over the past 20 years.

In October 2002, Chechen militants took about 800 people hostage at a Moscow theatre.

In September 2004, about 30 Chechen militants [seized a school in Beslan](#) in southern Russia, taking hundreds of hostages. *That atrocity is what brought me to this work – 20 years and the atrocities have never let up.*

*The method yesterday, a nice Friday in Ramadan, what could be more 'fitting', has something of the Mumbai attack in 2008 and more of the Bataclan and other venues murders in Paris in 2015 (also a Friday, but not during Ramadan)*

*The big question for me is why, when it was known that a big job was planned for Moscow, and some sort of concert or theatre was the potential target, it wasn't stopped earlier? I know security services have to be efficient all the time, while terrorists only have to be lucky once, but this seems a big planned job, not a lone wolf. And unlike the suicide bomber of Manchester Arena, they got away. So what's next?*

*The death toll is now 93, now 115, and 4 suspects have been apprehended after a car chase.*

..two were caught in Russia's Bryansk region, southwest of the capital, lawmaker Alexander Khinshtein said on Telegram. Other suspects fled into a nearby forest on foot, he added.

Mr Khinshtein said a pistol, a magazine for an assault rifle and passports from Tajikistan were found in the car.

Russia has arrested 11 people over Friday's deadly attack on a concert hall, including four people directly involved, Russian

news agencies reported on Saturday.

The death toll of the Moscow concert hall attack has risen to 93 people,