

Dozens dead in attacks on French embassy and military HQ in Burkina Faso

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Twin attacks on the French embassy in Burkina Faso and the country's military headquarters Friday left dozens dead or wounded, security sources said. The apparently coordinated attacks underlined the struggle the fragile West African nation faces in containing a bloody and growing jihadist insurgency.



The government said the attack on the military was a suicide car bombing, adding that a regional anti-terrorism meeting may have been the target. Officials from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger were at the meeting, representing

the G5 Sahel nations who have launched a joint military force to combat jihadists on the southern rim of the Sahara. The completed force will be composed of 5,000 troops and aims to be fully operational by the end of the month. It has already carried out operations against jihadist fighters with help from the French army.

Eight members of the armed forces were killed by the blast and the parallel attack on the French embassy, while 80 were wounded, said Security Minister Clement Sawadogo. One of the militants' assaults destroyed a room in the army headquarters where senior officers were to have met but was relocated at the last minute, according to Security Minister Clement Sawadogo. "If the meeting had taken place in the first room, our army would have been beheaded," Sawadogo said, adding that some of the assailants wore military clothing and seemed to be aware of the planned gathering.

The minister said eight attackers had been shot dead. "The vehicle was packed with explosives" and caused "huge damage", Sawadogo said, adding that it was a "suicide" attack.

The French Embassy came under attack around 10:15 a.m. local time, with witnesses at the nearby state TV offices telling The Associated Press that the attackers had arrived in a pickup truck, shouted, "Allahu akbar!" and began shooting.

Three security sources, two in France and one in West Africa, told AFP that at least 28 people were killed in the attack on the military HQ alone. French government sources said there were no French casualties and described the situation in Ouagadougou as "under control". The Paris prosecutor's office said it has opened a preliminary attempted murder investigation into the attack because the embassy was among the targets, a French judicial official said on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to talk to the media identified.

[Le Monde newspaper](#) that the attackers had shot at the town hall and his office windows were shattered. "Apparently, it is a jihadist attack," he said, but gave no further details.

No group claimed responsibility for Friday's attacks.