

Police mobilize in New York City after bomb detonated in subway system

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On Monday morning, an explosive device detonated in the New York City's Port Authority-42nd Street subway station shortly after 7:00 a.m., just after rush hour had begun. According to police, the device was hidden on the person of a 27-year-old Bangladeshi immigrant worker, Akayed Ullah, who has lived in Brooklyn for seven years.

The device, apparently a home-made pipe bomb strapped to Ullah's body, went off, perhaps prematurely, in a pedestrian walkway that connects two subway lines. The area is one of the busiest in the city, particularly during rush hour.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal, the most active bus terminal in the United States, only one floor up, was shut down, as were the two subway stations that the passage connected. Several train lines going into the Times Square area were redirected or skipped the area altogether. Three people were moderately injured and Ullah sustained life-threatening burns and abrasions, and is currently in serious condition at Bellevue Hospital.

According to media reports, an unidentified police source said that, "[Ullah] did make a statement providing the basis for his motive." The source noted that Ullah told the police that he read the ISIS online magazine Inspire and that he found instructions for making the bomb online. CNN has reported that he was motivated by recent Israeli actions in Gaza.

This is the second recent attack that has been attributed to terrorism by home-spun followers of ISIS. On October 31, Sayfullo Saipov, an Uzbek immigrant, killed eight people after he ran a rented truck into pedestrians on a pathway on Manhattan's West Side. As with numerous other participants in terror attacks, Saipov was, to some degree, already known to the intelligence authorities.

In a press conference later in the morning, Democratic New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, however, was quick to blame the internet for the incident, remarking on the "garbage and vileness" as well as instructions for making bombs that can be found online.

Later in the day Cuomo told the media that Ullah was a "lone wolf" and not part of a terrorist network. He again emphasized the role of the internet in the attack: "They're not people who come from overseas. They live here, they're disgruntled, they go to the internet."

The Democratic mayor of the city, Bill de Blasio, told a morning press briefing that the police had secured the city's transit hubs and that New Yorkers should be reassured "when you see those long guns [of the NYPD]."

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House spokesperson, used the occasion to reaffirm President Donald Trump's opposition to "chain migration," the policy that gives immigration preference to family members of those already with legal immigrant status in the US. This is the policy that reportedly enabled Ullah to enter the United States in 2011.

The investigation into the bombing is now being handled by the Joint Terrorism Taskforce (JTT), comprised of FBI agents and NYPD detectives. Police closed off a block near Ullah's residence in the Flatland's section of Brooklyn, and placed the entire area under surveillance, including the use of a police helicopter. The JTT is reportedly questioning Ullah's family.

The explosion was occasion for a surge in police and military presence in Manhattan.

One observer told the WSWWS that "a huge number of police vehicles, including heavily armored vehicles" had entered Manhattan from the Midtown Tunnel that

connects the island with Queens in the hour after the explosion. The number of police was a show of force well out of proportion to the seriousness of the incident, though not far beyond the usual presence of heavily armed men and women and military hardware that is now a part of daily life in the country's largest city.



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