

White House concurs with French belief IS behind attacks

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Reuters

There is no information to contradict the French government's initial assessment that the Islamic State (IS) was behind attacks in Paris that killed 129 and injured many more, the White House said today.

"The team reviewed the intelligence pictures, noting that we had no information to contradict the initial French assessment of IS' responsibility," the White House said in a statement after President Barack Obama met with his National Security Council.

It added that while there was no specific or credible threat to the United States, officials have reviewed their "homeland security posture."

Meanwhile Britain will hold a government crisis meeting today chaired by Interior Minister Theresa May to assess the response after the attacks in Paris, a government source said.

"The Home Secretary (May) will chair a COBR (on Sunday) on the Paris attacks and the government's response," the source said.

Prime Minister David Cameron chaired an initial COBR meeting on the attacks earlier on Saturday, saying afterwards Britain would stick with its existing threat level of 'severe'.

US works with France

Meanwhile in coordination with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies, US Justice Department attorneys are working with French authorities to obtain further information that may be relevant to the Paris attacks, a Justice Department official said today.

Department officials have also been in touch with the French Ministries of Interior and Justice to offer our fullest cooperation, the official said.

"We also understand that several US citizens were injured and at least one was killed in the attack.

"We are taking all appropriate steps in this regard, and our Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism is supporting the US government's assistance to the victims and their families through the State Department and FBI," the official said in a statement from the department.

On Friday night, several sites around Paris were targeted in a coordinated assault by gunmen and bombers in what the Paris public prosecutor said killed at least 129 people and wounded more than 350, of whom nearly 100 remain in critical condition.

IS on Saturday claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Police evacuate tourist spots

Meanwhile the situation in Paris is still tense as police have evacuated the area around the Eiffel tower and the surrounding Champ de Mars park, a Reuters witness saw on Saturday.

Heavy police presence was seen at the Pullman Hotel on Avenue de Suffren near the Eiffel tower, another eyewitness, who lives along Champ de Mars told Reuters. He declined to be identified.

Other witnesses also confirmed the presence of heavily armed police at the site of the hotel.

- Reuters