Beat: Politics

Suicide bomber kills 3, injures several in Damascus

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USPA News - A suicide bomber blew up an explosives-laden vehicle in the north of the Syrian capital of Damascus on Tuesday, killing at least three people and injuring several others, officials and opposition activists said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

The attack happened late in the afternoon when a suicide bomber blew up a van or truck in a street in the east of the Rukn al-Din district in northeastern Damascus. Footage broadcast on state-run television showed a crater about 2 by 2 meters, several burnt out cars, and shattered windows in nearby buildings. The state-run Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) said the attacker was driving a van and that three civilians were killed, but few other details were immediately released. The Britain-based activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also said three people were killed but claimed the suicide bomber was driving a truck. There was no immediate claim of responsibility following Tuesday`s attack. The crisis in Syria began as a pro-democracy protest movement in March 2011, similar to those across the Middle East and North Africa. The Syrian government violently cracked down on the protests, setting off an armed conflict between pro-Assad forces and anti-government forces. A number of jihadist groups have since joined the fight against Assad`s regime. Last week, at least 42 people were killed and more than 80 others were injured when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives at the al-Iman mosque in the district of al-Mazraa in Damascus. Among those killed was decorated scholar Mohammad Said Ramadan a-Bouti who had frequently spoken out against terrorism, criticizing rebel insurgency. The United Nations estimates that more than 70,000 people, many of them civilians, have been killed and more than 1.1 million others have fled to neighboring countries since the start of the uprising in 2011. Opposition groups estimate the number of deaths is far higher, but those figures cannot be independently verified.

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