

8 dead in Manhattan terror attack, Trump steps up 'extreme vetting' of foreign travellers

Sayfullo Saipov, a 29-year-old Uzbek migrant based in Florida, was shot in the abdomen by a police officer after he got out of his vehicle that collided with a school bus.



Police investigate a pickup truck used in an attack on the West Side Highway in Manhattan, New York, US, on November 1. (REUTERS)

A man rammed a pickup truck through a bike-only path in New York City's lower Manhattan area shouting "Allah-u-Akbar", killing eight people and injuring at least a dozen on Tuesday, in a terror strike close to the site of the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Sayfullo Saipov, a 29-year-old Uzbek migrant based in Florida, was shot in the abdomen by a police officer after he got out of his vehicle that collided with a school bus at 3.05 pm (1905 GMT), blocks away from the 9/11 Memorial, and walked in the middle of the street brandishing two weapons that turned out to be paint-ball and pellet guns.

The suspect is in police custody and is being treated at a hospital.

“This was an act of terror and a particularly cowardly act of terror aimed at innocent civilians, aimed at people going about their lives who had no idea what was about to hit them,” Mayor Bill de Blasio said at a news conference.

Authorities had not disclosed his identity, but news reports said Saipov came to the United States in 2010. He had driven to New York City from neighbouring state of New Jersey.

In a note found at the site near the abandoned vehicle, Saipov is reported to have pledged loyalty to the Islamic State terror group. But it was not immediately clear where or how he was radicalised.

Governor Andrew Cuomo said based on preliminary investigation that this was a lone-wolf attack. “This was one individual who meant to cause pain and harm and probably death and the resulting terror. That was the purpose,” said Cuomo.

Confronting what could be the most serious terror-related incident since taking power less than a year ago, President Donald Trump announced he had ordered the Department of Homeland Security to step up his “extreme vetting programme” on foreign travellers to the country.

“We must not allow ISIS to return, or enter, our country after defeating them in the Middle East and elsewhere. Enough!” Trump tweeted about what was clearly the first terrorist attack on American mainland in his term, and in his hometown.

This was the first instance also of a terrorist attack involving fatalities in New York City after 9/11 that had killed 2,606 people, including 34 from India. There were at least two other attempts since— the Times Square car bomb in 2010, and the Chelsea bombings in 2016 that had left 29 people injured.

This was also the first instance of a vehicle being used as a terror weapon in the United States, as in Berlin and Nice in 2016, in Barcelona last August and in London earlier this year. A white supremacist had driven through protestors in Charlottesville, Virginia recently killing one woman but authorities had not described it as an act of terrorism.

The suspect in the Tuesday’s attack had used a rental pick-up from Home Depot, a countrywide retail chain of home furnishings. He drove the truck down the bike-

path used by cyclists, joggers and walkers for about a mile, before it rammed the school bus, injuring two adults and two children inside, close to a community college and a high school.

Videos taken by passersby show the suspect running around — “randomly,” as one witness described it — after abandoning the vehicle, with police officers in pursuit. He held up two weapons that were later found to be imitation guns.

Six people died at the site of the attack and two were declared dead on arrival at the hospital, police commissioner James P O’Neill told reporters. The dead include five friends from Argentina.

Eleven people were seriously injured, O’Neill added, but none with life-threatening conditions. The number of those injured could go up.

Security had already been stepped up all over the city for Halloween celebrations and a traditional parade later in the evening, and authorities urged New Yorkers to go about their business.

“We know that this action was intended to break our spirit but we also know New Yorkers are strong, New Yorkers are resilient and our spirit will never be moved by an act of violence, an act meant to intimidate us,” Mayor de Blasio added.

Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/8-dead-in-manhattan-terror-attack-trump-steps-up-extreme-vetting-of-foreign-travellers/story-2AoY5tdspFk9Tq3ohiw8rJ.html>

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