

'Terror Attack' In Russia's Dagestan

Why In News

- **Gunmen attacked churches and synagogues** in Russia's North Caucasus region of Dagestan on Sunday, killing at least eight police and national guard officers and a priest, officials said. The unidentified gunmen launched simultaneous attacks in **Dagestan's largest city of Makhachkala** and in the coastal city of **Derbent**.



- Russia's Investigative Committee said it had opened criminal probes over "**acts of terror**" in **Dagestan**, a largely Muslim region of Russia neighbouring Chechnya. More than 15 people, including policemen, an Orthodox priest and civilians, were killed, and several others were injured in an attack by terrorists in Russia's southern republic of Dagestan.



Where Is Dagestan On The Map

- **Dagestan, officially known as the Republic of Dagestan**, is in southwestern Russia. It is located in the North Caucasus, along the Caspian Sea. Its largest city and capital Makhachkala is 1,588km (986 miles) southeast.

RUSSIA

Deadly attacks in Russia's Dagestan

Armed men have attacked churches, a synagogue and a police post in Dagestan in Russia's North Caucasus region, killing at least 15 police and National Guard officers, several civilians and an Orthodox priest.



Gunmen pictured on the street of Makhachkala [Reuters]



Thick smoke in the air above Derbent [Reuters]

What Happened In Dagestan

- **Shortly before 6pm local time (15:00 GMT)**, some attackers used automatic weapons to attack a synagogue and an Orthodox church in Derbent city, Dagestan's interior ministry said.
- Derbent is home to an ancient **Jewish community** in the mainly Muslim region.
- The interior ministry said gunmen simultaneously attacked a traffic police post in **Dagestan's capital Makhachkala**, about 125 km (75 miles) north of Derbent.
- The attackers and law enforcement officials exchanged gunfire. Heavy shooting was reported at the Russian Orthodox Assumption Cathedral in Makhachkala.



- According to reports, the **armed men slit the throat of the priest** - Father Nikolay - in the church in Derbent, while the security guard was shot dead. One of the law enforcement officers killed in the attack was the head of the 'Dagestan Lights' police department
- **Russia's National Antiterrorism Committee** said a counterterrorism operation was launched in Dagestan at 8:15am (05:15 GMT) on Monday. It was declared over soon after. During such operations, authorities can restrict people's movement and communications.



- The **attacks come three months after at least 133 people** were killed in an attack on a concert in Moscow's Crocus City Hall. While the **Afghanistan-based Islamic State in Khorasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K)**, claimed responsibility for the worst attack to hit Russia in years, Moscow claimed without evidence that Ukraine had a role.



- **State news agency TASS cited** a law enforcement source as saying the "gunmen who carried out attacks in Makhachkala and Derbent are supporters of an international terrorist organisation", without naming it.
- Russia's FSB security service in April said it had **arrested four people in Dagestan on suspicion** of plotting the deadly attack on Moscow's Crocus City Hall concert venue in March, which was claimed by the Islamic State group.

Early History

- **Militants from Dagestan** are known to have travelled to **join IS in Syria**, and in 2015, the group declared it had established a "franchise" in the North Caucasus.
- **Dagestan lies east of Chechnya**, where Russian authorities battled separatists in two brutal wars, first in 1994-1996 and then in 1999-2000.
- **Since the defeat of Chechen insurgents**, Russian authorities have been locked in a simmering conflict with Islamist militants from across the North Caucasus that has killed scores of civilians and police.

