

# MADRID SUBWAY BOMBING

**Situation:** Terrorist bombing at three locations along Madrid train line.

Prior to the attacks, Spanish authorities had discovered and removed a bomb from railroad tracks in the countryside. Based on this, the Spanish Government issued warnings of possible attacks against the rail system.

Investigations indicated the terrorists used backpacks filled with dynamite triggered by cell telephones. Witnesses identified after the attacks described three men carrying large backpacks made repeated trips from a van parked outside one of the stations to one of the trains. None of the witnesses notified authorities or took any action. Had witnesses reported these suspicious activities many lives may have been saved.

While planning your travel, you should always be alert to government warnings and recent events.



You should also be aware of the possibility of secondary explosions during an attack. While unsuccessful in Madrid, secondary explosions could have caused many more casualties. In the event of a terrorist attack, you should quickly and calmly evacuate the area while making mental notes of any details that might be useful to authorities.



Morning commuters were stunned and horrified as bombs detonated all around them. Most passengers fled the station, pushing and shoving their way to the street. Those too injured to flee waited for emergency crews to arrive on scene. Minutes after the first explosions, two more bombs exploded on a train at El Pozo del Tio Raimundo Station, two stops away from Atocha. One minute later, an additional bomb exploded on a train at Santa Eugenia Station, two stops further down the line.

Though the ten bombs killed 191 and injured 2,061 commuters, the casualty rate could have been higher. Three bombs failed to detonate that were perhaps intended to explode as emergency personnel arrived on the scene. This photo captures the moment of explosion from a security camera at the Atocha Station. Following a forensic investigation, police raided an apartment in a Madrid suburb on April 3, 2004. The occupants detonated explosives killing seven suspects and one Spanish agent. Among

the dead were Allekema Lamari of Algeria and Serkane Ben Abdelmajid of Tunisia, believed to have planned the attacks. One year later, 19 additional suspects were either on trial or awaiting prosecution.

On March 11, 2004, at 7:39 AM four bombs exploded in a passenger train as it approached a station during the morning rush hour in Madrid, Spain. Only seconds later, three more bombs exploded on another train already at the platform. In all, ten bombs detonated within three minutes at three busy commuting centers. A total of 191 persons were killed at the scene or later died of their wounds; 2,061 were injured.



This attack reflected strategic goals of the terrorists coming only three days before Spanish national elections. The people of Spain voted out the government of Jose Maria Aznar and elected Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, who soon fulfilled a campaign promise to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq.

Spain has long combated terrorist attacks. The Basque liberation organization ETA has detonated small bombs throughout the country for years. However, the magnitude of the March 11 train attacks shocked authorities and citizens.

Like September 11, 2001, the attacks in Madrid demonstrate the terrorist desire to inflict mass casualties on civilian targets and that attacks can occur at any time and location.

The attacks were linked to a Moroccan Islamic terrorist organization with ties to Al Qaida.