

Number of deaths in Algiers blasts unclear

by UPI

ALGIERS, Algeria -- There were widely varying reports Wednesday of the number of people killed in Algiers by two bomb blasts a day earlier as the search for victims continued. The offices of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, located across the street from the U.N. headquarters, were leveled by a blast that struck Tuesday morning and rescuers were searching debris Wednesday, CNN reported. The United Nations said 45 people were killed but the official Algerian government toll was 26. Local hospital sources in Algiers told BFM-TV 76 people were killed. The explosions also hit the building housing Algeria's Constitutional Council and Supreme Court. An Islamist group with links to al-Qaida claimed responsibility for the attack on a Web site posting, saying two trucks containing 1,763 pounds of explosives had been used, the report said. In a statement, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the "abjectly cowardly strike against civilian officials serving humanity's highest ideals under the U.N. banner."

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