

Radical students surrender in Pakistan

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- A day after fierce fighting with government forces, scores of radical Islamic students occupying a mosque in Pakistan surrendered Wednesday, CNN reported.

Quoting a government source, CNN said more than 100 of the students, who for months had barricaded themselves in Islamabad's Lal Masjid, or Red Mosque, gave up after authorities had imposed a curfew in the wake of Tuesday's gun battle in which at least 12 died.

More of the students were expected to surrender. The source told CNN no government operations to storm the mosque had been launched.

During their occupation of the mosque to press their demand for the imposition of Islamic laws, the students had indulged in such acts as kidnappings of police officers, those accused of prostitution and even Chinese nationals, all of whom were later released.

Earlier, the BBC reported Interior Minister Zafar Iqbal Warraich told reporters that police, army, and paramilitary units, who had surrounded the mosque, had been ordered to shoot on sight anyone leaving the mosque carrying a weapon. The minister said those giving up their weapons would be offered amnesty.

Pakistan authorities blamed the mosque and religious school leaders for the standoff, saying they have tarnished the image of Islam.

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