**Bangkok bomb: Thailand hunts CCTV suspect as device 'thrown from bridge'**

No one injured after object falls into Chao Phraya river, as authorities look for man caught on CCTV near scene of Monday’s blast

Thai authorities are searching for a suspect seen on CCTV near the scene of a [bomb blast at a popular shrine](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/17/bangkok-bomb-thai-capital-reels-deadliest-attack-in-years) in Bangkok that killed 22 people and injured 123.

Broadcast on Thai media, the footage shows a man in a yellow T-shirt sitting on a bench and taking off a large, black backpack. He then stands up and walks away before checking his phone.

The national police chief, Somyot Poompanmoung, said the suspect could be Thai or a foreigner. “We need to look at the before and after CCTV footage to see if there is a link,” Somyot told reporters.

In a separate development on Tuesday, police said a small explosive device appeared to have been thrown towards a pier from the Taksin bridge in the Thai capital. Security camera footage showed people on a walkway at the Sathorn pier being showered with water after the object fell into the Chao Phraya river. No link has been made to Monday’s attack and no one was hurt.

“If it did not fall in the water then it certainly would have caused injuries,” a deputy police chief told Reuters.

Thailand’s defence minister has said authorities are close to determining who detonated Monday’s bomb.

“It is much clearer who the bombers are, but I can’t reveal right now,” Prawit Wongsuwan said on Tuesday. “We have suspects. There are not many people.”

Thailand’s ministry of foreign affairs said: “For the time being, it is too early to determine the possible motives or who the perpetrators may be.”

[The prime minister, Prayuth Chan-ocha](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/thailand-west-get-tough-prayuth-chan-ocha-junta-bangkok), was quoted by news agencies as saying the suspect was believed to be from an “anti-government group based in Thailand’s north-east”. The area is a stronghold of support for the [redshirt movement](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/06/thai-court-jails-15-red-shirt-activists) which backs the former prime minister [Thaksin Shinawatra](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/sep/19/thailand1), who was [ousted by the military](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/sep/19/thailand) in 2006. But Thai media later said the quote was not referring to the suspect.

No group has claimed responsibility for the bombing of the Erawan shrine, a major attraction for visitors from Asia and for Thai people. Dedicated to the Hindu god Brahma, it is also popular among Thailand’s Buddhist and Chinese tourists.

Forensic police teams in white gloves spent Tuesday morning combing through glass and debris at the intersection where the bomb exploded, while the army stood guard.

The four major roads leading to the site, normally packed with traffic, had been blocked off by police. At midday, street cleaners entered the site and started to hose down the area, suggesting the scene investigation had finished.

Prayuth told media the attack “is the worst incident that has ever happened in Thailand”.

“There have been minor bombs or just noise, but this time they aimed for innocent lives,” he said. “They want to destroy our economy, our tourism.”

Much of the violence in the south-east Asian nation stems from a low-level insurgency waged by Muslim separatists in the south, but the country’s army chief said on Tuesday that the attack did not bear the hallmarks of the rebels.

“This does not match with incidents in southern [Thailand](http://www.theguardian.com/world/thailand). The type of bomb used is also not in keeping with the south,” the Royal Thai Army chief and deputy defence minister, General Udomdej Sitabutr, said in a televised interview.

Eight foreigners were killed in the explosion, including [three from the Chinese mainland, two from Hong Kong](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/18/china-fears-its-tourists-were-target-for-bangkok-bombers), two from Malaysia and one from the Philippines.

More than 20 of the 123 injured people were Chinese, according to a statement posted on the [website of China’s embassy](http://www.chinaembassy.or.th/chn/sgxw/t1289457.htm) in Bangkok. They sustained both “moderate and severe” injuries, China’s official news agency, Xinhau, said.

“It is beyond the imagination of Chinese people that a blast could happen at the famous Erawan shrine,” the Global Times, a Communist party-controlled tabloid, said [in an editorial](http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/937634.shtml). “It has almost the same impact on Chinese tourists as if it happened in China.”

[Beijing said](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-08/18/c_134527418.htm) it had demanded that embassy officials in Bangkok find out what had happened and to “go all-out to help treat the injured people”.

At the nearby police hospital, Chinese volunteer translators waited in the lobby for the families and friends of several Chinese tourists who had been killed and wounded in the blast, which [ripped through the area](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/17/bangkok-bomb-thai-capital-reels-deadliest-attack-in-years) at 7pm on Monday.

More than 6,500 people have been killed in the long-running insurgency in the south of the country since 2004, but militants have not launched an attack of this scale on the capital.

Bangkok has witnessed violent protests from opposing political groups since 2006 but foreigners are rarely caught in the bloodshed. An indiscriminate bomb attack killing large numbers of people is unheard of in recent memory.

Somyot, the police chief, told reporters the blast was caused by a pipe bomb.

Tourism is one of the few bright spots in an economy that continues to underperform more than a year after the military [seized power](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/25/thai-junta-dissolves-senate-coup-bangkok) in May 2014.

It accounts for about 10% of the economy, and the government had expected a record number of visitors this year after a sharp fall in 2014 during months of [street protests](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/15/two-protesters-killed-in-bangkok) and the coup.

The scene on Monday evening included burnt-out motorcycles, rubble from the shrine’s wall and pools of blood on the street.

“There were bodies everywhere,” Marko Cunningham, a New Zealand paramedic working with a Bangkok ambulance service, told Reuters. “Some were shredded. There were legs where heads were supposed to be. It was horrific,” he told Reuters.

He said the blast had left a two-metre-wide crater and wounded people several hundred metres away.

The Nation television channel reported that the government would set up a “war room” to coordinate a response. Two pipe bombs exploded in the same district in February but did not cause significant damage.