Beat: Travel

15 killed in attack on food street in China`s Xinjiang

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USPA News - At least fifteen people were killed when a group of attackers targeted civilians on a street in China`s western region of Xinjiang, state-run media reported on Saturday. Nearly all of the reported casualties were said to be attackers, but it was unclear whether the death toll would increase.

The attack happened at around 1:30 p.m. local time on Friday when a group of "mobsters" drove into a commercial street in Shache County and threw explosives at civilians before attacking them with knives, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported, citing a statement from local authorities. Xinhua said at least 15 people were killed, including 11 attackers who were shot dead by police. Fourteen others were injured and taken to local hospitals. It was not immediately known whether the death toll was expected to rise as Chinese authorities have repeatedly delayed important information about previous attacks, seemingly in an attempt to avoid significant news coverage. At least 50 people were killed in a coordinated attack at several locations in Xinjiang on September 21, but authorities initially reported only six deaths. Weeks earlier, on August 3, at least 96 people were killed when a group armed with knives and axes attacked government offices, a police station and civilians in Shache County, making it some of the region`s worst violence in years. Authorities initially said "dozens" of people were killed and did not release casualty figures for nearly a week. The western region of Xinjiang has been the scene of bloody attacks over the past year. Security forces announced a year-long crackdown on Xinjiang terrorism in May after two SUVs plowed into a crowd of early morning shoppers at an open air market in Urumqi, the capital of the restive region. The attackers also tossed explosives at the crowds, killing 39 people and injuring nearly 100 others. An estimated eight million Uighurs are living in the Central Asian region of Xinjiang, which is officially known as China`s Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. A large number of Uighur are reportedly unhappy about the large migrant Han Chinese settlers, accusing them of making their interests less important and generally disregarding their culture. Xinjiang was the scene of violent clashes between Uighur Muslims and Han Chinese in July 2009, leaving 197 people killed and more than 1,700 others injured. The riots were the region`s worst ethnic clashes in decades and the violence only stopped when a large number of troops were deployed to the remote western region.

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