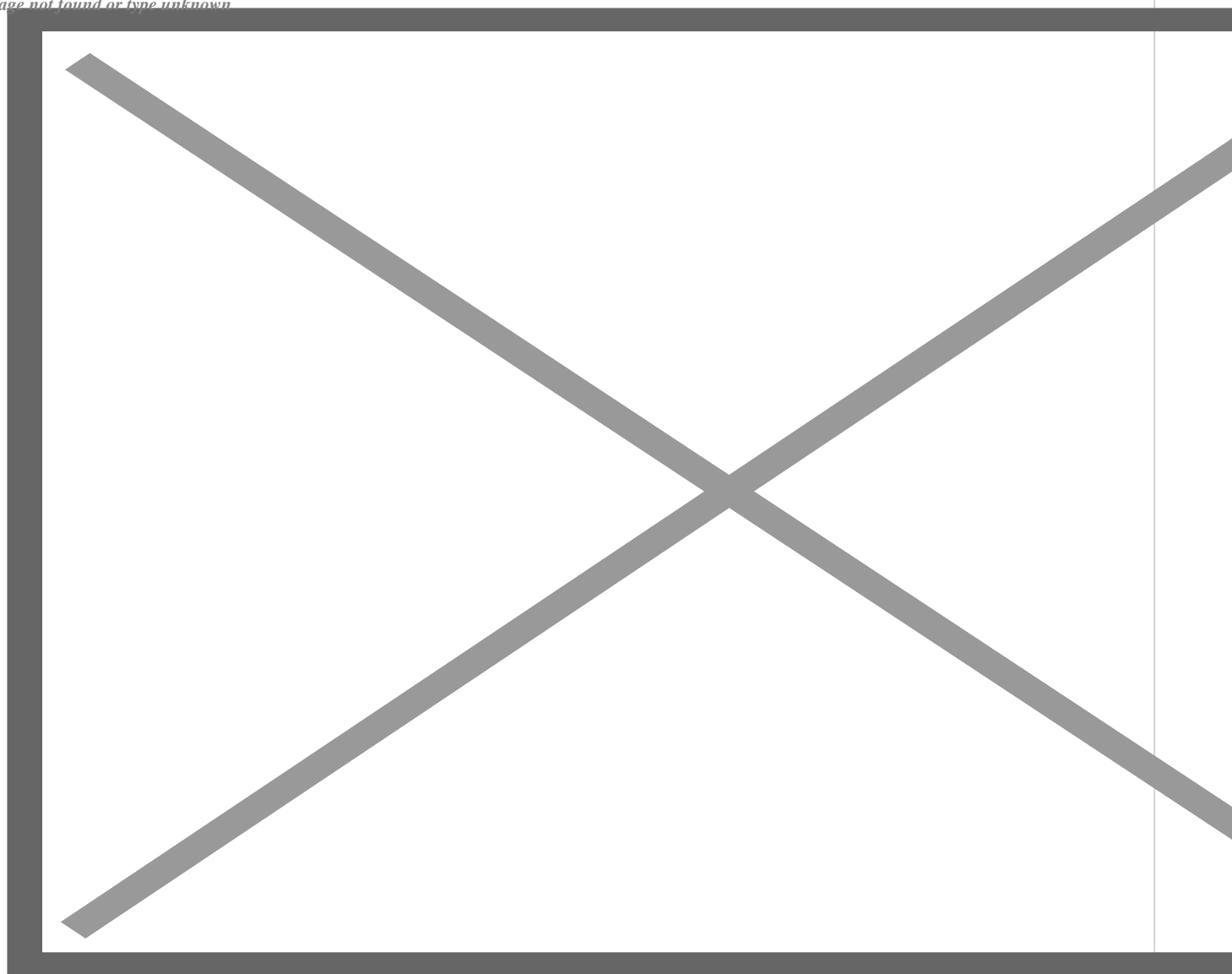


Deadly blasts near military hospital in Kabul

Image not found or type unknown



Injured victims of the blasts being shifted to an emergency hospital [EPA]

Kabul, November 2 (RHC)-- At least 19 people were killed and 43 wounded when two explosions followed by gunfire hit Afghanistan's biggest military hospital in the capital Kabul, interior ministry sources told Al

Jazeera on Tuesday.

The sound of gunfire was also heard near the Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan military hospital in the Afghan capital, according to witnesses and a government spokesperson.

Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, told reporters that at least two blasts took place at the entrance of the 400-bed hospital in Kabul's 10th district. Witnesses told Al Jazeera it was a car bomb. "Security forces are deployed to the area, there is no information about casualties," he said on Twitter.

Earlier, Saeed Khosty, interior ministry spokesman said that there were casualties in the blasts, but did not confirm the toll.

Photographs shared by residents showed a plume of smoke after the blasts in the former diplomatic zone in the Wazir Akbar Khan area in central Kabul.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. But the official Bakhtar news agency quoted witnesses saying a number of fighters from ISIL (ISIS) affiliate, entered the hospital and clashed with security forces. Al Jazeera however, could not independently verify the report.

The blasts add to a growing list of attacks and killings since the Taliban completed their victory over the previous Western-backed government in August, undermining their claim to have restored security to Afghanistan after decades of war.

ISIL affiliate Islamic State in Khorasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K), which has carried out a series of attacks on mosques and other targets since the Taliban's seizure of Kabul in August, mounted a complex attack on the 400-bed hospital in 2017, killing more than 30 people.

A health worker at the hospital, who managed to escape the site, said he heard a large explosion followed by a couple of minutes of gunfire. About ten minutes later, there was a second, larger explosion, he said, adding that it was unclear whether the blasts and the gunfire were inside the sprawling hospital complex, the largest military hospital in Afghanistan.

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