

U.S. Air Defense on Alert Over Canada Shooting



Washington, October 23 (RHC)-- The United States put its air defense on alert and placed its embassy in Ottawa on lock-down following shooting incidents in Canada including one inside its parliament building.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) is taking "appropriate" measures to ensure quick reaction to "any incidents involving aviation in Canada," said a U.S. defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

On Wednesday, a gunman shot dead a Canadian soldier at a war memorial in Ottawa and was chased by police toward the Canadian parliament. Following a gun battle inside the building, the gunman was fatally shot by officers.

Witnesses said over 20 shots were fired inside the parliament building and at least three people were taken to hospital for treatment. The Canadian soldier was identified as Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, a family source told CNN. Also, police identified Michael Zehaf-Bibeau as the suspected gunman.

In response to the Wednesday shootings, President Barack Obama said that Washington does not know yet whether the incident was a terrorist act. Obama also spoke with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper over the phone and offered assistance Canada might need to deal with the situation.

According to the White House, Washington and Ottawa have had regular contacts over the likelihood of terrorist attacks in Canada by fighters who were trained by ISIL in the Middle East.

ISIL terrorists were trained by the CIA in Jordan in 2012 to try to destabilize the Syrian government. They now control large parts of Syria and Iraq.

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