# Gunmen Kill Over 15 in Coordinated Attacks in Dagestan



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On Sunday, a series of coordinated attacks by armed militants resulted in the deaths of over 15 police officers and several civilians, including an Orthodox priest, in Russia’s southern republic of Dagestan. According to a statement made by Governor Sergei Melikov, the attackers targeted religious sites and a police post in the cities of Makhachkala and Derbent.

The assailants set fire to a synagogue and an Orthodox church in Derbent, as well as attacking a church and a traffic police post in Makhachkala. Russian state media reported that buildings were set ablaze by the gunfire.

Russia's National Anti-Terrorist Committee labeled the events as terrorist acts and confirmed that five gunmen were "eliminated" in a counter-terrorist operation. Governor Melikov announced that six attackers had been "liquidated," though an exact number of militants involved remains unclear.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attacks. The authorities have initiated a criminal investigation on charges of terrorism. State news agency Tass reported that a Dagestani official was detained due to his sons’ involvement in the attacks.

Governor Melikov asserted that law enforcement and local authorities have regained control of the situation and vowed to continue the investigation until all militant cells are uncovered. He suggested, without presenting evidence, that the attacks could have been orchestrated from abroad.

These attacks underscore long-standing ethnic and religious tensions in Dagestan, a predominantly Muslim region that has seen decades of violence. The most recent large-scale attack in Russia occurred in March, when gunmen killed 145 people at a Moscow concert hall, an act claimed by an affiliate of the Islamic State group.

Further details on the current situation and investigations are awaited. Officials have declared three days of mourning in Dagestan.