

6 Moroccans suspected in Madrid bombing

BY ANDREW SELSKY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MADRID, SPAIN — Police reportedly now suspect at least six Moroccans took part in the Madrid train bombings, and the United States is assisting a growing international investigation that is increasingly focused on Islamic militants possibly linked to al-Qaida.

A 45-year-old woman died of her injuries Tuesday, raising the death toll from Thursday's bombings to 201. Of the more than 1,600 wounded, eight are in critical condition.

The main suspect in custody in the attacks, Moroccan immigrant Jamal Zougam, has already been identified by Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzon as a follower of Imad Yarkas, the alleged leader of Spain's al-Qaida cell who is jailed

on suspicion he helped plan the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

The daily newspaper El Pais reported Tuesday that police believe they have identified five other Moroccans who directly participated in the attacks and are at large.

Two people who were traveling on one of the attacked trains have said that Zougam was aboard just before the bombs began exploding, El Pais said.

With signs that the bombings were carried out by Islamic extremists who operate and have confederates in several countries,

FBI agents are helping Spanish police in using fingerprints and names to seek a full picture of Zougam and four other suspects in custody, a senior U.S. law enforcement official said in Washington.

Spanish police have also arrested two more Moroccans and two Indians, but their possible role in the attacks has not been specified.

European countries were searching their databases for any information pertinent to the attack.

A suspected link between the Madrid bombings and suicide bomb attacks in Casablanca, Morocco, last year grew stronger Tuesday when French private investigator Jean-Charles Brisard described a phone tap in which Zougam said he had met with Mohamed Fizazi, the spiritual leader of Salafia Jihadia, a clandestine Moroccan extremist group.

Salafia Jihadia is suspected of involvement in the Casablanca attack.

Brisard told The Associated

Press the tapped call is cited in a lengthy report written for Garzon's inquiry of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Brisard, who is helping investigate the Sept. 11 attacks for lawyers representing some victims' families, has a copy of the report.

The Garzon document says that in the August 2001 monitored phone call, Zougam told Yarkas: "On Friday, I went to see Fizazi, and I told him that if he needed money we could help him with our brothers," Brisard said.

Fizazi was among 87 people sentenced in Morocco in August in a trial that centered on the Casablanca attacks. Fizazi received a 30-year sentence after being convicted of preaching radical Islam in mosques and meeting with the Casablanca attack's perpetrators.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS
A forensic police officer examines the remains of a carriage of a local train where a bomb exploded March 11 in Madrid.

Suspect kept tight hold on family

BY BRIAN MELLEY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRESNO, CALIF. — With nine family members shot to death and stacked in a pile behind him, Marcus Wesson walked out of his house covered in blood and did something others rarely saw: He gave up control.

Up until then, Wesson appeared to wield absolute authority over his household and his large clan.

The women would walk dutifully behind him in dark robes. They did not speak in his presence. They apparently worked to support him.

The children were home-schooled because he did not trust public education. And the little girls — immaculate and wearing dresses — obediently carried the very coffins that may have been intended for them.

Wesson, 57, left them all for dead Friday, shooting everyone in his house — a 25-year-old woman and eight children, authorities said. Then he surrendered to police.

Coroners were still working Tuesday to identify the dead, all of whom were believed to be his children. Late in the afternoon, Wesson was formally charged with nine counts of murder. He remained jailed on \$9 million bail pending an arraignment Wednesday.

Wesson was being held on \$9 million bail for arraignment Wednesday on nine counts of murder.

Police have not disclosed a motive but said that Wesson may have engaged in incest and polygamy and that the slayings could have been part of a cult ritual.

All nine victims were shot in the same way, the coroner said, and Wesson often talked about God.

Wesson's sons denied their father was a cult leader, saying that he was a good father and that the family had been raised as Seventh-day Adventists.

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