

《必须加强反恐斗争》

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The latest attack in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region highlights the need to intensify the fight against the growing threat of terrorism at multiple levels, according to security analysts and experts.

Ma Pinyan, a senior anti-terrorism researcher, said there had been a growing number of attacks and there was also the possibility that more people had become terrorists despite a crackdown on extremist activities in recent years.

"Not enough efforts are being made to solve terrorism at its roots," said Ma, deputy director of the Ethnic and Religious Study Center at Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences.

"The ideological basis for terrorism is religious extremism. The extremists have increased their efforts to indoctrinate people."

On Thursday morning, two cars without license plates plowed into people at an open-air market in Urumqi, the regional capital, with the occupants throwing explosives into the crowds.

The attack killed 31 people and injured at least 94 others. The Ministry of Public Security described it as "an extremely severe terrorist incident".

It was the second terrorist attack in Urumqi in less than a month. On April 30, a railway station explosion killed three people, including two attackers, and injured 79 others.

Xinjiang Party chief Zhang Chunxian said in March that the penetration of religious extremism had led to more attacks.

Tourism decline

Meng Nan, a Central Asian studies researcher at Xinjiang University, said the terrorists had become more focused and sophisticated in their attacks.

They chose the morning market for the latest attack because they could cause maximum panic, Meng said.

The attacks in Xinjiang would trigger a decline in the number of tourists to the region during the peak season, he said.

Besides economic damage, such attacks "can attract the attention of anti-China forces in the West, who will support the terrorists with funding or weapons", Meng added.

Ma said the timing of the attack, which came as China was hosting the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in Shanghai, also meant that it was deliberately provocative.

He said modern forms of communications had also made the fight against terrorism more challenging.

All these factors meant that counterterrorism efforts must be intensified and carried out at all levels, the experts said.

Liu Lei, Xinjiang military command commissar, said religious extremists in the region tended to recruit jobless young people from rural areas.

He said most members of the violent or terror-related groups cracked in Xinjiang in recent years were jobless and aged between 10 and 25.

More must be done to ensure that people at the grassroots had jobs so that they did not fall prey to extremists, Liu said.

Ma said China needed to strengthen counterterrorism cooperation with Afghanistan and Pakistan, which were increasingly becoming bases for the planning of attacks and training of terrorists in Xinjiang.

Effective measures

A special law on counterterrorism was urgently needed, Ma said.

Dai Peng, a professor at People's Public Security University of China, said the nation should enhance its capacity to combat terrorism in terms of intelligence gathering at border areas.

Basic counterterrorism measures also included cutting terrorists' sources of funding and weapons, Dai said.

"Police should take effective measures to cut off their source of funding. Whenever banks discover the illegal inflow or outflow of funds by suspected terrorists, they should freeze the accounts immediately."

Police and customs officials should maintain the pressure in cracking down on arms smuggling, he said.

Meng said the government should improve cooperation on information gathering and sharing with other countries to target terrorists at home and abroad who increasingly used the Internet to spread their extremist activities.

Security checks and patrols at public places such as hospitals, schools, shopping malls and theaters must be strengthened because those areas were major targets for terror attacks, Meng said.

Everyone should stay on high alert for suspected terrorists and report them to the authorities immediately, Meng said, adding that a consensus should be reached — that terror attacks could cause huge damage to all ethnic groups and nationalities.

Zhang Yan and Cui Jia contributed to this story.

