

New Orleans truck attack: what we know so far

AFP – The United States saw 2025 begin with a violent attack, after a man drove deliberately at high speed into a crowd of New Year's revelers in New Orleans, killing at least 15 people and wounding dozens more.

Here is what we know so far.

– What happened? –

A US citizen drove a white Ford pickup truck flying an Islamic State flag into throngs of people celebrating the New Year in the French Quarter, the Louisiana city's most iconic tourist district, around 3:15 am (0915 GMT), according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

He crashed the vehicle, then opened fire and died in a shootout with police, who said he had driven with the aim of killing as many people as possible.

He had rented the truck on popular carsharing app Turo, authorities said.

– What is the toll? –

Authorities had earlier put the toll at 10, but an FBI spokesman told AFP it had risen to 15, citing the New Orleans coroner's office.

The assailant shot and wounded two police officers, who were described as being in stable condition, said New Orleans police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick.

– What was the motive? –

This was not immediately clear, but the FBI said it was investigating the attack as a possible act of terrorism.

President Joe Biden said the suspect had shared videos online that indicated he was “inspired by ISIS,” using another name for the Islamic State armed group.

Officials say the pickup truck was flying a black flag of the Islamic State group and that they had recovered two improvised explosive devices.

– What is the suspect’s identity? –

The FBI identified the suspect as 42-year-old Shamsud-Din Jabbar, a US Army veteran who was honorably discharged.

He served more than 10 years in the military as a human resource specialist and an IT specialist, according to the Pentagon, which said Jabbar deployed to Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010.

Jabbar held a degree in computing from Georgia State University and lived in Houston, Texas, where he had worked as a real estate agent.

The FBI said it believes the suspect may have had accomplices, but gave few additional details.

– Where did the attack take place? –

The car-ramming took place in the heart of the French Quarter, a historic district known for its vibrant nightlife with many bars, restaurants and jazz venues.

The French Quarter and New Orleans in general are well known for the raucous pre-Lenten street party known as Mardi Gras.

The city was also hosting tens of thousands of people who came to see a major college football game called the Sugar Bowl, which has now been postponed by 24 hours.

New Orleans is also scheduled to host the Super Bowl on February 9.

AFP