

Bomb thrown near US Embassy vehicle in Sana'a

No one injured in blast outside restaurant.

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Sana'a : A group of American embassy staffers came under attack when a bomb was thrown near their vehicle outside a restaurant in Yemen's capital, US and Yemeni officials said on Thursday.

No one was hurt in the attack on Wednesday evening in Hadda, a commercial district in the capital, said US State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley.

"Those in the vehicle were not injured. We have an ongoing investigation. The attack occurred in Hadda," he said, adding that "the bomb went off outside the vehicle."

Two Yemeni security officials said that several suspects were arrested, including a Jordanian in his 20s.

Another US official said the blast disabled the vehicle, adding that the embassy believes it was "likely" an attempt to target US interests. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to talk to the press.

The US Embassy in Sana'a said in a statement on its website that "foreign residents ... were targeted for attack" on Wednesday, but it gave no further detail. It urged Americans in the country "to remain vigilant" and avoid areas where attacks have occurred.

It was not immediately known whether the attack was linked to Al Qaida militants in the country. The Yemeni officials said an investigation of the attack was under way, but refused to comment further.

Al Qaida's affiliate in Yemen has carried out a number of attacks against foreign embassy staffers — most recently in October when militants fired a rocket at a British Embassy vehicle carrying four officials and the deputy chief of mission. One staffer and three bystanders were wounded.

Al Qaida fighters have also carried out direct attacks on the US Embassy in Sana'a in the past.

The US has dramatically stepped up counter terrorism aid to Yemen's government to fight Al Qaida, which has claimed responsibility for an attempt last Christmas Eve to blow up a passenger jet over US soil and an attempt earlier this year to mail bombs to Chicago.

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