

## Karachi Fireworks Warehouse Blast Kills Four

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KARACHI, Pakistan, At least four people were killed and more than 30 were injured in a massive explosion at a fireworks warehouse in Karachi on Thursday, local authorities reported. The blast set off a fire that spread to nearby shops and damaged vehicles along the busy Jinnah Road area.

Witnesses described scenes of chaos as the force of the explosion shattered windows in surrounding buildings, sending shards of glass onto the streets and prompting pedestrians

to flee for safety. Emergency responders rushed to the site to extinguish the flames and evacuate residents from affected buildings.

The exact cause of the explosion has not been officially determined. However, authorities said raw materials used for fireworks manufacturing were being stored at the warehouse illegally. Two warehouse owners have been taken into custody.

A spokesperson for Karachi's anti-terror unit explained that "more than 50 kilograms of raw material may have been stored in the basement. This material is used to manufacture fireworks but also bombs." The spokesperson did not clarify whether any explosives contributed to the blast.

This incident mirrors a similar tragedy earlier this year in Punjab province, where a fireworks storage site exploded in January, resulting in six fatalities. Safety experts have repeatedly warned that improper storage of flammable materials in urban areas poses significant risks to residents and first responders.

Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and financial hub with a population exceeding 20 million, faces ongoing challenges in infrastructure and public safety. Overcrowding and the prevalence of unauthorized industrial activities in densely populated districts heighten the risk of accidents such as this.

Local authorities have pledged to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident, including reviewing safety violations and the storage practices of businesses handling hazardous materials. Police have already begun inspecting similar facilities in the city to prevent further accidents.

Residents in the vicinity expressed shock and concern over the blast, with many noting that such incidents could have devastating consequences in highly populated neighborhoods. Emergency services worked through the evening to clear debris and ensure that fires did not reignite.

The Karachi blast underscores the broader challenges faced by Pakistan in regulating industrial safety and enforcing building codes in rapidly expanding urban centers. While officials focus on immediate relief for victims, questions remain about long-term strategies to prevent similar disasters.

Authorities continue to appeal to businesses handling combustible materials to adhere strictly to safety regulations, warning that negligence can result in criminal charges and severe penalties.

As investigations continue, the city remains on alert, with local police and fire departments monitoring warehouses and industrial facilities closely. The incident serves as a stark reminder of the importance of safety compliance in urban industrial zones.