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UN police and a British officer inspect the scene

Seven people have been killed in a bomb attack on a convoy of buses carrying Serbs near the town of Podujevo in Kosovo.

More than 40 people are reported to have been injured - 10 of them critically - in the attack, which occurred noon, just after the convoy had passed across the border into Kosovo from Serb-administered territory.

The attack has sparked violent protests from the victims' relatives in the village of Gracanica.

They have blocked the main road into the regional capital Pristina and set vehicles on fire.

Militants from Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority, who are attempting to expel Serbs from the province, have been blamed for the attack.

Nato leaders have condemned the killings as "premeditated murder".

Patrol distracted

The group of vehicles was returning from the southern Serbian city of Nis to a Serb settlement just south of the Kosovan capital, Pristina, when the attack took place.

The bomb was detonated 400m from the road as the first bus in a

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Nato Secretary General George Robertson

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convoy of seven passed over it, UN officials say.

Reports say that a patrol which was sent ahead of the convoy to prevent attacks like this was distracted by two men acting suspiciously.

Most of those killed or wounded were on the first bus, which took the full force of the blast.

At least three people were airlifted to hospital in a UN helicopter.

The other buses were able to drive away from the scene of the attack.

Two people found near the scene were detained, said Nato peacekeeper Brigadier Robert Fry.

International anger

"This is an entirely indiscriminate attack and sends an example of premeditated murder," said Brigadier Fry.

Nato's Secretary General George Robertson was angered by the attack and said that Kosovo was in danger of losing the international community's support.

"Nato did not conduct its air campaign in order to see ethnic cleansing by one group replaced by the ethnic attacks and intimidation of another," he said.

In Belgrade, the Yugoslav parliament cut short its session in protest at the terrorist attack, which it described as an act of terrorism aimed at destabilising the area.

Our correspondent in Belgrade, Paul Anderson, says the attacks are yet another blow to efforts by K-For to protect the dwindling Serb minority in Kosovo.

They have been unable to stop the attacks carried out by militant Albanians who are determined to purge Kosovo of all Serbs.

Earlier this week UN police came under attack in the town of Strpce after a Serbian man died while travelling in a UN convoy.

Ethnic Albanians are pushing for independence for Kosovo - which remains a province of Serbia, the main republic in



A UN helicopter evacuates victims from the scene

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