

Yanukovich Vows Swift Blast Investigation

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Yanukovich meeting with people injured in last week's bomb blasts at a hospital in Dnipropetrovsk on Saturday. **Mykhailo Markiv**

DNIPROPETROVSK, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich has promised a swift investigation into last week's bomb blasts in the city of Dnipropetrovsk, which injured 30 people just weeks ahead of the European football championship that Ukraine co-hosts.

Four bombs planted in trash bins in various downtown locations exploded at short intervals in the city of 1.3 million on Friday in what prosecutors said was an "act of terrorism."

"We understand well that we must find the criminals as soon as possible and they must be punished," Yanukovich said after meeting top law enforcement officials in Dnipropetrovsk, where he arrived on Saturday. "We must understand what motivations and goals this crime had."

Yanukovich said city authorities would pay 2 million hryvna (\$250,000) for any information that would help find the bombers.

The president and other officials declined to say what direction the investigation was taking.

The opposition has claimed the blasts could be part of a government plot to divert attention from the imprisonment of opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko.

Interior Ministry investigator Vasyl Farinnik, however, said Friday that he saw no politics in the attacks, which he said appeared to be of a criminal nature. Ukraine has seen previous explosions connected to criminal extortion.

The attack has unsettled authorities who are preparing to host the Euro 2012 football championship together with Poland.

Dnipropetrovsk is not a championship venue itself and is located about 240 kilometers away from Donetsk, which will host several games.

People in Dnipropetrovsk, where regular police have been reinforced by interior troops and large-scale public gatherings have been barred, are recovering from the shock of the blasts.

"I live in Israel and such explosions are not new to me, but I was shocked to see a familiar picture here: a blast-hit tram and bloodied people," said Alexander Mogilyev, 50.

(Reuters, AP)

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