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**Newsletters****News****Slasher runs amok in creche**

January 24, 2009 *Edition 1*

It was every parent's worst nightmare: a man with a face painted white and eyes blackened who went on a rampage at a Belgian day care centre yesterday, stabbing two toddlers and a woman worker to death and slashing 10 other small children all over their bodies.

Sobbing parents rushed to the scene and to hospitals in the town of Dendermonde and others close by and medical workers sprang into action, performing 10 operations to save the badly wounded children.

The attack caused widespread panic in the day care centre, which looks after up to 30 children in the town, 30km from Brussels.

Christian du Four, a local prosecutor, said the man rode a bicycle to the Fabeltjesland day care centre, entered, and began slashing with a knife.

Du Four said in the mayhem the attacker simply walked out and got back on his bicycle before being arrested in a nearby supermarket shortly afterwards.

Dr Ignace Demeyer, director of emergency services at Our Lady Hospital in Aalst, 10km away, said 10 children were treated for serious stab wounds and all had required surgery.

Demeyer said 21 children were at the day care centre at the time, and nine were unharmed.

Du Four did not immediately identify the suspect, who was injured as police detained him and taken to a nearby hospital. Local residents said the suspect had a history of mental illness.

"An act of great brutality has happened here against our weakest citizens," said mayor Buyse Piet.

"The whole city is united in support for the parents who are in deep grief."

"People are totally in shock," said Leene du Bois, a spokeswoman for the regional government of Flanders. She said the perpetrator had no connection to the day care centre and his motive was unknown.

Demeyer said: "This was a particularly violent attack.

"All the kids had multiple stab wounds on their legs, arms and all over their bodies," he said.

He said two adults had also required surgery.

**Slasher runs amok in creche**

Other headlines visible: "PUMPED UP IN OZ", "YOUR HEART'S DESIRE", "Airport guard offered R300 000 to keep her mouth shut", "Top Hollywood stars due in city to film blockbusters", "Join the 'Kwint' Winning One-Club'".

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The city opened up a nearby community centre to provide counselling to family members and witnesses of the stabbings.

Police showed distraught parents photographs of those taken to the hospital, asking them to identify their children.

Veerle Heeren, the social welfare minister for the Flemish government, said she would be investigating security measures at the centre.

Crown Prince Philippe and his wife, Princess Mathilde, are planning to see the parents of the children.

- Meanwhile in Norway, a policeman shot and killed a woman teacher in a parking lot outside a school and then shot himself.

Other shootings and attacks in schools in Europe include:




November 7, 2007, Finland: Pekka-Eric Auvinen killed six fellow students, the school nurse and the principal and himself with a handgun at the Jokela High School near Helsinki.

September 23, 2008, Finland: Student Matti Saari opened fire in a vocational school in Kauhajoki in northwest Finland killing nine other students and one male staff member before killing himself. - Reuters and Sapa-AP


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