Beat: Local

16 killed during police operation in China;s Xinjiang

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USPA News - Two police officers were killed Sunday when they attempted to arrest a suspect in China`s western region of Xinjiang, resulting in a clash during which fourteen alleged attackers were shot dead by police, a state-run news portal reported on Monday. The incident happened at around 11 p.m. local time on Sunday in a village in Shufu county, located near the northwestern city of Kashgar, when police were attempting to make arrests.

"Suddenly the thugs attacked with an explosive device and machetes, killing two police officers," said a brief news report on a government-run regional news portal. In response to the attack, officers shot dead fourteen alleged assailants and arrested two others, the report said, adding that the incident is under investigation. Other details about the attack were not immediately made public, and the state-run Xinhua news agency made no mention of the clash. Hua Chunying, a spokeswoman for China`s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described the attackers as a "violent terror gang" during a daily news briefing. "These thugs used explosive devices to attack police officers, once again exposing the true face of terrorism," she said. "It should be unanimously condemned by the international community." Sunday`s attack follows a similar outburst of violence last month, when a group of axe-wielding assailants attacked a police station in Bachu county of Xinjiang, killing two police officers and injuring two others. Nine attackers were shot dead by police before order was restored, state-run media said at the time. An estimated eight million Uighurs are living in the Central Asian region of Xinjiang, which is officially known as China`s Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. A large number of Uighur are reportedly unhappy about the large migrant Han Chinese settlers, accusing them of making their interests less important and generally disregarding their culture. Xinjiang was the scene of violent clashes between Uighur Muslims and Han Chinese in July 2009, leaving 197 people killed and more than 1,700 others injured. The riots were the region`s worst ethnic clashes in decades and the violence only stopped when a large number of troops were deployed to the remote western region. Following the riots, China cut all communications from the region to the rest of the world, including international phone calls, text messaging, and the Internet. Thousands of additional security forces have since been deployed and thousands of `riot-proof` closed-circuit television cameras have been set up in public places in an attempt to discourage any violence or unrest.

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