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Two Britons reported dead in resort atrocity as tourists flee Egypt fearing fresh wave of attacks

BY HUGH MILES in Sharm el-Sheikh AND COLIN FREEMAN

HUNDREDS of British tourists fled Egypt last night, fearing fresh terrorist attacks after three bombs ripped through the popular Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. Hospital officials said that two Britons were among 88 dead, though last night the Foreign Office confirmed only that two men were missing. A further eight Britons were among the 120 wounded, including a 14-year-old girl and a 30-year-old man who were airlifted to a Cairo hospital. Egyptian medics said that the girl's injuries were so severe she might die. Mohamed Mahmoud, a doctor at the Sharm el-Sheikh International Hospital, said: "The British people who were injured are all in a stable condition, except for the 14-year-old girl. She is in a very critical condition and I am afraid that she might die. Her mother has a bad injury in her leg too." The two missing Britons are feared to have died in the Ghazala Gardens hotel, which was ripped apart by a suicide car bomber who crashed into the lobby.

A vast crater was left by the explosion at about 1.15am on Saturday. Mursi Gaber, an Egyptian who was on a nearby beach at the time, said: "This flaming mass flew over my head, faster than a torpedo, and plunged into the water. There were body parts all over the steps down to the beach." Terrified tourists then ran straight into a second blast, only 100 yards away. The bomb was apparently planted in a rucksack and exploded in a car park next to the Mövenpick Hotel. "We heard a God Almighty blast," said Jimmy Hayes, from Scotland, who was staying at the hotel with his wife, Ann. "We went out and I heard another blast, and another and another. I thought people were shelling us. I thought our end had come." The third explosion ripped apart cafes and shops in the Old Market area, two miles away. It was a holiday weekend in Egypt to celebrate National Day, and the resort's restaurants and beach bars were in full swing. Most of the dead were Egyptian. Habib al-Adli, the interior minister, said that security had been tightened after the London bombings. Asked if he thought the attacks were linked, Mr al-Adli said: "It's all a crime of

terrorism whether here, in London, Turkey, or Saudi Arabia." Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, said: "It is another terrorist atrocity which has taken at least 75 lives of all nationalities and of all religions, including many Muslims. It shows that the fight against this terrorism is international." An estimated 9,000 British tourists are in Sharm el-Sheikh. Although most are expected to stay, the first of several special return flights was expected at Gatwick airport with about 300 passengers late last night. A group calling itself the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, al-Qaeda, in Syria and Egypt has claimed responsibility for the atrocities on a website.

