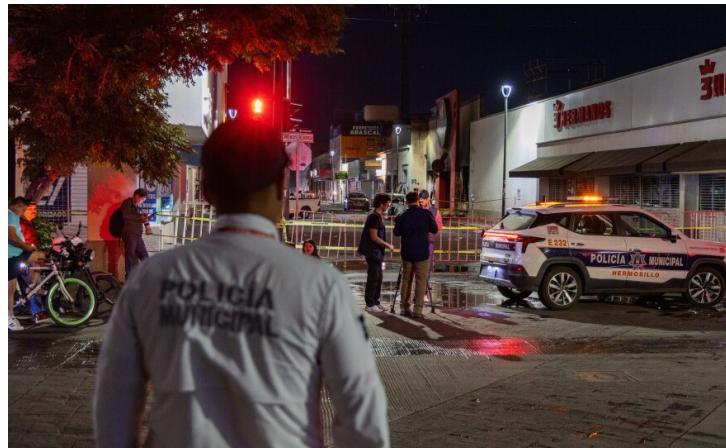


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Deadly Explosion Kills 22 at Store in Northern Mexico



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Mexico City, November 1 – At least 22 people were killed and several others injured after a massive explosion sparked a fire at a department store in Hermosillo, the capital of Mexico's northern state of Sonora, local media reported on Saturday.

The explosion occurred in the afternoon at a popular chain store located in the city center.

Witnesses said the blast was followed by a rapid spread of flames that engulfed parts of the building and nearby vehicles, leaving several people trapped inside.

Emergency and rescue teams arrived promptly to battle the blaze, evacuate surrounding areas, and transport the injured to local hospitals. Authorities said recovery operations were ongoing as firefighters worked to fully extinguish the flames and search for possible survivors.

Preliminary investigations indicated that the fire may have been caused by smoke from a malfunctioning transformer, though officials have ruled out any link to terrorism.

The tragic incident has shocked the local community, with authorities in Sonora pledging a full investigation into the cause of the explosion and promising support for the victims' families. An official report with further details is expected following the completion of rescue and inspection efforts.