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## **Sri Lankan government steps in to rebuild St Anthony's church after bomb attacks**

**Crowdfunding campaigns have also launched to support victims and restore heritage sites after deadly blasts**

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St. Anthony's Shrine in Kochchikade in Colombo was hit by a bomb on 21 April 21 ISHARA S. KODIKARA/AFP/Getty Images

The Sri Lankan culture minister, Sajith Premadasa, has pledged to rebuild the Roman Catholic church, St. Anthony's Shrine in Colombo, which was badly damaged in the Easter Sunday bombings. Hundreds of people were injured and 321 people died in the coordinated wave of attacks across the country; an Islamic terrorist group is responsible according to security officials.

Local press reports say that following investigations by the security forces, the Sri Lankan government will begin rebuilding St. Anthony's church under the supervision of Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo. The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organisation based in Connecticut, has also pledged \$100,000 towards "the rebuilding and repair of [the] Christian community in the aftermath of this act of terrorism". St. Sebastian's Church in Negombo and the Zion Church in Batticaloa were also bombed.

Crowdfunding campaigns have been launched by individual supporters though these have so far raised limited amounts. "We're [trying to raise] £600,000 to support the victims of the Sri Lanka terror attacks and restoration of the churches involved. Notre Dame raised £600m in 24 hours," says one such campaigner, Jake Margrain. After the [fire at the medieval landmark](#) last week in Paris, billionaires and businesses lined up to back the rebuilding campaign.