War exposure helped team react: Sri Lanka captain

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The Sri Lankan cricket team's exposure to the civil war back home helped them react swiftly when they were ambushed by gunmen in Pakistan, skipper Mahela Jayawardene says.

Seven members of the team, their assistant coach and a match umpire were wounded in Tuesday's gun and grenade attack as they travelled by bus to the cricket stadium in Lahore. At least seven people were killed in the assault. "We have been brought up in a background of terrorist activities," Jayawardene told reporters after returning home at the international airport in Colombo. "We are used to hearing, seeing these things - firing, bombings. So we ducked under our seats when the firing began. It was like natural instinct." Sri Lanka has seen nearly four decades of ethnic civil war with Tamil Tiger rebels who are fighting for a separate homeland. Jayawardene said the players were "shocked" and "mentally down" after the horrifying incident, and acknowledged there was a moment when he did not think he would ever make it back home. "I am a Buddhist, and I think we have done some merit in our previous birth to escape with minor injuries. We want some time now to be with our families," he said. The captain said it was too early to say if he or anyone else on the team would skip future tours of Pakistan. "We were not aware of security lapses. It's an unfortunate incident. In hindsight, this could have happened anywhere in the world," he said. "In the future, I think all of us will step back and look at the bigger picture besides just touring abroad, taking into account our families," he said. "That is something we will all do." - AFPCourtesy: abc.net.au