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## NATO copter goes down in Afghanistan

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A helicopter operated by the US-led NATO alliance has crashed in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan, with no immediate reports of casualties.

Afghan police officials said a foreign military helicopter went down in Nadali district near Shora area in Helmand province, 555 kilometers south of the capital Kabul on Monday, citing technical problems as the cause of the incident.

"According to our local police reports, the helicopter was seen on fire in the air before hitting the ground. We have no details about casualties," Helmand provincial police chief said.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for NATO forces in Afghanistan confirmed the incident, saying more information will be made public after an investigation.

"What we can confirm is the crash of a civilian helicopter in southern Afghanistan," the spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said.

"We are aware of an incident in the south of Afghanistan. We are gathering facts and will release more details when we have them," the spokesman said.

No details on casualties were available from either the Afghan police or the ISAF.

However, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the incident in a statement, saying that they shot down the foreign military helicopter and killed all people aboard.

The Taliban say they have shot down several aircraft and NATO choppers in different parts of Afghanistan over the past few months.

Last year, Taliban militants downed a US helicopter in Afghanistan's eastern province of Wardak. Thirty one members of the US special forces were killed in the incident which was the biggest single loss of life for American forces since the 2001 US-led invasion of Afghanistan.