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Militant attack kills US-led soldier in Afghanistan

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A soldier serving with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been killed in an attack in the troubled southern Afghanistan.

"An ISAF service member died following a militant attack in southern Afghanistan on Friday," a brief statement released by the military contingent on Saturday read.

The military force, however, did not announce the name or nationality of the victim.

According to official figures released by the website icasualties.org, a total of 37 foreign troops have lost their lives in war-battered Afghanistan so far this year.

A total of 566 US-led soldiers were killed in Afghanistan last year. The year 2010, nonetheless, remains the deadliest year for foreign military casualties with a death toll of 711.

The increasing number of military casualties in Afghanistan has caused widespread anger in the US and other NATO member states, undermining public support for the war effort.

Insecurity continues to rise across Afghanistan despite the presence of some 130,000 US-led forces in the war-battered country.

The United Nations announced on February 4 that last year was the deadliest on record for Afghan civilians. The number of deaths marked a rise of eight percent from the year before, and was roughly double the number in 2007.

Overall, 3,021 civilians died in violence related to the war and 4,507 were wounded. Of the deaths, the UN attributed 77 percent to militant attacks and 14 percent to foreign and Afghan troops. Nine percent of cases were classified as unknown.

“It is extremely worrying to see civilian casualties continuing to rise year after year,” the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said.

“Behind these numbers is real suffering and loss for families in Afghanistan,” she pointed out.