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Al Jazeera

Afghan in army uniform kills NATO soldiers

Attacker killed two soldiers before being shot dead by coalition forces at a base in Afghanistan's Helmand province.

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A gunman in an Afghan army uniform has killed two NATO soldiers at a base in southern Afghanistan, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has said.

Details were still sketchy about the incident on Monday morning, which was the latest attack by suspected rogue Afghan security forces on Western troops.

NATO said in a statement that an individual wearing an Afghan soldier's uniform had turned his weapon against international troops. Coalition forces then returned fire, killing the gunman.

"The gunman was shot and killed," Major Jason Waggoner, NATO spokesman, said. He declined to provide further details.

Al Jazeera's James Bays, reporting from the Afghan capital Kabul, said the incident took place at the gates to the headquarters of the main NATO base in Helmand province.

"The official NATO statement only said that it happened in southern Afghanistan. We have learned that it took place in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan, in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, and at the main NATO base there - the headquarters of the provisional reconstruction team," Bays said.

"An Afghan army soldier of low rank opened fire killing two of the NATO soldiers who were there on guard duty. Other NATO soldiers then shot the Afghan dead," he added.

The attack appeared to be the latest in a string of so-called green-on-blue attacks in which Afghan security forces have turned on their international colleagues or mentors.

"This incident brings the number of NATO troops killed by Afghan soldiers this year to 15," our correspondent said.

"This is very, very worrying for the international forces and for the Afghan government, because over the next year or so they are supposed to be transferring and transitioning control to the Afghans," he added.

The Lashkar Gah base is dominated by British and US forces, although there are also some Danish and Estonian troops stationed there, Bays said.

Britain's defence ministry told the Associated Press it was aware of Monday's incident, but refused to release any more details or confirm the nationalities of the soldiers who were killed.

A joint Afghan and ISAF team is investigating the incident, the NATO statement said.