

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

AFP

Tribesmen rise up against Afghan Taliban

By Waseem Nikzad and Sardar Ahmad

7/20/2012

About 200 tribesmen gathered in an eastern Afghan town this week to mark what they said was an uprising against Taliban insurgents -- the latest in a series of such moves, officials say.

Analysts caution that the so-called uprisings could be attempts by local militia leaders to reassert their authority ahead of the 2014 withdrawal of NATO troops supporting the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Or they could be orchestrated as part of a government strategy, they say.

But on Wednesday, in the central bazaar of Alishing, a farming district in eastern Laghman province, the tribesmen -- some carrying AK-47 rifles or rocket-propelled grenades -- made their intentions clear.

"We're fed up with the Taliban and their brutal aggressions against our people," a tribal elder among the protesters, Ghulam Rasoul, told AFP at the scene.

"We're standing up against them and will not allow them to oppress our people and kill our people," the turbaned elder said.

Laghman provincial administration spokesman Sarhadi Zwak told AFP that Alishing's revolt was the latest in a series of similar moves across the province northeast of Kabul.

And since mid-May, self-armed tribal militia have secured several villages in Ghazni province's Andar district south of the capital, a senior interior ministry source told AFP.

They were keeping the Taliban at bay and helped reopen dozens of schools the insurgents had closed, he said on condition of anonymity.

Although at an early stage, the revolts have worried the insurgents.

"Taliban fighters used to control most of the provinces, but now they are losing ground in areas like Helmand, Kunduz and more recently Kandahar, Zabul and Ghazni," a mid-level Taliban source told AFP in Pakistan.

"They lost ground to tribal militias because they don't let people access basic services, especially school," said the source, who belongs to the militants' political wing and travels regularly between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"That is what happened in Ghazni two months ago," he said.

At the demonstration in Alishing, tribal elder Noor Zaman told AFP: "The Taliban are insulting our elders, they are killing our elders, we decided to end this.

"Today we have gathered to tell the Taliban that they are no longer welcome in our village. If they try to enter our village again we will kill them," Zaman said.

The Taliban Islamists, who were in power between 1996 and 2001, are waging an insurgency they call "jihad", or holy war, to bring down the Western-backed Kabul government, which is supported by some 130,000 NATO troops.

But the US-led coalition is gradually withdrawing troops and increasingly handing responsibility for security to Afghans ahead of 2014.

"As the NATO troops are preparing to withdraw, the Taliban have started to expand their activities in the country," said analyst and author Waheed Mujda, a former official in the Taliban regime.

"The more they expand the more it becomes difficult for them to control their commanders and they and their soldiers have in some areas harassed and angered local communities.

"The uprisings are not purely by [ordinary] people -- in most parts they are being led by some former jihadi commanders who see this as a chance for themselves to come back to power."

Abdul Waheed Wafa, the director of the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University, said it was too early to call the moves an uprising.

"It's too early to give it a name. We don't yet know if it's really an uprising by the people or an intelligence strategy or a government project," Wafa said.

"But whatever it is, if it's not managed properly, it could turn into anything: it could turn into a popular revolution against the Taliban or a crisis within the crisis. It needs to be managed by the government," Wafa said.

The interior ministry official agreed that the uprisings were on a small scale so far, but said the government hoped they would expand.