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3 dead, 90 injured in Wardak suicide attack

Nov 23, 2012

A massive suicide bombing jolted the capital of central Maidan Wardak province on Friday morning, killing at least three people and wounding many others, an official said.

As usual, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack in Miadan Shahar, saying that a large number of Afghan and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops were killed in the explosion.

The suicide bomber struck close to the Office of Statistics at about 8.30am, the governor's spokesman, Shahidullah Shahid, told Pajhwok Afghan News.

The provincial police headquarters, central prison, *High Peace Council* and Swedish Committee for Afghanistan offices, as well as several other departments, are located in the area. But the offices remained closed on account of the weekly holiday.

Shahid said two employees of a government guesthouse were killed and 90 others, including women and children, were injured. Prison guards and some government officials are also among the wounded.

He added the injured were evacuated to Maidan Shahar and Kabul hospitals. The bombing damaged more than 30 civilian houses in the neighbourhood, the official added.

Provincial police chief, Brig. Gen. Sardar Mohammad Zazai, confirmed an explosives-laden Mazda pick-up truck was used in the attack. Twenty-two prisoners and 60 civilians suffered injuries in the explosion, he said.

But another security official, who did not want to be named, put the number of the injured at 179, including 31 policemen and 30 inmates. Several Afghan soldiers were slightly hurt, he said, adding that some prisoners tried in vain to escape.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the car attack was in retaliation for the execution of several fighters in the Pul-i-Charkhi Prison in Kabul. The hangings have come in for strong denunciation from global rights watchdogs.

The assault on a joint Afghan-ISAF coordination centre was carried out by Sohail Ghaznavi, a member of the insurgent movement, Mujahid said. Dozens of troops were killed, he claimed.