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Senior minister among 8 killed in Peshawar blast

Dec 22, 2012

Eight people, including a senior minister, were killed in a suicide attack on a rally in Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, on Saturday evening, officials said.

Senior Minister Bashir Ahmed Bilour succumbed to the critical injuries he suffered to his chest and stomach in the attack in the Dhaki Nalbandi area near the busy Qissa Khwani Bazaar. Bilour died soon after being rushed to the Lady Reading Hospital.

The bomber struck when Bilour was leaving the residence of a local Awami National Party leader after a meeting. His personal secretary Noor Mohammed and police officer Sattar Khan were among the fatalities, police said.

Eighteen others were injured in the bomb assault, claimed by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The outlawed group's spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan said Bilour, who repeatedly called for stepping up the campaign against terrorism, was the target.

Bashir's elder brother and federal minister for railways, Ghulam Ahmed Bilour, said he had wished to embrace martyrdom. "Rather than dying bit by bit on a street, he often voiced his desire to embrace *Shahadat*."

Asfandiyar Wali Khan, the party central president, called Bilour's assassination a huge loss for the entire country. Calling for continued war on terrorism, he said: "The ANP is rendering sacrifices for the motherland. All political forces will have to unite against the scourge."