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Combined forces kill 4 civilians

February 22, 2013

Combined force allegedly killed four civilians in Kunduz district, capital of northern Kunduz province on Thursday, local resident said.

Afghan and foreign forces raided the house of a local resident, Saifur Rahman, at approximately 1:30 a.m. (local time), killing him, his two sons, Dilarwa and 18-year-old Hayatullah, residents of Khwaja Ghaltan area, 20 km to northwest of Kunduz City, told a correspondent of Afghan Islamic Press who visited the area. He said the combined force also raided an adjacent house, killing owner of the house, Abdul Haq.

"All the dead were civilians. Saifur Rahman had enmity. This is a big problem that wrong information is given to the government due to personal enmity. The government too do not conduct investigations as result the civilians are killed," a resident said. "Security in Kunduz has been damaged by Uzbek commanders, Abdullah Guard and Basheer. His men were accompanied by the foreigners during the raid," he alleged.

Another resident told AIP that Saifullah had also received arms from government for his defence and to fight against Taliban.

Syed Sarwar Hussaini, spokesman for Kunduz police, told AIP that those killed during the operation were Taliban and fought for five hours against the combined force, killing two police. "It is true that fire was opened from Saifullah's house because he had personal enmity. Two police were killed and a foreign soldier was wounded in the gunfire," another resident told AIP.

Around 200 people took to the streets this morning and lodged a strong protest in the provincial headquarters against the killing of four civilians.

"The governor is not present. I too condemn this raid. All those killed are civilians, not Taliban. We would conduct investigations into the incident," Asadullah Omarkhel, head of Kunduz High Peace Council, told the protesters.

On contacting, ISAF press office said, " We can confirm six insurgents were detained during this operation, today in Kunduz district, Kunduz province. We have no operational reporting suggesting any civilians were harmed during this operation."

Though ISAF and Afghan government repeatedly promised of protecting civilians during operations, civilian casualties during combined force's operations have recently increased forcing President Hamid Karzai to ban airstrike in civilian areas.