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Taliban say captured troops swapped with their prisoners

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The Taliban said Wednesday the security personnel recently captured in Warduj district of Badakhshan province have been swapped with the Taliban prisoners.

In a press release sent to media, including the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP), the Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the bodies handed over to the Afghan government in Warduj district of Badakhshan province yesterday were not those captured alive by the Taliban.

He said the bodies were of those security personnel who were killed during gunfight with the Taliban few days ago. He said the Afghan army had left behind their bodies in the battlefield. "The mujahideen of Islamic Emirate recently attacked troops of the Kabul slave regime in Ghanio area of Warduj district. As a result, 15 troops were killed and 12 more held alive. Among the captured troops, one succumbed to his fatal injuries, raising the death toll of soldiers to 16. The enemy fled and left behind bodies of their comrades in the battlefield. The mujahideen took the bodies to their bases," he said.

The 16 bodies were handed over to a third side last night.

"The remaining 100 troops, including officers, were released alive in exchange of our prisoners and by taking surety. The claim is false that the mujahideen have killed the captured troops," he added.

The Taliban attacked a convoy of the Afghan security forces in Warduj district of Badakhshan province three days ago. The Taliban claimed killing 15 troops and capturing 12 more. However, officials said only six troops have been injured in the gunfight.

The Badakhshan governor's spokesman yesterday told the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) the Taliban have captured 23 security personnel, most of the Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers.

e said the Taliban killed 16 of the captured security personnel and released seven more after the area elders intervened.

Located in north-eastern Afghanistan, Badakhshan province is a stronghold of Taliban's opponents Northern Alliance. Such a fierce attack of Taliban in Badakhshan province could create concerns for the Afghan government and foreign forces.