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## 75 Faryab schoolgirls ill after gas attack

May 21, 2013

In a new anti-girl education incident, as many as 75 schoolgirls of a middle school fell sick after a suspected poisonous gas attack in the Shirin Tagab district of northern Faryab province on Tuesday, officials said.

The district chief said initially three girls fell unconscious after an unknown man hurled a poisonous substance into the air from outside the Islam Qala Girls' Middle school.

But later more girls fell unconscious, taking the number of affected girls to 70, Syed Loqman Gahrik told Pajhwok Afghan News.

He said the person who used the suspicious object had asked a shopkeeper in the area about the school address.

The attacker did not enter the school building, but tossed the substance into the air inside the school, he said, adding police had launched a manhunt to arrest the suspect.

Education Director Ghulam Sakhi Bayan said when two girls fell ill, other girls were allowed to go home, but dozens of them got sick at homes.

Public Health Director Dr. Abdul Ali Haleem confirmed 75 sick schoolgirls were brought to a hospital in the district for treatment of possible poisoning.

Last month, as many as 74 schoolgirls in northern Takhar province fell sick after smelling gas and were being examined for poisoning.

There have been numerous substantiated cases of mass poisonings of schoolgirls by elements opposed to girl education.