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## Death toll in Ghanikhel graveyard blast rises to 16

By *Mahbob Shah Mahbob*

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The death toll from a mine blast in a graveyard in the Ghanikhel district of eastern Nangarhar province has risen to 16, an official and residents said on Friday.

The explosion in the Golai area took place on Thursday morning when women and children, all from the same family, visited the grave of their relative to pay their respects to the deceased.

Officials said 14 people -- seven women and as many children -- were killed in the attack, which appeared to be timed to coincide with the festival of Eidul Fitr, marking the end of *Ramadan*.

A child and three women were wounded in the blast and the explosives had been planted on the grave which belonged to the brother of a *former jihadi* leader, Haji Ghalib. The man was killed by unknown gunmen last year.

A resident of the area, Syed Islam, told Pajhwok Afghan News the wounded child succumbed to his wounds at hospital. Another child was found dead in nearby fields, taking the number of those killed to 16, he said.

A doctor on duty at the Nangarhar Civil Hospital confirmed a child injured in the blast had died of his wounds. He said the condition of the three injured women was stable.

The governor's spokesman, Ahmad Zia Abdulzai, linked the attack to a personal enmity, a claim rejected by Ghalib, who blamed the Taliban for planting the explosives on his brother's grave.

However, a resident, who wished anonymity, said differences developed between Ghalib and the Taliban after he raised a militia to guard the construction of a road in the Golai area some time back.

“His brother was killed last year in a *mosque* by the same foes who killed his other family members in the graveyard.”

However, no one has so far claimed responsibility for the incident.