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9 killed in eastern Afghan blasts

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Six Afghan policemen and three civilians were killed in two separate bomb attacks in eastern province of Ghazni on Monday morning, a provincial government spokesman said.

"A police van set off a roadside bomb in Andar district early Monday morning, and the explosion left six police cops dead and two others wounded," spokesman Shafiq Nang told Xinhua.

The unit was travelling to respond to a Taliban insurgents' armed attack on a security checkpoint in the restive district, the source added.

In neighboring Gilan district, three men died as their motorcycle ran over a roadside bomb nearly at the same time, according to the spokesman.

A surge in attacks has been witnessed in the country since the Taliban launched a yearly rebel offensive against Afghan security forces and NATO-led troops stationed in the country in mid-May.

In another development, four militants and one policeman were killed and six Taliban rebels and two policemen were wounded in a clash which took place after Taliban attacked police

checkpoints in Aqcha district of northern Jawzjan province overnight, the provincial police chief Faqir Mohammad Jawzjani told Xinhua, adding that a Taliban local leader named Qari Sadroddin was among the killed.

The war-torn country is due to take over the responsibility for its own security from foreign troops by the end of the year.

Nearly 50,000 NATO-led coalition troops, down from the peak of 130,000 in 2010, are stationed in Afghanistan. Some 32,800 of them are Americans and the United States plans to trim its forces to less than 10,000 next year.