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## Afghan militants abduct aid workers including de-miners

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Anti-government armed militants have abducted aid workers including de-miners in the militancy-plagued Afghanistan and in the latest such attack the armed insurgents kidnapped a group of de-miners in the southern Ghazni province 125 km south of national capital Kabul Saturday night.

"A group of de-miners were on their way from Kandahar province to Kabul city when armed militants stopped their bus and took away 11 of them to unknown location on Saturday night," spokesman for Ghanzi's provincial government Shafiq Nang told Xinhua on Sunday.

Without giving more details, he added that search operations had been launched to locate and secure the safe release of the hostages.

He also didn't rule out the involvement of Taliban militants in kidnapping the de-miners and taking them to the Taliban hideouts in Andar district.

Taliban militants who had abducted 18 de-miners and several university professors of Kandahar couple of months ago but set them free after keeping them in custody for several days and conducting investigation.

However, the Taliban outfit has yet to claim responsibility for abduction of the de-miners.

In a related incident, unidentified armed men, according to media reports abducted five local employees of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the relatively peaceful western Herat province of the conflict-ridden Afghanistan on Thursday.

These aid workers, according to the local media were abducted in Adraskan district of Herat province 640 km west of the country's capital and efforts are underway to secure their release.

Although, the Taliban outfit has yet to claim responsibility for abduction of the aid workers, local officials have put finger at the Taliban militants.