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## Nato force blamed for Afghan deaths

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Four Afghan soldiers have been killed and another six wounded after Nato troops clashed with them and called in air attacks, Afghan provincial officials say.

Shahedullah Shahed, a spokesman for the governor of Wardak, said foreign forces and Afghan troops were both conducting operations on Friday night in the province southwest of Kabul, when they started shooting at each other.

"Four army soldiers were killed and six wounded when a foreign forces' air strike hit their post," he said on Saturday. "We don't know why it happened, but it is deeply regrettable."

Shahed said the raid had targeted an Afghan army outpost in the area that had been newly established.

An official from the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) said a gun battle broke out when a joint force came under fire on Friday in Wardak in what may have been a "friendly fire incident".

He said only two Afghan soldiers were killed, but it was not immediately clear who fired on them.

"We are working with the ministry of defence to determine the facts of the incident," US Army Lieutenant Nico Melendez, a spokesman for Isaf, said.

## **Badghis incident**

In another incident on Friday, Nato forces killed two civilians after opening fire on a taxi as it sped towards a patrol and ignored warnings to stop, in the Gelan district of Ghazni province, the international force said.

And on Saturday, at about 1am, joint Nato-Afghan forces came under attack in the northwestern province of Badghis, prompting a gun battle and an air attack that killed eight fighters, including a group leader, Abdul Jabar Khan, the deputy provincial police chief, said.

The violence in Badghis came a day after Afghan troops, backed by Nato helicopters, clashed with the Taliban in Helmand.

The fighters attacked UN and government buildings in Lashkar Gah, the capital of the southern Afghan province, early on Friday, witnesses and officials said.

The battle lasted eight hours.

Provincial officials said at least five attackers were killed and four Afghan soldiers injured in the fighting.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman, said seven fighters, armed with suicide vests and machine guns, had been sent to carry out the attack.

He said that 20 foreign and Afghan soldiers were killed or wounded, but Nato said no deaths had been reported on the pro-government side.

Kamal Uddin, the deputy provincial police chief, said no civilian casualties had been reported.

The Taliban have attempted similar attacks in Kabul, most recently on January 18 when seven attackers were killed after a five-hour assault.