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The New York Times

## Deadly Car Bomb Strikes Afghan Police Complex

By Alissa J. Rubin and Taimoor Shah

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KABUL — At least six members of the Afghan security forces were killed on Thursday when a vehicle that appeared to be an ambulance exploded next to a police and military training center in southern Afghanistan.

Before the vehicle arrived, the center in Kandahar came under attack by heavily armed gunmen wearing explosives-laden vests, and the site, also used to house some offices of the provincial police, was quickly cordoned off.

But police guards, thinking that the ambulance had arrived to pick up casualties from the gun battle, let the vehicle enter the cordoned-off area where security forces had gathered to stop the insurgent gunmen, said Khan Mohammed Mujahid, the Kandahar provincial police chief.

Seconds later, the ambulance detonated, killing four members of the Afghan intelligence service, one policeman and one member of the Afghan National Army. Members of the security forces had gathered in the aftermath of the gun battle, which had successfully killed the initial attackers before their vests detonated. Twelve police officers were wounded in the explosion.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, said Qari Youssef Ahmadi, the group's spokesman for southern Afghanistan.

It was at least the second time this year that a Kandahar police building was attacked and one of a series of bombings targeting the police. On Feb. 12, a complex attack involving several Taliban suicide bombers as well as a car bomb struck the city's police headquarters, killing at least 19 people, most of them police officers.

The province had been praised by NATO officers and Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top American commander in Afghanistan, for security improvements earlier in the year. Since February, however, there have been attacks and assassinations, and on Sunday a riot broke out that left 13 people dead after a demonstration protesting an American pastor's burning of the Koran.