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## Suicide attack kills Afghan tribal elder

**At least 10 dead as bomber blew himself up after approaching Malik Zarin, an influential tribal elder, to greet him.**

4/13/2011

A suicide attack has hit a gathering of tribal elders in the Asmar district of eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, killing 10 people, including a top tribal leader, the country's interior ministry has said.

"A suicide attacker targeted a gathering of tribal elders in the Asmar district of Kunar today," Zemarai Bashary, interior ministry spokesman, told the AFP news agency.

"Ten people have been martyred and seven others have been injured."

The spokesman said the slain tribal leader was a key local pro-government elder.

Mohammad Shoaib, the district police chief, said the bomber blew himself up after approaching Malik Zarin, an influential tribal elder and a former military commander, to hug him in greeting.

"The suicide attacker approached them (elders), hugged Malik Zarin and then detonated the explosives strapped to his body," Shoaib said.

The Taliban has denied that it was behind the attack. But its fighters frequently target pro-government figures as part of their near 10-year campaign against government forces and the roughly 130,000 international troops in Afghanistan.

Kunar is among Afghanistan's most restive provinces and is on the border with Pakistan, where insurgents are thought to have rear bases.

The mountainous province of Kunar is one of the main strongholds of the Taliban and their al-Qaeda-linked allies in their battle against the government in Kabul and its international NATO allies.

Suicide attacks and roadside bombings are the main weapons of choice for the insurgents.

The accidental deaths of civilians in international military operations in Kunar in recent months have triggered a wave of protests in Afghanistan.