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The Associated Press

## Afghanistan suicide attack on governor's office kills 8

06/15/2011

### Inauguration at police centre also targeted in separate attack

A suicide bomber killed eight people and wounded four in a strike Wednesday on the governor's office in the northeast, while a mortar targeted a building where NATO and Afghan officials were attending the inauguration of the country's largest police training centre in central Afghanistan.

The two attacks, which occurred at about the same time, were a stark reminder that insurgents can strike anywhere in this volatile country.

Provincial spokesman Halim Ayar said the bomber blew himself up about 200 metres from the office of Gov. Azizul Rahman Tawab in Kapisa province. He said four of the dead were police officers and four were civilians. All the wounded were civilians, he added.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that seven people were killed, including two police officers and five civilians. It added that seven others were wounded, including a police officer. The discrepancy in the casualty numbers, which is common in the aftermath of such attacks, could not immediately be resolved.

"The leadership of Ministry of Interior of Afghanistan condemns this inhumane and cowardly suicide attack. Such attacks will never weaken the determination of the Afghan National Police, the ministry said in a statement issued after the Kapisa attack.

Mortar attack during ceremony

Meanwhile, in central Wardak province, a mortar landed next to a large building where Afghanistan's second vice-president, Mohammed Karim Khalili and Interior Minister Bismullah Khan Mohammadi, along with NATO officials, were cutting the ribbon on the flagship centre of a multibillion-dollar NATO program to train Afghan national security forces ahead of a planned withdrawal of U.S.-led coalition forces at the end of 2014.

The deafening blast shook the building and more than 300 police recruits ducked for cover. Gunshots rang out after the attack. Bodyguards rushed Afghan and NATO officials into a hardened shelter before evacuating them on helicopters.

The area has seen increasing attacks by insurgents as the Taliban press a spring campaign against Afghan and NATO forces.

It was unclear if Khalili was the intended target of the attack, but the mortar seemed to be targeting the building where he had just finished delivering an address.

The \$100-million facility currently houses 725 recruits but will expand to 3,000, making it the largest facility of its kind in the country. A mostly U.S. funded program has been spending about \$10 billion a year in 2010 and 2011 alone to train, equip and build infrastructure for a range of Afghan forces, including police, soldiers and an air force. That program calls for increasing the number of Afghan police to 134,000 by October from the 81,509 of two years ago.

U.S. Maj.-Gen. James Mallory told The Associated Press that NATO would be able to properly train and support an estimated 157,000 police officers before the coalition's planned withdrawal in 2014.

However, he acknowledged there would be long-term legacy costs that the international community would need to bear for the country as it struggles economically, especially as 86 per cent of incoming recruits cannot read or write.

"We're dealing with a lost generation," Mallory said. He spoke just before the mortar attack.

Also Wednesday, in the southern province of Kandahar, the governor's office said NATO and Afghan troops killed 14 armed insurgents. Nine were killed after crossing the Pakistan border, while five were killed while allegedly trying to plant roadside bombs, the governor's office said.

A rocket attack in Kandahar city wounded four civilians in the Aymo Mina district, provincial police chief Gen. Abdul Raziq said.