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Al Jazeera

Deadly blast rocks Kandahar city

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An explosion has rocked the city of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, killing at least one person and wounding seven others.

The blast occurred near the Continental Hotel in the city's commercial centre when explosives strapped to a parked motorcycle were detonated.

Cars were ablaze and windows shattered in the immediate aftermath of the blast, according to local security officials.

The bombing came as Nato forces issued a statement on Saturday admitting troops accidentally killed six civilians while battling Taliban fighters on Thursday.

A brief statement released by the mission's headquarters said that the civilians died under artillery fire from a Nato unit in Paktia province, south of Kabul.

Nato's admission comes a day after the force said it was responsible for accidentally killing five Afghan soldiers in a botched airstrike.

The incident occurred in Andar district of Ghazni province, where the Afghan soldiers were launching a pre-dawn ambush against insurgents.

Aircraft from the military alliance began firing on them without warning, an Afghan defence ministry official said. Nato blamed the attack on a communication error.

A statement, also issued on Friday, said a joint investigation determined that the Afghan army unit gave the wrong location to international forces when it reported it would be operating in Ghazni.

The back-to-back incidents come as international troops try to gain the trust of the Afghan people and improve co-ordination with Afghan security forces in hope of handing over more responsibility for security to them nearly nine years into the war.

Hundreds of Afghans took to the streets of Mazar-i-Sharif on Saturday to protest against civilian deaths.

The protesters chanted slogans against foreign forces and Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, after US troops killed two civilians and arrested three others during a pre-dawn raid on Wednesday in the northern city's outskirts.