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Pajhwok

27 NATO fuel tankers destroyed in Pakistan

By Hijratullah Kharotai

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Twenty-seven oil tankers carrying fuel for Afghanistan-based NATO forces have been destroyed in a suspected militant attack in southern Pakistan on Friday, security officials said.

With Islamabad-Washington ties tense over a series of deadly coalition incursions into Pakistan's tribal region, the predawn assault happened in Shikarpur district of Sindh province.



A convoy of more than 30 tankers carrying fuel supplies for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was attacked at a pump station near the superhighway, a police official told Pajhwok Afghan News.

The brazen assault came hours after Pakistan blocked logistic supplies to international forces stationed in the neighbouring in the wake of its airspace violation by coalition helicopters.

Security guards at the Torkham border crossing were ordered not to allow supply trucks to cross into Afghanistan -- hours after three paramilitary soldiers were killed and as many injured during a helicopter raid in Kurram Agency on Thursday.

District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Hamid Khosa said 27 oil tankers were torched in the assault, the first in Shikarpur, which caused no casualties. The unidentified gunmen, numbering about 20, managed to escape, he added. Law-enforcement agencies are looking for the attackers.

But Iftikhar Ali, a Quetta-based journalist, claimed 27 fuel tankers and three civilian vehicles parked nearby were burnt in the rocket strike. He said two men were wounded during the attack which took place at about 2:00am.

He added the fuel tankers were on their way from the port city of Karachi to Quetta, capital of southwestern Balochistan province, from where they were to travel to Afghanistan.

On Thursday, the Pakistani president told the CIA director any violation of the country's sovereignty was counterproductive and unacceptable. At a meeting with Leon Panetta in Islamabad, Asif Ali Zardari said his government was averse to the contravention of internationally agreed principles.