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Four die in attack on UN compound

By Ahmad Quraishi

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Four suicide bombers armed with weapons launched an unprecedented attack on a UN office in western Herat province on Saturday, penetrating the heavily-guarded compound, officials said.

At least a security guard at the gate of the UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) and an Afghan police were wounded in attack, lasting nearly half an hour, provincial governor, Daud Saba, told reporters.

The first bomber detonated his explosive-laden vehicle at the entrance gate to pave the ground for three other militants to get on the base, the governor said.

The second bomber, who was armed with a rocket-propelled-grenade (RPG), was killed by security guards at the gate while two others managed to get into the compound and open fire.

Afghan forces, Saba said, shot dead the last two bombers before they set off their explosives vests, however, it took the troops more than 20 minutes to gun down the insurgents.

The nationality of the bombers was yet to be identified.

The spokesman for Herat police department, Col. Noor Khan Nekzad, did not rule out the possibility of foreign insurgents among the attackers.

No groups, including the Taliban, have claimed responsibility for the attack.

US Special Forces had also helped cordon off the scene and helicopters were hovering over the compound.

The United Nations premises have been attacked a number of times over the past few years in the country, which in one case, forced the world body to shut down its operation in Kandahar province for a short period.