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Al Jazeera

Fuel-tanker blast kills Afghan civilians

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At least 10 people have been killed and dozens of others injured after a fuel tanker targeted by a bomb burst into flames in northern Afghanistan, sources tell Al Jazeera.

The incident occurred on Wednesday in the Bagram district of Parwan province, 40km north of Kabul.

Al Jazeera's Bernard Smith, reporting from the Afghan capital, said the lorry was in a queue to get into Bagram air base, the largest military base in Afghanistan, at the time of the explosion.

Roshna Khalid, a provincial spokesperson, said that "a smaller explosion [on Tuesday night] caused by a magnet bomb made a hole" in the lorry. It was when people had gathered to collect the pooling fuel that the "bigger explosion took place" on Wednesday.

"I heard a small explosion and when I went outside, I saw a tanker was leaking fuel," Ajmal, a 35 year-old farmer told the Reuters news agency.

"A few minutes later people came with buckets and jugs to collect fuel when suddenly everywhere was on fire."

Abdul Baseer Salangi, Parwan's governor, urged people "not to risk their lives for fuel" after saying the injured and killed were all collecting the fuel at the time of the explosion.

'Terrorist attack'

Khalil Farhangi, the provincial hospital chief, said at least three people were killed on the scene. The interior ministry said up to 39 were injured.

Though no one has taken credit for the explosion, Salangi said "this was a terrorist attack."

Our correspondent said "this type of attack is a fairly recent tactic that those who align with the Taliban seem to be using" in an attempt to disrupt vital supply lines to foreign forces.

Khalid said that at least two similar explosions have been prevented by Afghan security forces in the past three months.

Hundreds of fuel tankers come and go from Bagram air base every day.

Al Jazeera's Smith reported quoting Afghan officials that rather than sending a suicide bomber, the Taliban and those aligned with them are "just sending people to stick a mine" on fuel tankers.

Lorry drivers say that "if this can happen so near to Bagram base, then nowhere is safe", he said.

A mine blast in the eastern province of Nangarhar wounded two Afghan policemen on Monday.