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Spanish soldier killed in Afghanistan

7 November 2011



A Spanish soldier has been shot and killed in the northwestern Afghan province of Badghis while patrolling with Afghan forces, the Spanish Defense Ministry announced, [Press TV](#) reported.

Staff Sergeant Joiaquin Moya Espejo died after his unit was attacked by Taliban militants with light arms on Sunday, AFP reported.

Spanish Defense Minister Carme Chacon is being dispatched to the Central Asian country to gather more details about the deadly attack.

The latest incident brings the death toll for Spanish soldiers serving in Afghanistan to 97.

Spain has had a military presence in the country since January 2002.

In June, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero announced that Spain plans to begin gradually withdrawing its 1,500 troops in 2012 and will complete the withdrawal by 2014.

In addition, according to official figures published by the website icasualties.org, a total of 511 foreign troops have lost their lives in Afghanistan so far this year.

Last year, nonetheless, remains the deadliest year for foreign military casualties with a death toll of 711. The number eclipsed the previous record of 521, set in 2009.