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Al Jazeera

Government office attacked in Afghanistan

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At least one policeman has been killed in an ongoing suicide attack against a government official's office in eastern Afghanistan's Paktia province, officials said.

"A suicide bomber blew up an explosives-laden vehicle at the gate of Chamkani district headquarters and then a group of militants, probably suicide attackers, tried to enter," said deputy provincial governor Abdul Rahman Mangal on Thursday.

"Fighting is continuing at the moment, we can confirm that at least one policeman has been killed."

The attack was confirmed by provincial spokesman Rohullah Samoon, who said it targeted a meeting between the district governor and local elders discussing a loya jirga, or traditional meeting, to be held in Kabul on November 16.

The loya jirga, called by President Hamid Karzai, will discuss a strategy for trying to make peace with the Taliban and Afghanistan's long-term relationship with the United States.

"We can confirm that a group of Taliban suicide bombers equipped with heavy and light weapons have attacked the district governor's office," said Samoon.

"We have reports that the Taliban have surrounded the district governor's office. Police and International Security Assistance Force forces are being deployed to the area."

He added: "There was a meeting between the district chief and a group of elders selected to participate in the loya jirga going on in the governor's office at the time of the attack."