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The Frontier Post

## French bribing Taliban to stop attacks

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QATAR (NNI): The Taliban commander of the Kabul district says French troops deployed in Afghanistan are attempting to bribe the militants to not attack them. "The French in Sorubi [in Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan] tried to send gifts to Taliban fighters and offered them a lot of money in return for not launching attacks targeting the French troops," Saif-Allah Jalili said in an interview with Al-Jazeera. Jalili said the Taliban fighters, however, rejected the offers and 'strongly demanded the departure of the French troops and all other foreign invaders from Afghanistan'. Jalili also scoffed at the West's move to arm local Afghan groups through the government to help fight the Taliban forces, claiming the weapons are being handed over to the militants. "There are many groups that work for the Taliban and also receive weapons from the foreign troops. They are supposed to fight us, but these groups fulfill their promise of loyalty by bringing the weapons to the Taliban," he said. The International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) responded by dismissing Jalili's claims as Taliban propaganda. Last month, the Taliban also accused the Italian troops in the same area of attempting to pay off the militant forces to keep the area calm. There were suggestions that the French troops later deployed in the region were unaware of the clandestine arrangement and were being severely attacked by the Taliban because the payments had not continued. Almost eight years after the 2001 US-led invasion of Afghanistan, the country is experiencing a fresh wave of militancy and a peak in violence.

More than 900 American soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan, with 74 killed in October marking it the deadliest month since the start of the war in 2001. The Afghanistan invasion and the prolonged war following it have also inflicted a heavy death toll on the civilian population of the violence-wracked country.