

Five Taliban killed, four police wounded in Afghanistan

Five Taliban militants were killed in a mine explosion in southern Afghanistan while four police officers were wounded and two Taliban militants were detained in a clash, officials said Saturday.

The Taliban militants were killed when the mine they were trying to place on a road in the Musa Qala district of southern Helmand province exploded prematurely Friday, Mohammad Hussain Andewala, provincial police chief, said.

He said that their mutilated bodies were on the road often frequented by Afghan and foreign forces in the district.

Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousif Ahmadi meanwhile said that the militants had attacked some 10 Afghan security posts in the Musa Qala district.

Ahmadi, who was talking to DPA from an undisclosed location by telephone, said that their fighters also attacked a security post near the residence of the district administrative chief.

He said several Afghan security force members were killed and their posts burned by the Taliban.

Andewala said there was only one clash with Taliban militants Friday, in which four Afghan policemen were wounded and two Taliban militants captured by security forces.

Helmand, the largest opium producing province in the country, is also where Taliban and foreign fighters are the most entrenched.

Taliban insurgents overran Musa Qala district and held sway there for around 10 months last year before a Taliban commander, Mullah Abdul Salam, changed sides and Afghan and international forces entered the province late last year.

The Afghan government then appointed Salam as district administrative chief of the district. The Taliban has made several attempts on his life since then.

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