

Dozens of Taliban, eight civilians killed in Afghanistan

Dozens of Taliban fighters, four police men and a girl were killed in separate attacks, while three coalition soldiers were killed as their vehicle rolled into a river in southern Afghanistan.

Officials in the southern Uruzgan province said a police vehicle was blown up by a roadside bomb in the provincial capital Tirin Kot city Tuesday morning while on a patrol.

Gulab Khan, head of the crime branch of the police, said four policemen died on the spot and two were wounded seriously.

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi claimed responsibility for the attack, but said six policemen were killed by a Taliban ambush with automatic weapons fire, not a bomb blast.

In the same province, several Taliban fighters were killed after they attacked a joint Afghan and US-led coalition forces convoy.

A statement from the coalition forces Tuesday said the combined forces received small-arms fire from militants while on a routine reconnaissance patrol in Khas Uruzgan district.

It added that 'combined forces returned fire and called in air support, killing several militants. After the attack, combined forces entered the militants' compound and found a dead, young girl.'

In the south-eastern Khost province, dozens of Taliban fighters were killed in two separate operations by coalition troops.

A separate statement from the coalition force's stronghold in Bagram said 33 fighters were killed in an air strike after they were located by an aerial reconnaissance team in the south of Khost.

Also in Khost, on the border with Pakistan in Spera district, an unknown number of Taliban were killed during an operation by NATO troops in coordination with Pakistani border forces, according to a statement from the alliance.

The fighters attacked a NATO outpost Monday that prompted a response from the latter with mortar, artillery fire on ground and close air support, said the statement.

'The fleeing militants crossed into Pakistan, (NATO-led International Security Assistance Force) ISAF forces thus coordinated with the Pakistan military border area counterparts, and the Pakistan border force subsequently fired artillery at the retreating insurgents inside Pakistan,' said the statement.

Meanwhile, three coalition soldiers were killed when their vehicle rolled into a river bed during a patrol in the southern Kandahar province.

A statement from the coalition forces said the three died in Arghandab district June 29.

It did not disclose the identity of the soldiers, but most of the troops based in the south are from the Canadian, British and US contingents.

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