

Beat: Politics

NATO soldier, 9 militants die in Taliban attack on base in Afghanistan

-, 20.01.2014, 18:33 Time

USPA News - A coalition service member was killed Monday when a group of Taliban fighters disguised as soldiers attacked a NATO base in southern Afghanistan, but all were killed while attempting to enter the facility, military and local officials said. One civilian was injured.

The attack began at around 11 a.m. local time when a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden pickup truck outside a coalition base in the Zhari District of Kandahar, located in Afghanistan's volatile southern region that was the birthplace of the Taliban movement two decades ago. "This was a complex attack with a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, enemy forces with suicide vests and small arms fire," said Master Sergeant Jeanette Spain, a spokeswoman for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). "As a result, one ISAF service member was killed. All other ISAF personnel are accounted for." Javid Faisal, a spokesman for the Kandahar governor's office, said all nine attackers were killed during the assault. "The insurgents were wearing ISAF uniforms and tried to enter the base but were gunned down by ISAF soldiers," he said. "They traveled to the base in the same vehicle [that exploded] but were dropped in the area just before the explosion." There were no reports of civilian casualties in Monday's attack, but the governor's office later said that a 12-year-old girl had been found with burns from the explosion and fire. "Operational reports state there was moderate damage to the outer perimeter of the base; however, the base is currently secured and all enemy forces were killed as a result of the attack," Spain added, giving no other details about the attack. "ISAF officials are still assessing the incident." Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf claimed responsibility for the attack and said it was carried out by at least one suicide car bomber and five gunmen who attempted to enter the base. "The said group engaged the enemy for several hours with high moral before the last one embraced martyrdom, may Allah accept them and grant them the highest ranks in Jannah," he said. Yousuf claimed dozens of soldiers were killed and that a number of buildings were destroyed, but the Taliban is known to exaggerate details of its attacks for propaganda purposes. He added that the base in Zhari District was attacked because it is used as a regional hub for operations in the region. "This attack once again proved to the arrogant enemy that no matter how high or how strong they build their bases, they shall not be able to live comfortably or be spared from our thunderous attacks," Yousuf added.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1806/nato-soldier-9-militants-die-in-taliban-attack-on-base-in-afghanistan.html>

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619