

RAPID

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WEEKLY NEWS UPDATE

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The RAPID Weekly News Update is a weekly collection of unclassified media and news bulletins focused on noteworthy improvised explosive attacks and trends in the EOD/C-IED community. To subscribe to this weekly publication and/or to receive additional IED-related reports, please request a RAPID login at <https://rapid.a-tolutions.com> using your government (.mil or .gov) email account.



Heavy Cache of Explosives Seized

Recovered explosives included 400 Detonators, one piece Explosive Wire, 200 meter roll, one piece explosive cotton weighs 125 kg and 1500 kg ball bearing.

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1. [Attack, Afghanistan] Taliban Suicide Bomber Kills Five Civilians In Attack On ISAF Convoy

Friday, January 25 2013

http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2013/01/taliban_suicide_bomber_kills_5_1.php

The Taliban killed five civilians in a suicide attack today that targeted an International Security Assistance Force convoy as was traveling in the Jalo Khel area of Tagab district in Kapisa province. From Khaama Press:

According to local authorities in eastern Kapisa province of Afghanistan, a suicide bomber detonated his explosives at Tagab district on Friday morning.

Deputy provincial governor Aziz-ur-Rahman Tawab confirming the reports said at least five civilians were killed and over ten others were wounded following the blast.

Mr. Tawab further added the suicide bomber was looking to target a convoy of the NATO troops however the bomber detonated explosives packed in the vehicle near a residential house.

ISAF confirmed that there was an attack on its convoy, and said that no ISAF casualties were reported.

Today's suicide attack is the third in Afghanistan in 10 days; all three have taken place in central Afghanistan. On Jan. 16, a suicide assault team attacked the National Directorate of Security headquarters in Kabul. All six fighters and one NDS guard were killed. The Taliban entered the compound before being repelled.

And on Jan. 21, a suicide assault team attacked the traffic police headquarters in Kabul. Five Taliban fighters and three policemen were killed after the suicide team entered the compound and battled for more than eight hours.

Tagab district is a known safe haven for Taliban and Hizb-i-Islami fighters in Kapisa province [for more information on insurgent groups in Kapisa, see LWJ report, Taliban suicide bomber kills 4 French soldiers]. In June 2012, the Taliban conducted two suicide attacks in Kapisa over the course of nine days.

French troops were formerly based in Kapisa, but transferred control of the province to Afghan security forces in June 2012 before withdrawing their combat forces completely from Afghanistan in December 2012, two years ahead of schedule.



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2. [Attack, Afghanistan] Suicide Bombers Strike In Kunduz And Ghazni

Saturday, January 26 2013

http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2013/01/taliban_suicide_bombers_strike_1.php

The Taliban launched a pair of suicide attacks in northern and southeastern Afghanistan today, killing 12 people, according to reports. The largest attack, in the northern province of Kunduz, targeted and killed 10 policemen, "including the local counter-terrorism chief," Reuters reported:

Shortly after 5 p.m. (1230 GMT) a man driving a motorbike detonated a large bomb at a busy roundabout in the north city of Kunduz near a group of police officers, provincial police chief spokesman Sayed Sarwar Hussaini said.

"As a result of a suicide attack 10 policemen were killed, including the head of the traffic department and the head of the counter-terrorism office," said Hussaini.

Four civilians and five other police officers were wounded in the bombing, he said.

While no group has claimed the attack, it was likely carried out by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, an al Qaeda-linked group that has integrated its operations and command structure with the Taliban in the Afghan north. ISAF has targeted IMU suicide cells in the north as recently as last month. The IMU has claimed credit for several suicide attacks in the north, including the November 2011 assault on a US Provincial Reconstruction Team in the peaceful province of Panjshir. At the end of November 2011, the IMU issued a statement claiming that 87 of its members had been killed during operations in Afghanistan over the past year; many of those killed died in suicide attacks. The IMU commanders and fighters listed as "martyred" were from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Germany, and Russia.

The second suicide attack today took place in the southeast, in Ghazni province, according to Xinhua:

"A man riding a bicycle and attempting to target a police checkpoint in Ghazni city but the bomb exploded prematurely, leaving three people including himself and two others dead and a few others injured," deputy to provincial police chief Mohammad Hassan told Xinhua.

Baz Mohammad Humat, director of Civil Hospital in Ghazni, the capital of Ghazni province 125 km south of Kabul, confirmed that two bodies including a police and a civilian and 13 injured people including 10 civilians which include two children and a woman have been taken to the hospital.

A multitude of groups, including the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, al Qaeda, the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, and a host of smaller foreign terror groups are known to operate in Ghazni.

Over the past 11 days, the Taliban and allied groups have launched five suicide attacks in Afghanistan; the previous three took place in central Afghanistan [see Threat Matrix report, Taliban suicide bomber kills 5 civilians in attack on ISAF convoy].

While Western leaders are pinning their hopes on reconciliation with the Taliban as NATO withdraws its forces (or "retrogrades," which seems to be the fashionable term for retreat these days), the Taliban do not appear to be letting up on their attacks against both NATO troops and Afghan National Security Forces.



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3. [Attack, Pakistan] Bomb Blast Injures One Man In Landikotal

Saturday, January 26 2013

<http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/13892515-bomb-blast-injures-one-man-in-landikotal>

According to political administration a bomb had been planted in front of the hujra of Tilawat Shah Shinwari in Landikotal here on Saturday in the after noon.the blast injures the owner of the hujra who was rushed to hospital, sources said. The administration has lodged the report against the alleged miscreants and has started investigations into the incident. However, no body has been arrested in the incident.The blast spread a wave of terror among the locals.The reason behind the blast could not be ascertained so far, sources said.



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4. [Attack, Afghanistan] Third Bomb Attack In 24 Hours Kills Eight Afghan Police

Sunday, January 27 2013

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/27/us-afghanistan-police-bombing-idUSBRE90Q02Q20130127>

A roadside bomb killed eight policemen in Afghanistan's volatile southern province of Kandahar, police said on Sunday, the third deadly attack by insurgents against police in 24 hours.

Twenty police have been killed across Afghanistan since midday on Saturday, a level of violence that underlines concern over how the 350,000-strong Afghan security forces will manage once most NATO-led troops withdraw by the end of next year.

In the latest attack, the police in Kandahar had just finished defusing a roadside bomb and had arrested three men suspected of being Taliban insurgents when the blast occurred late on Saturday.

"As they were leaving the area another bomb went off near their vehicle, killing eight policemen and two suspects," said Kandahar Police Chief Abdul Raziq.

Six police and a third Taliban suspect were wounded.

That blast came hours after 10 police officers, including the provincial counter-terrorism chief, were killed in an attack in northern Kunduz province. Another two police were killed in a bombing in eastern Ghazni province.

Eleven years into the NATO-led war against Taliban insurgents, violence has been increasing against Afghan security forces, sparking concern that they will not be able to take over all security responsibilities by the middle of this year.



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5. [Attack, Pakistan] Guard Killed In Mardan Blast

Sunday, January 27 2013

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-7-156508-Guard-killed-in-Mardan-blast>

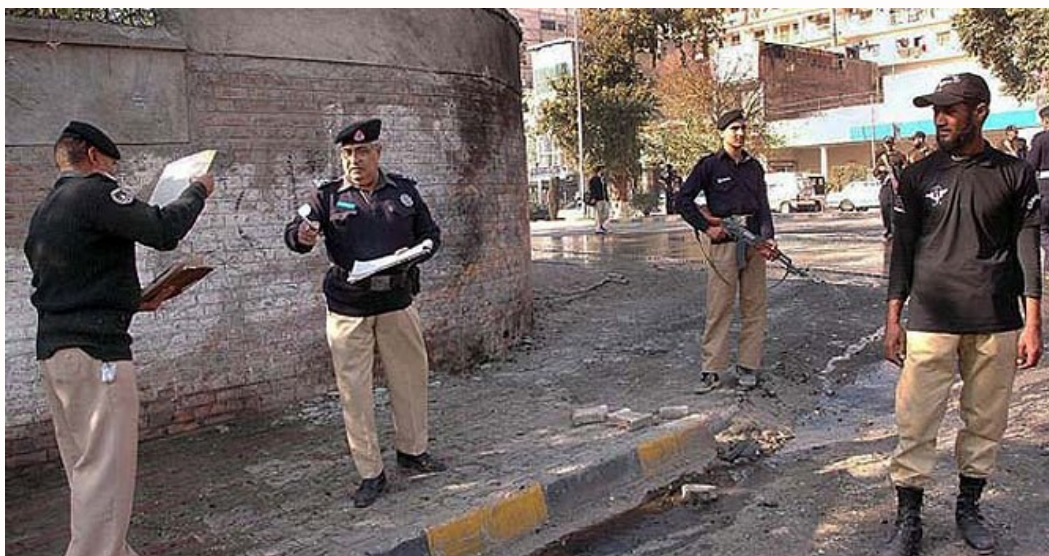
A private security guard was killed and two others sustained serious injuries when an explosive device planted next to the house of a well-known industrialist went off in the limits of Par Hoti Police Station on Friday evening, police and eyewitnesses said.

Gul Shad, hailing from Nowshera, who is security in-charge at the house of Samiur Rehman Khan situated on the Mardan-Swabi Road, reported to the police that he along with other guards Musa Khan, Mehar Mohammad and Khair Mohammad were performing duty when the explosion took place at around 07:50pm.

He said Musa Khan died on the spot while Mehar Mohammad and Khair Mohammad were seriously injured in the explosion. He said the injured were taken to the District Headquarters Hospital in Mardan.

Gul Shad said some unidentified persons had planted the explosives close to the main gate. He said the explosion partially damaged the security room and smashed its windowpanes.

Samiur Rehman is the brother of Awami National Party's former MNA Naseemur Rehman and also close relative of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf district organiser Mohammad Atif Khan.





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6. [Attack, Pakistan] Bomb Blast Rocks Hangu

Monday, January 28 2013

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-156704-Bomb-blast-rocks-Hangu>

A roadside bomb, apparently planted to target a convoy of the security forces on Kohat-Hangu road, went off without causing any casualty or damage, official sources said on Sunday.

The sources said that the militants had planted an explosive device on the Kohat-Hangu road in Utmankhel area in lower parts of Orakzai Agency, which went off at 11am.

However, the explosion caused no damage or casualty, the sources said, adding the time device was apparently planted to target the convoy of the security forces.



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7. [Security, Pakistan] Bag Full Of Explosives Confiscated

Monday, January 28 2013

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/499542/motorway-police-bag-full-of-explosives-confiscated/>

Motorway police seized a cache of explosives from a suspected militant, near Colonel Sher Khan Interchange, Swabi, on Sunday.

According to an official of the Motorway police, during a routine check on the interchange, police on suspicion signalled a man to stop for a security check. However, the man who was carrying a bag dropped it by the side of the road and ran away.

The official said when the police chased him, he hurled a grenade at them and managed to escape. The grenade exploded but no human loss was reported. The official said the bag was taken into custody.

Following the incident police searched the area around the motorway but could not find any trace of the suspected militant. They presumed he could have escaped to the mountains in the nearby Anbar village.

Incidents like these are becoming fairly common in this otherwise peaceful area because of a lack of security measures on the Swabi-Jehangira Road.



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8. [Trend, Afghanistan] One Thousand One Hundred Kg Of Explosive Achieved By Afghan National Army Forces

Tuesday, January 29 2013

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/6077-one-thousand-one-hundred-kg-of-explosive-achieved-by-afghan-national-army-forces.html>

The special unites of Afghan national army forces conducting emergency operations and seized at least one thousand one hundred Kg explosives.

BNA reported these operations launched in Maiwand district of Kandahar and Shindand of Herat last night.

ANA spokesperson claimed that the power of the explosive containing high destructive power could be used in terrorist attacks.

But immediate reaction by national army forces, failed them to achieve their evil goal.

It has been said that the operations have been lunched by national army forces independently during which a number of armed oppositions were arrested.



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9. [Attack, Pakistan] Blast In Sohrab Goth Kills Three

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-85987-Karachi:-Bomb-blast-in-Sohrab-Goth-kills-3>

At least three people were killed and several injured in a bomb blast here on Wednesday, Geo News reported.

The blast was reported from Al-Asif Square area located in Sohrab Goth, a hostile territory notorious for armed clashes, sources told Geo News.

Earlier, sources quoted police as saying the explosive device, planted in a motorcycle, detonated outside a mosque, however the cops later withdrew their earlier statement claiming the bomb actually went off near a drug dealers' den.

According to sources investigation was underway to ascertain as to who was the target of the bombing.

The identity of the culprits and the motive behind the attack were yet not figured out.

The dead and the injured were shifted to hospital, emergency responders told sources.

Security officials, who wasted no time in reaching the blast site, are searching the area for more improvised explosive devices to avoid any secondary blasts.

The blast-stricken area remains cordoned off with Rangers and police standing alert to control the situation.

Meanwhile, a cracker attack left two people, including a Sub Inspector of Police, injured in the same area.

Reportedly a police party deployed on a picket came under attack near Edhi's mortuary in Sohrab Goth.

Sources said unknown attackers hurled at least two crackers at the cops near Sohrab Goth flyover and fled away.

"We heard two blasts in the vicinity, which prompted us to rush to the scene where we found two people injured including a police officer", rescue sources told Geo News.



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10. [Attack, Afghanistan] Bomb In Afghan Market Kills Two Children

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://www.rferl.org/content/bomb-kills-two-children-afghanistan/24888421.html>

Afghan officials say a bomb has exploded in a market in eastern Afghanistan, killing two children and injuring four other civilians.

According to the governor's office in Khost Province the bomb went off in the main bazaar of the Sabari district on January 30 while a police patrol was passing by.

The statement says the bomb was hidden under a stall.

No police officers were reported to have hit in the blast.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.



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11. [Security, Pakistan] Bomb Defused In Defence

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-4-157068-Bomb-defused-in-Defence>

A roadside bomb was found in the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) on Tuesday and later defused by the Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS).

The Darakhshan police said an improvised explosive device weighing one and a half kilogrammes was found near businessman Afaq Ahmed's bungalow No-94 on Khayaban-e-Shaheen in DHA Phase-VI.

Ahmed's driver Pervez discovered a suspicious box in a plastic bag and immediately informed the police.

A police mobile unit rushed to the scene and called the BDS, which defused the bomb concealed in the box. A BDS official said a remote-controlled device was attached to the explosive material, adding that the bomb was made locally.



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12. [Security, Pakistan] Heavy Cache Of Explosives Seized

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://www.brecorder.com/pakistan/general-news/103891-heavy-cache-of-explosives-seized.html>

LEA sources told that security personnel deployed on Balili check-post signalled an 86-Car to stop but the driver tried to accelerate the vehicle, left it and managed to escape when the LEA vehicles chased it.

During search, LEA personnel along with bomb disposal squad recovered explosives from the car including 400 Detonators, one piece Explosive Wire, 200 meter roll, one piece explosive cotton weighs 125 kg and 1500 kg ball baring.

The seized explosives were to be used in sabotage act.





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13. [Attack, Pakistan] Blast In Peshawar Injures Nine

Thursday, January 31 2013

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/31/blast-in-peshawar-inujres-10/>

A blast targeting a police van on Jinnah Park road near Peshawar's Jinnah Park injured at least nine persons on Thursday.

Security and emergency teams rushed to the site.

The injured were shifted to Lady Reading Hospital where their condition was reported to be out of danger.

Nine vehicles, including the targeted police van, were damaged in the blast.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Circle Sajjad Khan said that the bomb was either planted or was magnetically attached to the mobile van, adding that the bomb disposal squad had confirmed the use of half a kilogram of explosive material used in the making of the device.

DSP Khan further said that no police personnel were injured in the blast.



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14. [Attack, Pakistan] Two Anti-Polio Workers Killed In Upper Kurram Explosion

Thursday, January 31 2013

<http://dawn.com/2013/01/31/two-anti-polio-workers-killed-in-upper-kurram-explosion/>

An explosion in Upper Kurram tribal region killed two anti-polio workers on Thursday, DawnNews reported.

Government administrator Yousuf Rahim says the men were going to a village to vaccinate children when the bomb hit their motorcycle in Upper Kurram tribal region on Thursday.

Although it's unclear whether the workers were the actual target, it was the second attack this week against polio workers.

On Tuesday, gunmen riding on a motorcycle killed a policeman protecting a polio vaccination team.

Pakistan is one of three countries where the crippling disease is endemic.

Suspicion for the attacks falls on militants, who oppose the vaccination campaign, accuse health workers of acting as spies for the US and claim the polio vaccine is intended to make Muslim children sterile.



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15. [Attack, Pakistan] Roadside Bomb Kills Two More Polio Workers In Northwestern Pakistan, Official Says

Thursday, January 31 2013

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/official-says-roadside-bomb-kills-2-more-polio-workers-in-northwestern-pakistan/2013/01/31/0e6dbdd4-6b7f-11e2-9a0b-db931670f35d_story.html

A roadside bomb killed two Pakistani polio workers on their way to vaccinate children in a northwestern tribal region near the Afghan border on Thursday, an official said.

The two men were on their way to Malikhel village as part of the U.N.-backed anti-polio campaign when the bomb hit their motorcycle, said government administrator Yousuf Rahim.

The attack — the third this week against polio workers in Pakistan — took place in the Kurram region, a known militant stronghold.

On Tuesday, gunmen riding on a motorcycle shot and killed a policeman protecting a polio team in Gullu Dheri village of Swabi district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The polio workers escaped unharmed in that attack.

In a separate incident in the northwest on Tuesday, a man wounded a polio worker with an axe.

Rahim said it was not immediately clear if the two workers killed Thursday were the actual target of the bombing. Javed Husain, a doctor at a hospital in the town of Parachinar, said the slain men were working as contractors for the government-run anti-polio program in the area.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks but suspicion fell on Islamic militants.

Some of the militants oppose the vaccination campaign, accuse health workers of acting as spies for the U.S. and claim the polio vaccine is intended to make Muslim children sterile.

Pakistan is one of only three countries where the crippling disease is endemic. The virus usually infects children living in unsanitary conditions; it attacks the nerves and can kill or paralyze. As many as 56 polio cases were reported in Pakistan during 2012, down from 190 the previous year, according to the United Nations.

Most of the new cases in Pakistan were in the northwest, where the presence of militants makes it difficult to reach children.

In December, gunmen killed nine polio workers in similar attacks across Pakistan, prompting authorities to suspend the vaccination campaign in the troubled areas. The U.N. also suspended its field operations in December as a result of the attacks, though it has since resumed some activities.

Also Thursday, a gunman opened fire on a vehicle carrying three local Sunni Muslim clerics in the southern city of Karachi, killing the three before fleeing the scene, said police officer Asim Qaimkhani.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack, which Qaimkhani said was likely sectarian.

Karachi is the capital of southern Sindh province and has witnessed scores of attacks against minority Shiites or majority Sunnis in recent years.



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16. [Attack, Pakistan] Bomb Kills Militants

Thursday, January 31 2013

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Bomb+kills+militants+&NewsID=364209>

KARACHI: A bomb blast killed three suspected militants in Pakistan's largest city Wednesday as they were carrying out preparations for a deadly attack, police said. The suspected militants were attempting to put the bomb in the trunk of a taxi when it went off, said senior police officer Aleem Jafri. The device exploded accidentally. The men had prepared three other bombs, but they did not explode and were defused by police. The bombs, which were wired with electronic detonators, contained about 300 kilograms of explosives, Jafri said.

Three die in clashes

DHAKA: Supporters of an Islamic party exploded home-made bombs and clashed with police during a general strike on Thursday, leaving at least three people dead and dozens injured, police and news reports said. The Jamaat-e-Islami party called a nationwide shutdown for Thursday to back its demand that the government stop a trial of the party's leaders on charge of crimes against humanity involving Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence from Pakistan. A policeman was killed and eight others were injured after stone-throwing protesters clashed with baton-wielding police in Jessore district about 135 km west of the capital, Dhaka, the Daily Star newspaper reported. Two protesters were killed in similar clashes in Bogra, 176 km north of Dhaka, according to local journalist Rabiul Karim Helal.

Polio workers dead

PARACHINAR: A roadside bomb killed two Pakistani polio workers on their way to vaccinate children in a north-western tribal region near the Afghan border on Thursday, an official said. The two men were on their way to Malikhel village as part of the UN-backed anti-polio campaign when the bomb hit their motorcycle, said government administrator Yousuf Rahim. The attack took place in the Kurram region, a known militant stronghold.



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17. [Attack, Pakistan] Suicide Bomb Kills 22 Near Mosques In Northwest Pakistan

Friday, February 1 2013

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/01/us-pakistan-mosque-idUSBRE9100ER20130201>

A suicide bomber killed 22 people on Friday in a crowded market outside two mosques from separate Muslim sects in Pakistan's restive northwest, police and hospital officials said. Two of the dead were policemen.

Forty-eight people were wounded in the attack in a narrow lane in the town of Hangu that houses both a Shi'ite and a Sunni Muslim mosque.

Officials said the anti-Taliban Sunni Supreme Council often holds its meetings in the Sunni mosque, which made it a possible target.

But district police chief Muhammad Saeed said that the attack was aimed at Shi'ites and that Sunni Muslims were unintended victims.

"Most of the dead were moving in and out of the mosques in the marketplace after Friday prayers when the bomb went off," senior police officer Imtiaz Shah said.

Hangu, part of Pakistan's border region with Afghanistan, has been racked by sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'ite tribes whose mosques, homes and shops are often close to one another.

Hangu is just a few km from Parachinar, which has a significant Shi'ite population against whom hardline Sunni militant groups have launched attacks for years.

No group had claimed responsibility for the attack by late evening.





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18. [Attack, Afghanistan] Deadly Bomb Blast Also Hits Bird's Fight

Friday, February 1 2013

<http://paktribune.com/news/Deadly-bomb-blast-also-hits-birds-fight-Police-257021.html>

A bomb exploded among spectators at a bird fight in southern Afghanistan on Thursday, killing a teenager and wounding up to eight other people, police said.

Taliban insurgents claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was launched against a “gambling match where local police were present”.

Gambling on animals forced to fight -- from quail and roosters to camels, rams and bulls -- is popular in Afghanistan but was banned by the Taliban during their rule from 1996-2001.

The motorcycle-bomb exploded at a bird fighting pit in the Greshk district of restive Helmand province where a crowd of more than 100 people had gathered to watch the regular match, said local police chief Shadi Khan.

“The explosion has killed a 13-year-old boy and wounded eight other people, all of them innocent civilians,” he said.

In 2008 a suicide blast hit a crowd of men watching dog fighting in neighbouring Kandahar province, killing up to 80 people and wounding dozens more.

The Taliban have been waging an insurgency against the Western-backed government of President Hamid Karzai since being ousted in a US-led invasion in 2001.

Three cops injured in Kandahar blast: Three police personnel were injured in an explosion in Kandahar City on Thursday.

A police van struck an improvised explosion device in Yakh Karez area of Kandahar City, leaving three cops injured, the Kandahar governor's spokesman Javed Faisal told the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP).

The injured were taken to the hospital, he added.

The Taliban have not said anything in this regard till filling of this report.

In Deh Khwaja area of Kandahar City, the security forces defused explosives in the limits of fourth police station, the Kandahar police chief General Abdul Raziq told the AIP.



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19. [Attack, Pakistan] Ten Passers-By Injured In Bomb Attack On Police Van

Friday, February 1 2013

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-20666-10-passers-by-injured-in-bomb-attack-on-police-van>

Up to 10 passers-by were injured when a magnetic bomb attached to a police van exploded on the road near the Bacha Khan Chowk on Thursday, the police said.

An official of the Hashtnagri Police Station said some terrorists had fixed a time-magnetic bomb in a police van parked on the busy Jalil Kababi Road opposite the Jinnah Park. Assistant Sub-Inspector Imranuddin told reporters he and other cops were standing near the vehicle when the explosion occurred. He said all the cops remained safe in the explosion, but 10 passers-by sustained injuries.

The injured were shifted to the Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) where condition of two persons was stated to be critical. Doctors at the LRH said two injured persons had been admitted to the hospital, while the remaining were discharged after the first-aid.



AFRICOM

20. [Attack, Somalia] Suicide Attack Outside Somali PM's Office, Six Killed

Tuesday, January 29 2013

<http://english.samaylive.com/world-news/676522844/suicide-attack-somali-mogadishu-somali-prime-minister-office-abd.html>

At least six people were killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up amongst a group of security officials outside the Somali prime minister's office on Tuesday, army officials said.

"I saw the dead bodies of six people and several others were injured," said Abdukadir Ali, a Somali military official who stayed near the scene of the attack in central Mogadishu. It is believed that many of those killed or wounded were soldiers or police.

"The bomber was sitting near a perimeter wall and detonated himself in the midst of a group of security forces," Ali added. "There was chaos, smoke and pieces of human flesh." Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon Said was in his office at the time when the attacker struck, officials in his office said, but he was not harmed by the blast.

"The area was closed down by the security forces... I saw several dead soldiers and others injured being rushed to hospital," said Mohamed Hussein, a witness. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the blast, but the Al-Qaeda linked Shebab insurgents have conducted a series of guerrilla style attacks in the capital.

The insurgents have vowed to topple newly elected President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who took office in September after being chosen by the country's new parliament, bringing an end to eight years of transitional rule.

Shebab fighters are on the back foot, having fled a string of key towns ahead of a 17,000-strong African Union force, which is fighting alongside Somali government troops to wrest territory off the Islamists.

Ethiopian troops are also battling the Shebab in the southwest of Somalia. But the Shebab remain a potent threat, still controlling rural areas as well as carrying out guerrilla attacks -- including suicide bombings -- in areas apparently under government control.

War-ravaged Mogadishu was hit last year by a string of bloody bomb attacks, although it has been more calm in recent weeks.

A car bomb in December killed three people, while in November a suicide bomber attacked a restaurant.



AFRICOM

21. [Attack, Kenya] Two Boys Injured In Samburu Explosion

Tuesday, January 29 2013

http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000076126&story_title=Kenya-Two-boys-injured-as-bomb-explodes-in-Samburu

Two boys were seriously injured after a metal object they were playing with turned out to be a bomb and exploded at Naiborkeju area in Samburu County.

The boys aged 15 and 5 are admitted at Maralal District Hospital where they are undergoing treatment.

Mr Jonathan Lekarsia, the father to one of the children said the two were herding cattle when they found a metal object and started playing with it.

He said he heard a loud explosion and ran to the scene where he found the two children writhing in pain after they were injured by the explosive.

Samburu Central OCPD Morris Asila confirmed the incident and warned locals not to play with metal objects they find in the area.

Naiborkeju area in Samburu Central is a training ground for Kenya Defence Forces and there have been reports of explosives injuring locals in the past.

It is suspected the explosives are left behind by the armed forces trainees.

ODM candidate contesting for Samburu governor seat Mr Michael Lolworikoi said the army should ensure they do not leave behind undetonated explosives as they endanger lives of residents especially children.

He also asked the Government to compensate those injured in such incidences.



AFRICOM

22. [Attack, Algeria] Terrorists Target Gas Pipeline

Tuesday, January 29 2013

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201301301017.html>

Another al-Qaeda attack on an Algerian energy facility turned deadly Sunday night (January 27th) in Djebahia.

Terrorists targeted a camp where guards were keeping watch over a gas pipeline linking Bouira and Tizi Ouzou. The assault left three Algerian security guards dead and seven injured, Tout sur l'Algerie reported on Monday (January 28th).

The victims reportedly prevented al-Qaeda's El Farouk brigade from blowing up the Sonatrach pipeline.

After the attack, "the army was deployed in the region and launched a massive combing operation", the source added.

Aside from the criminal act itself, it is the terrorists' choice of target which is worrying the Algerian public and authorities. Once again, terrorists have targeted the very heart of the national economy: gas facilities.

Since the In Amenas hostage crisis, Algerian officials have agreed that security arrangements at strategic oil and gas sites should be reviewed.

In a statement given to Associated Press on Saturday, Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci said that it was necessary to reassess and reinforce security at oil and gas installations.

"The attack at In Amenas probably makes it necessary for both Algeria, as the host country for these investments, and also companies operating in Algeria to reassess security arrangements with a view to reinforcing them," Medelci said.

"What happened at In Amenas will probably lead to some adjustments in this regard," he added.

Meanwhile, Energy Minister Youcef Yousfi said Sunday that Algerian authorities would "conduct a review of security arrangements at industrial facilities".

Yousfi had previously given assurance during a visit to the In Amenas complex on January 21st that "Algeria has the means necessary to make its energy installations secure".

"We will strengthen security and we will rely first and foremost on our own means," Yousfi said at the time.

The gas complex at In Amenas, which produces 8 billion cubic metres of gas per year, is jointly operated by BP, Sonatrach and Statoil. The British giant is responsible for internal security at the site and the Algerian gendarmerie is responsible for external security.

Internal security officers are unarmed. BP said it did not feel it was necessary to request armed security guards prior to the terrorist attack because of the significant presence of security officers.



"We and Statoil decided not to have armed guards on site. Given the large military presence in the area, we took the view that armed guards were not required on the site," BP spokesman Robert Wine told the New York Times.

After the terrorist attack on the In Amenas complex, Norwegian company Statoil announced its intention to review existing security measures.

"We will go through all elements of this terrible event, including questions connected to security," said Bard Glad Pedersen, a Statoil spokesman. The company had ultimately underestimated the risks in Algeria, according to Stein Bredal, a former member of the Statoil board.

Tunisia is also looking to step up security at oil and gas facilities. TAP quoted security sources as saying Tuesday that special combat units were set up to monitor the various sites in the wake of events in the Sahara.

"This measure is prevention against any terrorist act targeting these fields, especially those located on the Tunisian-Algerian border," TAP quoted the security official as saying.

Extra troops and military equipment have also been sent to the barracks at Remada and Dehiba, along the Tunisia-Libya border, AFP reported.



AFRICOM

23. [Attack, Zimbabwe] Zimbabwe Police Say Blast At Tribal Sorcerer's House Caused By Explosives

Wednesday, January 30 2013

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/zimbabwe-police-say-blast-at-tribal-sorcerers-house-caused-by-explosives/2013/01/30/72b1a89a-6aef-11e2-9a0b-db931670f35d_story.html

Police in Zimbabwe say they have found traces of explosives at a tribal sorcerer's house where a massive blast killed six people and damaged 12 nearby buildings.

Police official Charity Charamba said the sorcerer and accomplices, one of them a former police officer, were suspected of trying to extract a compound of mercury sometimes used in the manufacture of explosive materials.

Five people, including the sorcerer, sometimes referred to in the West as a witchdoctor, died on the spot on a township outside Harare on Jan. 21 and the sixth died later. Neighbors at first feared the explosion was a traditional ritual to produce a deadly lightning bolt meant to strike down enemies or evil spirits.

Charamba said mercury compounds are often believed to fetch huge prices on illegal markets.



AFRICOM

24. [Trend, Algeria] Hostages 'Strapped To Machines As Bomb Exploded'

Friday, February 1 2013

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/hostages-strapped-to-machines-as-bomb-exploded-3371952.html>

The final hostages to die in the terrorist attack on the BP joint-operated gas plant in Algeria were strapped to machinery as a huge bomb was detonated, managers at the plant have said.

As Western media visited the plant at In Amenas for the first time, detailed accounts were provided of the terrifying end met by a group of eight to 10 expatriate workers.

Lufti Benadouda, the Algerian general manager of the site, recounted how there was a major explosion on the night of Thursday, January 17 at the central production facility, where the hostage-takers, who arrived in two groups, had gathered for a final stand.

Mr Benadouda said Western hostages had been tied to the gas construction complex, some at ground level, some a bit higher up, while the terrorists built a bomb in one of their vehicles. Many of the hostage takers had been wearing suicide vests.

"There was one big explosion and we saw the fire burning all night," said Mr Benadouda. "We found the hostages had been tied to the structure and put close to each other. Some were on the ground near the car, some were up a bit.

"The terrorists wanted a big explosion. They wanted to destroy the plant and make a big impression. They didn't destroy the plant. The next day we arrived at the plant. It was my job to identify the bodies of my colleagues, but I could not, except one, an American."

Among the dead were a Norwegian, and, he thinks, a Briton. He said he saw the remains of three terrorists that suggested they had detonated suicide vests. Yesterday, evidence of the carnage remained on view, with parts of the infrastructure at the plant showing signs of considerable blast damage.

Calling themselves the Signatories in Blood Battalion, the attackers appeared out of the desert at dawn on Wednesday, January 16. Mr Benadouda was quickly identified by terrorists who stormed through the gates of the accommodation compound as a senior figure and was used to relay messages to Algerian forces.

Having missed the initial attack, the army quickly encircled the facility, which sprawls over 37 acres, is surrounded by scrub and sand and is circled by a 12-foot barbed-wire fence.

At first, Mr Benadouda said, the terrorists' mood was "quite calm" but they soon demanded that the plant be re-started. It had been closed after a security guard sounded the alarm. Moments later he was shot in the head.

"After some time they realised they were not getting out alive, and they wanted to blow up the plant. They asked me to start it again, but I said it was too difficult." His defiance may have saved the plant from much greater destruction.



Expatriates have yet to return, but 120 Algerians, seen yesterday on the site in hard hats and blue overalls, are preparing for the day when the plant, which BP runs with Norway's Statoil and Algeria's Sonatrach, can resume producing gas with a daily average output worth \$14m (€10.3m).

Assailants

The attack, which claimed the lives of 38 foreign workers, has stunned Algeria, which thought it had contained the internal threat posed by al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb. Instead, it now finds itself on a new front line of the war on terrorism that spreads west to Mali, where the French intervened to quell an Islamist advance, south to Niger and east to Libya, where the weapons for the attack were procured. It is also believed the assailants, allegedly led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, came across the table-top flat terrain from Libya, which is 35 miles away as the crow flies.

The assault on the plant jointly operated by a British flagship company prompted a hurried visit by UK prime minister David Cameron this week, where he called for a "strong, strategic partnership" between Britain and Algeria.



CENTCOM

25. [Trend, Lebanon] Wanted Man Threatens To Detonate Explosive In His Car

Saturday, January 26 2013

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Jan-26/203848-wanted-man-threatens-to-detonate-explosive-in-his-.ashx#axzz2JTgiiChI>

A man being chased by police threatened to detonate a bomb inside his car along the southern highway of Damour Saturday.

Personnel from state security were involved in a car chase with the man, identified as Maher al-Sheen in his 40s, who is wanted on several arrest warrants, along the Damour highway when he finally stopped on the side of the road.

Sheen locked his car and remained inside with a bomb in his hands, warning security forces he would detonate it if they arrested him.

Security personnel negotiated with Sheen who suddenly opened the car window and threw the bomb in the direction of the forces.

An explosives expert arrived to the area after security forces cordoned off the scene to examine the bomb.



CENTCOM

26. [Attack, Yemen] Suicide Bomber Kills Eight Yemeni Troops

Monday, January 28 2013

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/28/us-yemen-violence-idUSBRE90R0EQ20130128>

A suicide bomber killed at least eight Yemeni soldiers on Monday after troops backed by tanks attacked an al Qaeda stronghold following the collapse of talks to free three Western hostages, local officials and residents said.

Tackling lawlessness in the impoverished Arabian Peninsula state, which flanks the world's biggest oil exporter Saudi Arabia, is an international priority. The United States views Yemen as a frontline in its struggle against al Qaeda.

A Finnish couple and an Austrian man, who were studying Arabic in Yemen, were snatched last month by tribesmen in the capital Sanaa. They were later sold to al Qaeda-linked members, and transferred to the southern al-Bayda province, a Yemeni official told Reuters earlier this month.

A government official said the army began its offensive in al Qaeda's al-Manaseh stronghold in al-Bayda early on Monday after the militants rejected demands to release the hostages.

Residents said they saw dozens of tanks and armored vehicles moving at dawn towards al-Manaseh.

"A few hours later, army forces started shelling. We could hear explosions," a man who gave his name only as Abdullah told Reuters by telephone.

In an apparent reprisal for the offensive, a suicide bomber drove a car laden with explosives into an army checkpoint in Radda, a town near al-Manaseh, killing the eight soldiers, local officials said.

The bombing came after suspected militants ambushed and killed three other soldiers near Radda, according to medics. At least 20 other soldiers were wounded in both attacks.

No figures were immediately available on rebel casualties.

The kidnapping of Westerners occurs sporadically in Yemen, mostly by tribesmen seeking bargaining clout in disputes with the authorities or by al Qaeda militants.

Washington and other Western governments regard al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which has planned attacks on international targets including airliners, as one of the most dangerous offshoots of the global militant network founded by Osama bin Laden.

There have been dozens of killings of security and military officials by suspected al Qaeda gunmen in the past year, suggesting AQAP remains resilient despite increased U.S. drone strikes and an onslaught by government forces.



CENTCOM

27. [Trend, Syria] Al-Qaida-Linked Group Claims Deadly Suicide Attack On Pro-Government Militia In Central Syria

Monday, January 28 2013

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/al-qaida-linked-group-claims-deadly-suicide-attack-on-pro-government-militia-in-central-syria/2013/01/28/ba4c441c-6937-11e2-9a0b-db931670f35d_story.html

An al-Qaida-linked group fighting alongside Syrian rebels claimed responsibility Monday for a suicide car bombing that reportedly killed dozens of President Bashar Assad's loyalists last week.

In Paris, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius pleaded for countries to honor their pledges of funding and other aid to the Syrian opposition to keep the country out of the hands of Islamist militant groups.

"If we don't give the means to the Syrian people to go achieve their freedom, there is a risk, and we all know it exists, that massacres and antagonisms amplify, and that extremism and terrorism prevail.

"Chaos is not tomorrow, it is today, and we need to end it. We need to end it in a peaceful way and that means increased and concrete support to the Syrian National Coalition."

Islamic militants have been the most organized fighters battling government troops in the 22-month-old conflict in which more than 60,000 people have been killed. Their growing prominence has fueled fears that Muslim radicals might try to hijack the revolt, and has contributed to the West's hesitance to equip the opposition with sophisticated weapons.

Jabhat al-Nusra, which the U.S. says has ties to al-Qaida and has declared a terrorist organization, said in a statement posted online that one of its suicide bombers detonated a car bomb last Monday at the headquarters of a pro-government militia in the central province of Hama. It said the bomber drove a truck packed with explosives to the militia's complex in the town of Salamiya and blew himself up "to give the tyrannical regime a taste" of violence it has been inflicting on the Syrian people.

Activists said at least 42 people, mostly pro-Assad militiamen, were killed in the blast. The government did not say how many people were killed, although state-run SANA news agency published photographs of what it said was a funeral procession for the blast's victims on Wednesday. In one of the photographs, a dozen men are seen standing behind 11 caskets, wrapped into a Syrian flag.

Jabhat al-Nusra has previously targeted government institutions in Damascus with suicide bombers and has led successful attacks on military bases and strategic territory in the country's north.

The suicide bombings are part of relentless violence that has engulfed Syria since the uprising against Assad began in March 2011.

On Monday, activists said troops battled rebels in several towns and villages around Damascus, including in Daraya, Arbeen and Zabadani. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the regime's forces also shelled several of the capital's suburbs.

The areas outside Damascus have been rebel strongholds since the uprising began. In recent months, the rebels have used them as a base from which they have been trying to push into central Damascus, the seat of Assad's power.

In the north, troops clashed with rebels in al-Hasaka province along Syria's border with Turkey, the Observatory said, adding that at least 10 rebels were killed in the fighting that erupted Sunday after the opposition fighters attacked a government checkpoint.

International efforts to stop the bloodshed in Syria have repeatedly failed and both sides fighting in the civil war are convinced they can defeat the other on the battlefield.

In France, Fabius pleaded for countries to keep their promises of financial aid to the Syrian opposition or risk compromising the legitimacy of the Syrian National Coalition in the eyes of the people fighting the Assad regime.

The opposition coalition was formed in November. More than 100 countries have back the umbrella group, de-



creasing it the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people. France was the first to confer such recognition.

“We have to give the Syrian people a clear signal: We are at your side,” Fabius told representatives of some 50 nations.

Not all the promises of funding and other aid made at the Friends of Syria group’s conference in December in Marrakech, Morocco, have materialized. France, which has spearheaded the formation of a viable opposition in exile, wants to make sure that backing that has been promised actually comes through.

More than \$100 million was promised in Marrakech, but it’s unclear how much has been sent.

Three Syrian National Coalition’s vice-presidents attended the Paris gathering, which comes two days before a donor conference in Kuwait.



CENTCOM

28. [Trend, Syria] Al Qaeda's Syrian Affiliate Claims Two More Suicide Attacks

Monday, January 28 2013

http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/01/al_qaedas_syrian_aff.php

The Al Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant, al Qaeda in Iraq's affiliate in Syria, has claimed credit for two more suicide attacks against Bashar al Assad's military.

In a statement released on the Al Nusrah Front's Twitter page, the group said it struck military targets in Homs and Hama in the past week, according to the SITE Intelligence Group. One of the attacks was carried out in conjunction with two other Syrian rebel groups.

The Al Nusrah Front said a suicide attack on a "military barracks" in the city of Al Qusair in Homs province on Jan. 23 was conducted by Abu Islam al Shami "after coordinating with the independent al-Farooq regiment and the Ashbal al-'Aqida [Cubs of the Creed] Brigade," according to SITE. Al Shami drove a truck packed with "nearly 20 tons of explosive materials" into "the heart of the barracks."

The Al Nusrah Front also said a suicide bomber named Abu Abdul Jabbar al Najdi "detonated an Isuzu truck laden with 3.5 tons of explosive materials in the area of al-Salmiyya, and in one of the most secure areas" in Hama province on Jan. 21.

The group did not say how many Syrian soldiers and "thugs" were killed in either attack, but vowed to carry out further suicide strikes.

"The Al Nusrah Front promises its people in proud Homs that it will continue such blessed operations until it cleanses it of the filth of Nusayris [Alawhites] and grants relief to the Sunnis from their oppression," one of the statements said.

Additionally, another suicide attack is reported to have taken place on Jan. 19 near a mosque in the southern city of Dara'a. The government blamed the Al Nusrah Front for the attack; Al Nusrah has not claimed the attack.

The Al Nusrah Front has now claimed credit for 48 of the 58 suicide attacks that have taken place in Syria since December 2011, according to a tally by The Long War Journal (note that multiple suicide bombers deployed in a single operate are counted as part of a single attack). Last week, the terror group claimed credit for a complex suicide assault in Sa'sa', near the Golan Heights. Six suicide attacks have now been reported in Syria so far this year; Al Nusrah has claimed credit for five of them.

Al Nusrah has also served as the vanguard for jihadist forces in the major attacks on Syrian military bases. In concert with allied jihadist groups such as the Ahrar al Sham, the Islamic Vanguard, Mujahedeen Shura Council, the Muhajireen Group, and Chechen fighters, as well as supposedly secular insurgents groups such as the Free Syrian Army, the terror group has overrun three large Syrian installations since last fall [see LWJ report, Al Nusrah Front claims complex suicide assault on Syrian military base, for more information on the group's joint operations].

An al Qaeda affiliate

On Dec. 11, 2012, the US designated the Al Nusrah Front as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. The designation stat-



ed that the emir of al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Du'a (a.k.a. Abu Bakr al Baghdadi al Husseini al Qurshi), "is in control of both AQI and Al Nusrah."

At the same time, the US added two senior Al Nusrah leaders, Maysar Ali Musa Abdallah al Juburi and Anas Hasan Khattab, both members of al Qaeda in Iraq, to the list of global terrorists; the US did not add the emir of Al Nusrah, Sheikh Abu Muhammad al Julani, to the list, however. [See LWJ report, US adds Al Nusrah Front, 2 leaders to terrorism list, for information on the designation of the Al Nusrah Front and the two leaders.]

Despite Al Nusrah's known affiliation with al Qaeda and its radical ideology, Syrian opposition groups, including the supposedly secular Syrian National Coalition, have rallied to support Al Nusrah. Immediately after the US designated Al Nusrah as a terrorist group, 29 Syrian opposition groups signed a petition that not only condemned the US's designation, but said "we are all Al Nusrah," and urged their supporters to raise Al Nusrah's flag (which is the flag of al Qaeda).



CENTCOM

29. [Attack, Lebanon] Beirut Car Explosion May Have Targeted Hizbullah Member

Tuesday, January 29 2013

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/164679#.UQINMibhfAo>

A bomb exploded under a car in the south Beirut suburb of Hay al-Selloum late Monday night, the Now Lebanon website reported.

There were no casualties and gunfire was heard in the area after the explosion, the report said.

LBC television reported that the explosion targeted a Honda belonging to a man identified as Abbas Mazloum, adding he was not affiliated with any Lebanese political party. Earlier reports said that Mazloum was a member of the Lebanon-based Hizbullah terror group.

LBC also reported said that Hizbullah security was deployed to the site of the explosion along with army units.

Hay al-Selloum is a predominantly Shiite neighborhood within the Hezbollah stronghold of Dahiyeh.

Hizbullah's Al-Manar TV reported that a small explosion hit the area and did not cause any injuries.

Meanwhile, an anonymous security source told AFP that that "a bomb exploded under a car in Hay al-Selloum, causing only material damage."

Al-Jadeed TV, another Lebanese television network, reported that the bomb was small in size and only resulted in material damage, but it detonated in a crowded area.

Such explosions occur from time to time in Lebanon, usually targeting Hizbullah bases or weapons depots.

Last month, a huge explosion hit a Hizbullah weapons depot near the border with Israel. Hizbullah immediately accused Israel of carrying out an aerial bombing.

In October, explosions at a Hizbullah weapons cache in the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon killed nine people, among them members of the terror group.





CENTCOM

30. [Security, Yemen] Weapons Cache Intercepted Off Yemeni Coast

Tuesday, January 29 2013

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/weapons-cache-intercepted-off-yemeni-coast-1.1139095>

Yemeni forces intercepted a ship on January 23 carrying a large cache of weapons — including surface-to-air missiles.

Yemen's government said the arms intercepted aboard the ship off the country's coast also included military grade explosives, rocket-propelled grenades and bomb-making equipment, according to a statement by its embassy in Washington.

US officials suspect that the weapons were being smuggled from Iran and destined for Yemeni insurgents, officials said on Monday.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed the operation was coordinated with the US Navy and that a Navy destroyer was nearby.

Iran denies any interference in Yemen's affairs.

Analysts and diplomats believe that the ascent of the Houthis, named after their leaders' family, has turned Yemen into a new front in a long struggle between Iran and Western powers and the Arab regimes they support.

Gulf Arab governments and Sunni clerical allies accuse Iran of backing Shiite communities around the region, and Sana'a has also accused Iran of trying to meddle in Yemeni affairs.

Yemen's President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi snubbed a visiting Iranian envoy last year to signal "displeasure" with Tehran after Sana'a said it had uncovered an Iranian-led spy ring in the capital.

Earlier this month, the US envoy to Yemen, Gerald Feierstein, was quoted accusing Iran of working with southern secessionists. Yemen is also grappling with Al Qaida militants in the north.

Its location flanking top oil producer Saudi Arabia — Iran's regional adversary — and major shipping lanes have made restoring its stability an international priority.

Yemen's government said in a statement the shipment was intercepted in Yemeni waters, close to the Arabian Sea. It said Yemeni Coast Guard officials boarded the vessel, which flew multiple flags and had eight Yemeni crew members on board.

"Authorities are continuing to investigate the vessel's shipping route by analysing navigation records found on board the ship," the statement said.



CENTCOM

31. [Attack, Syria] Car Bomb Blast Injures Syrian Parliamentarian In Damascus

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/8113701.html>

A Syrian Parliamentarian was injured Tuesday when an explosive device ripped through his car, as clashes continued unabatedly in the outskirts of the capital Damascus, local media said.

Abudul-Razzaq Qattini was wounded and hospitalized to a Damascus hospital, reports said without giving further details about his medical situation and details of the blast.

Targeting government officials and army officers became increasingly common as the anti-regime movements that have started as peaceful protests for just demands have evolved into a deadly civil in the 22-month-old crisis.

Separately, the clashes continued Tuesday in several hotspots around Damascus, local media and activists said.

The state-run SANA news agency said army units killed and injured large number of gunmen in the Damascus' suburbs of Awamid, Thiabieh, Babila, Sbaineh.

The oppositional Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a London-based watchdog, said Syria's air force carried out several airstrikes on the eastern Ghouta towns just outside Damascus. It said explosions were heard in the suburb of Yalda due to the intense bombardment around it.

The observatory and local media also reported clashes and violence elsewhere in the conflict-engulfed country.

Amid the incessant violence, Syria's Prime Minister Wael al-Halqi ordered on Tuesday the formation of a committee that would be tasked with facilitating the return of displaced people in neighboring countries to their homes.

The premier said the committee would practically oversee the return of those displaced via border points.

The state-run Tishrin newspaper said earlier in the day that the prolonged crisis in Syria has displaced as many as 770 families and "left thousands of martyrs and wounded and other woes and tragedies."



CENTCOM

32. [Attack, Bahrain] Bomb Explodes In Bahrain Capital

Thursday, January 31 2013

<http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/bomb-explodes-in-bahrain-capital>

Several policemen were injured when a home-made bomb exploded at a roundabout west of Bahrain's capital Manama, the prime minister said.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa said the explosion happened at Budaiya motorway "leaving a number of policemen injured whilst on duty", the Bahrain News Agency said.

A ministry of interior message on Twitter put the number of wounded at three and described the device as remotely-detonated and home-made.

Both the ministry and Sheikh Khalifa described the explosion as a "terror" incident.

Bahraini police say they have been the target of numerous attacks with home-made bombs since April 2012, including one that killed a policeman in October.

The Sunni-dominated government has been struggling since early last year to end unrest led mainly by the kingdom's majority Shiite Muslims.

Five home-made bombs killed two people in Bahrain on November 5, and the government said the attacks bore the hallmarks of Hizbollah, the Lebanese militant group allied with Iran. Iran dismisses Bahraini accusations of involvement in the political unrest. Hizbollah also denies involvement, but has criticised the government's handling of protests.

Sheikh Khalifa said that Bahrain would remain stable and its citizens "would foil any terror plot targeting Bahrain to subvert its security", BNA reported.



CENTCOM

33. [Security, Lebanon] Army Defuses Makeshift Bomb In North Lebanon

Friday, February 1 2013

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Feb-01/204581-army-defuses-makeshift-bombs-in-north-lebanon.ashx#axzz2Jf3iZyIW>

The Lebanese Army sealed off a residential street in Tripoli, north Lebanon, Friday and called in an explosives disposal unit after an improvised bomb was found in the area.

The Lebanese Army said chemicals were used to make the explosive.

A statement by the military command said a Lebanese Army patrol found the bomb “made up of a metal container filled with chemicals used for explosives” on Tripoli’s Qalaa Abu Samra Street.

“A quantity of nails, two detonators and a slow-burning fuse – all not set to explode – were also found” near the bomb, the statement said.

It said members of the patrol called in explosive experts who examined the bomb and moved it to a safe location where it was dismantled.

A search for the perpetrators is under way, the Army added.



EUCOM

34. [Security, Northern Ireland] 'Explosive Device' Found In N Ireland

Saturday, January 26 2013

<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/viable-explosive-device-found-n-ireland-201953926.html#5ybfDHE>

Northern Ireland police say they have found a "crude viable explosive device" in Omagh, County Tyrone.

The device was found near the home of a police officer.

The discovery prompted a security alert but police said "everyone has returned to their homes".

Police found the device as they were conducting an investigation in the area after an off-duty officer had fired some shots on Friday night.

Officers urged anyone who could provide information to come forward.



EUCOM

35. [Security, Northern Ireland] Dissidents' Behind North Belfast Bomb

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://www.u.tv/News/Dissidents-behind-north-Belfast-bomb/581eb30a-c163-4b88-8da9-5dcd2a04f66b>

Around a dozen teenagers were in the centre when the alarm was raised on Tuesday night.

A bomb warning was telephoned through at around 5.20pm and staff told UTV that Óglaigh na hÉireann that claimed responsibility.

"My understanding is they said it was from Óglaigh na hÉireann and that there was a bomb in the back yard," said Geraldine O'Kane from the centre.

"I don't think there's any justification for what they did. I don't understand why they did it."

The Greater Whitewell Community Survey is a cross community project supported by both the Stormont Executive and the International Fund for Ireland.

It lists its aim and objective as providing a better quality of life for all in the Greater Greencastle and Whitewell community.

Project organisers are therefore shocked that their building has been targeted.

"For a start, we work for this community," continued Ms O'Kane.

"We work for all this community to make this a far better community for everybody. We try our best to get a shared space for all the young people to come together and for everybody to come together. So we're a wee bit shocked as why?"

Army bomb experts found a viable pipe bomb when they were called to the centre.

It and a number of other nearby homes and businesses were evacuated for a time, and disruption was also caused to traffic.

The attack has been condemned by politicians, who said that despite enduring its share of sectarian hatred, the Whitewell area had consigned such scenes to the past.

Sinn Féin Councillor Tierna Cunningham said: "Why anyone would want to target the Greater Whitewell Community Surgery is beyond belief.

"The community centre was obviously affected and local residents had to leave their homes while the device was dealt with. No doubt whoever was behind this will not be stepping forward to explain their actions as they know the community is disgusted with it."

Nigel Dodds, North Belfast DUP MP, said: "This has caused a great deal of shock within the wider community and I encourage community workers in the area not to be deterred from the positive work they have been engaging in.



"Community Workers from Whitewell, White City, Fairyknowe and Graymount all meet in the surgery alongside young people from each area."

Anyone with information on the incident can pass it on to the PSNI.



EUCOM

36. [Security, Northern Ireland] Pipe Bomb 'Bid To Murder Police'

Thursday, January 31 2013

<http://www.independent.ie/breaking-news/national-news/pipe-bomb-bid-to-murder-police-3371580.html>

A pipe bomb attack on a police patrol in Belfast was a reckless attempt to kill, a senior officer has said.

Dissident republicans have been blamed for throwing the viable device as the armoured Landrover made its way along Oldpark Road in the north of the city on Wednesday night.

Superintendent George Clarke said: "This is absolutely and clearly an attempt to murder police officers.

"It not only shows a willingness and determination to kill people who are serving the community but it also shows complete disregard for the people living in that area.

"We are extremely fortunate. These devices are designed, intended and capable of killing."

Up to 20 families were evacuated during the late night alert. The PSNI said officers received a telephone call at about 10.15pm claiming that a bomb had been thrown at officers but had not detonated.

The device, which was later defused by Army bomb experts, was discovered during a follow up search operation at Rosapenna Street. It was removed for forensic examination.

Less than 24 hours earlier, the dissident splinter Ogligh na hEireann said it had left a pipe bomb close to a community centre at Greater Whitewell Road, also in north Belfast.

Superintendent Clarke added: "Clearly we are worried about this but we are resolute in our determination to deliver policing. We know we have the community support."

North Belfast MP Nigel Dodds has condemned those responsible. He said: "These are the actions of people seeking to undermine law and order and to destabilise society through acts of violence. Their actions will only reinforce the determination across society not to give in to such terrorism."



EUCOM

37. [Attack, Northern Ireland] Man Unhurt After Bomb Through Window

Thursday, January 31 2013

<http://www.u.tv/News/Man-unhurt-after-bomb-through-window/e1e7927d-8d2c-4314-88d8-eb784aae3db5>

A man has escaped injury after a petrol bomb was thrown through the window of a house in Larne, Co Antrim. The attack happened in the Church Way area on Wednesday night.

Police said the petrol bomb smashed through the window shortly before 10.30pm.

The man was not hurt but extensive damage was caused to the front of the house.

Stewart Dickson, Alliance MLA for the area, urged anyone with information about the attack to contact police.

"This man had a very lucky escape. This petrol bomb attack had the potential to cause serious damage to the house and could have led to serious injury or worse," he said.

"There can be absolutely no justification for carrying out an attack like this on a person's home. We should be able to live in our own homes with the fear of this sort of incident."





EUCOM

38. [Security, Northern Ireland] Pipe Bomb Found Near Ballyclare Chapel

Friday, February 1 2013

<http://www.u.tv/News/Pipe-bomb-disrupts-St-Brigids-Day-mass/32fa44c6-274e-4a5b-ba8c-532f4cd18a23>

A viable pipe bomb has been discovered during a security alert close to a Catholic Church in Ballyclare, Co Antrim. The Sacred Heart Church on the Doagh Road was evacuated while a number of suspicious items were examined on Friday.

No controlled explosions were carried out by the army bomb squad but component parts of the bomb were removed for further forensic examination.

The road has now reopened and residents have been allowed to return to their homes.

The alert disrupted mass at the chapel and Parish priest Fr Eugene O'Hagan said the incident was disappointing. "We had scheduled to have mass at half past nine this morning on the feast of St Brigid with our own primary school, that of course did not take place," he said.

"There is disruption for us but also it has caused huge disruption for the townsfolk here in Ballyclare."

UUP South Antrim MLA Danny Kinahan condemned those responsible for the bomb.

"This has been the cause of disruption to local residents and motorists and has required the attention of Army bomb disposal officers," Mr Kinahan.

"I utterly condemn whoever is responsible for this act. If this does turn out to be an attempt to stoke up sectarian tensions in Ballyclare and elsewhere in South Antrim that is also to be condemned.

"I know that the vast majority of the community in South Antrim has no time for those who would seek to create and exploit sectarian divisions for their own ends."

Mr Kinahan appealed for anyone with information to contact PSNI.



EUCOM

39. [Attack, Turkey] Suicide Bomber Kills Guard At U.S. Embassy In Turkey

Friday, February 1 2013

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/01/us-turkey-usa-explosion-idUSBRE91001620130201>

A suicide bomber killed a Turkish security guard at the U.S. embassy in Ankara on Friday, blowing the door off a side entrance and sending smoke and debris flying into the street.

Ankara Governor Alaaddin Yuksel said the attacker was inside U.S. property when the explosives were detonated. The blast sent masonry spewing out of the wall of the side entrance, but there did not appear to be any more significant structural damage.

The bomber was also killed.

U.S. Ambassador Francis Ricciardone emerged through the main gate of the building, which is surrounded by high walls, shortly after the explosion to address reporters, flanked by a security detail as a Turkish police helicopter hovered overhead.

"We are very sad of course that we lost one of our Turkish guards at the gate," Ricciardone he said, thanking the Turkish authorities for a prompt response.

A Reuters witness saw one wounded person being lifted into an ambulance as police armed with assault rifles cordoned off the area.

"It was a huge explosion. I was sitting in my shop when it happened. I saw what looked like a body part on the ground," said travel agent Kamiyar Barnos whose shop window was shattered around 100 meters away from the blast.

One witness said the blast was audible a mile away.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. The British Consulate-General to Turkey said the blast a "suspected terrorist attack".

Islamist radicals, far-left groups, far-right groups and Kurdish separatist militants have all carried out attacks in Turkey in the past.

The main domestic security threat comes from the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), deemed a terrorist group by the United States, European Union and Turkey, but the PKK has focused its campaign largely on domestic targets.

Turkey has led calls for international intervention in neighboring Syria and is hosting hundreds of NATO soldiers from the United States, Germany and the Netherlands who are operating a Patriot missile defense system along its border with Syria, hundreds of kilometers away from the capital.

The U.S. Patriots were expected to go active in the coming days.



The most serious attacks of this kind in Turkey occurred in November 2003, when car bombs shattered two synagogues, killing 30 people and wounding 146. Authorities said the attack bore the hallmarks of al Qaeda.

Part of the HSBC Bank headquarters was destroyed and the British consulate was damaged in two more explosions that killed a further 32 people a week later.





PACOM

40. [Security, India] Explosive Material Recovered From Train Passenger

Monday, January 28 2013

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/states/article4353750.ece>

Nearly eight kgs of ammonium nitrate (an oxidising agent used for making explosives) was seized from a train passenger at Sealdah station on Monday.

The police said that the man was arrested as soon as he got down from the Lalgola Express at Sealdah station.

It is not yet ascertained if the man was linked to any terror outfit or if he was hatching any sabotage plot, according to the police. The police are interrogating him.



PACOM

41. [Attack, Thailand] Marine Killed, Two Hurt In Narathiwat Blast

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/333358/marine-killed-by-narathiwat-bomb>

One marine was killed and two others injured in a roadside bomb explosion in Narathiwat's Muang district on Wednesday morning, reports said.

The marines, members of a special task force, were assigned to teacher escort duty.

They were patrolling a rural road near Khok Bae Nae intersection in tambon Manang Tayo of Muang district in a modified pickup when an improvised bomb buried in the road exploded beneath the vehicle.

Three marines, Chief Warrant Officer Suthep Muankammoon, Pvt Wasant Kaewsansarn and Pvt Anuchit Jitnin, were wounded in the explosion and taken to Narathiwat Ratchanakarin hospital.

Chief Warrant Officer Suthep was later pronounced dead.

Police were inspecting the scene. They blamed separatist militants.





PACOM

42. [Law Enforcement, Philippines] Muslim Rebel Bomb Expert Captured In S. Philippines

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/759101.shtml>

The Philippine military captured a suspected foreign-trained bomb expert working for a renegade Muslim rebel group in southern Philippines, a military official said Wednesday.

The suspect, Armons Salanggao, was arrested outside the hotel in Midsayap town, North Cotabato province following a weeklong surveillance, according to Sr. Supt. Joselito Esquivel of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

Esquivel said Salanggao, who is working with Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, was arrested on Sunday but they only released their report after they confirmed the background of the suspect.

"He (Salanggao) works for Ameril Umbra Kato as bomb expert. He confessed to us that some of his comrades planted bombs near a gasoline depot which was recovered and defused by our bomb experts," Esquivel said.

The homemade bomb recovered was fashioned from 60-millimeter- mortar attached to a mobile phone as detonator.

The suspect as well as the recovered bomb are now in the custody of CIDG in General Santos City.



NORTHCOM

43. [Trend, United States] Pakistani Fertilizer Firm To Expand In U.S., But Balks On Controlling Bomb Materials

Sunday, January 27 2013

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/27/pakistani-fertilizer-firm-expand-us-despite-balkin/>

The Pakistani corporation that has refused the Pentagon's urgent appeals to control the flow of explosive materials to bomb-makers who kill U.S. troops is expanding its fertilizer manufacturing into the United States.

And it is being done with the help of U.S. taxpayers through the municipal bond market.

The Indiana Finance Authority has approved \$1.27 billion in tax-exempt bonds for Midwest Fertilizer Corp. to build a nitrogenous fertilizer manufacturing plant in Posey County. Midwest is a new startup company of the Fatima Group, a conglomerate headquartered in Lahore, Pakistan.

Fatima's fertilizer components are used by terrorists in Pakistan and Afghanistan to build homemade bombs — the No. 1 killer of American service members in Afghanistan.

Fatima's corporate leaders know this is happening, based on communications with Obama administration officials and military leaders, but they have refused pleas to control the flow, according to an Army general.

Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, who heads the Pentagon's Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO), bluntly criticized Fatima in testimony last month before a Senate panel.

He called Fatima "less than cooperative" in even instituting minimal controls on calcium ammonium nitrate, or CAN, a fertilizing compound that has been used in 70 percent of the homemade explosives deployed against U.S. troops.

Fatima is the only Pakistani producer of CAN, which is illegal to import into in Afghanistan.

Gen. Barbero said that nearly 1,900 Americans in Afghanistan had been killed or wounded by homemade bombs in 2012 at the time of his Dec. 13 testimony. He said the only sources for CAN are two Fatima Group plants in Pakistan.

In his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian affairs, Gen. Barbero said:

"In 2011, I engaged the top leadership of Fatima Group, the producers of CAN in Pakistan, to urge their action in countering the illicit use of their fertilizer as an explosive through the implementation of several steps — a dye program, better tracking and such — but I also engaged the International Fertilizer Association and global fertilizer community to encourage the development of a whole-of-industry approach addressing the illicit use of their products.

"While the international and U.S. professional fertilizer associations are receptive and actively addressing these issues, the producers within Pakistan have been less than cooperative. Despite making minor packaging, tracking and marketing changes, they have not implemented any effective product security or stewardship efforts. I believe



Pakistani-based CAN producers can and must do more.

“While the government of Pakistan has taken military actions to address the idea of threatening and going after these networks, these efforts remain focused on Pakistan’s domestic threat and have had not measurable effect on the number of [bombings] in Afghanistan, on the flow of [homemade explosives] precursor materials smuggled across the border, or on the threat of networks operating in Pakistan who attack our troops in Afghanistan.”

Gen. Barbero testified that, after meeting with a Fatima Group leader at JIEDDO headquarters in 2011, all future contact was cut off by the Pakistan government.

“We requested the actions that I indicated, and specifically, find a way to dye this material so our border guards on both side — our soldiers — can look at something and determine it’s either the residue or the ammonium nitrate,” the general said. “Right now, it’s this nondescript, milky-white substance, which is often repackaged as detergent. So how can you tell the difference in what it is? So we request that.

“We’ve been told no on the dye,” he said.

The Washington Times asked the JIEDDO press office if the situation with Fatima has improved in the month since Gen. Barbero’s testimony. A spokeswoman declined to comment.

As Fatima stiff-arms the U.S. military, it is eyeing a chunk of the American fertilizer market.

Jim McGoff, counsel for the Indiana Finance Authority, told The Times that Fatima has created the Midwest Fertilizer Corp. and plans to build its first U.S. plant in that state.

Fatima is capitalizing on a 2008 federal disaster relief law that allows its company to obtain financing through Indiana’s municipal bond market. The law allows the bond buyer, or lender, to pay no or limited taxes on the bond’s interest, which means that Fatima would pay 5 percent interest instead of 7 percent.

“The federal benefit bestowed to the borrower would be the 2 percent differential,” Mr. McGoff said. “The growth repayment of their obligations is much cheaper.”

Midwest Fertilizer “is a new entity that is being incorporated and will be registered in the state of Indiana. And it will be a subsidiary of a company that is Fatima Group,” Mr. McGoff said. “My understanding is this is a startup, a first endeavor for the Fatima Group in the United States.”

Indiana state records show that Midwest was registered in Indiana in September at a time when the Pentagon says Fatima continued to be uncooperative in fighting homemade bombs.

Besides the CAN-Fatima issue, Gen. Barbero had more bad news when it comes to Pakistan and countering homemade bombs.

In July, Pakistan agreed to a military-to-military cooperation framework. At the time of his Dec. 13 testimony, the agreement “remains in its original draft form, with no progress,” Gen. Barbero said.



NORTHCOM

44. [Security, United States] Inside The Ring: New Al Qaeda Threat

Wednesday, January 30 2013

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/30/inside-the-ring-new-al-qaeda-threat/?page=all#pagebreak>

A jihadist website posted a new threat by al Qaeda this week that promises to conduct “shocking” attacks on the United States and the West.

The posting appeared on the Ansar al Mujahidin network Sunday and carried the headline, “Map of al Qaeda and its future strikes.”

The message, in Arabic, asks: “Where will the next strike by al Qaeda be?” A translation was obtained by Inside the Ring.

“The answer for it, in short: The coming strikes by al Qaeda, with God’s Might, will be in the heart of the land of nonbelief, America, and in France, Denmark, other countries in Europe, in the countries that helped and are helping France, and in other places that shall be named by al Qaeda at other times,” the threat states.

The attacks will be “strong, serious, alarming, earth-shattering, shocking and terrifying.”

Under a section of the post on the method of the attacks, the unidentified writer said the strikes would be “group and lone-wolf operations, in addition to the use of booby-trapped vehicles.”

“All operations will be recorded and published in due time,” the message said. “Let France be prepared, and let the helpers of France be prepared, for it is going to be a long war of attrition.”

The reference to France appears linked to the group’s plans for retaliation against the French-led military strikes in northern Mali in operations to oust al Qaeda terrorists from the North African country.

The Ansar al-Mujahidin network is a well-known jihadist forum that in the past has published reliably accurate propaganda messages from al Qaeda and its affiliates.

U.S. counterterrorism actions over the past 10 years have prevented al Qaeda from conducting major attacks. However, U.S. officials warn that the group continues to be dangerous, despite the killing of its top leaders in drone strikes and special operations.

A U.S. official said the threat is being taken seriously by the U.S. government.

“Extremists regularly make threats online,” he told Inside the Ring. “This one is not particularly unusual, but of course should be taken seriously.”



NORTHCOM

45. [Law Enforcement, United States] Man Arrested After Grenades, Bomb-Making Materials Found In Apartment

Thursday, January 31 2013

http://www.tulsaworld.com/specialprojects/news/crimewatch/article.aspx?subjectid=450&articleid=20130131_450_0_Office913281

Officers responding to a domestic violence call discovered bomb-making materials in an apartment Wednesday.

Tulsa police were called the Greens of Bedford, 6508 S. 106th East Place, just before 6 p.m. to investigate a report of a domestic disturbance involving a pipe, said Officer Jillian Roberson.

When officers arrived, they searched the apartment for a possible victim, whom they were unable to locate, she said.

Richard Douglas Carter, 41, was arrested after police saw several grenades on and around a bed in the apartment.

The Tulsa Police Department's bomb squad was dispatched to the scene and found materials commonly used to manufacture explosives, Roberson said.

Carter was booked into the Tulsa Jail on complaints of manufacturing a bomb or explosives and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony.

He is being held without bond for the U.S. Marshal Service.



SOUTHCOM

46. [Trend, Colombia] British NGO Begins Landmine Clearance In Colombia

Thursday, January 31 2013

<http://colombiareports.com/colombia-news/news/27928-british-ngo-begins-landmine-clearance-in-colombia.html>

A British NGO has begun recruiting and training citizens on how to clear landmines across Colombia, one of the most mine-infested countries in the world.

Colombia's program director of HALO Trust, an international organization that trains people around the world about local landmine clearance, told Colombia Reports that they have already made headway in the central Colombian department of Antioquia.

"There are 14 already trained, and in February our goal is to recruit 40 more. We hope to have roughly 200 staff members fully trained by the end of 2013," program director Grant Salisbury told Colombia Reports.

The Colombian government told HALO Trust that they could begin recruitment in December of 2012.

The motivation for international groups to pour their efforts into Colombia comes after a series of laws passed two years ago that permit international NGOs and local groups to engage civilians in the demining process. Up until that point, only Colombian military forces were allowed to conduct landmine clearance.

"We are only going to work in areas that are considered safe by the government," Salisbury told AlertNet.

It is expected that humanitarian demining groups from Switzerland, Denmark, and Norway will also start operations in Colombia within a year.

According to the NGO, since 1990 Colombia has registered more than 10,000 deaths and injuries from landmines of which 982 were children.

As a signatory of the Mine Ban Treaty, Colombia has agreed to clear the country of mines by 2021.

If a peace agreement with the country's oldest guerrilla group, the FARC, is reached, the need for more organizations to participate in the demining process could accelerate. Landmines contaminate significant amount of land around schools, houses and other civilian infrastructure in rural areas around Colombia.



SOUTHCOM

47. [Attack, Colombia] Colombia Rebels Seize Three Oil Workers, Blow Up Energy Tower

Thursday, January 31 2013

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/31/us-colombia-rebels-idUSBRE90U0QG20130131>

Colombia's FARC rebels kidnapped three oil workers and killed four soldiers in the nation's south, while they blew up an energy tower in the north, military sources said, in a sign the group is stepping up pressure during peace talks.

The kidnappings and other violent incidents on Wednesday came days after the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, made clear during the negotiations in Cuba that it would continue to capture armed forces members even as talks continue.

The oil workers were contracted as engineers by Canada's Gran Tierra Energy, according to an email from the Colombian air force overnight. Company officials in Canada and Bogota were not immediately available to comment.

The air force was hunting for the contractors, the statement said. They were believed to be Colombians.

President Juan Manuel Santos' government and Marxist rebels have been engaged in peace negotiations in Havana since November, trying to reach a settlement to a war that has defied all past attempts for resolution.

The FARC, the biggest and oldest armed group in Latin America, also seized two police patrolmen in a southwestern province last weekend - the first kidnapping of security forces since the group said last year it would stop taking hostages to finance its activities.

The rebels have in the past seized oil workers for ransom and to disrupt economic interests.

While the FARC has said it would stop kidnapping to fund its war against the government, it never said it would stop taking members of the armed forces as "prisoners of war." In April of last year it released all government forces under its control.

An escalation of hostilities could affect the progress of the peace talks in Cuba. Santos has said he wants to achieve an agreement within a year.