Beat: News

Taliban kill senior peace envoy in southern Afghanistan

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USPA News - A senior member of Afghanistan`s peace council was killed Wednesday when suspected Taliban insurgents ambushed his vehicle in the country`s south, local officials said. In a separate incident elsewhere in the country, three civilians were killed.

The first incident happened in the Gereshk district of southern Helmand province when an improvised explosive device (IED) struck a convoy carrying Shah Wali Khan, the provincial chief of the Afghan High Peace Council that is working on peace negotiations with the Taliban. Gunmen then opened fire at the vehicles. Provincial spokesman Omar Zwak said Khan and two of his bodyguards were killed in the ambush, which local officials blamed on the Taliban insurgent group. At least three police officers and an Afghan soldier were injured, but their conditions were not immediately known. Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who is currently on an official visit to Denmark, strongly condemned Wednesday`s attack. "The President said such cowardly attacks by the enemies of the Afghan people ... can not undermine peace and stability in the country," a presidential spokesman said. "The Afghan people are committed to make the peace process succeed." Elsewhere in the country, in a separate incident on late Tuesday evening, three civilians were killed when their vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb. It happened in the district of Charchino, located in Uruzgan province, when a family of six people was traveling in the vehicle. A provincial police spokesperson confirmed three people, two of them children and the third an adult man, were killed in the powerful explosion. In addition, three women who were also on board the vehicle were injured and rushed to a local hospital, but their medical conditions were not immediately known. Violence in Afghanistan has been on the rise in recent months. Earlier on Tuesday, a roadside bomb attack killed three British service members operating for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The incident brought the number of foreign troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 42.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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