

5 NATO service members killed in Afghanistan

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Five NATO service members were killed Thursday in southern Afghanistan, the scene of heavy fighting as troops push into areas long controlled by the Taliban, the coalition said. Three died when a homemade bomb exploded and two were killed separately - one following an insurgent attack and another in an explosion.

No other details or the nationalities of the troops was immediately disclosed.

Three Afghan civilians also died in the south in a suicide attack on a NATO convoy, a local official said. Nine other civilians were wounded in the bombing, which occurred near the airport in Kandahar, a Taliban stronghold. The suicide attacker detonated explosives while in his vehicle, causing the casualties, said Zulmai Ayubi, a spokesman for the Kandahar governor.

A NATO spokesman confirmed one Afghan death and said the blast caused substantial damage to buildings in the immediate area and left a significant crater in the highway. NATO said the wounded civilians were medically evacuated. One coalition vehicle was damaged in the attack, he said. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

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