



Taliban insurgents armed with bombs, automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades attacked the Kandahar police headquarters Saturday during a bloody assault on the southern Afghan city that killed at least 21 people and wounded dozens more.

The bold afternoon raid showed insurgents are still able to launch deadly strikes on heavily fortified government institutions despite the past year's influx of U.S. troops into Kandahar province, the Taliban's birthplace. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

Fifteen of those killed were Afghan police officers, said provincial Governor Torkyalai Wesa. Interior Ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary said three Afghan soldiers, two civilians and one intelligence service agent also died in the assault.

Insurgents first struck around noon, detonating a series of explosions that rocked the area near the provincial police headquarters. The police post is located in central Kandahar, not far from the governor's offices.

Initial reports suggest a car bomb exploded outside the police compound, and then immediately afterward two suicide bombers tried to storm the headquarters but blew themselves up outside the perimeter wall, according to NATO officials in Kandahar.

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