

Beat: Miscellaneous

Suicide car bombing kills 2 American contractors in Kabul

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USPA News - Two American civilians working for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) were killed Monday in a suicide car bombing in the Afghan capital Kabul, coalition officials said. The attack happened at around 2:30 p.m. local time on Monday when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives-laden vehicle at Ahmad Shah Baba Mina Square in eastern Kabul, located in Afghanistan's volatile eastern region.

ISAF said two of its civilian contractors were killed in the attack but declined to provide other details, although a U.S. military official in Washington confirmed both casualties were American citizens. A third ISAF contractor and five Afghan civilians were wounded in the blast, the local Pajhwok news agency reported. Eng Haroon Zarghoon, a spokesman for the insurgent group Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), claimed responsibility for Monday's attack, Pajhwok reported. The Hezb-i-Islami group previously also claimed responsibility for other attacks in Kabul, including attacks in May 2013 and September 2012 in which 25 people were killed. There are currently more than 57,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, including some 38,000 U.S. troops and 5,200 British soldiers. The UN Security Council extended ISAF's authorization for a final time last year, as all foreign combat troops are due to leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Eight coalition troops have been killed in Afghanistan so far this year, according to official figures. A total of 160 ISAF coalition troops were killed in Afghanistan in 2013, down from 402 fatalities in 2012 and 566 in 2011. A majority of the fallen troops were American and were killed in the country's south, which is plagued by IED attacks on troops and civilians. In June 2013, Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced the fifth and final phase of security transition in which coalition forces hand over control of the remaining 95 districts - including Taliban stronghold areas in the south and east - to Afghan security forces. ISAF will still be responsible for military air support as well as support in combat operations until the end of 2014.

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