Afghan schoolgirls attacked, six wounded (AFGHANISTAN)

MAZAR-I-SHARIF, Afghanistan (Reuters) - Suspected Taliban insurgents tossed a crude bomb into an Afghan girls' classroom, wounding a teacher and five students, a headmaster and police said on Tuesday. Taliban have launched numerous attacks on schools as part of an intensified insurgency that has produced some of the worst levels of violence since the end of Taliban rule in 2001.

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Headmaster Gul Mohammad said a small bomb was thrown through a window into a girls' class at his school, in the Chamtol district of the northern province of Balkh, on Monday.
A teacher was seriously wounded and five girls were slightly hurt with burns in the attack, he said.
Another school in the district was burned down early on Tuesday after its guards were beaten up, police said.
"The Taliban are behind this," said district police chief Mohammad Hashim, referring to both attacks.
The militants attack schools as symbols of the Western-backed government and foreign influence. Seven children were killed when a rocket hit a school in an eastern town last month.
The Taliban were ousted by U.S.-led forces in late 2001 after refusing to hand over Osama bin Laden, architect of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.
But nearly five years later, their insurgency shows no sign of ending.

AIR STRIKE, OFFICIALS BEHEADED
Violence has surged in recent months and more than 500 people have been killed this year.
The unrest comes as NATO members are sending reinforcements to boost their peacekeeping force from 9,000 to 16,000.
With about 23,000 troops, the United States now has its largest force in Afghanistan since its military involvement began in October 2001. The United States had been hoping to trim its Afghan force to 16,500 by early this year.
Elsewhere on Tuesday, U.S.-led forces killed four militants in an air strike in Uruzgan province in the volatile south, the U.S. military said.
"The extremists were responsible for launching numerous attacks against civilians and the Afghan National Army," the U.S. military said in a statement.
In other violence, Taliban raided two police posts near the Pakistani border, killing two policemen and wounds six.
A government office in the same area was attacked and a woman in a nearby house was wounded, a Khosh provincial police spokesman said.
Security forces later captured 13 suspected Taliban, including some who were burying a body, he said.
In the southern province of Helmand, where British forces are in charge of security, police found the beheaded bodies of two government workers who had gone missing last week.
In Ghazni province, just south of the Kabul, a man had his hands blown off and was blinded when a mine he was planting exploded.
His target was believed to have been a U.S.-funded road project, a provincial security official said.


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