Dutch marines killed in Uruzgan

Tirinkot, AFGHANISTAN, 18 April 2010 (Pajhwok Afghan News) - A landmine explosion has killed two Dutch marines in the central province of Uruzgan, officials said on Sunday.

A Dutch military patrol vehicle hit the roadside bomb east of the provincial capital, Tirinkot, late Saturday evening, a senior police officer told Pajhwok Afghan News. With the latest fatalities, the Dutch military death toll during the eight-year Afghan conflict has reached 23. Most of the 2,000 troops from the Netherlands, scheduled to start withdrawing in August through the end of 2010, are stationed in Uruzgan. Col. Gulab Khan said at least one other Dutch marine was wounded in the blast, confirmed by the Defence Ministry in The Hague. The fallen troops were aged 23 and 29, the ministry said. "Two ISAF servicemembers died following an improvised explosive device attack in southern Afghanistan," the NATO-led force said in a brief statement that gave no more details of the explosion. The deaths came two days after four German soldiers were killed in a deadly Taliban ambush in northern Baghlan province. Five others were wounded in the clash in Baghlan-i-Markazi district. Also on Saturday evening, a militant commander was shot dead by police in the Charchino district of Uruzgan province. Four Kalashnikov assault rifles were seized as a result of the firefight, Col. Gulab said.

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