Islamabad (Pakistan) - At least seven Afghan soldiers were killed on Friday when a landmine blew up their vehicle near the southeastern Afghan city of Khost, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported.

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The blast was apparently set off by a remote-controlled device and badly damaged the vehicle, the Pakistan-based private news service said.

Quoting eyewitnesses, it said the vehicle was carrying Afghan soldiers who belong to a unit that helps US military operations in Afghanistan.

The dead included a local Afghan commander, it said. The blast occurred near the town of Farm Hadda, at the southern flank of Khost city, it said.

No official confirmation was immediately available.

AIP said the blast occurred on the main road leading to the Pakistani border.

Witnesses said the bodies of several victims were mutilated. Some sources said the military pick-up had been transporting eight or nine Afghan soldiers and all of them were killed.

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