



District recaptured from Taleban

A district in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar has been recaptured after falling to the Taleban, an army commander has said.

Afghan forces earlier made a tactical withdrawal from Myanishen.

But another district, Ghorak, has fallen to the insurgents, Kandahar's police chief has told the BBC.

Meanwhile, dozens are reported killed or injured in fighting in nearby Uruzgan province. One official says 60 civilians died, but Nato disputes this.

The police chief, Gen Esmatullah Alizai said: "Our forces have made a tactical withdrawal and Ghorak district now is under the control of Taleban, we don't have any casualties on our side, we will re-take it soon.

"In the meantime we have re-taken control of Myanishen district, this afternoon we launched operations together with Nato forces."

There is no place in the Uruzgan hospital for injured ones and it is very difficult to transfer them

Mawli Hamdullah,
Uruzgan provincial council head

Separately, a man has been injured while trying to place an explosive device outside the main US military base in the country.

The US-led military coalition and the Interior Ministry say the device exploded prematurely outside the Bagram base. They say the man is now in Afghan police custody.

In the adjacent district of Chora in Uruzgan province fierce fighting between the Taleban and foreign and Afghan forces is reported to have continued for at least three days.

There are reported to be more than 100 wounded in the main provincial hospital.

Reports say staff there are unable to treat all the wounded people arriving, but still more of the injured are said to be at the scene of the fighting.

The head of the provincial council, Mawli Hamdullah, has called on President Karzai to send helicopters to airlift the injured to hospitals in Kabul.

He says he believes some 60 civilians have died in the clashes, as well as 30 Taleban, including a key commander, and 17 Afghan soldiers.

But the Nato-led force, Isaf, says it has no confirmation of any civilian deaths, saying rather that some

60 rebels have been killed, as well as a Dutch soldier.

Uruzgan's police chief gave much lower figures for civilian and army deaths but estimated the number of Taleban killed at 65.

He alleged that some ordinary people were killed by what he called American bombing.

Last year Chora district fell into Taleban hands for a few days before being retaken by government forces in a battle.

Plea for civilians

The latest violence came as aid organisations said that international and Afghan government forces had been responsible for the deaths of at least 230 civilians since the start of 2007.

"Excessive and disproportionate use of force is not only illegal and wrong but is also counter-productive," the Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief (Acbar) warned.

Acbar, which brings together nearly 100 Afghan and international aid organisations, said such attacks created hostility towards international forces and made relief work more difficult.

Scores of civilians have also been killed by the Taleban and their allies this year.

The Acbar statement condemned such attacks by the armed opposition as "wanton acts of violence... which can never be justified".

Story from BBC NEWS:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/6766495.stm

Published: 2007/06/19 18:50:34 GMT

© BBC MMVII