

Blast in eastern Afghanistan kills eleven

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Blast in eastern Afghanistan kills at least 11

Kabul, December 18 (RHC)-- At least 11 people have been killed and dozens of others injured as a motorbike loaded with explosives blew up at a religious ceremony in Afghanistan's eastern province of Ghazni.

"The explosives detonated at a gathering in Gilan district of Ghazni Province," said spokesman for provincial governor Wahidullah Jumazada on Friday. He said children were among the injured.

Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian confirmed the blast, but said 15 people had been killed. He further said the explosives had been loaded on a motorbike parked near a house in a village where a Quran recitation was being held. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the deadly assault, but the Taliban militants and Afghan government forces have regularly clashed in Ghazni.

Last month, at least 30 security personnel were killed and 24 others injured when a bomber detonated a Humvee full of explosives close to an army base in Ghazni.

Violence continues to take a heavy toll in Afghanistan even as the government and the Taliban have been holding negotiations in the Qatari capital, Doha, in an effort to end nearly two decades of war. The latest violence comes as both sides in the Afghan peace process are taking a break until January 5th, after reaching a preliminary agreement this month.

Afghanistan has been gripped by insecurity since the U.S. and its allies invaded the country as part of Washington's so-called war on terror nearly 20 years ago -- in 2001. Many parts of the country remain plagued by militancy despite the presence of foreign troops.

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