Six Killed in Gun Battle in Afghanistan's Helmand Province

Islamabad, May 13 (RHC)-- At least six people have been killed in a gun battle between Afghanistan's security forces and armed militants in the southern province of Helmand.

Enayatullah Ghafari, the chief of Helmand's health department, said six dead bodies including those of two policemen were brought to a local hospital on Wednesday. Eight wounded people are also being treated in the hospital.

Other reports say the head of the Ulema Council of Helmand and a top religious authority were among the fatalities. An Afghan security official, whose name was not mentioned in the report, told AFP that two attackers armed with RPGs and guns tried to enter "the governor's building in Lashkar Gah (the capital of Helmand), but they were pushed away by the police. The attackers "were forced to enter a nearby mosque and are now exchanging fire with the police who have surrounded them."

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but most terrorist acts across Afghanistan are usually claimed by the Taliban militants.

Afghanistan has been grappling with a security challenge years after the United States and its allies invaded the country in 2001 as part of Washington's so-called 'war on terror.' The offensive removed Taliban from power, but many areas are still witnessing violence.

At least 13,500 foreign forces remain in Afghanistan despite the end of the U.S.-led combat mission on December 31, 2014. The foreign forces, mainly from the United States, are there for what Washington calls a 'support mission.'

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