

Beat: Miscellaneous

Bomb kills 19 Afghan civilians traveling to wedding party

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USPA News - Nineteen civilians were killed Friday and more than a dozen others were injured when a roadside bomb ripped through a minivan carrying guests to a wedding party in northern Afghanistan, officials said on Saturday. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

The incident happened in the Sadarabad area of Daulatabad district, located in northern Balkh province, when an improvised explosive device (IED) struck a minivan. The vehicle was carrying mostly women and children who were en-route to a wedding celebration in the district. Police said nineteen people were killed while sixteen others were injured, some of them critically. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi blamed the attack on the Taliban. "[The] Taliban committed another crime today; they massacred 19 innocent Afghans, including kids and women by their planted IED," he said. "The women and children were going to a wedding in a nearby village." Brig. Gen. Günter Katz, a spokesman for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), condemned Friday's deadly attack. "Again, the enemies of Afghanistan have shown their willingness to kill and maim innocent civilians without hesitation, all in order to advance their repressive and cruel agenda," he said. "I offer my condolences to the families and loved ones of the innocent civilians killed and injured as a result of this attack." According to a report from the United Nations (UN), at least 1,145 Afghan civilians were killed in the war in the first six months of this year. Approximately 80 percent of the casualties were blamed on insurgents, with more than half of those caused by roadside bombs. A record 3,021 civilians died in 2011.

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