

## **Suicide bomb in Afghan capital kills young girl, wounds 15**

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Basir Mujahid, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said the blast occurred in the eastern neighborhood of Qabil Bay, in an area that is home to a police station, the government's customs offices and some guest houses.

**Kabul:** A suicide car bombing in the eastern part of the Afghan capital today morning killed at least one person, a young girl, and wounded 15, Afghan officials said.

Basir Mujahid, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said the blast occurred in the eastern neighborhood of Qabil Bay, in an area that is home to a police station, the government's customs offices and some guest houses.

Mohammad Musa Zahir, a doctor at the area's Wazir Akbar Khan hospital, said 15 people were also wounded in the blast, including five children and two women.

Najib Danish, spokesman for the Interior Ministry, said the suicide bomber targeted a "convoy of foreigners" but did not offer further details or clarify whether it was foreign forces who were targeted or contractors.

No non-Afghan casualties were reported in the bombing and NATO forces in Kabul, which said they were aware of the reports, had no immediate comment. No militant group claimed responsibility for the attack.

At the blast site in the Qabil Bay neighborhood, blood pooled on the pavement amid rubble in front of a destroyed building.

Residents in the area were the first to say the explosion was a suicide attack, before Danish's statement. They spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing for their own safety.

Kabul has recently seen a spate of large-scale militant attacks by the Taliban and also the Islamic State group, whose affiliate in Afghanistan has grown stronger since it emerged in 2014.

In late January, a Taliban attacker drove an ambulance filled with explosives into the heart of the city, killing at least 103 people and wounding as many as 235.

The Taliban claimed the ambulance attack, as well as an attack a week earlier in which militants stormed a luxury hotel in Kabul, killing 22 people, including 14 foreigners, and setting off a 13-hour battle with security forces.

The recent attacks have underscored the weaknesses of Afghan security forces more than 16 years after the U.S.-led invasion toppled the Taliban.

On Wednesday, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani called on the Taliban to take part in peace talks to "save the country," offering security and incentives such as passports to insurgents who join the negotiations.

Separately, the Taliban said today they released five of a total of 19 people they say they abducted on Tuesday along the boundary between the southern Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces.

At the time, Gen. Abdul Raziq, Kandahar's police chief, said insurgents wearing army uniforms stopped a bus and

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abducted 30 people. There was no information on the fate of the others.

- AP