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Want Wegal district in Nuristan falls to Taliban: PC head

Jun 26, 2015



Taliban fighters on Friday torched the district office building and other residential areas soon after taking control of Want Wegal district in eastern Nuristan province, head of provincial council said.

Hundreds of insurgents stormed the district center which sparked heavy fighting since Thursday, Eng. Saadullah, head of provincial assembly, told Pajhwok Afghan News.

He said district fell to Taliban and insurgents hoisted their flag on a building. Taliban set the district office and residential areas on fire, he said, adding that casualties were inflicted on civilians and military personnel but he had no exact figure.

Following chaos, he said that several security forces were feared made hostage or disappeared amid communication breakdown in the district. “We have already informed defence and interior ministries that the district would fall to militants if they didn’t send reinforcements or take immediate action,” he complained.

Around 2,000 to 3,000 militants in black dresses came from Kunar and the other side of the Durand Line, who could not be identified as who they really were.

Brig. Gen. Khalilullah Ziaee, provincial police chief, confirmed fall of the district in militants’ control and said that both the sides suffered casualties. “We have retreated from the district but the fight has been ongoing in some areas,” he said.

Acting Governor Hafiz Abdul Qayyum denied the district had fallen to rebels but confirmed intense fighting were underway at two kilometers away from the district. The acting governor said the other day: “Neither the district is besieged nor it has threats of falling to militants. Taliban have attacked but our security forces are strong enough to retaliate.”

Zabihullah Mujahid, Taliban spokesman, twitted that militants got control of the district and 16 security check posts. Scores of security forces had been killed and huge cache of arms and ammunition seized in the gun battle. Eight militants were killed or injured during the fight, he stated.

Wegal district is situated adjacent to Manogay district where insurgents have control on some of the areas.