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52 Afghan Security Forces Killed in Two-Day Taliban Offensive

By Jason Ditz
February 16, 2016

Despite a growing US military presence and repeated deployments of reinforcements into the area, the Helmand Province of Afghanistan still seems to be the focus of a big Taliban offensive, with reports that 52 Afghan security forces were killed in the past 48 hours.

The death toll occurred over several incidents, and saw 25 soldiers and 27 Afghan national police slain in fighting. There was no report of the Taliban sustaining significant casualties, and a lot of the attacks appear to have been Taliban ambushes.

It may be getting worse, according to reports from officials on the ground, who say that the Taliban has been heavily mining a lot of roads around Marjah to keep reinforcements from the area, and that some 250 police and 300 troops are totally surrounded.

The Helmand Province is the center of Afghanistan's opium trade, and in years past the Taliban has sought to control the area as a source of funding. Throughout the winter, the Taliban has focused on reclaiming the territory, and has proven quite effective at fighting off Afghan troops.