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## Blast near NATO headquarters in Kabul kills at least 6

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A suicide attacker set off a powerful explosion near NATO headquarters in one of the most heavily secured districts of Kabul on Saturday, killing at least six civilians, some of them street children.



The blast, which reverberated throughout the city's diplomatic quarter shortly before noon, came a day after the United States announced it was formally designating the Haqqani network, an offshoot of the Taliban, as a terrorist organization.

The Haqqanis threatened retaliatory moves against U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The Interior Ministry said it suspected the group had carried out Saturday's attack, the latest in a string of strikes against high-profile targets in the capital.

The NATO force said all its personnel were accounted for, with no military deaths or injuries from the explosion, which took place about 200 yards from its sprawling, highly fortified headquarters, in an area where a number of Western embassies are located.

Afghan authorities said that in addition to the six civilians who were killed, five were injured, with children among the casualties. Street urchins routinely gather outside the base's gates, begging for small change from foreigners going in and out, or selling items like chewing gum.

The bomber was thought to be young as well. Kabul deputy police chief Daud Ameen said the remains recovered from the scene suggested he may have been a teenager.

The attack coincided with public commemorations of the 11th anniversary of the death of Ahmad Shah Massoud, the Northern Alliance commander who was assassinated by Al Qaeda shortly before the Sept. 11 attacks. The alliance went on to fight alongside U.S. troops to topple the Taliban.

Massoud's death anniversary, which falls on Sept. 9, is usually marked by large street gatherings a few days beforehand.