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## Pakistani Taliban claims attack on foreigners

**Armed group says shooting at base camp of mountain Nanga Parbat, which killed 10, meant to avenge US drone strikes.**

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Pakistan's umbrella Taliban movement claimed responsibility for killing nine foreign climbers in the Himalayas, saying it had created a new wing to attack foreigners to avenge US drone strikes.

Gunmen had stormed a base camp on Saturday night in a remote part of northern Pakistan and killed nine tourists and one Pakistani guide who were part of a Nanga Parbat mountaineering expedition, police officials said.

Spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan telephoned the AFP news agency to say that the killings were intended to avenge the death of the second in command of the umbrella Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) in a US drone strike late last month.

"We did it and we claim responsibility for this attack," Ehsan said in the call from an undisclosed location.

"One of our factions, Junood ul-Hifsa, did it. It is to avenge the killing of Maulvi Wali ur-Rehman," he said.

"We want to convey to the world that this is our reply to US drone attacks," he added.

Rehman died on May 29 in a US drone attack on a house in North Waziristan, the most notorious

Taliban and al-Qaeda stronghold in Pakistan on the Afghan border.

Ehsan told AFP that Junood ul-Hifsa was a new wing set up by the Taliban "to attack foreigners and convey a message to the world against drone strikes".

### **Remote area**

Ali Sher, a senior police officer in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan province, told the Reuters news agency that the gunmen fled after the attack, which took place at about 1 a.m. local time on Sunday, Sher said.

Reuters said five Ukrainians, three Chinese a Russian and their guide were killed in the attack.

A senior government official said a large number of security personnel had been sent to the area.

Al Jazeera's Kamal Hyder, reporting from Islamabad, said that the attack took place at a base camp, 4000 metres above sea level, for the western face of the Nanga Parbat, one of the highest mountains in the world.

He said this is the first attack against foreigners in that region and the remoteness of the area made retrieval of bodies possible only by helicopter.

Hyder said that this incident puts Pakistan in a difficult situation as the country is planning to host other mountaineering expeditions this year.

Gilgit-Baltistan, which borders China and Kashmir, had been considered one of the more secure areas of Pakistan but has witnessed a spate of attacks by armed groups targeting members of Pakistan's Shia minority in recent years.