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Al Jazeera

Afghan blasts leave many dead

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The commander of a provincial Afghan police rapid reaction force has been killed in a suicide attack in Khost in eastern Afghanistan, sources have told Al Jazeera.

Saturday's attack, which killed Commander Zahir, also claimed the lives of two of his bodyguards.

Up to 16 others were wounded in the blast.

The attack occurred when a bomber blew himself up in front of the police unit's base,

Mohammad Yahqoob Mandozai, the Khost deputy police chief, told the AFP news agency.

"The suicide attacker who was waiting outside the base detonated himself as the vehicle carrying the police commander exited the base."

"The majority of them civilians have been injured," Mandozai said.

In another attack on the same day, Afghan authorities said a roadside bomb hit a bus in the south of the country, killing 15 people, including eight children.

The ministry of interior said the attack took place in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province. The ministry also said in a statement that one person was wounded in the blast.

Afghan forces are set to take increasing responsibility for security in the country as foreign combat troops withdraw in a process starting from July but not due to be completed until 2014.