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Al Jazeera

## Taliban attack Afghan air base

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A gun battle erupted outside the main Nato base in southern Afghanistan, after a suicide bomber blew himself up outside the gates and fighters attacked with small arms.

James Bays, Al Jazeera's correspondent in Afghanistan, said that "the information we are getting is that there was a suicide attack at one of the base's entrances" followed by an hour of fighting with small arms on Tuesday.

Witnesses inside the base also reported hearing what sounded like rocket explosions.

Fred De Mos, a Nato spokesman in Kandahar, said the one-hour assault started before mid-day on Tuesday and lasted about an hour before the attackers fled.

Katie Kendrick, a spokeswoman for Nato-led forces in Kabul, the Afghan capital, said "the suicide bomber failed to gain access and then detonated his explosives, killing himself. This appears to be an unsuccessful and unorganised attack".

### 'Complex attack'

Our correspondent, however, said it "seemed to be a complex attack by the Taliban".

Officials said six fighters were involved in the attack.

The air base had come under attack even the past. Taliban fighters attempted storm the air base on May 22, just a few days after they attacked Bagram Air Field, the main US base in the country.

Elsewhere, six Afghan private security guards were beheaded during a bank robbery in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Sherjan Durani, a police spokesman in Balkh province, said on Tuesday that an unknown number of robbers killed the guards and stole about \$269,000 in US and Afghan currency.