

Beat: Politics

NATO soldier shot dead in Afghanistan; volatile east

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USPA News - A coalition service member was killed Monday when he was shot by insurgents in eastern Afghanistan, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said. It raises the number of foreign troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 157. ISAF said one of its service members was killed when he was attacked by enemy forces in Afghanistan's eastern region, which is also home to the country's capital.

But because the multinational force defers the release of specific details to national authorities, no other details about the incident were available, including the exact location. "Due to operational security, it is ISAF policy not to discuss wounded ISAF personnel or the province where the incident happened," a coalition spokesperson said when asked for details and whether any attackers had been killed. "At this moment, we have no operational reporting regarding enemy forces killed." The nationality of the service member involved was also not immediately disclosed by ISAF, again per its policy. Monday's death raises the number of coalition troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 157, according to official figures. A total of 402 ISAF troops were killed in Afghanistan in 2012, down from 566 fatalities in 2011 and 711 in 2010. A majority of the fallen troops were American and were killed in the country's south, which is plagued by IED attacks on troops and civilians. Last week, six U.S. service members were killed when their Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crashed in Now Bahar district of Zabul province, located in Afghanistan's volatile southern region that was the birthplace of the Taliban movement nearly two decades ago. ISAF said the cause of the crash remains under investigation but noted there were no reports of enemy activity at the time of the crash. There are currently more than 84,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, including some 60,000 U.S. troops and 7,900 British soldiers. The UN Security Council in October extended ISAF's authorization for a final time, as all foreign combat troops are due to leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014. In June, Afghan President Hamid Karzai announced the fifth and final phase of security transition in which coalition forces hand over control of the remaining 95 districts - including Taliban stronghold areas in the south and east - to Afghan security forces. ISAF will still be responsible for military air support as well as support in combat operations until the end of 2014.

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