

9 Afghans Killed Ahead of Election; Taliban Are Blamed

By CARLOTTA GALL

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KABUL, Afghanistan, Sept. 4 - Another election candidate and eight other people were killed in Afghanistan in several attacks, officials said today, blaming Taliban militants.

This was the second day of multiple attacks around the country, and they raised fears that the Taliban were continuing to step up their campaign of violence in an effort to disrupt elections in two weeks.

Habibullah Khan, a candidate from Garmser district in the southern province of Helmand, was killed when his car hit a landmine, said the deputy police chief of Helmand, Col. Muhammad Ayub. "He lost his leg and we brought him to the Emergency Hospital in the capital and he died at noon," Mr. Ayub said.

He was the fifth candidate to be killed in the period leading up to the Sept. 18 elections for parliament and provincial councils. A sixth candidate was abducted in the neighboring province of Kandahar on Saturday and is thought to have been killed, a police officer in Kandahar said. The Taliban claimed responsibility for abducting and killing five people on Saturday, including the candidate and a local district chief.

In another incident in Helmand this morning, a district police chief, Amanullah Khan, his son and two bodyguards, were killed in an ambush by suspected Taliban insurgents in Dushi, toward the border with [Pakistan](#), Colonel Ayub said.

"Normally, Taliban are crossing the border. Several groups have come recently, according to our information," Colonel Ayub said. "The first are placing mines, killing people and soft targets, and others are attacking government targets. We are trying our best to stop them. We have been discovering five to six mines a day," he said.

In the neighboring province of Zabul, government officials reported two attacks overnight by suspected Taliban. Gunmen attacked a police checkpoint on the main Kabul-Kandahar road, killing one policeman and wounding another. Citing the police, Gulab Shah Ali Khel, a spokesman for the governor, said the authorities killed one Taliban attacker and wounded six others. Three policeman were also killed in an attack on a supply convoy heading for the American base in Zabul, another official, told Agence France-Presse.