

ISIS claims responsibility for attack on Pakistan consulate in Jalalabad

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Kabul: The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for an attack on a Pakistani consulate in eastern Afghanistan today, which Afghan officials said left at least seven members of the security forces dead.

In a statement translated by the SITE Intelligence Group, US monitors of militant groups, the "Khorasan Province of the Islamic State" said three of its "soldiers" attacked the consulate in Jalalabad, capital of the volatile province of Nangarhar, which borders Pakistan. It claimed to have killed "dozens" of consulate staff.

Afghan officials said seven members of the security forces were killed in the attack. Attaullah Khyogani, spokesman for the governor of Nangarhar province, said another seven people were injured during the attack, which began when a suicide bomber detonated explosives outside the consulate in the provincial capital Jalalabad and ended with a gun battle between Afghan security forces and militants.

He said that three attackers were killed, including the one who had detonated explosives on his body at around 9 AM. The siege ended when the two gunmen, who had taken position in a guesthouse close to the consulate, were killed at around 12.30 PM local time, Khyogani said.

Hazrat Hussein Mashraqiwal, the spokesman for the provincial police chief, said the dead included three police and two intelligence service officers, one each from the army and border police. Seven people were wounded, including three civilians, he said.

It was the first insurgent-style attack on a Pakistan embassy or consulate in Afghanistan, an official at the Pakistani embassy said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Pakistani government properties have come under attack in the past during protests by Afghans angry at Islamabad's perceived support for the Taliban, who have waged war on the Kabul administration for more than 14 years.

The scene of the attack is close to a hospital and schools as well as the Indian consulate. The schools were evacuated, officials said.

The Pakistani consulate is usually busy during morning rush hour as people queue for visas. The suicide bomber joined the visa queue before blowing himself up, officials said.

The embassy official said all consular staff were evacuated. In Islamabad, the foreign affairs ministry condemned what it called "the terrorist attack" on its Jalalabad consulate and requested a thorough investigation.

- PTI