

At least 7 dead in suicide blast in Afghan capital Kabul

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A government spokesperson said the bomber appeared to have intended to attack crowds gathered for the anniversary celebrations of the death of Abdul Ali Mazari, a Hazara political leader.

Afghan security forces keep watch near the site of an explosion in Kabul on March 9, 2018. (AFP File)

Kabul: A suicide bomber blew himself up in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Friday, killing at least seven people in an attack apparently intended to hit crowds gathered to commemorate a political leader from the mainly Shiâ€™ite Hazara minority, officials said.

One policeman and six civilians were killed and seven civilians wounded when the bomber was stopped at a security checkpoint, said Nasrat Rahimi, a deputy interior ministry spokesman.

He said the bomber appeared to have intended to attack crowds gathered for the anniversary celebrations of the death of Abdul Ali Mazari, a Hazara political leader killed by the Taliban in 1995.

A string of attacks on Shiâ€™ite mosques and Hazara gatherings has been claimed by an affiliate of Islamic State, although many Afghan and Western security officials say they doubt the group works alone.

In December, dozens of people were killed in a suicide attack on a Shiâ€™ite cultural centre claimed by Islamic State and two months earlier two separate mosque attacks killed at least 72 people.

The attack came less than two weeks after President Ashraf Ghani called on the Taliban to join peace talks to end more than 16 years of the latest phase of Afghan war.

- Reuters