Sailor, Marines Killed in Kabul Terrorist Attack



UK coalition forces, Turkish coalition forces, and U.S. Marines assist a child during an evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Kabul, Afghanistan, Aug. 20. At least 13 U.S. military personnel were killed and 15 wounded in a suicide bomb attack six days later. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Staff Sgt. Victor Mancilla*
This report was updated on Aug. 27.

ARLINGTON, Va. – A suicide bomber attacked a gate at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, Aug. 26, killing 13 U.S. military personnel and wounding at least 15 others, U.S. military officials said.

Killed were 11 Marines and one Sailor, according to official statements as of 27 Aug. A press report said that the 13th military person killed was a soldier. The service identities of the 15 wounded personnel have not been announced yet, pending notification of next of kin, though some are confirmed to be Marines, according to the HQMC statement.

The units of the dead and wounded have not been announced. The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, staged from the USS Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group, had dispatched Marines to Kabul in mid-August as part of the U.S. forces deployed to the Kabul airport to evacuate Americans and certain Afghan nationals who had helped with the U.S. war effort.

The attack is believed to have been conducted by ISIS-K, rather than the Taliban, said Marine Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., commander, U.S. Central Command, speaking Aug. 26 via internet link to reporters at the Pentagon. At least 79 other people were killed at the scene of the attack, which included small arms fire as well as a suicide vest.

A second attack thought to have occurred at the Baron Hotel near the airport turned out not to have occurred, said Army Maj. Gen. William "Hank" Taylor, the Joint Staff's deputy director of regional operations, in an Aug. 27 briefing to reporters.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III issued the following statement:

"On behalf of the men and women of the Department of Defense, I express my deepest condolences to the loved ones and teammates of all those killed and wounded in Kabul today.

"Terrorists took their lives at the very moment these troops were trying to save the lives of others.

"We mourn their loss. We will treat their wounds. And we will support their families in what will most assuredly be devastating grief.

"But we will not be dissuaded from the task at hand.

"To do anything less – especially now – would dishonor the purpose and sacrifice these men and women have rendered our country and the people of Afghanistan."

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday also memorialized in the following statement the Navy and Marine Corps personnel lost in the attacks:

"This is a solemn day for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps team. Those warriors who died gave their lives to save thousands of men, women and children, Americans and Afghans alike.

"Their courage and selflessness represent the highest ideals of America. We pay solemn tribute to their sacrifice.

"To the families and loved ones who grieve – you are not alone. We stand beside you in this pain, humbled by the loss of these heroes, grateful that individuals of such valor chose

to serve among us.”

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger issued the following statement:

“It is with extremely heavy hearts that we learned several Marines and other service members were killed and wounded in the Kabul attacks today. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families as they are notified of this devastating loss.

“These fallen heroes answered the call to go into harm’s way to do the honorable work of helping others. We are proud of their service and deeply saddened by their loss. As we mourn, we also keep those who are still over there protecting Americans and our Afghan partners at the forefront of our thoughts. Our Marines will continue the mission, carrying on our Corps’ legacy of always standing ready to meet the challenges of every extraordinary task our Nation requires of her Marines.

“I am continually humbled by the courage and warrior spirit exhibited every day by Marines across the globe. The sacrifices Marines make on behalf of freedom must never go unnoticed or unappreciated. I ask that you keep these Marines and service members, and especially their families, in your thoughts and prayers.”