



Western forces have accidentally killed seven civilians in an air attack in the Afghan province of Helmand, the governor's office there has said.

Nato said it ordered the attack on Friday after hearing that a Taliban leader and several of his subordinates were travelling in two vehicles. The car that was targeted had exploded next to another carrying the civilians. Three children were among those killed. The air strike took place in the Naw Zad district.

Two men, two women and three children were killed in the attack, the office of the provincial governor said.

The Nato-led International Security Assistance Force said it was targeting a Taliban leader and other militants, but Isaf spokesman Major Tim James could not confirm whether the Taliban chief was present.

Helmand is one of the biggest flashpoints in the Taliban insurgency, which began after a US-led invasion brought down their regime in 2001.

Nine children died in another Nato air strike in eastern Kunar province earlier this month.

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