

Beat: Miscellaneous

Pakistani Taliban militants execute 21 paramilitary soldiers

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USPA News - Pakistani Taliban militants have executed 21 members of a paramilitary force after they were kidnapped on Thursday from their posts near the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar, officials said on Sunday. Two other officers survived.

Naveed Akbar Khan, a senior official in the region, said the bodies were discovered on early Sunday morning after one of the kidnapped service members managed to escape and alert local tribesmen. Another service member, identified as Amanullah Khan, was found alive but remains in a critical condition. Reached by telephone, other officials said the 21 service members were tied up and blindfolded when they were lined up and executed one by one by being shot in the head. Some of the service members, who were all members of a paramilitary force known as Levies, are believed to have suffered multiple gunshot wounds. The group was kidnapped on early Thursday morning when Taliban militants armed with rocket-launchers, hand grenades and automatic weapons attacked two Levies posts in Frontier Region Peshawar. In addition to the 23 Levies being kidnapped, two other service members were also killed during the initial attack. A spokesman for the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is best known as the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility. In a statement, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari strongly condemned the massacre and ordered his security forces to bring the culprits to justice. He expressed his sympathies to the families of the service members and praised the victims for sacrificing their lives for the struggle against militants. United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he was appalled by what he described as "escalating terrorist violence" in Pakistan. "These cruel acts of violence cannot be justified by any cause or grievance. Their perpetrators should be brought to justice," Ban's spokesman said.

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