

# Georgia Minister Visits Afghanistan After 7 Deaths

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KABUL — Georgia's defense minister visited his troops in Afghanistan on Friday, a day after seven Georgian soldiers were killed in a huge truck bomb blast at their base in the deadliest single attack on international forces this year.

Defense Minister Irakli Alasania cut short an official visit to Brussels on Thursday to travel to Afghanistan. A statement from the former Soviet republic's defense ministry said Alasania met with his Afghan counterpart, Bismillah Khan Mohammadi and visited troops wounded in the bombing.

Afghan official Mohammad Omar Zwark said a suicide attacker drove the truck into the entrance of the camp in Helmand province Thursday in Now-e-Zad district and detonated it.

"It was a huge truck full of explosives," Zwark said. "The blast was very strong."

The explosion at the outer wall caused a building inside to collapse, killing the Georgians, NATO spokesman Col. Thomas Collins said.

All seven killed were members of the same Georgian unit, which had been deployed in Afghanistan only since April, the country's defense ministry said.

Georgia, which has aspirations of joining NATO, has 1,545 troops serving in Afghanistan.

*(AP)*

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