Three Australian Diggers wounded in a shooting attack in Afghanistan

Three Australian soldiers have been seriously wounded and two of their Afghan partners have sustained minor wounds in an incident involving an Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier in eastern Uruzgan yesterday afternoon (Tuesday, 8 November 2011 local Afghan time).

The soldiers were members of Mentoring Task Force -3 (MTF-3), operating with their Afghan partners at a patrol base in the Charmestan region, north east of Tarin Kot when an ANA soldier located in an overwatch position opened fire on the troops using an automatic weapon and a grenade launcher.

All five wounded soldiers were treated at the scene then aero medically evacuated to the Role 2 hospital at Multi National Base – Tarin Kot.

The three Australians were subsequently transferred to the ISAF Role 3 medical facility at Kandahar Airfield for emergency treatment.

The Chief of the Defence Force, General David Hurley said the three Australian soldiers remain in a serious condition.

"The wounded soldiers' families have now been informed and Defence is working to support them."

"Assisting the families is always our highest priority following the treatment and care of the wounded," General Hurley said.

The two Afghan soldiers are listed as satisfactory.

The offending ANA soldier, who was a member of the 3rd Kandak, fled in an ANA vehicle.

"He was initially pursued by ANA members at the patrol base and an operation is currently underway aimed at apprehending him."

"Immediately following the incident Brigadier General Mohammed Zafar Khan ordered that members of the 3rd Kandak at Patrol Base Nasir be disarmed and confined to barracks," General Hurley said.
Additional MTF personnel from a nearby patrol base have moved forward to Patrol Base Nasir and are providing security and overwatch.

"I understand the reaction many Australians will have to news of this latest incident so soon after the deaths of three soldiers in similar circumstances, however it is too early to speculate whether these two incidents are linked.

“At this time the motive for the shooting is unknown,” General Hurley said.

Combined Australian and Afghan investigations into the shooting incident are now underway.

32 Australian soldiers have been killed during operations in Afghanistan.

212 Australian Defence Force members have been wounded during operations in Afghanistan.

47 Australian Defence Force members have been wounded in Afghanistan during 2011.

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