Beat: News

U.S. forces rescue kidnapped American doctor in Afghanistan

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USPA News - Seven Taliban insurgents were killed Sunday in a successful operation by U.S. special forces to rescue an American doctor who had been abducted in eastern Afghanistan, officials said. A U.S. service member was also killed in the operation.

Morning Star Development, a non-profit community and economic development organization, said three of its staff members were kidnapped at about 3:30 p.m. local time on Wednesday while the group was returning from a visit to one of the organization`s medical clinics in eastern Kabul province. "They were stopped and captured while driving, by a group of armed men. They were eventually taken to a mountainous area about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the Pakistan border," a spokesperson for the organization said in a statement. The abduction had previously not been made public out of security concerns. Contact between the captors, described by the U.S. military as members of the Taliban, and Morning Star`s crisis management team led to the release of two of the hostages on early Saturday morning. The two hostages, whose identities were not released because they both live and work in the area, safely reached a local police station where they contacted Morning Star Development and their families. But despite the safe release, American doctor Dilip Joseph, of Colorado Springs, Colorado, remained in the custody of his captors amidst increasing concerns that his life was in danger. U.S. General John R. Allen, the commander of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), ordered a rescue operation on early Sunday when intelligence showed that Joseph was in imminent danger of injury or death. The operation was successful as an elite U.S. special forces team was able to rescue Joseph uninjured and take him to Bagram Airfield north of Kabul. But U.S. President Barack Obama later announced the rescue came at a cost, confirming the death of a U.S. service member from the Navy`s Special Warfare Development Group, more commonly known as SEAL Team Six. "Our special operators in Afghanistan rescued an American citizen in a mission that was characteristic of the extraordinary courage, skill and patriotism that our troops show every day," Obama said. "Tragically, we lost one of our special operators in this effort. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family, just as we must always honor our troops and military families. He gave his life for his fellow Americans, and he and his teammates remind us once more of the selfless service that allows our nation to stay strong, safe and free." U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta commended the members of the elite special forces team and said he was "deeply saddened" to learn that an American service member had been killed. "The special operators who conducted this raid knew they were putting their lives on the line to free a fellow American from the enemy`s grip," he said. "They put the safety of another American ahead of their own, as so many of our brave warriors do every day and every night." Panetta, who extended his condolences to the deceased`s family, teammates and friends, added: "In this fallen hero, and all of our special operators, Americans see the highest ideals of citizenship, sacrifice and service upheld. The torch of freedom burns brighter because of them." Morning Star Development said Joseph was reported to be in a good condition but remained at Bagram Airfield on Sunday to undergo precautionary examinations and debriefing before returning to his Colorado Springs home. "His family was notified of his safe rescue very shortly after he was freed," the organization said.

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