

Fighting flares in Pakistan's Swat valley

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Fighting between Pakistani troops and Islamic militants has resumed in the Swat valley as a cease-fire in effect since Monday disintegrated. Pakistan's English-language Dawn newspaper reported Thursday some 2,500 security forces, sent to regain control of the once-popular tourist region of ancient Buddhist sites from a fiery pro-Taliban cleric, used helicopter gunships to attack the militants' positions. The military said in a statement as many as 70 militants had been killed, Geo TV reported. The report said the tenuous cease-fire came apart after militants set fire to a police post and attacked a health clinic. Separately, a police station at another location reportedly came under rocket attack. A senior local official told Dawn the militants had set up check points in some of the areas to abduct government officials returning home. More people began fleeing their homes with the resumption of fighting, the report said. The Swat district is being overrun by militants led by Maulana Fazlullah, who uses radio broadcasts to urge his followers to attack the troops.

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