

Pakistan goes after radical cleric

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - The Pakistani government launched a military operation Thursday against a radical Islamic cleric in the Swat Valley. Eight people were killed, including Maulana Fazlullah's second in command, The Pak Tribune reported. More than 20 suspected militants were captured. Government troops entered Mam Dherai and occupied an under-construction madrasa. They also blew up Fazlullah's house and that of a spokesman for his group. The two men had moved their families elsewhere and the houses were empty. The Tribune said sources described helicopter gunships being used against suspected militant hideouts. The government said militants in the area had been driven into the mountains. The Swat Valley, a former princely state, was a popular tourist destination. But Fazlullah, nicknamed Mullah Radio for his use of illegal broadcasting, had set up a parallel government backed by hundreds of militant fighters.

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