

Airstrikes kill 16-20 Taliban fighters

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Airstrikes in a border region of western Pakistan killed between 16 and 20 Taliban fighters, but their commander escaped, officials said.

A Taliban spokesman told CNN the Sunday airstrikes in the Orukzai Agency killed 16 fighters and Pakistani army officers put the toll at 20.

There was no immediate report on the identify of the attacking planes.

The target of the attack, Taliban commander Mulvi Hakimullah Mehsud, escaped unharmed, Pakistani army spokesman Qari Muhammad said.

A Pakistani intelligence official confirmed that Mehsud was the target.

Mehsud on Saturday claimed responsibility for a suicide car-bombing on a convoy of Pakistani security forces in which at least 28 people died and 30 were wounded. The blast occurred in the Hangu region, which borders Orukzai.

Officials said most of the casualties were soldiers and police.

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