

Commander: Soldier couldn't be saved

by UPI

KABUL, Afghanistan - The commander of Finland's peacekeeping forces in northern Afghanistan said a faster medical response would not have saved a soldier killed by a bomb.

"He was so close to the explosion and received such serious injuries, that he could not have been saved even if he had been put immediately on a helicopter and flown to a hospital," Lt. Col. Ali Mattola told Helsingin Sanomat of St. Petri Immonen.

Mattola, whose Maimana-based troops serve under Norwegian command in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, was responding to Norway's allegation that rescue helicopters took too long to reach Immonen. The Norwegians have called for a larger investment in medical response in the region.

Mattola said the medical service in Maimana is adequate and the Norwegian allegation stems from a dispute over medical spending.

"Let us say that in this situation, the medical response was just what we had expected. No kinds of investments would have saved the Finnish peacekeeper," he told Helsingin Sanomat.

The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the bomb that killed Immonen Wednesday.

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