

## Taliban releases seven remaining hostages

*by UPI*

SEOUL - The Taliban released its seven remaining South Korean hostages Thursday, ending a 43-day Afghanistan hostage crisis without a ransom being paid, a report said. South Korea promised to follow through with plans to pull its 200 troops from Afghanistan by the year's end as well as ban any more Christian missionaries from traveling to the war-torn country, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported. Taliban fighters seized 23 South Korean missionaries on July 18 and killed two of them. Two women with health problems were later released and 12 hostages were freed Wednesday. Ghanzi province tribal elders told Yonhap by phone that they had custody of the seven missionaries and would deliver them to the International Red Cross in the nearby Zabul province. South Korean officials denied any money changed hands to secure the hostage release, Yonhap said.

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