SITUATIONAL REPORTS

Taliban Says It Destroyed Two ISIS-K Strongholds in the Surghar Shalman area as Tensions Rise

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EXECUTIVE BRIEF & KEY FINDINGS

Reports from Al-Mirsaad, a media outlet often linked to Afghan Taliban sources, say that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has struck and destroyed two Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIS-K) camps in eastern border regions, reflecting deepening security concerns amid ongoing regional instability.

According to the report, Taliban forces targeted a militant centre in the Surghar Shalman area, reducing it to rubble. The outlet claimed several key ISIS fighters were killed in the strike, though no independent verification of casualties is available. The operation was described as part of broader counter-terror activities in Tirah Valley, a mountainous area long contested by insurgent groups. Video material shared by Al-Mirsaad shows armed ISIS fighters being hit with precision strikes carried out with night-vision equipment, suggesting the use of advanced targeting technology.

The same sources said another series of attacks focused on positions held by ISIS-K fighters in the Tora Dara area, where militants allegedly came under assault with laser-guided weapons while attempting to flee. These reported engagements mark one of the most publicised Taliban offensives against ISIS-K elements since the group's resurgence in parts of eastern Afghanistan. (Khaama Press)

ISIS-K remains a major security threat in Afghanistan. United Nations estimates suggest the group maintains a force of roughly 2,000 fighters, and the faction has carried out high-profile attacks in cities like Kabul as well as remote valleys such as Nangarhar and Kunar. (Khaama Press)

The Taliban refers to ISIS-K as “Khawarij,” a derogatory term indicating ideological enemies. The rivalry between the Taliban and Islamic State predates the fall of Kabul in 2021, with repeated clashes reported in eastern provinces. ISIS-K opposes the Taliban’s rule and seeks to impose its own extremist model, leading to frequent violent encounters between the two groups.

In addition to direct conflict with Taliban forces, there have been accusations that Pakistan has played a role in the regional militant landscape involving ISIS affiliates. Afghan Taliban officials, including a deputy foreign minister, previously claimed that elements within Pakistan were hosting or even training ISIS operatives and then sending them into Afghanistan to target the Taliban. These allegations include claims that some ISIS fighters arrested in Afghanistan confessed to having received training in Pakistani territory, particularly in areas near Quetta. Islamabad has consistently denied these accusations. (Afghanistan International)

Such claims add a layer of complexity to the security environment, where daily clashes between insurgent groups and national forces compound longstanding disputes between neighbouring states and militant networks. While official confirmation is limited, regional intelligence and militant recruits’ testimonies have at times pointed to cross-border training and movement of fighters, a concern that both Kabul and Islamabad have been forced to address. (Moneycontrol)

The Taliban’s recent reported strikes on ISIS-K facilities in Tirah and Tora Dara follow a pattern of intense pressure on the group, whose fighters reportedly use rugged terrain to evade persistent offensives. The destruction of these two camps, if verified independently, would signal a significant tactical blow to ISIS-K’s organizational footprint in those districts, and reflect the continued clash between rival extremist factions competing for influence in Afghanistan’s borderlands.