Meanwhile, the Afghan Interior Ministry said it had arrested the commander of the Taliban's Zabul province. The arrests came after direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban were launched on Wednesday.

The government said it hoped the talks would eventually lead to a peace and reconciliation process.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed the arrests and said the Taliban would extend a conditional surrender to the government.

"We invite the government to enter into a dialogue and we are ready to extend a surrender to them," he said.

Referring to the Taliban's ongoing peace talks, the Interior Ministry said it also comes at a time of heightened security in Afghanistan after the recent rise in Taliban attacks.

At least 125 Afghan volunteers reportedly lost their lives last weekend.

On Feb. 10, two policemen were killed and nine injured after four suicide bombers attacked a police checkpoint near the capital, Kabul.

On Feb. 6, eight civilians were killed and nine injured in an attack on a police checkpoint near the capital.

On Jan. 20, up to seven media workers and a policeman were killed in a targeted killing.

On Jan. 13, seven security personnel were killed and 38 injured in a suicide bombing attack near a security checkpoint.

On Jan. 11, three security personnel were killed and eight injured in a suicide bombing attack near a checkpoint.

On Jan. 9, two security personnel were killed and six injured in a suicide attack near a checkpoint.

On Jan. 7, two security personnel were killed and six injured in a suicide attack near a checkpoint.

On Jan. 6, two security personnel were killed and six injured in a suicide attack near a checkpoint.

On Jan. 4, one suicide bomber was killed in a suicide attack on a government checkpoint in Nangarhar province.

On Jan. 3, gunmen seized a building at the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Empowerment in Kabul, killing one security force soldier and injuring nine others.

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