

Afghan army commander in Kandahar asks Kabul for extra troops

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MAY 14, 2008 AT 6:31 AM EDT

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN — The commander of Afghan army troops in Kandahar has asked his country's Defence Ministry to send two more battalions of soldiers to the troubled southern province.

Brig.-Gen. Gul Aqa Naibi, who is in charge of the Afghan 205 Corps, made the request to the chief of army staff and he's hopeful it will be granted.

He says the addition of two more infantry battalions — called kandaks — to the three already on the ground would allow him to provide security for the whole province.

Brig.-Gen Guy Laroche, who formally stepped down Wednesday as commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, says more Afghan troops would definitely help.

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The fledgling Afghan army has been carrying more of the fight against the Taliban in rural areas outside of Kandahar, with Canadian troops playing a supporting role.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said Canada's best hope to eventually withdraw from the war-torn country involves getting Afghans to take over more of their own security.

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