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Statement on situation around Kandahar

By THE CANADIAN PRESS

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - Text of a statement released Tuesday by Lt.-Col. Dave Corbould, commanding officer of the battle group of 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, on the situation in the Arghandab district and Kandahar city:

As most of you are aware, The government of Afghanistan and ISAF have recently augmented forces deployed in Kandahar city and the Arghandab area in response to Insurgent claims and public fears of increased violence.

This show of force, which includes Canadian soldiers, involves increased security patrolling and checkpoints throughout the provincial capital and the Arghandab district to ensure stability and public safety.

The movement of troops has taken place without significant incident thus far, and it is clear that Kandahar city remains firmly under the control of the Afghan government and its people. Indeed, having just returned from the Arghandab district centre, I can tell you that there were no obvious signs of insurgent activity. While this does not mean the Taliban are not there, they just do not appear to have the foothold that they have apparently claimed.

The strong insurgent claims, however, have intimidated some people in the region. This may have caused the local population to exaggerate accounts of insurgent activity and given what citizens have experienced in past years, we understand their concerns.

The recent events at Sarposha Prison also increased the potential threat levels. However, the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF have taken firm steps to maintain overall security.

For example, the Afghan National Police recently detected and neutralized two bicycle-borne IEDs before they did any harm. This is but one example of several other devices that have been neutralized as a result of good policing, and equally important, a result of the local population taking ownership of the situation and reporting on those who are up to no good. I believe the steady reporting by citizens is having a direct impact on insurgent activities.

In augmenting forces to address a potential increased security threat, the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF continue to demonstrate we have the capability, responsiveness, and mobility required to deal with the threats posed by insurgents.