Beat: Miscellaneous

Afghan militants release Kyrgyzstani hostage after 1.5 month

-, 12.06.2013, 20:01 Time

USPA News - Taliban insurgents have released a Kyrgyzstani hostage who was abducted in late April after a Turkish military helicopter made an emergency landing in eastern Afghanistan, officials said on Wednesday. Two other people are still being held captive.

Nurgazy Konushbekov, 47, was among eleven people who were abducted on April 21 after their Turkish military helicopter, carrying supplies for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), made an emergency landing in the Mangal Pass area of Azra district, located in eastern Logar province. The Kyrgyz National Security Committee said Wednesday that Konushbekov was released on Sunday after negotiations between representatives of the committee and the leadership of the Taliban. He arrived back in Kyrgyzstan on Wednesday while accompanied by members of the committee. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed the insurgent group had released Konushbekov. "The citizen of Kyrgyzstan ... has been released after a formal request from Kyrgyzstan as well as a decision by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate (Taliban) due to good intention, human compassion and Islamic sympathy," he said. In an interview with Kyrgyzstan`s 24 news agency, Konushbekov, who is Muslim, thanked his government for their efforts and said he was treated well during his captivity. "They treated me like a guest, feeding [me] with their food. I could move freely, there were no restrictions," he was quoted as saying. "I thank the government, especially the State National Security Committee, who cared about me." With the earlier release of eight Turkish engineers, a Russian and an Afghan interpreter are still being held by the militants although it is not clear if any demands for their release have been made. The April incident marked the largest abduction of foreigners in Afghanistan in recent years.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1105/afghan-militants-release-kyrgyzstani-hostage-after-15-month.html

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619