

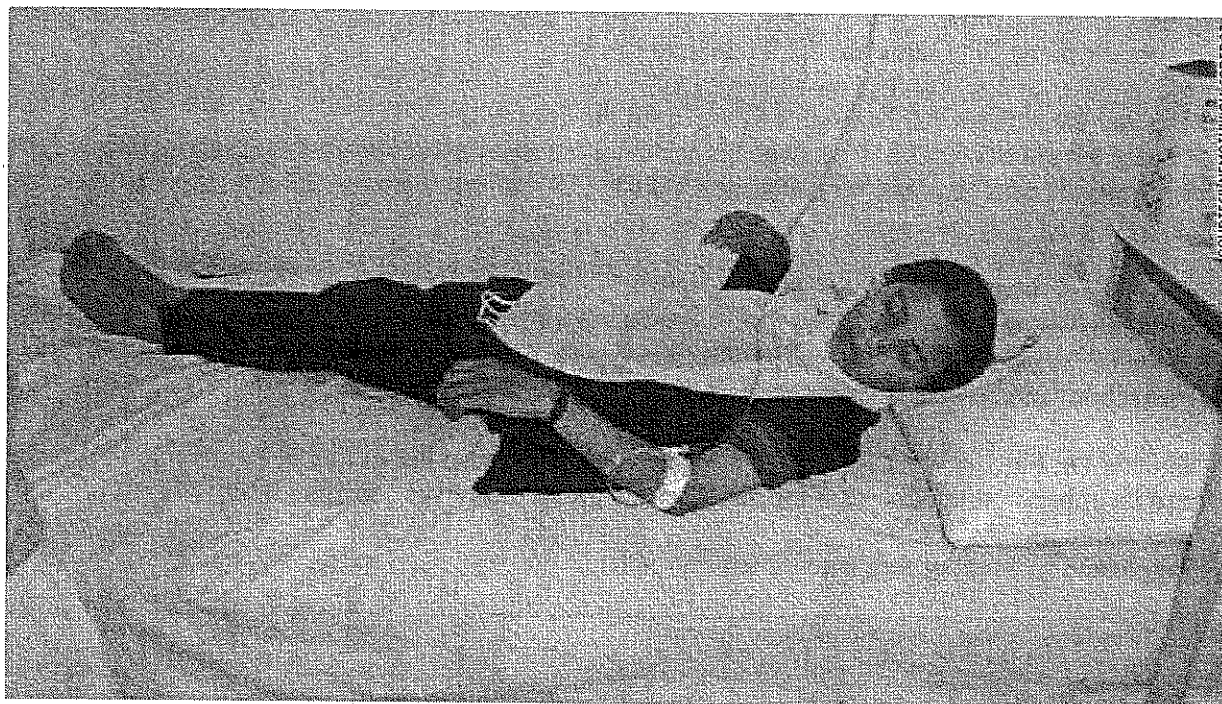
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Official: 122 girls, 3 teachers poisoned at Afghan school - CNN.com

From Nick Paton Walsh, CNN

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Kabul, Afghanistan (CNN) -- More than 120 girls and three teachers were admitted to an Afghanistan hospital Wednesday after being poisoned in their classes with a type of spray, a Takhar provincial official said.

The incident occurred in the

provincial capital of Talokhan, in the Bibi Hajera girls school, said Dr. Hafizullah Safi, director of public health for the northern Afghanistan province.

Forty of the 122 girls were still hospitalized, he said, with symptoms including dizziness, vomiting, headaches and loss of consciousness.

Blood samples have been sent to Kabul in an effort to determine the substance used, he said.

"A number of girls from 15 to 18 were brought from a school to hospital today," said hospital director Dr. Habibullah Rostaqi.

Taliban take forceful control of schools
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"Generally they are not in a critical condition. We are looking after them, but let's see what happens later. We understand so far from the situation ... they are more traumatized."

"The Afghan people know that the terrorists and the Taliban are doing these things to threaten girls and stop them going to school," said Khalilullah Aseer, spokesman for Takhar police. "That's something we and the people believe. Now we are implementing democracy in Afghanistan and we want girls to be educated, but the government's enemies don't want this."

Taliban tightens grip on Afghan schools

There have been several instances of girls being poisoned in schools in recent years. In April, also in Takhar province, more than 170 women and girls were hospitalized after drinking apparently poisoned well water at a school. Local health officials blamed the acts on extremists opposed to women's education.

While nearly all the incidents involve girls, earlier this month nearly 400 boys at a school in Khost province fell ill after drinking water from a well that a health official said may have been poisoned.