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ASIA/AFGHANISTAN - The Taliban attack girls' schools in order to force the closure

Kabul (Agenzia Fides) - More than 120 students and 3 teachers have been intoxicated in the second attack reported after months in Afghanistan by radical conservatives in the north of the country. According to the Afghan police and school officials, a type of unidentified toxic material was used to contaminate the air of the students' classes, leaving dozens unconscious in the province of Takhar. The National Security Forces, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), argue that the Taliban, who are against education for girls, are trying to create panic in schools with the aim to close them down by 2014. Sources of the local Ministry of Education recently reported that 550 in 11 provinces where the Taliban have strong support have been closed. Last month, always in the province of Takhar 150 students were poisoned after drinking infected water. Since 2001, when the Taliban were overthrown by Afghan forces backed by the United States, three million girls are back in school. Under the dominion of the rebels, women could not work or study. Unfortunately, periodic attacks against students, teachers and school buildings are still occurring, especially in more conservative areas of the south and east of the country where the Taliban are strongest. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 25/5/2012)

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