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## Baitullah Mehsood gets warm welcome as he appears amid death rumours

[2008-10-03 3:33:50 PM GMT]

WANA: Chief of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Baitullah Mehsood was accorded warm welcome by people of his tribe on Friday when he appeared in a remote village to quash media reports about his death.

Local and some Western media reported that Baitullah Mehsood died of illness on Tuesday in his base South Waziristan tribal region.

Spokesman for TTP Maulvi Umar and family had denied death rumours.

Baitullah is accused of masterminding suicide attacks against the security forces and is also wanted for allegedly having hands in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

Armed tribesmen from Mehsood tribe and local Taliban fired shots from rocket launchers and automatic weapons as Baitullah appeared in a small village 'Saam' to nullify his death reports, witnesses said.

The TTP leader, who was being protected by his armed guards, was accorded a heroic welcome by the people and was presented a traditional turban and garland, they said.

Mehsood also visited some other areas in South Waziristan, including Ladha, Kani Garam, Salai Rogha and Badr and the tribesmen hugged him while standing in lines. Several were seen kissing his hands amid heavy firing in the air, they said.

**Tufan Burki, a local political leader from 'Tehrik-e-Insaf' presented him tradition tribal turban and garland.**

Speakers on the occasion said they were very concerned as the local and foreign media aired and published baseless news about Baitullah's death over the past two days.

"We were concerned and that is why tribal elders decided to arrange visit for Baitullah to prove his death's reports as baseless and the tribesmen see themselves that he is alive," they said.

They condemned media reports 'as anti-Baitullah propaganda' under a conspiracy and said some private TV channels and other media organizations are indulged in irresponsible reporting.

**\*end\***

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