

Left behind: The rights of victims in the aftermath of decades of armed conflict in Afghanistan

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Introduction

Afghans have paid the price for the decades of conflict affecting their country. Victims of the conflict have, for the most part, been left to deal with the aftermath without justice, reparation or even any acknowledgement of what happened to them.

From January 2009¹ until the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021, UNAMA documented more than 40,000 civilians killed and more than 77,000 wounded as a result of the armed conflict. Victims have reported that little was done to fulfil their rights in the aftermath of incidents.² Efforts at the domestic and international levels to hold perpetrators to account have been limited and faced numerous barriers.

States have obligations under both international human rights law and international humanitarian law to ensure investigation and prosecution of violations, ensure reparations for victims and prevent recurrence of violations.³

As the current duty bearers of Afghanistan's international human rights obligations, the *de facto* authorities bear additional responsibilities to ensure the progressive realization of the economic, social and cultural rights of the population, to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and to ensure equality and non-discrimination for all.

Executive summary

This report presents the findings of research undertaken by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan Human Rights Service (UNAMA) in 2024 and 2025 to highlight the experiences and needs of victims of the armed conflict in Afghanistan. The report focuses primarily on the period from the United States-led military intervention in 2001 until the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021. It is based on interviews with 195 victims of armed conflict and their relatives, 23 non-governmental organisations working to address the needs of victims of armed conflict, and 23 *de facto* officials.

This work was undertaken in accordance with the UNAMA mandate, which is received from the United Nations Security Council,⁴ and includes – in addition to the promotion and protection of human rights – promoting responsible governance and the rule of law, including transitional justice, and providing support for the rights of victims.

¹ UNAMA commenced systematically recording civilian casualties due to the armed conflict in 2009.

² UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021). Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

³ ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rules 158, 150.

⁴ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2626 (2022), extended by Resolution 2777 (2025).

Victims' voices⁵

Impact of the conflict

- **Over half of interviewees (58 percent) said they experienced physical harm as a result of incidents.**⁶ In many cases, this physical harm continued to impact their lives for months, years or even decades after the incident took place. Victims continue to live with chronic pain and have ongoing medical needs which they said are difficult to meet due to financial barriers and/or lack of available health care in Afghanistan. Some, as a result of being injured, had acquired disabilities which prevented them from continuing their education and work. In some instances, family members had been required to give up work or school to care for their injured relatives.
- **Almost all interviewees (95 percent) said that they experienced emotional and/or psychological harm as a result of what happened.** They reported symptoms such as memory loss, flashbacks, depression and anxiety. Some interviewees said they had contemplated suicide after losing family members.
- **The vast majority of interviewees (84 percent) had experienced financial losses as a result of the incident.** These related to costs they incurred for health care, funerals and rebuilding homes and businesses. Many interviewees also reported that they lost income as they were unable to work due to their injuries or having to care for injured relatives. Some interviewees said that they were living in the wreckage of homes destroyed by airstrikes or shelling, as they could not afford to repair the damage. Women whose husbands were killed in the conflict often reported particularly dire financial situations. In many instances, men killed in conflict were their family's sole provider and their surviving women relatives are unable to earn an income due to restrictions imposed by the *de facto* authorities which prevent them from working.⁷ Numerous interviewees said that the financial hardship they experienced in the aftermath of an incident resulted in them having to withdraw their children from school and send them to work to support the family.
- **Almost half of the interviewees (45 percent) said that incidents impacted their social interactions, as well as those of their families and wider communities.** Numerous people said that they avoid gatherings or social situations which bring back painful memories of what happened to them. Interviewees spoke about the stigma and shame associated with disability in their communities because they are seen as being weak or incapable of supporting a family. Women whose husbands were killed said that they also experience stigma because they are

⁵ For purposes of this report, victims are persons who individually or collectively suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that constitute gross violations of international human rights law, or serious violations of international humanitarian law. Where appropriate, the term "victim" also includes the immediate family or dependents of the direct victim and persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimization. This definition aligns with the definition of "victim" set out in Article 8 of the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005.

⁶ A number of interviews were conducted with the family members of victims who had been killed or forcibly disappeared and, therefore, physical impacts were not experienced by the interviewee.

⁷ On restrictions imposed by the *de facto* authorities, see: UNAMA, *Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October – December 2024* (27 January 2025), Annex: Timeline of decisions by the *de facto* authorities impacting women and girls. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/human_rights_situation_in_afghanistan_october_-_december_2024_-_english.pdf.

widows. They also said that not having a husband puts them at greater risk of violence from other family members.

Efforts made by victims to seek redress

- **Over half of the people interviewed for this report (55 percent) had not made any attempt to make a complaint, seek justice, compensation or assistance for what happened to them.** This lack of action was largely rooted in the belief that their issues would not be taken seriously, would not be dealt with in an impartial or transparent manner or fears of reprisals. Many interviewees also said that they were simply unaware of where or how to seek redress.
- **Over half of interviewees who sought some form of redress or assistance (64 percent) said that their effort was unsuccessful.** Those whose efforts were unsuccessful said they had never received a response, had their request denied or faced other bureaucratic impediments. Some also alleged corruption and/or discrimination by those they complained to. Interviewees had sought recourse from a range of entities, including: Provincial Governors, Police, the Department of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs and other government⁸ entities, the Taliban (before their takeover of Afghanistan) and the *de facto* authorities (after their takeover of Afghanistan). The majority of interviewees who had attempted to pursue accountability through formal justice processes were unsuccessful, which they attributed to inaction and/or denials by the officials they had approached – both from the former government and the *de facto* authorities.
- **The most common response to complaints was *ad hoc* financial support.** The financial support provided varied greatly, from between 67 USD to over 90,000 USD and were given to victims by a range of government entities, as well as, in some cases, international military forces. Many interviewees said that the amount received was insufficient to cover the financial losses incurred as a result of incidents. Some interviewees were in receipt of a pension, due to either their own injury or the killing of a relative.
- **Most interviewees had not received any information about the incident.** A small number had, however, received acknowledgements or apologies from various entities, including: the Office of the President, the Taliban, Provincial and District Governors and security forces, including international military forces.

Addressing the needs of victims

- **The priorities of victims were: financial compensation (81 percent of interviewees), access to justice (48 percent) and efforts to prevent recurrence (47 percent).** Those who cited financial compensation as their biggest concern said that they would use the money to remedy the harm caused by incidents, including to: pay for medical treatment, rebuild or repair destroyed property, offset the loss of earnings as a result of death or disability and pay back outstanding debts. Interviewees who cited access to justice as a priority also often expressed their distrust of formal justice processes.

⁸ The aforementioned list of government entities refers to the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

- **Just 18 percent of victims said that an apology was important to them.** The most common response was that an apology would do nothing to change what happened or bring back their killed loved ones.

Perspectives of the *de facto* authorities

- UNAMA interviewed 23 *de facto* officials from provincial from *de facto* Departments of Labour and Social Affairs, *de facto* Departments of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, *de facto* Departments of Public Health and *de facto* Provincial Governors' Offices about the services provided by their respective departments to victims of armed conflict.
- All interviewees from provincial *de facto* Departments of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs said that they provided some form of pension, or payment, to victims of armed conflict and their relatives. Other *de facto* officials also spoke about health services, orphanages and the provision of targeted support to persons with disabilities.
- The *de facto* officials interviewed were asked what they perceived to be the priority needs of victims and communities harmed by armed conflict. The most commonly cited barrier to providing support to victims was **funding limitations**, with interviewees asserting that the resources available are often insufficient to meet even the basic needs of victims and their families.
- *De facto* officials also highlighted a number of priorities that reflected a number of issues raised by victims themselves, including: importance of addressing the **specific needs of persons with disabilities**; the need for **vocational and livelihood opportunities** for victims of armed conflict; the gaps in **health care** available to victims of armed conflict, with numerous interviewees noting the need for psychosocial support; the **humanitarian needs of victims**, such as shelter and food; the **specific needs of widows and women-headed households**, including challenges they face in supporting their families; the importance of **ensuring access to education for children**; and the **need for access to justice, apology or acknowledgment of harm** for victims.

Perspectives of non-government organisations

- UNAMA interviewed 23 non-governmental organisations that provide assistance to victims of armed conflict in various areas, including cash assistance, education and vocational training, health care, demining and others.
- Non-governmental organisations that were interviewed provide various forms of victim support, including: cash assistance, education and vocational training, health care and demining. They highlighted a range of issues, including: the mental and physical health impacts of armed conflict on victims, the prevalence of physical disabilities among victims of armed conflict, the destruction of infrastructure and the risks posed by explosive remnants of war and abandoned improvised explosive devices.
- Similarly to the *de facto* authorities, **non-governmental organisations said that the biggest barrier to providing support to victims is funding limitations.** They noted that resources

constraints hinder their ability to meet the needs of communities and called for additional funding from donors.

- Several non-governmental organisations spoke about **interference by the *de facto* authorities affecting their ability to deliver services**. Interviewees said that the restrictions placed on women and girls by the *de facto* authorities often prevent women and girls from accessing the support or assistance their organisation provides.
- **Most interviewees spoke of the need for livelihood opportunities, job creation and other financial support for victims of armed conflict**. They said that widowed women and people with disabilities, who struggle to find employment, are in particular need of support.

Recommendations

1. The *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should consult with victims of armed conflict about their needs and should, on the basis of consultations, establish comprehensive programs for redress and other assistance to victims. Consultations should be inclusive and gender-balanced and protect the safety, security and confidentiality of all participants.
2. The *de facto* authorities should conduct a full review of existing institutional capacity to provide redress to victims of conflict-related violations of international law, including by identifying gaps in the legal and institutional framework.
3. The *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should establish a mechanism through which victims, their relatives and the public can seek information and learn the truth about violations.
4. On the basis of consultations with victims, the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should establish comprehensive programs for reparation and victim assistance.
5. The *de facto* authorities should seek to cooperate with former parties to the conflict in Afghanistan, who also bear responsibilities to victims, in the establishment of reparation and victim assistance programs.
6. Member states should dedicate financial assistance to Afghanistan that is informed by the needs and priorities of victims of the armed conflict.
7. The *de facto* authorities should use vetting – in a manner compliant with international norms and standards – to remove perpetrators of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law from security forces.
8. The *de facto* authorities must provide training on international human rights law and international humanitarian law to security forces, including law enforcement personnel.
9. The *de facto* authorities must ensure Afghanistan complies with its obligations under international human rights law by taking measures to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, including by:

- a) Rescinding discriminatory edicts and decrees that curtail the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls, enabling their access to secondary and tertiary education and work, respecting their freedom of movement and ceasing interference with other aspects of their daily lives;
 - b) Ensuring that legislation, policies, edicts and other instructions issued by the *de facto* authorities are in line with international human rights law;
 - c) Taking immediate legal, policy and practical measures to prevent human rights violations, in particular unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions and torture and ill-treatment, and ensure accountability – in line with international human rights norms and standards – when violations occur.
10. The *de facto* authorities and all former parties to the conflict should take urgent action to address the risk posed by unexploded and abandoned ordnance, including demining efforts and public awareness and education campaigns to educate the community on the risk.
 11. The *de facto* authorities should establish mechanisms for the receipt and investigation of allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law during armed conflict in Afghanistan.
 12. All member states whose military forces were present in Afghanistan should ensure the independent investigation and prosecution of alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by their own personnel in Afghanistan, in a manner consistent with international standards.
 13. The *de facto* authorities should consider declaring themselves bound by the obligations under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
 14. The *de facto* authorities should establish mechanisms for the receipt and investigation of allegations of enforced disappearance to provide families with information about the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones, address their needs and provide them with reparations.
 15. All parties to the armed conflict should make available any records or information on the whereabouts of the missing (whether living or dead).
 16. The *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should, through the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, conduct a comprehensive mapping exercise to understand the forms of support currently available to victims of armed conflict.
 17. The *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should, through the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, consult with victims of armed conflict to understand the services they need. Consultations should be inclusive, gender-balanced and non-discriminatory, protecting the safety, security and confidentiality of all participants.
 18. The *de facto* authorities should develop resources and information for victims of armed conflict about the services available to them and disseminate information widely and equally among communities.

19. The *de facto* authorities should develop public awareness campaigns and activities aimed at improving understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities and addressing negative attitudes and stereotypes towards persons with disabilities in the community.
20. The *de facto* authorities should take steps to ensure the inclusion of person with disabilities in the labour market, including through: prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment; employing persons with disabilities in the public sector and ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to technical and vocational education and training programs.
21. The *de facto* authorities take steps to ensure the inclusion of women in the labour market, including through: prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender and sex with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment and ensuring that women have access to university, technical and vocational education and training programs.
22. The *de facto* authorities should rescind restrictions which limit women's ability to participate in the labour market, in particular:
 - a) The bans on education for women and girls beyond grade six, as well as on women studying at medical institutes;
 - b) The requirement for women to be accompanied by a *mahram* for travel over 78 kilometres;
 - c) The bans on women's employment, including with non-governmental organisations and in most areas of the civil service.

Part 1: Introduction

A. About this report

This report presents the findings of research undertaken by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Human Rights Service in 2024 and 2025 to highlight the experiences and needs of victims of the armed conflict in Afghanistan. The report focuses primarily on the period from the United States-led military intervention in 2001 until the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021.⁹ It is based on interviews with 195 victims of armed conflict and their relatives, 23 non-governmental organisations working to address the needs of victims of armed conflict and 23 *de facto* officials.

This work was undertaken in accordance with UNAMA's mandate from the United Nations Security Council,¹⁰ which includes – in addition to the promotion and protection of human rights – promoting responsible governance and the rule of law, including transitional justice, and providing support for the rights of victims.

Broad and inclusive consultations, including with victims and survivors of gross human rights violations and crimes under international law, are a key component of effective future accountability, including truth, justice and reparations.¹¹ Consultations, and participation in general, contribute to successful accountability in various ways. They increase the likelihood that accountability measures will capture the diverse views of victims and survivors on justice and on what constitutes effective redress. Consultations also increase the legitimacy of future accountability measures because the process of consulting is itself a measure of the recognition and empowerment of victims and communities, and it helps them gain or regain a place in the public sphere that they were denied. The undertaking of broad and inclusive consultations is in line with the pursuit of establishing an inclusive society based on the rule of law and equality.¹²

This report presents an initial consultation with victims and those affected, in order to identify their needs and demands and providing a potential pathway for ensuring accountability, truth telling, justice and reparations.

The report aims to amplify the voices and needs of victims, highlighting the gaps in fulfilling their rights in the aftermath of armed conflict and providing recommendations on actions that duty bearers should take to ensure that rights of victims and those impacted by armed conflict are respected and protected. As such, the views presented in this report are those expressed by victims themselves and do not necessarily fully represent the views of all victims and survivors of the conflict period.

⁹ While this report focuses on the experiences of civilian victims of hostilities during a specific temporal period, we acknowledge that victims of other types of human rights violations have also experienced harm and are entitled to remedies for the harm suffered.

¹⁰ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2626 (2022), extended by Resolution 2777 (2025).

¹¹ United Nations, Updated Set of principles for the protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity (E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1), 2005.

¹² See UN Secretary-General's Guidance note on transitional justice, October 2023. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2024/03/202307guidancenotettransitionaljusticeen.pdf>

B. Context and background

Armed conflict in Afghanistan

There is almost no family in Afghanistan today left untouched by the effects of decades of armed conflict that have affected the country which involved various different actors over many years. The majority of victims interviewed for this report were impacted by incidents which took place between 2001 and 2021.

During this period (2001 – 2021), UNAMA considered that there were a number of non-international armed conflicts in Afghanistan between the armed forces supporting the Government of Afghanistan (Afghan National Defence and Security Forces supported by international military forces) and various non-State armed opposition groups, as well as between non-State armed opposition groups.¹³

Parties to the conflict in Afghanistan consisted of pro-government forces, including the security forces of the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,¹⁴ pro-government armed groups and international military forces; and anti-governments elements, including the Taliban, the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant – Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP) and other non-State armed opposition groups.

- The **security forces of the former government** comprised: the Afghan National Army (ANA) (and its subsidiaries the Afghan Air Force and Afghan National Army - Territorial Forces), Afghan Special Forces, National Directorate of Security (NDS), Afghan Local Police (ALP), Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan National Civil Order Force and Afghan Border Force.¹⁵ These forces ceased to exist after the 15 August 2021, when the Taliban entered Kabul.
- The former government was supported by **international military forces** in the conflict. The United States and its coalition partners commenced a military campaign in Afghanistan on 7 October 2001, known as Operation Enduring Freedom.¹⁶ In December 2001, the establishment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to assist the Afghan Interim Authority¹⁷ in the maintenance of security was authorised by United Nations Security Council resolution 1386. At its height, ISAF comprised more than 130,000 troops from 51 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and partner nations.¹⁸ On 1 January 2015, ISAF transitioned to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM). RSM was a non-combat mission led by NATO whose primary goals was to train, assist and advise Afghan National Security Forces. On the same date,

¹³ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021), p. 97. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

¹⁴ The term "former government" is used hereafter to refer to the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which collapsed on 15 August 2021 when the Taliban took over as the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan.

¹⁵ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021), p. 101. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

¹⁶ United States Mission to Afghanistan, *History of the U.S. and Afghanistan*. Available at: <https://af.usembassy.gov/history-of-the-u-s-and-afghanistan/>; United States Department of State Archive, *The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days*. Available at: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/6947.htm>; United States Defence Casualty Analysis System, *Operation Enduring Freedom*. Available at: <https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/app/conflictCasualties/oef>.

¹⁷ The Afghan Interim Authority was the six month-long administration governing Afghanistan from 22 December 2001 – 13 June 2002. It was established by the Bonn Agreement, a series of agreements passed on 5 December 2001 during an international conference on Afghanistan held in Bonn. See further: <https://unterm.un.org/unterm2/en/view/78bdd75b-b167-43d2-a9de-dac28eaa9231>.

¹⁸ NATO, *ISAF's mission in Afghanistan (2001-2014)*, 30 May 2022. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm.

Operation Freedom's Sentinel replaced Operation Enduring Freedom, marking what the United States announced as the end of their combat operations in Afghanistan. US troops engaged in Operation Freedom's Sentinel focussed on counter-terrorism operations under the Afghanistan-United States 2014 Bilateral Security Agreement.¹⁹ On 29 February 2020 in Doha, the United States and the Taliban signed an agreement on the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan by May 2021.²⁰ RSM was terminated in early September 2021, after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.²¹

- **Pro-government armed groups** also engaged in conflict against armed opposition groups. These groups were distinct from government forces and lacked legal basis under the laws of Afghanistan. They included the National Uprising Movement (a community-based defence initiative), the Khost Protection Force, and Paktika-based forces known as "Shaheen Forces".
- **The Taliban** were the main anti-government element engaged in armed conflict against the former government of Afghanistan and its former partners during this period. The Taliban emerged in the mid-1990s and assumed control of the country in 1996. They remained in control until the United States-led military intervention in 2001 after which they re-emerged as an insurgency engaged in a conflict with the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ('pro-government forces' as set out above). With the withdrawal of ISAF in 2014, the Taliban incrementally increased their territorial control within Afghanistan and at times launched large-scale assaults. They established shadow administrative structures in most provinces. On 15 August 2021, the Taliban assumed *de facto* control of Afghanistan, after the collapse of the former government.
- **ISIL-KP** was formally established in January 2015.²² ISIL-KP was, during the time period covered by this report, mainly present in the east of Afghanistan. Its expansion was constrained by Afghan National Security Forces and international military forces operations (including airstrikes), local militia mobilization and, separately, Taliban offensives. By 2020, ISIL-KP had lost much of the territory under its control in the East and had shifted its focus to conducting sporadic high-impact attacks, mainly using improvised explosive devices, in Kabul and other cities.

While the majority of incidents discussed in this report took place between 2001 and 2021, several interviewees discussed instances of harm which took place between 1994 and 1996, during what is referred to as the Afghan Civil War. At this time, armed groups from various armed factions fought for control of the interim Afghan government. This was also the period during which the Taliban emerged and eventually gained control of the country between 1996

¹⁹ UNAMA, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict 2018 Annual Report* (February 2019), p. 58. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama_annual_protection_of_civilians_report_2018_-_23_feb_2019_-_english.pdf; United States Defence Casualty Analysis System, *Operation Freedom's Sentinel*. Available at: <https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/app/conflictCasualties/ofs>.

²⁰ *Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America* (29 February 2020). Available at: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf>.

²¹ NATO, *Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan (2015-2021)*, 30 May 2022. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm.

²² Combatting Terrorism Centre at Westpoint, *The Islamic State Threat in Taliban Afghanistan: Tracing the Resurgence of Islamic State Khorasan* (January 2022). Available at: <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-islamic-state-threat-in-taliban-afghanistan-tracing-the-resurgence-of-islamic-state-khorasan/>.

and 2001.

Impact of armed conflict on human rights in Afghanistan

UNAMA Human Rights Service began documenting civilian casualties in Afghanistan in 2009.²³ Between January 2009 and 15 August 2021, UNAMA documented over 40,000 civilian deaths and over 77,000 injuries to civilians as a result of armed conflict. During the same period, UNAMA monitored places of detention across Afghanistan, uncovering extensive violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law against conflict-related detainees.²⁴ UNAMA also monitored and documented targeted killings of human rights defenders, journalists and media workers²⁵ and grave violations against children.²⁶ Conflict-related sexual violence affecting both women and men, while often underreported, was also carried out by parties to the conflict.²⁷

In addition to UNAMA, a range of other actors reported publicly on the human rights impact of armed conflict in Afghanistan.²⁸

Between 2020 and 2021, UNAMA conducted in-depth, post-incident interviews with victims of armed conflict.²⁹ Those UNAMA interviewed, spoke of how little was done to acknowledge the harm done, provide them with adequate, prompt and effective reparation, and protect their rights in the aftermath of civilian casualty incidents. Only in exceptional circumstances did the responsible party to the conflict reach out to recognize harm done or to apologize. Victims were often not aware of whether investigations were being conducted into the incident that caused harm, and few victims received compensation. Many victims indicated that non-recurrence of such incidents was of major importance to them, and expressed their desire for peace.

Previous efforts to fulfil the rights of victims of armed conflict in Afghanistan

While there were some efforts made over the years to fulfil the rights of victims of armed

²³ UNAMA's comprehensive documentation of civilian casualties began in 2009. However, annual reports on the protection of civilians were issued from 2006 onwards and are available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/reports-protection-civilians-armed-conflict>.

²⁴ See UNAMA reports on the treatment of conflict-related detainees in Afghan custody. Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/treatment-conflict-related-detainees-afghan-custody-0>.

²⁵ UNAMA, *Special Report: Killing of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists and Media Workers in Afghanistan* (14 February 2021). Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/special_report_-_killing_of_human_rights_defenders_and_journalists_2018-2021_-_unama_-_14_february_2021_english_0.pdf.

²⁶ See UNAMA reports on children in armed conflict. Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/children-and-armed-conflict-0>.

²⁷ See UNAMA reports on women's rights. Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/reports-womens-rights-women-peace-and-security>.

²⁸ See, for example: Reports of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, available at: https://www.refworld.org/search?sm_document_source_name%5B%5D=Afghanistan+Independent+Human+Rights+Commission+%28AIHRC%29&sort=score&order=desc; Human Rights Watch, "They've Shot Many Like This" Abusive Night Raids by CIA-Backed Afghan Strike Forces (31 October 2019). Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/10/31/theyve-shot-many/abusive-night-raids-cia-backed-afghan-strike-forces>; Human Rights Watch, "No Safe Place" Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Afghanistan (8 May 2018). Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/05/08/no-safe-place/insurgent-attacks-civilians-afghanistan>; Human Rights Watch, "Education on the Front Lines" Military Use of Schools in Afghanistan's Baghlan Province (17 August 2016). Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/08/17/education-front-lines/military-use-schools-afghanistans-baghlan-province>; Patricia Gossman and Sari Kouvo (Afghan Analysts Network), "Tell Us How This Ends", June 2013. Available at: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/dari-pashto/dossiers/tell-us-how-this-ends-transitional-justice-and-prospects-for-peace-in-afghanistan/>; Amnesty International, *Afghanistan: No escape: War crimes and civilian harm during the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban* (15 December 2021). Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5025/2021/en/>.

²⁹ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021). Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

conflict in Afghanistan, these were largely unsuccessful, for various reasons. The below sets out an overview of efforts made both at the domestic and international levels to meet parties' obligations to investigate and uphold accountability for violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed during the conflict in Afghanistan.

Efforts within Afghanistan to address victims' rights

In 2005, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) conducted a national consultation process to explore whether Afghans wanted the past legacy of human rights violations addressed and, if so, how. The consultation process resulted in the publication of "A Call for Justice"³⁰, which found: "the vast majority of people we spoke to have a deeply eroded trust in public authorities due to the absence of justice and protection of their rights, and they desire deeply that their suffering be recognized"³¹. The report made a series of recommendations to the then government and the international community.

At the same time as the AIHRC consultations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) prepared a report which mapped human rights violations in Afghanistan between 1978 and 2001. That report, however, was never publicly released by the UN.³²

In December 2006, then President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, launched the "Peace, Reconciliation and Justice in Afghanistan Action Plan", which was co-drafted with the AIHRC and UNAMA. The Action Plan focused on four key areas which were: "1) acknowledgement of the suffering of the Afghan people; 2) ensuring credible and accountable state institutions and purging human rights violators and criminals from the state institutions; 3) truth-seeking and documentation; 4) promotion of reconciliation and improvement of national unity".³³ A key provision of the Action Plan was the: "establishment of effective and reasonable accountability mechanisms aimed at ending impunity and ensuring that there will be no amnesty for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other gross human rights violation". Ultimately, however, the Action Plan was never fully implemented.³⁴

In May 2008, the National Assembly passed the "National Reconciliation, General Amnesty and National Stability Law", which was not made public until 2010.³⁵ The law granted a broad amnesty to all parties to the conflict before the establishment of the interim administration in 2002, providing that: "all political parties or factions that were involved in a way or another in the hostilities before the establishment of the interim Administration shall not be legally or

³⁰ Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *A Call for Justice - A National Consultation on past Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan* (25 January 2005). Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/reference/confdoc/aihrc/2005/en/58500>.

³¹ Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *A Call for Justice - A National Consultation on past Human Rights Violations in Afghanistan* (25 January 2005). Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/reference/confdoc/aihrc/2005/en/58500>.

³² Kate Clark (Afghan Analysts Network), *War Crimes in the First Two Decades of the Afghan Conflict: Republishing the UN Mapping Report*, 15 August 2024. Available at: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/rights-freedom/war-crimes-in-the-first-two-decades-of-the-afghan-conflict-republishing-the-un-mapping-report/>.

³³ *Peace, Reconciliation and Justice in Afghanistan Action Plan of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan* (6-7 June 2005). Available at: <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/17033d/pdf/>.

³⁴ Patricia Gossman and Sari Kouvo (Afghan Analysts Network), "Tell Us How This Ends", June 2013. Available at: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/dari-pashto/dossiers/tell-us-how-this-ends-transitional-justice-and-prospects-for-peace-in-afghanistan/>.

³⁵ Sari Kouvo (Afghan Analysts Network), *After two years in legal limbo: A first glance at the approved 'Amnesty law'*, 22 February 2010. Available at: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/rights-freedom/after-two-years-in-legal-limbo-a-first-glance-at-the-approved-amnesty-law/>.

judicially prosecutable.”³⁶ Article 3(3) preserved the right of victims to make *haq-ul-abd* claims, which according to Sharia principles, allow victims to request the state to pursue criminal allegations against alleged perpetrators regardless of any formal amnesty, based on the “rights of the people”. Both UNAMA and OHCHR called for the repeal of the law, finding it incompatible with Afghanistan’s obligations under international human rights law to investigate and prosecute those allegedly responsible for gross human rights violations.³⁷

The AIHRC continued its work on transitional justice with another “mapping project” conducted between 2008 and 2011 which gathered material about human rights violations between 1978 and 2001. The report which resulted from this exercise was shared with President Karzai and later President Ghani, but was never published.

The former government made some efforts aimed at upholding accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including:

- In February 2018, a revised Penal Code entered into force. It criminalized international crimes listed in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, including: war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and aggression. Following the promulgation of the new Penal Code, an “International Crimes Directorate” was established within the office of the Attorney-General of the former government in February 2018, with a mandate to investigate alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed during the conflict, focussing on crimes committed by security forces of the then government, the Taliban, ISIL-KP and other armed groups.³⁸ The International Crimes Directorate reportedly had difficulty building cases and the number of ongoing cases at the time of the Taliban takeover is unknown.
- The former government also conducted prosecutions which led to judicially imposed punishments on individuals accused of violations committed during armed conflict. While there are no comprehensive records of these cases available, UNAMA did monitor cases of capital punishment under the former government among which were executions of individuals found guilty of conflict-related violations.³⁹ For example, in 2004, a former military commander was executed for crimes committed during the civil war. In response to executions carried out by the former government, the UN called for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.⁴⁰ The UN and human rights groups also often raised concerns about lack of due process and failures to comply with fair trial standards in capital punishment cases under the former government.⁴¹

³⁶ National Reconciliation, General Amnesty, and National Stability Law, Article 3(1).

³⁷ UNAMA, *Top UN Official in Afghanistan Calls for Repeal of Amnesty Law*, 25 March 2010. Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/top-un-human-rights-official-afghanistan-calls-repeal-amnesty-law>.

³⁸ Status of Forces Agreements at the time precluded jurisdiction over crimes involving international military forces.

³⁹ Ehsan Qaane and Jelena Bjelica (Afghan Analyst Network), *Afghanistan’s Latest Executions: Responding to calls for capital punishment* (11 May 2016). Available at: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/rights-freedom/afghanistans-latest-executions-responding-to-calls-for-capital-punishment/>.

⁴⁰ UNAMA, *UNAMA statement on executions carried out in Kabul today* (8 May 2016). Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/unama-statement-executions-carried-out-kabul-today>; UNAMA, *UN Human Rights Office urges Afghan Government to halt death sentences in rape case* (27 September 2014). Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/un-human-rights-office-urges-afghan-government-halt-death-sentences-rape-case>.

⁴¹ See, for example: OHCHR, *Press briefing notes on Afghanistan* (26 September 2014). Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2014/09/press-briefing-notes-afghanistan>; UNAMA, *UN Human Rights Office urges Afghan Government to halt death sentences in rape case* (27 September 2014). Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/un->

- In response to UNAMA's consistent documentation of and public reporting on torture and ill-treatment of conflict-related detainees by former Afghan national security and defence forces,⁴² the former government took some relevant actions, including, in 2015, committing to a "National Plan on the Elimination of Torture" and, in October 2018, the enactment of the Anti-Torture Law.⁴³

On 29 February 2020, the United States and the Taliban signed the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan.⁴⁴ While the agreement included provisions for an intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations, it did not include any specific provisions on victims' rights, justice or accountability.

Since their takeover of Afghanistan on 15 August 2021, the *de facto* authorities have not announced any plans to investigate or uphold accountability for violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law carried out during the conflict. They did issue a "general amnesty" for former officials of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and former members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF)⁴⁵ at the time of the takeover. While there has been no written clarification regarding the scope of the amnesty issued by the *de facto* authorities, their public comments to date suggest that the "general amnesty" refers to a broad guarantee of protection for former government officials and ANDSF members, which may not be compatible with Afghanistan's obligations under international law to investigate and prosecute those responsible for gross violations of human rights and of international crimes. Additionally, UNAMA has consistently reported on human rights violations carried out by the *de facto* authorities against individuals affiliated with the former government and its security forces, in violation of their own amnesty (and international human rights law).⁴⁶

Efforts regarding the conduct of international military forces in Afghanistan

There has been limited action by states that contributed security forces in Afghanistan to investigate and uphold accountability for alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law carried out by their own personnel.

[human-rights-office-urges-afghan-government-halt-death-sentences-rape-case](https://www.amnesty.org/ar/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/act500012005en.pdf); Amnesty International, *The death penalty worldwide: developments in 2004* (April 2004), pp. 5-6. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/act500012005en.pdf>.

⁴² UNAMA reports on detainee treatment found many conflict-related detainees interviewed had experienced torture and ill-treatment during arrest and interrogation in numerous detention facilities run by the National Directorate of Security and Afghan National Police, with limited accountability for torture or ill-treatment. See UNAMA reports on the treatment of conflict-related detainees in Afghan custody. Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/treatment-conflict-related-detainees-afghan-custody-0>.

⁴³ At the time of the Taliban takeover the former government had not, however, maintained, designated or established a national preventative mechanism as per its obligation under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which it acceded in April 2018.

⁴⁴ *Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America* (29 February 2020). Available at: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) is an umbrella term used to refer to the security forces of the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and includes: Afghan Border Force, Afghan Local Police, Afghan National Army, Afghan Air Force, Afghan National Police, Afghan National Civil Order Force, Afghan Special Forces, Afghan Territorial Army (also referred to as the Afghan National Army – Territorial Force), and the National Directorate of Security.

⁴⁶ UNAMA, *A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members* (22 August 2023). Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/barrier-securing-peace-hr-violations-against-former-government-armed-forces>.

The Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan operated under a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) which defined the terms and conditions under which NATO forces were deployed and the activities they were authorized to carry out. Additionally, the United States had a similar, bilateral security agreement for Afghanistan. Both documents were negotiated with and agreed by the former government. They both also precluded international military personnel from prosecution in Afghanistan for civil or criminal offences by granting the states the exclusive right to exercise jurisdiction over their own personnel.⁴⁷ In November 2019, the President of the United States pardoned three members of the US military who had been convicted by military courts for criminal acts in Afghanistan that amounted to war crimes.⁴⁸

Some countries have undertaken, or are in the process of undertaking, inquiries into the conduct of their own troops in Afghanistan:

Australia

After allegations of unlawful killings committed by Australian Defence Force members in Afghanistan were aired in a television program in 2016, the Australian Defence Force established the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Afghanistan Inquiry (Afghanistan Inquiry). The Australian Defence Force said at the time that the Afghanistan Inquiry was established in response to “rumours and allegations relating to possible breaches of the Law of Armed Conflict by members of the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan over the period 2005 to 2016”.⁴⁹ A report of the Inquiry’s findings was released in 2020, and found credible information of 23 incidents of unlawful killing by or at the direction of Australian Defence Force personnel resulting in the deaths of 39 people. The Inquiry also found that two people were “cruelly treated” with the involvement of Australian Defence Force Personnel. The report also made recommendations with regards to the payment of compensation, stating: “in cases where it has found that there is credible information that an identified or identifiable Afghan national has been unlawfully killed, Australia should now compensate the family of that person.”⁵⁰

Following the release of the report, the Australian Government tasked the Office of the Special Investigator with investigating, together with Australian Federal Police, allegations of criminal conduct by Australian Defence Force personnel in Afghanistan and referring those with sufficient evidence to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.⁵¹ In 2023, following an investigation by the Office of the Special Investigator and the Australian Federal Police, a former Australian Special forces soldier was arrested and charged with the murder of an

⁴⁷ *Security and Defense Cooperation Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America*; Kabul, 30 September 2014, Article 13. Available at: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/BSA-ENGLISH-AFG.pdf>; *Agreement between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the Status of NATO Forces and NATO Personnel Conducting Mutually Agreed NATO-Led Activities in Afghanistan*; Kabul, 30 September 2014, Article 11. Available at: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_topics/20141216_140913-SOFA-en.pdf.

⁴⁸ *Issuing Several Pardons, President Trump Intervenes in Proceedings of U.S. Troops Charged or Convicted of Acts Amounting to War Crimes*, *American Journal of International Law*, Volume 114, Issue 2 (April 2020), pp. 307-312.

⁴⁹ Australian Government, Defence, *Afghanistan Inquiry Report (Public Release Version)*, 2020. Available at: <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/reviews-inquiries/afghanistan-inquiry>.

⁵⁰ Australian Government, Defence, *Afghanistan Inquiry Report (Public Release Version)*, 2020, p. 173, para. 32. Available at: <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/reviews-inquiries/afghanistan-inquiry>.

⁵¹ Australian Government, Defence, *Afghanistan Inquiry Report (Public Release Version)*, 2020, p. 11. Available at: <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/reviews-inquiries/afghanistan-inquiry>.

Afghan man while deployed in Afghanistan with the Australian Defence Force.⁵² In November 2024, media reported that the charges had been dropped.⁵³ On 7 April 2026, a former Australian Defence Force Soldier was arrested at Sydney Airport, charged with five counts of War Crime – Murder, following a joint investigation between the office of the Special Investigator and the Australian Federal Police.⁵⁴ The case is currently before the Local Court in Sydney.⁵⁵

In July 2024, the Australian Defence Department established the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme to provide compensation to family members of victims of unlawful killings in Afghanistan.⁵⁶ The scheme is limited to instances where the Afghanistan Inquiry found credible information of alleged unlawful assault, property damage or killings by Australian Defence Force members on operations in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2016, but does not require the establishment of legal liability for such actions.⁵⁷

United Kingdom

Similarly to Australia, the Government of the United Kingdom established an independent statutory inquiry to investigate matters arising from the deployment of British Special Forces to Afghanistan between mid-2010 and mid-2013 after allegations of war crimes committed by UK Special Forces soldiers were aired in a television program.⁵⁸ The inquiry was established in December 2022 and is ongoing. A number of hearings – both public and closed – have been held by the inquiry since October 2023.

New Zealand

In April 2018 the New Zealand Government announced an inquiry into allegations made in a book entitled *Hit & Run* regarding the conduct of New Zealand Defence Force personnel in Afghanistan. The allegations pertained to “Operation Burnham” carried out in Baghlan province by New Zealand Special Air Service with Afghan National Security & Defence Forces and US air support in October 2010. The inquiry concluded that New Zealand Defence Force personnel complied with applicable rules of engagement and international humanitarian law in the conduct of that operation,⁵⁹ however it did acknowledge that there had been miscalculations and a failure to protect detainees against the risk of torture or mistreatment.⁶⁰

⁵² BBC News, *Australian former SAS soldier held over alleged war crime in Afghanistan* (20 March 2023). Available at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-65010345>.

⁵³ The Age, ‘Absolutely gutted’: Cases dropped against soldiers over notorious war crimes allegations (30 November 2024). Available at: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/absolutely-gutted-cases-dropped-against-soldiers-over-notorious-war-crimes-allegations-20241129-p5kuio.html>.

⁵⁴ Australian Federal Police, *AFP Commissioner opening statement following arrest of former Australian soldier* (7 April 2026). Available at: <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-statement/afp-commissioner-opening-statement-following-arrest-former-australian>.

⁵⁵ Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions, *Attorney-General (Cth) v Benjamin Roberts-Smith* (updated 27 August 2026). Available at: <https://www.cdpp.gov.au/attorney-general-cth-v-benjamin-roberts-smith>.

⁵⁶ Australian Government, *Defence (Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme) Regulations 2024* (18 July 2024). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00903/latest/text>.

⁵⁷ Australian Government, *Defence, Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme*. Available at: <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/complaints-incident-reporting/afghanistan-inquiry-compensation-scheme>.

⁵⁸ Website of the Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan. Available at: <https://www.iiia.independent-inquiry.uk/>.

⁵⁹ *Report of the Government Inquiry into Operation Burnham* (July 2020), Chapter 1b - Summary of findings and recommendations. Available at: <https://operationburnham.inquiry.govt.nz/inquiry-report/chapter-1b>.

⁶⁰ *Report of the Government Inquiry into Operation Burnham* (July 2020), Chapter 1b - Summary of findings and recommendations. Available at: <https://operationburnham.inquiry.govt.nz/inquiry-report/chapter-1b>.

The Netherlands

In 2022, the Hague District court in the Netherlands found that the Netherlands did not respect its obligations under international humanitarian law during a 2007 operation targeting a residential compound in the Chora Valley in Uruzgan province. The court ordered the Netherlands to pay compensation to the victims' families.⁶¹

The government of the Netherlands has also commissioned the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH) and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies to undertake a study to examine Dutch military engagement, diplomatic activities and non-governmental involvement in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2021.⁶²

International efforts

International Criminal Court

A preliminary examination of the situation in Afghanistan by the International Criminal Court was announced in 2007. On 5 March 2020, the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court authorised the Prosecutor to commence an investigation into alleged crimes under the jurisdiction of the Court in relation to the situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.⁶³ This overturned a previous decision of Pre-Trial Chamber II, which had rejected the Prosecutor's request for authorisation of an investigation, finding that the commencement of an investigation would not be in the interests of justice.

On 26 March 2020, the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan sought a deferral of the investigation, on the basis that it had or was investigating the same crimes under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.⁶⁴ Following the Taliban takeover of 15 August 2021, on 27 September 2021 the ICC Prosecutor requested authorization to resume the investigation, citing the lack of prospect of genuine and effective domestic investigations continuing.⁶⁵ The Prosecutor issued a statement noting his intention to focus "on crimes allegedly committed by the Taliban and the Islamic State – Khorasan Province ("IS-K") and to deprioritise other aspects of this investigation".⁶⁶ On 31 October 2022, the Pre-Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court (ICC) authorised the Prosecutor to resume investigations into Afghanistan, stating that they considered that Afghanistan was not presently carrying out genuine investigations in a manner that would justify a deferral of the Court's

⁶¹ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, *Investigation into suspected or alleged civilian casualties*. Available at: <https://english.defensie.nl/topics/civilian-casualties/investigation-into-suspected-civilian-casualties>.

⁶² NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, NIMH-NIOD research 'The Netherlands and Afghanistan 2001-2021'. Available at: <https://www.niod.nl/en/projects/nimh-niod-research-netherlands-and-afghanistan-2001-2021>.

⁶³ International Criminal Court, *Afghanistan: ICC Appeals Chamber authorises the opening of an investigation* (5 March 2020). Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/afghanistan-icc-appeals-chamber-authorises-opening-investigation>.

⁶⁴ International Criminal Court, *Notification to the Pre-Trial Chamber of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's letter concerning article 18(2) of the Statute* (15 April 2020). Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-02/17-139>.

⁶⁵ International Criminal Court, *Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim A. A. Khan QC, following the application for an expedited order under article 18(2) seeking authorisation to resume investigations in the Situation in Afghanistan* (27 September 2021). Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-prosecutor-international-criminal-court-karim-khan-qc-following-application>.

⁶⁶ International Criminal Court, *Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim A. A. Khan QC, following the application for an expedited order under article 18(2) seeking authorisation to resume investigations in the Situation in Afghanistan* (27 September 2021). Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-prosecutor-international-criminal-court-karim-khan-qc-following-application>.

investigations.⁶⁷ In January 2025, the Prosecutor announced that his office had filed applications for arrest warrants against the Taliban Leader and the *de facto* Chief Justice for the crime against humanity of persecution on gender grounds.⁶⁸ These were granted on 8 July 2025.⁶⁹ The Prosecutor noted that investigations into individual members of the Taliban and ISKP were ongoing.

Extraterritorial and universal jurisdiction

A small number of cases have been brought on behalf of victims of international crimes in Afghanistan under the principle of universal jurisdiction.⁷⁰ Jurisdictions where such cases have been brought include – but may not be limited to – Germany,⁷¹ the United Kingdom⁷² and the Netherlands. In 2022, a court in the Netherlands sentenced a 76-year-old Afghan man to 12 years in prison for war crimes committed in Afghanistan between 1983 and 1987. His conviction related to cruel and degrading treatment of prisoners at Pul-e-Charkhi prison in Kabul, where he held a senior position, which the court found to be in violation of international humanitarian law.⁷³

Support for victims of armed conflict in Afghanistan

Avenues available prior to Taliban takeover

Under the former government, there existed four main channels through which victims applied for or received assistance,⁷⁴ all of which have ceased since the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021.

Afghan Government Emergency Assistance ‘Code 90s’ Payments

‘Code 90s’ payments were one-off payments from a discretionary government fund controlled by the President, which were given to civilian victims either by: a government delegation (usually given proactively, without an application process, to victims of high-profile civilian casualty incidents) or through an application process. The financing for these payments came from funds allocated in the national budget, known as Code 91 and Code 92 (previously known

⁶⁷ International Criminal Court, *ICC judges authorise Prosecution to resume investigation in Afghanistan* (31 October 2022). Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-judges-authorise-prosecution-resume-investigation-afghanistan>.

⁶⁸ International Criminal Court, *Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC: Applications for arrest warrants in the situation in Afghanistan* (23 January 2025). Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-applications-arrest-warrants-situation-afghanistan>.

⁶⁹ International Criminal Court, *Situation in Afghanistan: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II issues arrest warrants for Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani* (8 July 2025). Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-afghanistan-icc-pre-trial-chamber-ii-issues-arrest-warrants-haibatullah-akhundzada>.

⁷⁰ The principle of universal jurisdiction is classically defined as “a legal principle allowing or requiring a state to bring criminal proceedings in respect of certain crimes irrespective of the location of the crime and the nationality of the perpetrator or the victim”. See: Kenneth C. Randall, *Universal jurisdiction under international law*, Texas Law Review, No. 66 (1988), pp. 785-8; International Law Association Committee on International Human Rights Law and Practice, *Final Report on the exercise of universal jurisdiction in respect of gross human rights offences* (2000), p. 2.

⁷¹ TRIAL International, *Universal Jurisdiction Annual Review 2021*, p. 57. Available at: https://www.ecchr.eu/fileadmin/Publikationen/Trial_International_UJAR_DIGITAL.pdf.

⁷² International Federation for Human Rights, *Universal Jurisdiction Annual Review 2024*, p.108. Available at: <https://www.ecchr.eu/en/publication/universal-jurisdiction-annual-review-2024/>.

⁷³ The Hague District Court, *Twelve years imprisonment for war crimes in Afghanistan* (14 April 2022). Available at: <https://www.rechtspraak.nl/Organisatie-en-contact/Organisatie/Rechtbanken/Rechtbank-Den-Haag/Nieuws/Paginas/Twelve-years-imprisonment-for-war-crimes-in-Afghanistan.aspx>.

⁷⁴ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021), pp. 87-88. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

as Code 99). These codes referred to broad-ranging discretionary funds allocated to the President which were used to fund the government's response to natural disasters and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to assistance for civilian victims of armed conflict.⁷⁵ Families of civilians killed or "martyred" as a result of the conflict were eligible for a payment of 100,000 Afghanis (1,333 USD) under Codes 91/92, while those civilians suffering war-related injuries were eligible to receive 50,000 Afghanis (667 USD).⁷⁶ Individuals whose applications were approved were reportedly also referred to the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled if they qualified for long-term maintenance payments.⁷⁷ In 2020, UNAMA noted that there was a significant backlog in the processing of applications for Code 90s payments.⁷⁸

Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs Maintenance Payments

The maintenance payments initially functioned as a mechanism to provide monthly payments to all persons with disabilities in Afghanistan. However, in September 2020 President Ghani issued a decree shifting the mechanism to disburse payments only to "war victims". Under this mechanism, civilians suffering a conflict-related disability or injury received between 750 Afghanis (10 USD) and 1,500 Afghanis per month (20 USD).⁷⁹

Conflict Mitigation Assistance for Civilians Support (COMAC)

COMAC was a program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which carried out verification processes to identify and register victims of the armed conflict who were eligible for assistance. The assistance provided included: food, sanitary items, healthcare and livelihood assistance.⁸⁰ In 2020, victims of conflict told UNAMA that COMAC assistance was more accessible and quicker than either Afghan government mechanisms or *ex gratia* payments by international military forces.⁸¹

Ex gratia payments by international military forces

Ex gratia payments were those authorized by the United States National Defence Authorization Act, made to "friendly civilians" in the event of property damage, personal injury, or death that was as a result of the use of force by 1) the United States Armed Forces; 2) a coalition that includes the United States; or 3) a military organisation supporting the United States or such coalition. Such payments were made by authorized commanders in Afghanistan "as a means

⁷⁵ Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), *Unacknowledged harm: Hurdles to receiving victims' assistance in Afghanistan* (December 2020), p. 9. Available at: https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CIVIC_Afghanistan_Report_Draft4-1.pdf.

⁷⁶ For more detailed information on this mechanism, see Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), *Unacknowledged harm: Hurdles to receiving victims' assistance in Afghanistan* (December 2020), p. 9. Available at: https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CIVIC_Afghanistan_Report_Draft4-1.pdf.

⁷⁷ UNAMA noted in 2020 that the functionality of these payments varied widely from province to province. For more detailed information on this mechanism, see Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), *Unacknowledged harm: Hurdles to receiving victims' assistance in Afghanistan* (December 2020), p. 9-11. Available at: https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CIVIC_Afghanistan_Report_Draft4-1.pdf.

⁷⁸ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021), p. 87. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

⁷⁹ Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), *Unacknowledged harm: Hurdles to receiving victims' assistance in Afghanistan* (December 2020), p. 12. Available at: https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CIVIC_Afghanistan_Report_Draft4-1.pdf.

⁸⁰ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021), p. 88. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

⁸¹ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021), p. 88. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

of expressing condolences, sympathy, or a goodwill gesture”.⁸² Payments were classified as being for battle damage, condolence payments, and hero payments, the latter specifically meant for those harmed while supporting United States forces. Typically, *ex gratia* payments were made proactively and there was no formal way for victims to approach the relevant offices and request such payment.

Avenues available under the de facto authorities

In a written response to this report,⁸³ the *de facto* Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed UNAMA Human Rights that all persons with disabilities, as well as families of martyrs, orphans and widows, have been registered by the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs and provided with monthly cash assistance. According to the *de facto* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since the Taliban takeover, the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs has:

- registered 654,063 individuals for assistance, among them 385,856 orphans, 97,217 widows and 170,998 persons with disabilities;
- distributed 45,908 billion Afghanis (approximately 695,735,280 USD) to beneficiaries, in addition to food assistance, winter clothing, wheelchairs and prosthetic limbs;
- activated specialized rehabilitation centres providing physiotherapy, orthopedic services and psychological and mental health services to persons with disabilities.

With regards to employment, the *de facto* Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that:

- widows, orphans, and female-headed households have been provided with sewing machines, home bakery equipment and other equipment;
- efforts are being coordinated to implement a three percent quota of persons with disabilities employed in *de facto* government institutions;
- other equipment for small businesses, including shops and livestock has been distributed;
- individuals have received vocational training and other education.

On 2 April 2025, the Spokesperson for the *de facto* authorities, Zabihullah Mujahid, addressed media to clarify reports about an annual payout for families of victims of war. He stated that 12.5 billion AFN (approximately 166,666,667 USD) from the annual budget had been allocated through the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs to orphans, widows and persons with disabilities either affiliated with the Taliban, with the former government, or other civilians.⁸⁴

C. Methodology

This report is based on interviews with 195 victims of armed conflict in Afghanistan and/or

⁸² US Department of Defence, Memorandum: “Interim Regulations for Condolence or Sympathy Payments to Friendly Civilians for Injury or Loss that is Incident to Military Operations” (22 June 2020). Available at: <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jun/23/2002320314/-1/-1/1/INTERIM-REGULATIONS-FOR-CONDOLENCE-OR-SYMPATHY-PAYMENTS-TO-FRIENDLY-CIVILIANS-FOR-INJURY-OR-LOSS-THAT-IS-INCIDENT-TO-MILITARY-OPERATIONS.PDF>.

⁸³ See Annex B: Comments received from the *de facto* Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁴ Zabihullah (ذبيح الله م.) [Zabehulah_M33], X (formerly Twitter), 2 April 2025, 7:35PM. Available at: https://x.com/Zabehulah_M33/status/1907449357068067220 and https://x.com/Zabehulah_M33/status/1907449379914486026.

their relatives,⁸⁵ 23 national and international non-governmental organisations providing services to victims of armed conflict, and 23 *de facto* officials.

Of the 195 victims interviewed for this report, 113 are Pashtun, 31 Tajik, 22 Hazara, 13 Uzbek, six Sadat, three Baloch, three Turkmen and four from other groups. Of the 195 interviewed, 52 are women and 143 are men. Victims and survivors interviewed were subject to violations from a broad range of parties to the conflict, including Republic-era, Taliban and international forces (see breakdown in Annex A).

The interviews were carried out by UNAMA between June 2024 to December 2025 and victims' accounts span the period between 1994 to 20 August 2021. Out of the 195 incidents described by victims, 172 took place between 2016 and 2021, with the largest number having occurred in 2021 (47).

Interviews were held with people from 32 of 34 provinces in Afghanistan, in both Pashto and Dari (depending on the preferred language of the interviewee) and were carried out both in person and remotely. In some instances, interviews were facilitated by an interpreter. UNAMA informed interviewees that they were not under any obligation to participate in an interview and that all information shared with UNAMA would be handled confidentially. Interviewees who confirmed they wished to be interviewed were also asked by UNAMA if their accounts could be used in a public report. They were also asked if they consented for their personal information to be included in the report or preferred to have their accounts anonymised. Consent was obtained orally.

This report builds on civilian casualty recording undertaken by UNAMA between January 2009 and 15 August 2021, as well as post-incident interviews conducted by UNAMA in 2020 and 2021.⁸⁶ Victims and their relatives were identified primarily through an existing UNAMA database of civilian casualty incidents and through community and other networks. The criteria for selection for interview were that the victims of the incident were civilian and that the incident happened prior to the *de facto* Taliban authorities' takeover of Afghanistan on 15 August 2021.

While UNAMA made utmost efforts to ensure a diversity of interviewees in terms of their gender, age, ethnicity, geographical location and the type of incident that affected them, the interview sample may not be fully representative of the broader affected population.⁸⁷

Part 2: Legal framework

International human rights law applies both in times of peace and in armed conflict. Afghanistan is a State party to the following human rights treaties: the Convention Against

⁸⁵ As per the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, victims are: "persons who individually or collectively suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that constitute gross violations of international human rights law, or serious violations of international humanitarian law. Where appropriate, and in accordance with domestic law, the term "victim" also includes the immediate family or dependents of the direct victim and persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimization."

⁸⁶ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021). Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

⁸⁷ See 'Annex A: Demographic breakdown of interviewees' for further information.

Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and its Optional Protocol; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a State party to these treaties, Afghanistan is obliged to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all persons within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, without discrimination.

In addition, international humanitarian law - the law of armed conflict - protects persons who are not, or are no longer, directly or actively participating in hostilities, and imposes limits on the means and methods of warfare. The main treaties of international humanitarian law are the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols.⁸⁸ The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 are universally ratified.⁸⁹

UNAMA considered that the situation in Afghanistan was characterized by a number of non-international armed conflicts between the armed forces supporting the Government of Afghanistan (Afghan national security forces supported by international military forces) and various non-State armed opposition groups, as well as between non-State armed opposition groups.⁹⁰ In a non-international armed conflict, article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions establishes minimum standards that parties to a conflict, including State and non-State actors, shall respect. Common Article 3 explicitly prohibits violence to life and person, including murder, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture, taking hostages, as well as outrages against personal dignity and extrajudicial executions, at any time and in any place with respect to persons taking no active part in hostilities, including civilians. Under international humanitarian law, parties to a conflict are also obligated to respect the key principles of distinction,⁹¹ proportionality⁹² and precaution⁹³ in the conduct of hostilities. Additionally, where applicable,

⁸⁸ Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field. Geneva, 12 August 1949; Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea. Geneva, 12 August 1949; Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949; Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977; Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III), 8 December 2005.

⁸⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Humanitarian Law Databases. Available at: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/treaties-and-states-parties>.

⁹⁰ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021), p. 97. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

⁹¹ Distinction: The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack and parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants. This principle requires that parties to a conflict distinguish between civilians and civilian objects on the one hand, and combatants and military objectives on the other. Attacks may only be directed against the latter. In order for an object or building to be considered a military objective, it must meet two cumulative criteria, namely that (1) by its "nature, location, purpose of use [it] make[s] an effective contribution to military action" and (2) the object's "total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization in the circumstances ruling at the time, offer[s] a definite military advantage." See Additional Protocol II, Article 13(2); ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 1, Rules 1-24.

⁹² Proportionality: "launching an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, is prohibited". See ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 14.

⁹³ Precautions in attack: "[...] civilians shall enjoy general protection against the dangers arising from military operations". "In the conduct of military operations, constant care must be taken to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects" and all

the provisions of Additional Protocol II of 1977, to which Afghanistan is a party, also form part of the legal framework.⁹⁴

All States that contributed to the international military forces in Afghanistan are signatories to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. While not all troop-contributing States are signatories of Additional Protocol II of 1977, they are all bound by the relevant rules of customary international humanitarian law applicable in non-international armed conflicts.⁹⁵ The customary rules regulating non-international armed conflict are applicable to all parties to the conflict, whether a state or an armed group.

Certain provisions of international humanitarian law continue to apply also after the end of armed conflict.⁹⁶ For example obligations related to the release of persons deprived of liberty in relation to the conflict,⁹⁷ the search for the missing,⁹⁸ and the clearance of minefields.⁹⁹

Obligations to investigate and prosecute

States are obliged to investigate possible war crimes and, where appropriate, prosecute the suspects. This obligation is applicable in both international and non-international armed conflicts.¹⁰⁰ In addition, international human rights law obliges states to investigate, prosecute and try those responsible for gross international human rights law violations and abuses.¹⁰¹ States are required to undertake prompt, effective, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent investigations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and take appropriate measures in respect of the perpetrators by ensuring that those responsible for serious crimes under international law are prosecuted, tried and duly punished with penalties that are commensurate with the gravity of the offence.

Reparation

The right to reparation is firmly established under international law.¹⁰² A State responsible for

feasible precautions must be taken with the “view to avoiding, and in any event to minimizing, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.” See ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rules 15-21.

⁹⁴ Afghanistan ratified Additional Protocol II 1977 on 10 November 2009. It entered into force on 24 December 2009.

⁹⁵ The United States has signed, but not ratified, Additional Protocol II. It is nevertheless bound by norms of customary international law, which are reflected in the provisions of Additional Protocol II.

⁹⁶ In certain provisions of international humanitarian law, the expressions “cessation of active hostilities”, “close of hostilities”, “end of active hostilities”, and “end of hostilities” set differentiated starting points for the application of some specific protections. In addition, the fact that a conflict has ended does not preclude certain obligations of international humanitarian law from continuing to apply even after a “general close of military operations”. For example, persons deprived of their liberty as a result of armed conflict remain protected by international humanitarian law until they have been released or repatriated or their status otherwise normalized.

⁹⁷ ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 128.

⁹⁸ ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 117.

⁹⁹ Amended Protocol II to the Convention prohibiting Certain Conventional Weapons (1996), Articles 3(2) and 10; ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 83.

¹⁰⁰ ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 158. For treaty provisions, see: Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Article 146.

¹⁰¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 8; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 6; Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Articles 7, 12-13.

¹⁰² Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 8; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 6; Convention against Torture, Article 14; Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 39. See also Committee against Torture, *General Comment No. 3*, para. 2; and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 9*, para. 2.

serious violations of international humanitarian law or gross violations or abuses of international human rights law is required to provide full and effective reparation. The UN Human Rights Committee has emphasized that without reparation, the obligation to provide an effective remedy is not discharged.¹⁰³ Individuals who have been subjected to violations or abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law are entitled to receive adequate, comprehensive, prompt, and effective reparations.¹⁰⁴ Reparation includes restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition.¹⁰⁵ The reparation provided must be commensurate to the harm experienced.¹⁰⁶

Accounting for the missing

International humanitarian law obliges each party to an armed conflict to take all feasible measures to account for persons reported missing and must provide their family members with any information it has on their fate. This obligation is applicable in both international and non-international armed conflicts.¹⁰⁷ The obligation arises as soon as circumstances permit, and at the latest from the end of active hostilities. In addition, the obligation to account for missing persons is an obligation of means. Each party to the conflict must use its best efforts in this respect. This includes searching for, but also facilitating the search for, persons reported missing as a result of the conflict.¹⁰⁸

Right to truth

The right to truth is often invoked in the context of gross violations of human rights and grave breaches of international humanitarian law.¹⁰⁹ It is an inalienable and autonomous right, recognized in several international treaties and instruments as well as by national, regional and international jurisprudence and numerous resolutions of intergovernmental bodies at the universal and regional levels.¹¹⁰

The right to the truth is both an individual and collective right. The right to truth entitles victims, their relatives and the public to know the full and complete truth as to events that have transpired, their specific circumstances, and who participated in them, including knowing the circumstances in which the violations took place, as well as the reasons for them.¹¹¹ The right

¹⁰³ UN Human Rights Committee, *General Comment No. 31*, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add. 13 (26 May 2004), para. 16.

¹⁰⁴ ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 150; UN General Assembly, UN General Assembly, *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law* (2005).

¹⁰⁵ Committee Against Torture, *General Comment No 3*, CAT/C/GC/3 (13 December 2012), para 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Prosecutor vs. Germain Katanga 2017* § 293-94 (2017). *Prosecutor vs. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo*, para. 12 (2016). See also Rule 97 of the ICC's Rules of Procedure and Evidence.

¹⁰⁷ ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 117.

¹⁰⁸ ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 117.

¹⁰⁹ OHCHR, *Study on the Right to the Truth: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, E/CN.4/2006/91 (8 February 2006), para. 3.

¹¹⁰ OHCHR, *Study on the Right to the Truth: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, E/CN.4/2006/91 (8 February 2006), para. 55.

¹¹¹ OHCHR, *Study on the Right to the Truth: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, E/CN.4/2006/91 (8 February 2006), para. 3.

to truth is both an individual¹¹² and collective¹¹³ right.

The right further requires States to establish institutions, mechanisms and procedures authorized to seek information about disputed events. While formal truth commissions are the most prevalent mechanism to ensure this right, other measures can also do so. These include civil society led truth-seeking processes, community-based initiatives, commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions and mapping exercises, human rights commissions, mechanisms to reveal the fate of the missing or disappeared, forensic investigations, the locating of mass graves and the exhumation and identification of bodies, the preservation of and granting public access to intelligence and security services' archives, arts initiatives, and public apologies.¹¹⁴

Guarantees of non-recurrence

In 2004, the Human Rights Committee held that the purposes of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights “would be defeated without an obligation integral to article 2 to take measures to prevent a recurrence of a violation of the Covenant. Accordingly, it has been a frequent practice of the Committee ... to include ... the need for measures, beyond a victim-specific remedy, to be taken to avoid recurrence of the type of violation in question”.¹¹⁵

The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of nonrecurrence has stated that: “The general commitment to adhere to a right involves making efforts to ensure that its violation ceases and is not repeated. The duty to prevent recurrence is hence closely linked to the obligation of cessation of an ongoing violation. On this basis, “guarantees serve a preventive function and may be described as a positive reinforcement of future performance”.¹¹⁶

The concept of guarantees of non-recurrence incorporates a broad range of measures which can contribute to preventing future violations. This could include institutional reforms (for example: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, security sector reform, actions to enhance judicial independence, legislative review to ensure compliance with international human rights law) as well as other actions that target broader societal and cultural transformation to prevent recurrence of violations (for example: removing limitations on civic space, promoting of anti-discrimination laws and policies, cultivating a free media sector, memorialization initiatives, interfaith dialogue).¹¹⁷

¹¹² International human rights instruments give indications as to who is entitled to the right to the truth. All of these texts confer the right to the truth on victims and their relatives or their representatives. This is supported both by the jurisprudence of international human rights courts and treaty monitoring bodies as well as domestic courts. See further: OHCHR, *Study on the Right to the Truth: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, E/CN.4/2006/91 (8 February 2006), para. 35.

¹¹³ OHCHR, *Study on the Right to the Truth: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, E/CN.4/2006/91 (8 February 2006), para. 36.

¹¹⁴ United Nations, *Guidance Note of the Secretary General on Transitional Justice: A Strategic Tool for People, Prevention and Peace* (11 October 2023), pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁵ Human Rights Committee, *General Comment No. [80]*, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13 (26 May 2004), para. 17.

¹¹⁶ *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence*, A/HRC/30/42 (7 September 2015), para. 18.

¹¹⁷ United Nations, *Guidance Note of the Secretary General on Transitional Justice: A Strategic Tool for People, Prevention and Peace* (11 October 2023), p. 20.

Economic, social and cultural rights

Afghanistan is a State party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Economic, social and cultural rights include the rights to adequate food, to adequate housing, to education, to health, to social security, to take part in cultural life, to water and sanitation, and to work.¹¹⁸ Afghanistan is obliged to respect, protect, and fulfil the economic, social and cultural rights of all persons within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, without discrimination.

States are required to progressively achieve the full realization of these rights to the maximum of their available resources.¹¹⁹ This obliges all States parties to take appropriate steps to ensure continuous and sustained improvement in the enjoyment of these rights over time. This also means that States are required, with immediate effect, to ensure the enjoyment of minimum essential levels of each right.¹²⁰ States also have a duty to use their maximum available resources for the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Even if a State clearly has inadequate resources at its disposal, it should still introduce low-cost and targeted programmes to assist those most in need so that limited resources are used efficiently and effectively.¹²¹ In addition, the duty to progressively fulfil economic, social and cultural rights implies a prohibition of measures that would diminish the current enjoyment of rights.¹²²

Various obligations are also of immediate effect, such as the principle of non-discrimination.¹²³ In order to respect the principle of non-discrimination, States must take specific measures to ensure the protection of the rights of marginalized populations as a priority. Even when resources are limited, the State has a duty to adopt measures to protect those most at risk.¹²⁴

In addition, the right to health is recognized in numerous international instruments. Article 25.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services”.¹²⁵ In addition, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides that States parties recognize: “the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”.¹²⁶ The right to health is an inclusive right extending not only to timely and appropriate health care but also to the underlying determinants of health.¹²⁷

¹¹⁸ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966.

¹¹⁹ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 2.1, 16 December 1966.

¹²⁰ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 3*, E/1991/23 (14 December 1990), para. 10.

¹²¹ OHCHR, *Economic, social and cultural rights*. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/economic-social-cultural-rights>.

¹²² OHCHR, *Economic, social and cultural rights*. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/economic-social-cultural-rights>.

¹²³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 3*, E/1991/23 (14 December 1990), paras. 1-2.

¹²⁴ OHCHR, *Economic, social and cultural rights*. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/economic-social-cultural-rights>.

¹²⁵ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25.1.

¹²⁶ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 12.1.

¹²⁷ Such as access to safe and potable water and adequate sanitation, an adequate supply of safe food, nutrition and housing, healthy occupational and environmental conditions, and access to health-related education and information, including on sexual and reproductive health. See, for example: Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 14*, E/C.12/2000/4 (11 August 2000).

Rights of persons with disabilities

Afghanistan is a State party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The obligations on States with regards to the rights of persons with disabilities are also included in additional human rights treaties and have been developed through the commentary by additional human rights treaty bodies, for example the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The obligations on States include ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to adequate food, accessible housing and other basic material needs. It is also necessary for States to ensure that support services, including assistive devices, are available for persons with disabilities, to assist them to increase their level of independence in their daily living and to exercise their rights.¹²⁸ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has stated that State parties to the CRPD have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of women with disabilities, noting the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that women with disabilities face.¹²⁹ Persons with disabilities, whether in rural or urban areas, must have equal opportunities for productive and gainful employment in the labour market.¹³⁰ In addition, social security and income-maintenance schemes are often of particular importance for persons with disabilities. States should ensure the provision of adequate income support to persons with disabilities who, owing to disability or disability-related factors, have temporarily lost or received a reduction in their income or have been denied employment opportunities. Such support should reflect the special needs for assistance and other expenses often associated with disability. As far as possible, the support provided should also cover individuals who undertake the support of a person with disabilities.¹³¹

In addition, States should recognize the principle of equal educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings. States should ensure that teachers are trained to educate children with disabilities within regular schools and that the necessary equipment and support are available to bring persons with disabilities up to the same level of education as their non-disabled peers.¹³²

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has affirmed that States should ensure that persons with disabilities, particularly infants and children, are provided with the same level of medical care within the same system as other members of society. The right to health also implies the right to have access to and benefit from medical and social services - including orthopaedic devices – which enable persons with disabilities to become independent, prevent further disabilities and support their social integration. Similarly, persons with disabilities should be provided with rehabilitation services which would enable them to reach and sustain their optimum level of independence and functioning. All such services should be provided in such a way that the persons concerned are able to maintain full respect for their rights and dignity.¹³³

¹²⁸ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 5*, E/1995/22 (9 December 1994), para 33.

¹²⁹ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, *General Comment No. 3* (2016), *Article 6: Women and girls with disabilities*, CRPD/C/GC/3 (2 September 2016).

¹³⁰ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 5*, E/1995/22 (9 December 1994), para 22.

¹³¹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 5*, E/1995/22 (9 December 1994), para 28.

¹³² Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 5*, E/1995/22 (9 December 1994), para 35.

¹³³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 5*, E/1995/22 (9 December 1994), para 34.

Part 3: Impact of the conflict on victims

UNAMA interviewed 195 individuals about the lasting impact of incidents which occurred in the context of armed conflict. The incidents themselves spanned many years (from 1994 to 2021) and yet still represent only a fraction of the human rights violations that have occurred in Afghanistan over many decades. It was evident that despite their different ethnicities, genders and ages and the variety of perpetrators, tactics used and types of harm they experienced, victims share common experiences of pain and suffering. Those interviewed spoke of the long-term physical, emotional, financial and social impacts they experienced, with the effects continuing to be felt for many years and over multiple generations.



25-year-old Gul Serah walked on an unexploded rocket when she stepped out of her house in Laghman province. She is now a seamstress. Doctor Bakhtmeena Safi is testing Gul Serah's prosthesis.

UNMAS, Kabul, 2023.

A. Physical impacts

Interviewees were asked about the physical impacts the incident had on them and/or their family members. Fifty-eight percent of interviewees reported physical impacts as a result of incidents.¹³⁴

Bilal and Ghawsodeen¹³⁵

At around 4am on 18 June 2021, Ghawsodeen was on his way to the mosque in his village in Jawzjan province, leaving his family asleep at home, when heavy artillery fired by pro-government militia from a nearby check post hit his house. He rushed back, finding his mother and sister dead and his two sons, aged five and six, badly wounded.

His son, Bilal, now 10 years' old, said:

"I was peacefully sleeping under the mosquito net when I suddenly woke up from a terrifying dream. To my surprise, I saw my mother gently wrapping my foot with a cloth. The next thing I knew, I found myself in the hospital. After spending ten days in the hospital, I realized that I could not move my foot. It felt as though the light of day had turned into the darkness of night. I underwent two operations on my foot, but unfortunately, they were not successful. Since then, I cannot walk without crutches because of the severe damage my foot sustained. This led to me being unable to attend school for seven months. Thankfully, a kind neighbour offered to transport me to school in his rickshaw vehicle alongside his own children, free of charge. However, I am now faced with concerns about my future. How will I be able to attend university? Will any girl be willing to marry me? And if I do get married, how will I provide for my wife and children? It pains me the most when I see my friends running and playing football, activities that I can no longer participate in."

i. Chronic pain

Many victims continue to experience chronic pain as a result of their injuries, for example due to burns or pieces of shrapnel embedded in their bodies:

*"My whole body bears the signs of burning. [...] I cannot sit near to a chimney in winter. Also, I cannot walk on sunny weather. When I walk in the sunny weather, my entire body gets burned. I cannot sit in the heat at all."*¹³⁶

*"Improvised explosive device shrapnel perforated my son's chest, causing him pain to this day. He has inflammatory responses in his head and hands, which very often become numb, tingling, or swollen. One of his kidneys was also removed after the incident."*¹³⁷

"My daughter still suffers from the injuries of burning. The skin of her body is very weak and

¹³⁴ A number of interviews were conducted with the family members of victims who had been killed or disappeared and therefore, physical impacts were not experienced by the interviewee.

¹³⁵ Interview no 51.

¹³⁶ Interview no 103.

¹³⁷ Interview no 84.

sometimes it bleeds from a simple scratch. She and my niece both sometime have some bleeding from their ears. My niece has shrapnel inside both of her thighs which were not taken out during operations in Kabul."¹³⁸

An interviewee who was shot in the leg by Taliban members in 2001 said he continues to feel pain in his leg which affects his mobility and ability to work more than two decades after the incident.¹³⁹

ii. Ongoing medical needs

Numerous interviewees had ongoing medical needs connected with their injuries. In some cases, they continued to need treatment years after the incident took place. For example, a woman who was wounded by heavy artillery fire (sustained during fighting between the Taliban and the Afghan National Army in her village) continues to visit the hospital to have pieces of metal removed from her leg.¹⁴⁰

Others said that they continue to suffer physical pain because they were unable to afford further medical treatment:

*"I have an iron rod in my right tibia. Thanks to Dr. Bilal, the leg is ok again. However, I have pains in the winter. Dr. Bilal told me that he could remove the rod, but I don't have money for another operation."*¹⁴¹

An interviewee said that his son was working as a daily labourer to support his family when he was wounded by an improvised explosive device planted by the Taliban. The man sent his son, then under the age of 18, to Pakistan for medical treatment to remove shrapnel from his body, but the boy still has broken teeth from the incident which the family cannot afford to repair.¹⁴²

iii. Disability

Many victims had acquired physical disabilities as a result of injuries sustained during the conflict, including becoming blind or deaf, losing a limb or ongoing mobility issues. They described the wide-ranging impact that their disabilities had on many areas of their life, including the ability to work, study and participate in social activities.

One man described how, at the age of 15, he picked up a piece of metal that he found in a field while he was out grazing his livestock, not knowing what it was. It was an unexploded ordnance, which detonated:

"I was severely injured. If you were to see my body closely, you would be shocked at how I survived. I am now a person with disabilities. I cannot see; I have lost my sight, and my left hand is amputated at the wrist. I am unable to work, and I couldn't attend school or a

¹³⁸ Interview no 34.

¹³⁹ Interview no 109.

¹⁴⁰ Interview no 16.

¹⁴¹ Interview no 76.

¹⁴² Interview no 66.

*madrassa.*¹⁴³

Another interviewee, who became blind at the age of nine as a result of heavy artillery fire by ANDSF striking his house, said that he had to leave school due to his disability:

*"At the time of the incident, I was a third-grade student with dreams of becoming a medical doctor. Unfortunately, those dreams were buried. Although I continued my education until the 7th grade, the gradual weakening of my second eye due to the injuries sustained in the incident forced me to leave school. Now, at 17 years' old, I work as a daily labourer while my former classmates have progressed to the 11th grade. The pain of remaining illiterate weighs heavily on me."*¹⁴⁴

A man whose eleven-year-old sister became blind in one eye after being hit by shrapnel from an airstrike carried out by international military forces said she left school due to her disability.¹⁴⁵

A woman whose 17-year-old daughter was injured by heavy artillery fired by ANDSF, described the impact of her daughter's injuries:

*"The incident impacted my daughter Awaz Gull differently. She was a carpet weaver and was engaged. She lost her ability to weave carpets due to the damage she sustained to her right upper limb in the incident. Because of her carpet weaving skills, her fiancée already paid us a high bride dowry of 400,000 Afghanis [5,333 USD]. However, after marrying her, he constantly abused her for being useless in his life as she could not weave carpets any longer."*¹⁴⁶

iv. Caring responsibilities

The long-term effects of physical injuries also affect family members who had to become caregivers. Several interviewees spoke about having to give up work or education to take care of family members:

*"My siblings and I lost our parents. My youngest brother became paraplegic. [...] My sister, who is only 16 years' old, and I, have to take care of our youngest brother all the time. Lifting him is becoming an increasing challenge. My sister feels pain in her back and shoulders because all the time she must bend over to carry our brother. [...] My sister could not attend school, as someone has to take care of our brother."*¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Interview no 126.

¹⁴⁴ Interview no 56.

¹⁴⁵ Interview no 31.

¹⁴⁶ Interview no 55.

¹⁴⁷ Interview no 39.



“The most painful part is that I cannot forget. Wherever I go, it is with me.”

Muhammad, victim of an IED explosion

UNAMA, Kabul, 2025.

B. Emotional and psychological impacts

Haji Dina Gul¹⁴⁸

On 5 July 2019, in Paktya province, heavy artillery fire impacted the home of Haji Dina Gul. His son Barakatullah (aged 12) was killed instantly by shrapnel and his daughter Badshah Gul (aged 8), his son Najibullah (aged 10), his nephew Karim (aged 16), and his niece Ayesha (aged 15) were wounded.

While he was transporting the wounded children to the hospital with his other niece Bibi Halima (aged 18), an airstrike targeted their vehicle, killing Najibullah and Bibi Halima instantly. Just over a year later, his 17-year-old daughter Badana took her own life, due to the depression she suffered after losing her brothers.

"Everyone in the family is like an alive-dead body. Though we seem to be alive, we are all dead in reality. My remaining children became very isolated, and they do not want to meet with others or talk to them at all."

Interviewees were asked about the impact the incident had on their emotional wellbeing. Almost all (95%) interviewees reported emotional and/or psychological impacts of incidents, which included suffering mental and/or emotional distress including inability to focus, memory loss, flashbacks, depression, and social detachment.

Those whose family members were killed spoke of the emotional pain they experienced in the aftermath:

*"How can I explain our suffering? Every day, we endure the pain of losing loved ones, with two funerals departing from our house. Their mother does not sleep through the night; she stays awake, crying all night. The room we had recently decorated for my son's wedding now stands as a painful reminder of what we have lost, a room we can hardly bear to look at."*¹⁴⁹

A man described how his father and brother were shot and killed with their hands tied behind their backs by Taliban members over 20 years prior. The man, who was a child at the time, was shot in the shoulder and foot in the incident and said he continues to struggle emotionally with what happened:

*"Sometimes I still can't sleep properly after all these years. I keep remembering my father and uncle being killed. I recall how they were killed and how my home and village was burnt. And no one assisted me."*¹⁵⁰

Numerous interviewees had experienced mental health issues, including depression and anxiety. Some said they had contemplated suicide:

¹⁴⁸ Interview no. 34

¹⁴⁹ Interview no 12.

¹⁵⁰ Interview no 19.

*"The death of my two children was a cause of extreme sadness for me and my wife. Sometimes I sit in a room, close the door and I cry a lot. I lost all hope. Then, I think about committing suicide but then I changed my mind. I told myself we must continue to live despite the odds. [...] It's not just me. My entire family continues to carry the wounds in our bodies, which perpetually torment our minds."*¹⁵¹

Victims of incidents described feeling fear or anger triggered by stimuli which remind them of the incident:

*"I still experience psychological issues. I am scared thinking of the incident and even now I feel scared when I hear noise or a loud voice."*¹⁵²

A man who was wounded in a complex attack carried out by ISIL-KP described experiencing memory and concentration issues in the aftermath:

*"Before the incident, I could learn and remember things easily, but now, I cannot remember easily what I read or what I want to learn. Also, I am forgetful. For example, if I go downtown, I lock the door. Then, on my way, I cannot remember if I locked it. I have to go back and check it. It started only after the incident."*¹⁵³

Some people spoke of developing fears of doing certain things or going to certain places. One woman described how her son was wounded in a suicide attack carried out by ISIL-KP inside a Kankor examination centre. After the incident, she said her younger son stopped going to school: *"convinced that if he goes, an explosion will occur and he would be injured like his brother. He has developed a belief that attending school will lead to another explosion there."*¹⁵⁴

A man whose father was abducted and killed by Taliban members said:

*"The incident struck fear into our family. We thought they would harm us too. The street where my father was captured is the main access route from our village to the bazaar. I cross this street almost every day on my way to the bazaar. Every time I cross it, it reminds me of my father and how he was brutally and mercilessly killed."*¹⁵⁵

Several interviewees mentioned issues of substance abuse stemming from mental health issues suffered after an incident:

*"Following the incident, my uncle became a drug addict due to deep sorrow and depression and could no longer care for his family. As a result, his wife and six children now live with us."*¹⁵⁶

"Some victims' families were seriously affected by this incident, for example Abdul, who lost his entire family. He stopped behaving normally, meaning that he has strong emotional and physical reactions. He is suffering from mental illness and is now addicted. He has cut his

¹⁵¹ Interview no 16.

¹⁵² Interview no 121.

¹⁵³ Interview no 78.

¹⁵⁴ Interview no 108.

¹⁵⁵ Interview no 139.

¹⁵⁶ Interview no 35.

relationships with all villagers. He is now walking on the roadsides and street to street in our village."¹⁵⁷

Some interviewees described how the emotional stress and trauma they felt after the incident manifested physically:

*"The incident turned my happy life into a disaster. [...] The loss of my husband made me deeply sad and concerned, which resulted in the disappearance of my breastmilk. This resulted in the malnutrition of our newborn baby, which seriously affected his growth."*¹⁵⁸

*"When he was at the gate of the learning centre, about to enter, a massive explosion occurred. In the blink of an eye, dozens of students, including my son, were killed or wounded. My son was injured by shrapnel from the bomb, which affected his eyes, ear, and arms. I was at home when they brought him back, covered in blood. The shock caused my blood pressure to spike and I lost consciousness. Since then, my right leg has not functioned properly. It was a terrible day."*¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Interview no 148.

¹⁵⁸ Interview no 55.

¹⁵⁹ Interview no 108.



An Afghan shopkeeper looks at his destroyed shop at the site of a powerful truck bomb in Kabul on August 7, 2015. A powerful truck bomb killed at least seven people and wounded more than 100 others, officials said.

AFP PHOTO / SHAH Marai, 2015.

C. Financial impacts

Hasan Jan¹⁶⁰

"One day at around 9am, I do not remember the exact date, but the year was 2017. I was driving a tractor loaded with wood for sale. The vehicle drove over an improvised explosive device planted on the road, which triggered its detonation. The explosion was heavy and blew up my tractor into rubble. My feet were seriously injured... As a result of surgery, one of my legs was amputated, and the other was fixed by installing iron bars with fractured bones. I was hospitalized for almost four months to be able to walk again and rejoin my family..."

The tractor which was destroyed in the incident was the only source of income for my family. I had borrowed around 500,000 Afghanis [6,666 USD] from one of our relatives in Kandahar to purchase it just weeks before the incident. I have not returned the money so far. My family has borrowed approximately 200,000 Afghanis [2,666 USD] to fund my treatment which also has not been repaid. These two debts have made me extremely concerned about how to pay them back. Since then, I have tried to work as a daily labourer to feed my family, but because of my disability and unfitness, a very limited number of employers allow me to work for them."

Eighty-four percent of interviewees had experienced financial losses as a result of the harm they suffered. They had incurred costs for health care, funerals and rebuilding homes and businesses. Many interviewees also reported that they lost income as they were unable to work due to their injuries or having to care for injured relatives.

i. Cost of health care

Many interviewees spoke about the cost of health care. Some continue to bear the financial burden of ongoing health needs, either for themselves or their family members:

*"I can't express how hard life is for me. Since the incident, I've had to buy 300 to 400 prescriptions of medicine. Believe me, I can't afford any more medicine. I have sold almost everything at home to feed my family and pay the rent."*¹⁶¹

*"The incident took everything from us. I lost my son and my daughter got serious injuries in her legs. We lost our house. I sold all my possessions to provide money for my daughter's medical treatment."*¹⁶²

The lack of available healthcare in some parts of Afghanistan required some victims to travel to other parts of the country, or even to neighbouring countries such as Pakistan or Iran, to seek treatment – incurring additional costs:

"Both my arms and both my legs were broken, and my head and whole body were hit by dozens of pieces of shrapnel. It was impossible to get proper medical treatment in Afghanistan. That is why I went to Pakistan, in particular for the medical treatment of my right arm. Then I treated the rest of my body in Afghanistan. My left leg underwent 32

¹⁶⁰ Interview no. 101

¹⁶¹ Interview no 2.

¹⁶² Interview no 41.

operations. The doctors told me that five more operations were needed to complete the medical treatment on my left leg. In addition, my head was hit by several pieces of shrapnel. To date, I have spent 2,000,000 Afghanis [26,667 USD] on my medical treatment and I need a further 1,000,000 Afghanis [13,333 USD] to carry out the other operations recommended by the doctors."¹⁶³

*"My injured feet need continued treatment; I feel pain and discomfort. Thus, I must regularly visit the health facility in Qalat or Kandahar, which requires me to travel long distances and spend money which I cannot afford."*¹⁶⁴

*"I spent about 11,000 USD for medical treatment of my eyes. I owe a lot of money. I am now planning to go to Pakistan for further medical treatment, but I do not have money."*¹⁶⁵

A man whose family home was damaged by heavy artillery fire during fighting between the Taliban and ANDSF said is still repaying the costs of his wounded relatives' medical care:

*"Our family is trying to cope with the incident. It took place five years ago, but still, we must pay our loans which we took for the medical treatment of our family members. I once left the country and went to Turkey for work. I used to work in a construction site and send money to my family, so they could pay off the loans and their expenses."*¹⁶⁶

ii. Property damage

Numerous interviewees spoke of the cost of repairing property damaged by hostilities. One interviewee said that he was required to take out loans to rebuild his business after his shop was destroyed as a result of heavy exchange of fire between the Taliban and ANDSF (supported by international military forces).¹⁶⁷ Another said that the unexploded ordnance which killed one of his sons and wounded another also killed the family's cow – their sole source of income.¹⁶⁸

A man whose house was severely damaged by heavy artillery fire by the Afghan National Army in 2016 said that he cannot afford to rebuild the rooms that were destroyed in the incident, which also killed two of his relatives and wounded five others. He and his family continue to live in the partially destroyed house.¹⁶⁹

iii. Loss of earning capacity

Many of those interviewed spoke of loss of earning capacity in the aftermath of an incident. In some families, this financial hardship was long-term, for example where a relative who was the main breadwinner for the household was killed or acquired a disability which prevented them from returning to work.

One interviewee described how their family had experienced significant financial loss after his

¹⁶³ Interview no 60.

¹⁶⁴ Interview no 101.

¹⁶⁵ Interview no 10.

¹⁶⁶ Interview no 102.

¹⁶⁷ Interview no 111.

¹⁶⁸ Interview no 84.

¹⁶⁹ Interview no 11.

father was killed in an airstrike conducted by international military forces in 2018. The father had managed the family's apple orchard, and without his expertise, they were unable to manage it, resulting in a very low harvest.¹⁷⁰ Others described similar experiences:

*"The incident changed me into a physically disabled person. I am not able to work as a normal person. I am the main breadwinner for my family consisting of four sons, two daughters, and a sick wife. The incident resulted in the loss of my business as well as the education of my kids. In addition, the health condition of my wife continues to worsen. The only source of income for the time being is growing cheap vegetables inside the home yard and selling them in the market. My adolescent children do this. If the situation persists, I will have no other option but to sell my residential home to feed my family."*¹⁷¹

*"This left us not only physically wounded but also financially devastated, as my husband was the primary breadwinner of our family. Additionally, my own injuries prevent me from being able to work. I am solely focused on finding a simple bread to survive, heavily relying on people's assistance."*¹⁷²

*"All of my brother in law's properties were destroyed in the incident, and his 12 children were left without any savings. They have all been facing a lack of proper nutrition. I am trying my best, but I cannot afford to fulfil all of the needs of his children in addition to my own."*¹⁷³

*"We lost a brave man who was hardworking and one of the breadwinners of our family. He worked as a mason, earning about 15,000 Afghanis [200 USD] per month, which was sufficient to cover our family's monthly expenses. I also spent over 60,000 Afghanis [800 USD] on my son's funeral and burial, which led to a significant economic loss. I had to borrow this amount from my relatives. At 58 years' old, I am unable to work. We now have a widow and three orphaned children at home. It is challenging to provide food for them, and affording their medical care when they fall sick is a constant worry."*¹⁷⁴

iv. Impact of financial hardship on women

Many of the women interviewed had lost their husbands – who were often their household's main breadwinner – in the conflict. The financial hardship experienced by women in these situations is particularly acute because of the *de facto* authorities' various restrictions on their right to work, as well as the *mahram*¹⁷⁵ requirement which creates financial and logistical barriers to women's freedom of movement,¹⁷⁶ limiting their ability to work or travel on their own.

A woman whose husband was shot and killed by undetermined anti- government elements while he was on his way home said:

¹⁷⁰ Interview no 26.

¹⁷¹ Interview no 49.

¹⁷² Interview no 53.

¹⁷³ Interview no 22.

¹⁷⁴ Interview no 125.

¹⁷⁵ A *mahram* is a male guardian.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example: UNAMA, *De Facto Authorities' Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights* (July 2024). Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/moral_oversight_report_english_final.pdf; UNAMA, *Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan: October - December 2024 Update* (27 January 2025). Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/human_rights_situation_in_afghanistan_october_-_december_2024_-_english.pdf.

*"It is very difficult to endure the pain of losing the sole breadwinner of the family – the only hope we had. He had just gotten a job after studying for several years. When he died, all our hopes vanished. I need to look after my four children, but I have no means of livelihood. My parents are supporting me, but I don't know how long they can continue."*¹⁷⁷

Other women recounted similar experiences:

*"He was our sole breadwinner. I am an uneducated widow with four children—one boy and three girls. The oldest is just nine years' old. In Kabul, my brother-in-law asked us to leave his house, and we couldn't afford to rent a place. I struggle to feed my kids. After a few months, we were forced to leave and return to my parents' home. Life is extremely difficult. I searched for work as a cleaner, but could not find any. My husband's friends donated some money for a while, but now that support has ended."*¹⁷⁸

*"My husband is sick; he cannot work properly. If my son was alive, he would have worked and overcome the economic and livelihood challenges we face now. Other than that, he would have been my mahram, if I was to travel or work anywhere in the current context."*¹⁷⁹

*"He left behind his four-year-old son and his wife who has no job and no income. They are going through a very tough time with no financial support from the government or others, except for some relatives who give them some money on an occasional basis. They have not lived a good day since then."*¹⁸⁰

*"My son was a school student, we were maintaining hopes that one day he would become a great person, brighten the name of the family, and serve his country so that me and his father would have a life full of joy and pride. Currently, I am the only breadwinner for the family, going through multiple financial and social problems, because, in such a society, life without having a young man, particularly when there are young girls at home, is difficult."*¹⁸¹

*"I can't even send my daughters outside to find work due to poverty, as the Taliban do not allow them to go and keep them in confinement."*¹⁸²

v. Impact of financial hardship on children

Numerous interviewees said that the financial hardship they experienced in the aftermath of the incident forced them to withdraw their children from school and instead send them to work to support the family:

"As we lost all of our property, I was the only breadwinner in the family. I was only 15 and my sisters and brothers were very small. Due to economic problems and poverty, I could not go far in school. My cousin was affected the same way. He also had to work from childhood. He is now 35. He was 12 years' old at the time of the attack. He also became the breadwinner

¹⁷⁷ Interview no 57.

¹⁷⁸ Interview no 57.

¹⁷⁹ Interview no 70.

¹⁸⁰ Interview no 112.

¹⁸¹ Interview no 70.

¹⁸² Interview no 146.

of his family.”¹⁸³

“The younger children of my brother must work with their older brother to find food to feed their mother and sisters. In case their father was alive they would not have to work and instead would be going to school.”¹⁸⁴

“Me and my sisters were unable to go to school because of financial hardship. I wanted to go to school with my sisters, but no one supported us, and we were very young.”¹⁸⁵

“My cousin’s family lives in extreme poverty. His mother and brother suffer from depression. His children cannot afford to go to school and have to work to earn money to provide food for their family. The family is fractured and unhappy, they – and we are all – in a state of emotional torture because of his death.”¹⁸⁶

“My children could not participate in primary and secondary school because we cannot afford it. This is because, due to my injuries, I could not work in jobs that enabled me to raise money for their education. So my children worked from a young age. After all these years my children cannot work in good jobs as they lack education and qualifications.”¹⁸⁷

Some interviewees said they had been forced to consider selling their children or giving them away in child marriage due to their financial situation. One woman, whose father was shot and killed by Northern Alliance members in 1996, said:

“When my father was killed, we were already a very poor family and his death caused more economical hardship. My oldest sister and I could not get an education or careers. We lost our chance to participate in society the way others could. Without a father, my oldest sister and I were married off in early and underage marriages.”¹⁸⁸

Others described similar experiences:

“I am a very poor person and the sole breadwinner for my family. I don’t think I will again become a healthy person like in the past. There are no services for persons with disabilities in the country, and people perceive persons with disabilities as inferior and weak. If the situation persists, it may force me to marry my 11-year-old daughter to an old man against some money to save the rest of the family members. Other than that, I will have no option but to engage my adolescent son in heavy labour.”¹⁸⁹

“Financially, we have lost everything since our son, who was our sole provider, can no longer support us. Additionally, I have lost my social standing. No one is willing to lend us money, and when I asked my neighbour for some flour, he cruelly suggested I sell my grandchild to feed my family. So, I have nothing to live for.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ Interview no 19.

¹⁸⁴ Interview no 105.

¹⁸⁵ Interview no 163.

¹⁸⁶ Interview no 20.

¹⁸⁷ Interview no 109.

¹⁸⁸ Interview no 162.

¹⁸⁹ Interview no 101.

¹⁹⁰ Interview no 3.

"When my husband went missing and was presumed dead, we faced severe poverty. I even wanted to sell my youngest daughter, but no one was willing to buy her."¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Interview no 146.



"My faith has remained strong. But is it not easy to forget. Weddings are okay. But if I am in a group gathering, the memories return to me. What if such an incident happens again? When we want to celebrate special days – such as the Shia Ramadan or New Year celebrations – the Taliban make extra arrangements for our security. It makes me wonder if we have reason to worry."

UNAMA, Kabul, 2025.

D. Social impacts

Wahida¹⁹²

On 3 October 2016, Wahida's husband was wounded by an improvised explosive device placed on a motorbike in a crowded bazaar in Jawzjan province. He passed away the following day. Wahida did not see her husband before he died, because she could not afford a taxi to the hospital. A week after the incident, Wahida's father-in-law told her she had to leave his house, because he lived with his two brothers, who had young sons, and they were not mahram to Wahida. He said it was best for Wahida's reputation that she leave his house and return to live with her parents.

Wahida said: *"After some time, my father-in-law filed a petition with Daesh in an attempt to gain custody of my children. However, I stood my ground and made it clear that I would rather face death than give up my children. [...] Life is difficult for the widows in our district. They need to be extra cautious about their engagement in social and cultural activities. As such, I prefer to stay at home."*

Forty-five percent of interviewees said that incidents impacted their social interactions, as well as those of their families and wider communities. They spoke of negative impacts on their participation in community events and celebrations and other social interactions within their own communities and families.

i. Stigma associated with disability

A common theme in interviews was the impact of negative attitudes towards disability. Individuals who had acquired disabilities in incidents related to armed conflict described how stigma and negative attitudes had affected their lives in various ways.

For example, several interviewees said that the stigma associated with disability had impacted their or their relative's chances of finding a partner and getting married:

*"My uncle's three daughters injured in the incident have been heavily affected. One lost her leg; another lost her eyesight and the third lost her hearing. They do not have a normal life. No one is eager to marry them, and they will be suffering throughout their lives and have to rely on their relatives to support them."*¹⁹³

*"My brother is paralyzed and due to the problems with my left hand, no one is interested in sending me a marriage proposal. I am not participating in many relatives' gatherings because I am feeling ashamed of my left hand."*¹⁹⁴

Numerous victims said they feel ashamed because their injuries prevent them from being able

¹⁹² Interview no 52.

¹⁹³ Interview no 95.

¹⁹⁴ Interview no 94.

to support their families:

*"I am feeling disheartened, humiliated and disabled. My children while looking at me also feel hopeless and desperate as their father is not fully functional. [...] I always feel I wish I was a sound man with all my extremities healthy and strong."*¹⁹⁵

*"Psychologically, I am not well at all. I am very depressed and do not want to interact with people. I have suffered a significant psychological blow. I am constantly in pain and unable to do the things a healthy person can do. I always feel inferior."*¹⁹⁶

The stigma of disability – or even the physical barriers to accessing social gatherings – resulted in some people withdrawing from social interactions:

*"I am no longer happy to go out into society. My whole body bears the signs of burning. For three months I was not able to walk. After that I prefer to stay at home and I do not show my face to other people. [...] I was not able to attend gatherings or the mosque. I felt like everyone is watching me."*¹⁹⁷

*"The dependence of my son and nephew on their walking sticks to walk for a few meters seriously affects their participation in various social and cultural events and activities. They can only leave the house, sit somewhere closer to the house, and come back."*¹⁹⁸

*"Socially, I no longer see myself as part of the community. People use the word 'disabled' when referring to me. I cannot participate in joyful events and celebrations. I am blind. My entire family is affected by this, and they must guide me whenever I go outside."*¹⁹⁹

A male interviewee spoke of the shame he feels from his community because he is no longer able to provide for his family:

*"I am unable to earn a living and feed my eight-member family, comprising of four sons, three daughters, and a wife. People keep spreading rumours that I have been a burden on my wife, who has been receiving a limited amount of financial support from her father's side and additionally gaining some money from handicrafts and animal husbandry. I feel embarrassed and hopeless seeing all these miseries."*²⁰⁰

ii. Participation in social gatherings

Some interviewees said that they avoid participating in social events because they bring back memories of their family members who died:

"My sister prefers to stay home. She does not like to attend social family gatherings. She was crying when her older daughter got married. She was crying during the wedding party of

¹⁹⁵ Interview no 96.

¹⁹⁶ Interview no 126.

¹⁹⁷ Interview no 103.

¹⁹⁸ Interview no 54.

¹⁹⁹ Interview no 126.

²⁰⁰ Interview no 101.

her daughter."²⁰¹

Numerous interviewees said that they have not participated in social gatherings since the incident because they find it too upsetting or emotionally difficult:

*"My mental state has deteriorated because of this incident. I do not enjoy talking to anyone. I always want to stay alone. Participating in social activities brings me no joy. My family members no longer participate in social celebrations and often avoid attending such events. However, we attend the mosque for prayers."*²⁰²

*"When you are experiencing mental health challenges, people often change their behaviour towards you and your family. They may believe that I am incapable and unable to contribute to the community."*²⁰³

*"As of today, our family members cannot forget the incident. Due to that, they do not participate in weddings or other joyful parties."*²⁰⁴

*"It has been eight years, yet the pain of my husband's passing still brings tears to my eyes. Since that fateful day, I have avoided attending ceremonies or visiting my sisters and relatives."*²⁰⁵

One woman said that, as a result of being injured in a suicide attack by unknown anti-government elements, her husband became disabled and now uses a wheelchair. His photography shop was also destroyed in the incident and he now works selling small items in the bazaar. As a result of the incident, they do not have the money to participate in social events:

*"Our daughters do not have much. They ask for clothes and shoes to go to weddings and parties; they do not understand why we cannot pay for them and they cry. Mostly we do not go to social events because we cannot afford it."*²⁰⁶

Mass casualty incidents affected the social lives of entire communities. A victim of an airstrike carried out by the Afghan National Army which targeted a graduation ceremony at a madrassa in Kunduz province, said: *"After this incident, no social and cultural events were celebrated in my village as they had been in the past. This incident had an impact on the lives of almost everyone in the region."*²⁰⁷

A man who was wounded in a suicide attack by ISIL-KP on a Shi'a mosque said:

"Socially, the impact has been significant. After the incident, we, as Shi'a people, are unable to gather at social events easily. We live in fear that another attack could happen. ISKP can target us easily at such gatherings. As a result, we rarely attend prayers, marriage

²⁰¹ Interview no 22.

²⁰² Interview no 81.

²⁰³ Interview no 93.

²⁰⁴ Interview no 62.

²⁰⁵ Interview no 52.

²⁰⁶ Interview no 170.

²⁰⁷ Interview no 60.

*ceremonies, and other social events, leaving us feeling isolated from the community."*²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Interview no 124.



Displaced women and children in Afghanistan's northern Saripul province in 2009.

UNAMA/Eric Kanalstein, Saripul, 2009.

iii. Specific impacts on women

Women spoke about the social implications of losing male family members due to the value placed on having male family members in Afghan society and their role as breadwinners, including experiencing discrimination and gender-based violence. Women whose male relatives had been killed said that no longer having a *mahram* impacted their freedom of movement and ability to participate in the social lives of their communities:

*"On Friday nights especially, we are crying a lot. When I go out without a mahram, it's hard for me. I see other families with their mahram and I feel pain. I just sit at home and think about how if my husband was alive, we would be a happy family like our neighbours."*²⁰⁹

*"We did not expect my father, who only worked as a doctor, to be murdered. [...] When my mother is ill, it is very difficult for her to go to Kabul, because she does not have a mahram."*²¹⁰

*"You know, life is not easy for the widows in our culture. As such, since then, I have not worn a new dress, used cosmetics, or participated in social gatherings, including wedding parties, just to protect myself from any possible false accusation, such as extramarital relationships, adultery, or anything similar. Occasionally when I find myself in a gathering I feel that people are staring at me."*²¹¹

One woman described how, after her husband, a taxi driver, was shot and killed during an operation conducted by ANDSF against Taliban members, his family did not support her to feed her children and were physically violent towards her. She subsequently left their home and went to live with her own parents.²¹²

Another woman described how her husband was killed and she and their young daughter were wounded when their car struck a pressure plate improvised explosive device planted on a road by the Taliban. She said:

*"Widows and orphan children, especially if they are poor, became like a garbage bin in the village. Communities and relatives can do any harm that they want. My 15-year-old son, left the house for the evening praying; then, [the next morning], his dead body was found in the desert. He had been cruelly beaten to death. I am sure my in-laws killed my son as my son did not have a father, and this gave them the courage to perform this cruel crime. Due to fear and to save the lives of my other children and protect my daughter from being raped by my in-laws, I moved to my parents' house six days after the killing of my son."*²¹³

Part 4: Efforts made by victims to seek redress or

²⁰⁹ Interview no 173.

²¹⁰ Interview no 30.

²¹¹ Interview no 55.

²¹² Interview no 164.

²¹³ Interview no 53.

assistance

Interviewees were asked about efforts by responsible parties to address the harm they suffered.

Over half of the individuals interviewed (55%) had not attempted to make a complaint²¹⁴ about what had happened to them or to file a claim for compensation or assistance.²¹⁵ The remaining 45 percent of interviewees had made a complaint and/or a claim. A higher proportion of men interviewed for this report (50%) had made complaints and/or claims compared with women interviewees (33%), which may indicate greater barriers to seeking recourse for women as compared to men.

Among interviewees who had made complaints and/or claims, most were addressed to offices of the former government. The most common entities were: Republic era Provincial Governors' offices (31), Republic era police (23), and Republic era District Governors' offices (15). Some interviewees had made complaints and/or claims to multiple entities.

Although all incidents covered by this report occurred prior to the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021 and most complaints and claims were made during this time, seventeen interviewees had complained and/or made claims addressed to the current *de facto* authorities in Afghanistan, after the takeover.

Among those who did make complaints and/or claims, over half (64%) said that they received no response or were unsuccessful in their endeavours to seek justice, obtain compensation and/or some other type of remedy or reparation. Even those interviewees who said that there was some effort made to address the harm caused were mostly dissatisfied with the efforts made, saying that they did not adequately compensate for or remediate the harm caused.

²¹⁴ For the purposes of this report, the term "complaint" is used to encompass a wide range of potential actions that may have been taken by victims, in both written and verbal form. It could include complaints to a variety of actors, including (but not limited to) the former government, the Taliban/*de facto* authorities, international military forces, UN special procedures. A complaint may have included a request for acknowledgment, apology, information, access to justice, and/or a claim for compensation or any other type of reparation or assistance.

²¹⁵ In their responses, victims often referred to claims for "compensation" in a broad sense, without necessarily meaning compensation as a form of legal reparation. Victims often also referred to other forms of assistance including disability payments, food assistance or other forms of discretionary financial or material humanitarian assistance received from various actors in the aftermath of an incident which victimized either them or their family members.



A. Barriers to making complaints and/or claims

"... I was working with my son in our agricultural land near to a mosque to collect the harvest. I was a little far and my son was close to the mosque when a drone came and fired at the mosque. We did not know who sent this drone to attack the mosque. We all dropped on the ground and after a few minutes, I saw my son was hit by shrapnel in the head. I took my son and immediately carried him to the local hospital and after some basic treatment, moved him to Kabul.

This incident affected all of our village as some people lost their lives. We are poor people and can hardly afford the treatment of our patients, so this incident, besides psychologically

affecting us, caused us financial losses as well because taking care of the injured person costs money. We did not know to whom we should complain to or where to claim compensation. No official investigation has taken place."²¹⁶

Over half of interviewees (55%) had not made any type of complaint or claim. The barriers to making complaints and claims included: lack of awareness of available avenues for support or complaints; bureaucratic impediments; lack of confidence that any action would be taken, and fear of reprisals.

i. Lack of awareness of processes

Numerous interviewees stated they did not make a complaint or claim because they did not know how or where to do so. A man whose 11-year-old sister was injured by shrapnel from heavy artillery fired by international military forces said that he did not lodge any written complaint or claim compensation, because he was unaware of the process and cannot read:

*"I am an illiterate man. I did not lodge any written complaint against the perpetrator. I do not know about any official investigation. I was unaware about any kinds of compensations."*²¹⁷

A woman whose husband and children were killed by artillery fire by Afghan National Army members said that she did not know who to approach to claim compensation and, furthermore, was not in a position to undertake such a process after the incident which killed her husband and children:

*"Actually, I did not know about any entity to ask for compensation. I was on my own, a fresh widow who had lost her husband, children and I was myself injured. I was not thinking clearly."*²¹⁸

Being injured, grieving killed family members and needing to care for the wounded were common reasons for people not making complaints or claims:

*"No, [I did not make a complaint or claim for compensation] I was busy grieving."*²¹⁹

*"No, it was the time of the conflict, no one cared about what happened. We were busy with our wounded patients."*²²⁰

ii. Bureaucratic impediments

Some interviewees described bureaucratic impediments to making complaints or registering claims. For example, some mentioned the need to obtain signatures from community members as a barrier:

"I went to the Department of Disabilities and Martyrs, but they did not help us. They told us that we needed proof that this incident happened, and we needed mullahs and elders to sign

²¹⁶ Interview no 18.

²¹⁷ Interview no 31.

²¹⁸ Interview no 154.

²¹⁹ Interview no 12.

²²⁰ Interview no 102.

documents. But when we went to the mullahs and the elders to ask them to sign, they refused because they said too many incidents like this happened. They did not want to help us. So, without the paperwork, I could not get any assistance."²²¹

*"We approached some NGOs for assistance, and they said that we needed to get the Shura to sign off on paperwork to confirm what happened, but the shuras kept delaying and they wouldn't help us. Then the Republic government collapsed and there was nothing."*²²²

Victims of incidents which took place shortly before the Taliban takeover said that by the time they were ready to make a formal complaint or claim, the government had collapsed and they felt there was therefore no one they could approach:

*"A few months after the incident, I went to the Provincial Governor's office for compensation, but I could never finalize the paperwork because the staff were too busy or were not in the office on certain days. Later, the government collapsed and I could not complete the procedure."*²²³

*"We did not file any complaints. It happened one month before the collapse of the Republic regime, and we were occupied with people offering their condolences and prayers."*²²⁴

iii. Lack of confidence in the authorities

*"I did not make any complaints to any parties involved. I was extremely busy in the burial ceremony, funeral, and the treatment of my children. I did not have time to make complaint. In addition, I knew the government officials could not do anything to address my complaints. They neither bring the perpetrators into justice, nor they could bring my lost children back."*²²⁵

A common response among interviewees who had not filed a complaint or claim was that they thought that they would not be listened to by those responsible. In the majority of cases, this was expressed as a general feeling of distrust in the competence and fairness of public institutions. Many said that they were just "ordinary civilians" and did not believe that the authorities – referring both to the former government and the *de facto* authorities – would listen to them:

*"No, I did not file a complaint. It will be futile to do so."*²²⁶

*"It was a time of conflict, and we thought our voice would not be heard because we were ordinary defenceless civilians, so we did not complain about what happened, and I thought at the time that our voice would not be heard."*²²⁷

*"We are poor families, no one will hear our sad voice."*²²⁸

²²¹ Interview no 172.

²²² Interview no 171.

²²³ Interview no 139.

²²⁴ Interview no 81.

²²⁵ Interview no 34.

²²⁶ Interview no 26.

²²⁷ Interview no 61.

²²⁸ Interview no 67.

Many interviewees said that they did not see the point in filing a complaint, because they did not have confidence that the authorities would take any meaningful action in response.

Interviewees often expressed the belief that there was widespread corruption among parties to the conflict, and cited this as a barrier to making complaints or claims because they thought that their issue would not be taken seriously or considered impartially. A man whose nephew was the victim of a targeted killing by the Taliban, said:

"How would we complain to anyone? The Republic regime was corrupt and could not protect its citizens, while the de facto government is the rule of the former Taliban fighters. Where can we go and what would we do? In Pashto, we have a proverb which says that if the judge himself is a criminal, where we shall refer our case?"²²⁹

Other interviewees shared similar views:

"When we are poor, illiterate, powerless, and have no rule of law. When we have our village almost entirely controlled by a harsh and inhuman group called the Taliban – the group that itself causes civilian casualties with ignorance [...] how can we claim compensation? Are they the ones to provide us with compensation? We are afraid of getting killed, wounded, or displaced. We have daughters for whom we are afraid they will be forced to marry the Taliban if we claim compensation. They will never give us any type of reward or bring back the lives of those we lost. They would even increase problems for us. Therefore, we kept silent and never raised our voices for justice."²³⁰

"No action has yet been taken by any of the responsible parties. The perpetrators are currently in power. I heard that in the meetings, they generally acknowledge that they were carrying out improvised explosive device attacks in [my] city and that they feel proud for what they had done. [...] I did not lodge any complaint. I know the current government not only does not hear such complaints, but it could create more problems for me."²³¹

"Who could dare to bring the NATO forces to justice? They would have been justifying their violent acts as legitimate because of the war."²³²

A man whose parents, two sisters and brother were killed when artillery fired by the Afghan National Army hit their family home, said that he was deterred from making a complaint by the general amnesty for former ANDSF and former government officials which was announced by the *de facto* authorities after their takeover of Afghanistan.²³³

iv. Fear of reprisals

Numerous individuals spoke of fear of retaliation being a primary reason for not having made a complaint or claim.

An individual who was shot in the leg by Afghan National Police officers while standing outside

²²⁹ Interview no 104.

²³⁰ Interview no 148.

²³¹ Interview no 10.

²³² Interview no 111.

²³³ Interview no 32.

his shop said:

*"I wanted to sue the police and file a complaint against the local administration, but after consultation with local tribal and community elders – most of whom were security forces affiliates and told me there would be harsh consequences if I opted to do so – I did not. I was concerned about the safety of my family members and wanted to avoid any retaliatory acts by the police commander. This was the main reason I refrained from filing a complaint and a compensation claim."*²³⁴

A woman whose husband and his two cousins were killed in an airstrike while they were on their way home from their work in the fields said she did not make a complaint because she was afraid, due to rumours of a planned second bombardment on their village.²³⁵

A man whose relatives died when their taxi drove over a pressure plate improvised explosive device, killing all passengers on board said that "no one dared to complain" about the incident:

*"...when this incident happened, the Taliban immediately reacted harshly, they yelled at us and warned of why stepping on their pressure plate improvised explosive device which they intended to target the Afghan National Security Forces. They did not even excuse themselves for causing the civilian casualties. They did not even announce to anyone in our village to try to be cautious to not step on or roll over their planted improvised explosive device, which was unacceptable. They could have told us prior this incident and we could have prevented it from happening... We were brave and still are brave, but we were afraid that the Taliban would cause us big trouble if we talk or complain against them."*²³⁶

A man who at the age of 15 survived an attack on his village by Taliban members, in which his father and uncle – along with five others – were executed, said they did not complain because they did not believe anyone could bring the perpetrators to justice, and were afraid that the Taliban would return to the village:

*"When I see a man with a full beard I am scared and reminded of what was done to us by the Taliban. I fear they will come back to our village and harm us again."*²³⁷

B. Unsuccessful claims or complaints

The majority of people who had made complaints or claims were dissatisfied with the outcome, often stating that they simply received no response from the authorities, were denied assistance, or turned away.

i. No action taken

The most common reason complaints and claims were unsuccessful was that the authorities took no action in response.

²³⁴ Interview no 49.

²³⁵ Interview no 123.

²³⁶ Interview no 148.

²³⁷ Interview no 19.

In numerous instances, despite assurances from senior government officials, interviewees received no response to their complaints or claims. A man whose house was severely damaged by a vehicle borne improvised explosive device planted by the Taliban (which also wounded the interviewee, his mother and his 12-year-old son) said:

*"As it was a huge incident, the Provincial Governor, District Governor and some members of the parliament came to visit us and they promised to support us financially, but no real action was taken. We filed a claim for financial compensation with the District and Provincial Governors' offices. At that time, Mr. [name withheld], the parliamentary chairman who is from our village, promised us that there is no need for us to approach any other government institution because he would fully compensate our losses, but nothing happened."*²³⁸

A man whose three children were killed by a mortar fired by Afghan National Army forces landed in the yard of their house reached out to the District Governor and the Police regarding the incident. He then met with the Deputy Provincial Governor who promised him compensation. Some weeks later, he followed up with the Provincial Governor's office:

*"When I contacted the number, the person who answered asked me: 'Who gave you this number?' I told him it was the District Governor's office. Then the person who answered the phone gave me very harsh words. He said: 'You and the person who gave you this number can go to hell and eat shit! And if you call me again, I will arrest you.'"*²³⁹

A woman whose father was shot and killed by Taliban members approached multiple entities to report the incident and seek an investigation:

*"The Taliban promised to do an investigation and find the perpetrator. The Provincial Governor, Chief of Police, and Chief of the National Directorate of Security all promised to do an investigation and find the perpetrator. The commander of Hizb-e-Islami Gulbuddin Hekmatyar [...] also promised to do an investigation. But so far, there is no outcome. The motive behind the incident and perpetrators have remained unknown."*²⁴⁰

Others said that they simply never received any information about the outcome of their complaint, leading them to conclude that the authorities took no action:

*"[Some] officials came for an investigation, but I do not know much about the investigation or its results."*²⁴¹

*"The government authorities, including the district Governor and the Chief of Police, said that it was a terrorist attack and that they would follow up, but there was no outcome. We have no idea if an official investigation took place or what the outcome was."*²⁴²

Many relatives of victims displayed extraordinary persistence in following up on their complaints with authorities, some for many years. For example, a man whose two brothers were shot and killed by pro-government militia while attending a funeral in 2012 said he lodged

²³⁸ Interview no 43.

²³⁹ Interview no 27.

²⁴⁰ Interview no 30.

²⁴¹ Interview no 150.

²⁴² Interview no 100.

petitions with the Provincial Governor, the Chief of Police and the President's office at the time of the incident. He said that the perpetrators fought off a police operation to arrest them and escaped. Almost nine years later, when the city where the man lived fell to the Taliban, the two perpetrators were arrested by the *de facto* authorities. The man was subsequently told that the Taliban Leader had announced a general amnesty which meant the perpetrators could not be punished. He said they were released and fled abroad.²⁴³

Another individual whose son and daughter were killed by a mortar round fired by Afghan National Army forces, also wounding the interviewee and five other family members, said that he approached the Department of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs with a petition to obtain financial support for his grandsons. He said he also shared his petition with the Provincial Governor's office and the court but no one took any action, despite him following up his request for around two years. He said that when he asked for his documents back, he was told they had been burnt and lost.²⁴⁴

ii. Request denied by authorities

Some people said that when they tried to seek assistance or make a complaint, the person or persons they met with refused to help them. An interviewee whose 17-year-old son was killed and grandson was wounded during an exchange of fire between ANDSF and Taliban forces approached both parties to ask for assistance to rebuild his house, which had been completely destroyed in the incident:

*"After the incident, I went to the specific Afghan National Security Forces outpost and informed them that they had destroyed my home and should compensate me for it. They responded by saying that I should never accommodate the Taliban in my home or its vicinity, adding that in war, there are no rewards or compensations. I then asked Taliban commander [name withheld] for assistance, saying: 'Due to your actions, my home has been destroyed. Could you at least help me rebuild it?' The Taliban commander responded: 'It is not our responsibility to provide compensation for that.'"*²⁴⁵

Others said they approached the Taliban with complaints about pressure plate improvised explosive devices which had killed and wounded their relatives. They were often told that this was an accident and that they should be strong and put their faith in Allah. A man who was travelling in a vehicle that hit a pressure plate improvised explosive device planted by the Taliban, killing 13 passengers – six of whom were members of his family – went to the Taliban with a letter of complaint, requesting compensation and punishment for the perpetrators. He said:

*"When I handed over my complaint letter to him, he just encouraged me to be strong and said that Allah will give me paradise against those lost. He did not take any action."*²⁴⁶

Another man said he drove over a pressure plate improvised explosive device with a tractor, causing it to detonate. His tractor was destroyed and his legs were badly wounded. He

²⁴³ Interview no 134.

²⁴⁴ Interview no 11.

²⁴⁵ Interview no 13.

²⁴⁶ Interview no 65.

approached the Taliban about the incident:

*"I sought to know why I was targeted. In response, [...] the commander of the Taliban argued that they had mistaken my tractor with an Afghan National and Defence Security Forces military vehicle, which was the real target of the improvised explosive device. The perpetrators simply called this an unintentional accident written in my fate by Allah and welcomed that I was still alive."*²⁴⁷

iii. Collapse of the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

The collapse of the former government was commonly cited as a reason for complaints or claims not being followed up:

*"A few months after the incident, I went to the Provincial Governor's office for compensation, but I could not finalize the paperwork because the staff were too busy or were not in the office on certain days. Later, the government collapsed and I could not complete the procedure."*²⁴⁸

One individual described how the deteriorating security situation in his province at the time of the collapse of the former government prevented him from approaching government authorities about the killing of his brother:

*"The incident happened at a critical juncture of time, amidst harsh armed clashes over the control of the provincial capitals. The bureaucratic apparatus of the previous government seemed to have almost collapsed, the only thing left was the Afghan National and Defence Forces in an evacuation posture from their military check posts. It was highly risky for us to request or seek an investigation. We even struggled at the expense of our lives to transfer the dead body of my brother from the battlefield."*²⁴⁹

A man whose cousin, a taxi driver, was shot and killed by Taliban members at a checkpoint said that a few months after the incident, the perpetrators were arrested by National Directorate of Security officials and the case was supposed to be heard by a court. However, the accused individuals were released from custody after the takeover and he now sees them in the streets of his town.²⁵⁰

iv. Alleged corruption and discrimination by state authorities

Khan Yousufi

"On [date withheld], in the afternoon, my 10-year-old son opened the front door of our house [...] and was faced with an Afghan National Police patrol tank which opened fire on him. He was shot in the chest. When my wife saw the scene, she ran to save our son and was also shot in the forehead. My son died on the spot, and my wife was severely injured. I reached out to the Chief of Police's office and complained about the atrocity. At first, they told

²⁴⁷ Interview no 101.

²⁴⁸ Interview no 139.

²⁴⁹ Interview no 133.

²⁵⁰ Interview no 20.

me: "You have to give a statement that your son died of anti-government elements' firing so we can give you some compensation". I denied this, and then they threatened me that they would arrest me on allegations of being an anti-government element myself, so I kept quiet. [...] I did not need compensation because my son cannot be alive again. I was just asking for justice."²⁵¹

Some people said that their complaints or claims were denied due to what they perceived as corruption or discrimination by officials. For example, one individual who approached the *de facto* Department of Labour and Social Affairs after the Taliban takeover seeking support for her son, who was severely injured in a mortar attack, said she was told by *de facto* officials that she was not eligible for assistance because of her ethnicity.²⁵²

Individuals repeatedly cited corruption by officials as the reason – in their opinion – that they were denied financial assistance:

*"During the Republic regime, my uncle made several attempts to get me a financial assistance card, but due to corruption I was unable to receive any financial assistance."*²⁵³

*"The government authorities, including the police, became aware of the incident and the harm it caused to the victims, but no action or any investigation was undertaken. All the [...] provincial authorities were warlords in alliance with General Dostum. They were busy with their own monkey business and corruption and were careless about the communities."*²⁵⁴

*"I have not been supported. I was just told to apply for a Martyrs card. However, I have not received such a card, due to the complicated administrative process and the misbehaviour of the officials."*²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ Interview no 7.

²⁵² Interview no 90.

²⁵³ Interview no 126.

²⁵⁴ Interview no 54.

²⁵⁵ Interview no 23.



Women who lost relatives in a suicide attack on a wedding hall in Kabul on 18 August 2019:

"The blast shattered glass and sent dust flying, turned the happiness and joy into a tragedy, yelling, and fear. The white tablecloths stained red with the blood of participants and people, including the wounded, were running out of the hotel. Everyone was searching for their loved ones inside and outside the hotel salons."

"I have grieved for years and continue to do so. Neither the former government nor the current Taliban have offered any assistance. While it is possible that the previous government provided support to some victims, we did not receive any help. We were poor then and remain poor now."

Wakil Kohsar/AFP, Kabul, 2019.

C. Types of recourse sought and received

Over half (64%) of interviewees who had filed some type of complaint and/or claim, said that their efforts were unsuccessful. These individuals had made complaints and/or claims to various entities, including the former government, the Taliban prior to their takeover of the country, and the *de facto* authorities after the takeover.

On the other hand, out of the remaining interviewees who reported having filed some type of complaint and/or claim, thirty-six percent reported having received some form of response, acknowledgment and/or financial or other support. However, even where a response or acknowledgment had been received, victims were rarely satisfied with the outcome, often expressing that the response was inadequate considering the suffering and loss they had experienced.

i. Monetary support

Some individuals received money in response to their complaint or claim. The sums received varied greatly, from between 5,000 and 7,000,000 Afghanis (equivalent in USD to 67 to 93,333 USD). The modalities varied and included ad hoc payments by the former government, received from a range of entities including: the Department of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, Provincial Governors, Departments of Labour and Social Affairs and the Office of the President. Some victims had received *ex gratia* payments by international military forces.

Many interviewees explained that the amounts received were insufficient to cover the costs they incurred, such as having to rebuild their homes and businesses, funeral costs or medical treatment for the wounded. One man's father and brother were killed in an airstrike carried out by international military forces which impacted his family home. The man, his mother and his ten siblings – all aged under 13 at the time of the incident – were also wounded in the incident. He said:

*"After a few months, the Afghan Government paid 200,000 Afghanis [2,667 USD] to our family as compensation for the death of my father and my brother, but the amount did not even cover their funeral expenses and we had no money left for the treatment of the injured victims."*²⁵⁶

Some people had applied to the government and/or the *de facto* authorities for assistance and received ongoing pensions. The amounts received and sources of the pensions varied. For example, one individual said he received 6,000 Afghanis per month [80 USD] from the Department of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, following the killing of his son by Taliban members in 2018.²⁵⁷ Another man, whose three sons were killed and another severely wounded in a suicide attack, said that the previous regime paid for martyrs (killed persons) while the current regime provides support to orphans. He said that each orphaned child receives 2,000 Afghanis per month [27 USD], paid every six months, from the *de facto* Department of Martyrs and

²⁵⁶ Interview no 97.

²⁵⁷ Interview no 115.

Disabled Affairs. His disabled son receives the same amount.²⁵⁸

Several people spoke about having received a pension under the former government, which ceased after the Taliban takeover.²⁵⁹ Others had not received a pension under the former government, but receive one now from the *de facto* authorities.²⁶⁰ Some noted that their pension amounts had decreased since the Taliban takeover:

*"In the previous regime, I was registered with the Department of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs and received an annual allowance of 60,000 Afghanis [800 USD]; an amount that has almost been cut in half under the de facto authorities."*²⁶¹

Several people said that they received *ad hoc* or one-off payments without having made a claim:

*"I did not make a claim, but on the seventh day of the incident, the Provincial Governor's office paid us 100,000 Afghanis [1,333 USD] for each person killed; a total of 500,000 Afghanis [6,667 USD] for five family members."*²⁶²

*"The then government paid 100,000 Afghanis [1,333 USD] per person to honour their martyrdom. In addition, the families of the victims were given a shop on the outskirts of the city."*²⁶³

In addition, a number of interviewees had received *ex gratia* payments from international military forces, which were made to Afghan civilians for death, injury and property damage as a result of combat operations.

Ghulam Mahayuodin

On 30 January 2020, in the afternoon, Ghulam Mahayuodin's family was travelling back home from a funeral ceremony when their car was targeted by a US drone. His father, mother, uncle, aunt and the child of his cousin were killed.

After the incident, he received a phone call from the Deputy Chief of Staff of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. He apologized for the incident and said President Ghani and the Afghan security forces had not been consulted or informed by US forces about the attack. After a couple of days, Afghan military staff and a US military staff member came to visit Ghulam Mahayuodin and his brother. The US staff member acknowledged he had ordered the attack based on erroneous information that some key leaders of the Taliban had been travelling in the vehicle.

*"During that meeting, I asked for justice and compensation, but I did not receive any response. At the end of the meeting, I was given an envelope which had only 2,000 USD in it."*²⁶⁴

²⁵⁸ Interview no 75.

²⁵⁹ Interview no 72.

²⁶⁰ Interview no 126.

²⁶¹ Interview no 101.

²⁶² Interview no 35.

²⁶³ Interview no 70.

²⁶⁴ Interview no 9.

A man whose father and brother were killed in an air operation conducted by New Zealand military forces in 2010 said:

*"Before August 2021, a [district representative of the Department of Martyrs and Disabled people] called me and said that the New Zealand government wanted to pay blood money. Because of this, I talked with [a New Zealand journalist] twice, but he did not confirm this information."*²⁶⁵

Some interviewees had received *ad hoc* payments from non-governmental organisations:

*"An NGO – I don't remember the name – came and gave us 15,000 Afghanis [200 USD] per killed person."*²⁶⁶

*"[N]o assistance was received from the Republic regime or the Taliban fighters [...] For my injury and disability, I received only 50,000 Afghanis [667 USD] from an international NGO, the name of which is not known to me."*²⁶⁷

ii. Apologies and information²⁶⁸

Most interviewees had not received any information about the incident, with even those who tried to register formal complaints often saying that they never heard back from the entity they had complained to. Some said that despite having registered complaints, the only organisation to ever contact them about the incident was UNAMA.²⁶⁹

Some interviewees had received acknowledgments and apologies for incidents. These were received from various actors and parties to the former armed conflict, including the President's Office, the Taliban, Provincial and District Governors, and security forces, including international military forces. Apologies often followed concerted efforts by the families of victims to seek justice:

*"The father of the victim went to Quetta, Pakistan, where the leadership council of the Taliban was believed to be stationed. He spent more than a week to meet the judicial officials to file a complaint, but failed to reach out to the relevant officials of the Taliban. He only met and gave the message to low-level officials aimed at relaying it to the council judicial branch. After a few days, a Taliban commander [...] who was allegedly responsible for the killing acknowledged and apologized for the mistaken assassination of an innocent person. The message was passed through local community members who came to our house."*²⁷⁰

"Soon after the incident, we learned that the Taliban forces who had planted the improvised explosive device had committed a mistake, by confusing our car with an Afghan National and Defence Security Forces Ranger pickup. The local Taliban commander took responsibility for the mistake and requested us to allow some influential tribal figures to

²⁶⁵ Interview no 140.

²⁶⁶ Interview no 94.

²⁶⁷ Interview no 96.

²⁶⁸ While apologies are generally regarded as a form of satisfaction linked to victims' right to reparation, and information is linked to victims' rights to truth, victims often saw these issues as interconnected in their responses to questions.

²⁶⁹ Interview no 7; Interview no 14.

²⁷⁰ Interview no 24.

apologize on behalf of the Taliban, but we have not accepted the delegation to come. They only extended condolences for the loss."²⁷¹

Apologies were also often accompanied by *ad hoc* financial assistance. The victim of an airstrike carried out by the Afghan National Army, which killed her nine-year-old nephew and wounded her and seven of her family members, said that the Deputy Provincial Governor visited them in hospital to apologize for the incident, which he said was a mistake. He also gave the family 10,000 Afghanis [133 USD] for her nephew's funeral ceremony, and promised to pay for their medical treatment. She said, however that the government collapsed a few days later and the family received no financial assistance.²⁷²

Additionally, interviewees who had received apologies often felt that it did not do anything to change the situation - noting that no one had been arrested, prosecuted or punished for the incident in question:

*"After UNAMA issued a press statement on the incident, the situation developed positively. Elders from our community travelled to Kabul and visited President Ashraf Ghani and the Minister of Defence. All the authorities, including the President, apologized for the incident and said it was a mistake, though no one was arrested, prosecuted or punished for the serious crime."*²⁷³

*"We reached out to the [...] District Governor and to the Chief of Police. They said: 'We are sorry for what happened', but the perpetrators were not identified or arrested."*²⁷⁴

Some interviewees said that they met with officials of the former government who either did not take responsibility or blamed other parties, such as the Taliban or international military forces, for the incident in question:

*"The Afghan Government and the President's Office acknowledged the incident and added that the incident was conducted by American forces. But the Americans did nothing about the incident. They neither acknowledged the incident nor apologized about it."*²⁷⁵

*"Despite my grandpa's earnest visit to the [Provincial] Governor at the time, to express his concern regarding the tragic loss of his grandchild, no steps were taken by the authorities. The Provincial Governor, in response, conveyed to my grandpa that there might have been a misunderstanding, implying that the individuals involved in the incident were affiliated with the Taliban."*²⁷⁶

iii. Access to justice

No one investigated it. If they did I am unaware of it. I'm 75 percent sure no one investigated or followed up or documented it. No one ever interviewed me about it. No NGO ever asked me about

²⁷¹ Interview no 98.

²⁷² Interview no 135.

²⁷³ Interview no 60.

²⁷⁴ Interview no 94.

²⁷⁵ Interview no 62.

²⁷⁶ Interview no 8.

it. Today is the first time anyone has asked me about it."²⁷⁷

The majority of interviewees who had attempted to seek justice for what happened to them or their family members said that they were unsuccessful. This was mostly due to what interviewees perceived as the inaction or denials of the officials they approached – both in the former government, the Taliban (pre-takeover) and the *de facto* authorities (post-takeover):

*"I did make complaints to the Taliban fighters in the area, but none of them entertained my concerns or answered my questions. They denied their involvement in the killing of my son. [...] I knew that he was killed by the Taliban and therefore did not complain to the Republic regime officials."*²⁷⁸

*"The incident took place in 2021, but I complained about it recently under the Taliban's regime. I drafted a petition and presented it to the current governor of Sar-e-Pul, who told me that he could not do anything, and I should go to Kabul. I told him that if I had money to go to Kabul, I would not have come to you."*²⁷⁹

A man whose nephew and brother were shot and killed when an Afghan National Army member fired at him from a check post in said he approached the Commander to ask why they had done this:

*"They said that they did not think they shot the victims, but that they might have been shot by the Afghan National Police. We told them that they were the ones who fired as we saw them, and that the Afghan National Police was not firing during the specific time. They had no response. We left the area and buried our victims."*²⁸⁰

Despite the denial, the man said he still hopes to be able to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Some people who approached the authorities to complain about incidents said that the former government accused the victims of being Taliban members as a way of justifying their killing. An interviewee spoke about his community's attempts to seek justice for the killing of five local children by heavy artillery fired by Afghan National Army members:

*"After the incident, we organized a demonstration and blocked the highway for three hours. The Provincial Governor asked us to speak with him. The representative of the demonstrators met with him and complained verbally. But the Provincial Governor took no action. He said: 'You are Taliban. You provide food for the Taliban. You provide place for the Taliban.'"*²⁸¹

A number of interviewees said they were told by officials that they were unable to bring the perpetrators to justice because they had no power to do so:

"My family and [the other victim's] family even approached National Security Council officials in Kabul and complained about the incident. But the officials' response was that they

²⁷⁷ Interview no 19.

²⁷⁸ Interview no 115.

²⁷⁹ Interview no 37.

²⁸⁰ Interview no 105.

²⁸¹ Interview no 138.

believed the [US] drone had hit the wrong target and that they were powerless against the Americans."²⁸²

*"I complained to the former provincial police. However, they told me they could not control [the Commander in charge]. [...] The provincial police advised me that we, as a community, should support the Taliban in attacking [the Commander's] check post to kill him."*²⁸³

There were, however, some interviewees who described different forms of justice or accountability procedures taking place as a result of their complaints. A man whose son was killed by *Arbaki*²⁸⁴ members said that the perpetrators were arrested, tried and received a long prison sentence. He said they were released after serving just five months of their prison terms, which he believed was due to bribery.²⁸⁵

A man whose brother was shot and killed by ANDSF during an exchange of fire with Taliban members said that after the takeover of the country he approached the *de facto* authorities to seek justice. He said:

*"The offender confessed to his guilt, while his comrades as eyewitnesses offered testimonials against the police officer who had shot my brother. My family members were present in the trial-like procedure. Subsequently, I learned that the culprit was executed/killed by the Taliban [de facto authorities], and justice was served."*²⁸⁶

iv. Non-monetary forms of victim assistance

Some interviewees said that they had received *ad hoc* food assistance from the former government and from NGOs (non-governmental organisation) following the incident:

*"I explained to the former Provincial Governor about the incident with details. He only provided me food assistance including: four bags of flour, one bag of rice, one bag of beans, and two cans of cooking oil."*²⁸⁷

*"I did not raise the incident to anyone or to any organisations so far, and have not lodged a complaint against anyone either. [...] We received some food assistance from the Department of Martyrs and Disabled Persons."*²⁸⁸

*"After the incident, only one NGO provided me with two sacks each of wheat flour, beans, and sugar. No other assistance came from anyone else."*²⁸⁹

"The government has not supported me. An NGO, whose name I cannot remember, helped

²⁸² Interview no 113.

²⁸³ Interview no 51(a).

²⁸⁴ "Arbaki" was a term used during the period of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to describe pro-government militia or Afghan Local Police members.

²⁸⁵ Interview no 106.

²⁸⁶ Interview no 133.

²⁸⁷ Interview no 11.

²⁸⁸ Interview no 61.

²⁸⁹ Interview no 96.

me once with some food items, including flour, beans, and oil."²⁹⁰

Numerous interviewees, when asked if they received any form of assistance, responded that they received free medical treatment in hospitals run by the government, despite the fact that this would be a service to which they would reasonably be expected to be entitled.²⁹¹

A man who was wounded in a US airstrike on his village when he was three years' old said he received medical treatment in the United States:

*"I do not remember the incident well because, I think I was around three years' old. I lost ten members of my family including my father, mother and siblings in the incident. I, along with my brother and sister, survived. I lost everything. Nothing was left for us. My siblings and I were seriously injured. I feel the harm of the incident until now and it will continue throughout my life. People told me that in my village all houses were destroyed by the bombardment, only me along with my two siblings and another female kid in the village were left at the scene... I hardly remember... I was in the village and playing with other kids in front of my house when the incident happened. After that I do not know what happened. I lost consciousness. When I got back to normal, I was in America, in Washington D.C., in a hospital along with my sister and brother. I do not know who transferred us to America. [Later I learned] that when American forces bombarded and took control of the village, they found us on the scene with serious injuries. They collected us and transferred us to Washington D.C. I was there for around three years with the support of American institutions. I was then transferred back to Afghanistan without my siblings. I was handed over to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and enrolled in an orphanage."*²⁹²

The man lost contact with his siblings, who remained in the United States, despite continuing his search for them after his return to Afghanistan.

A woman whose husband, a polio vaccinator, was shot and killed by Taliban members, said that they did not receive any financial compensation or assistance, however her oldest son was given the job of her late husband as a polio vaccinator at the hospital.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Interview no 17.

²⁹¹ Interview no 36; Interview no 53.

²⁹² Interview no 82.

²⁹³ Interview no 72.



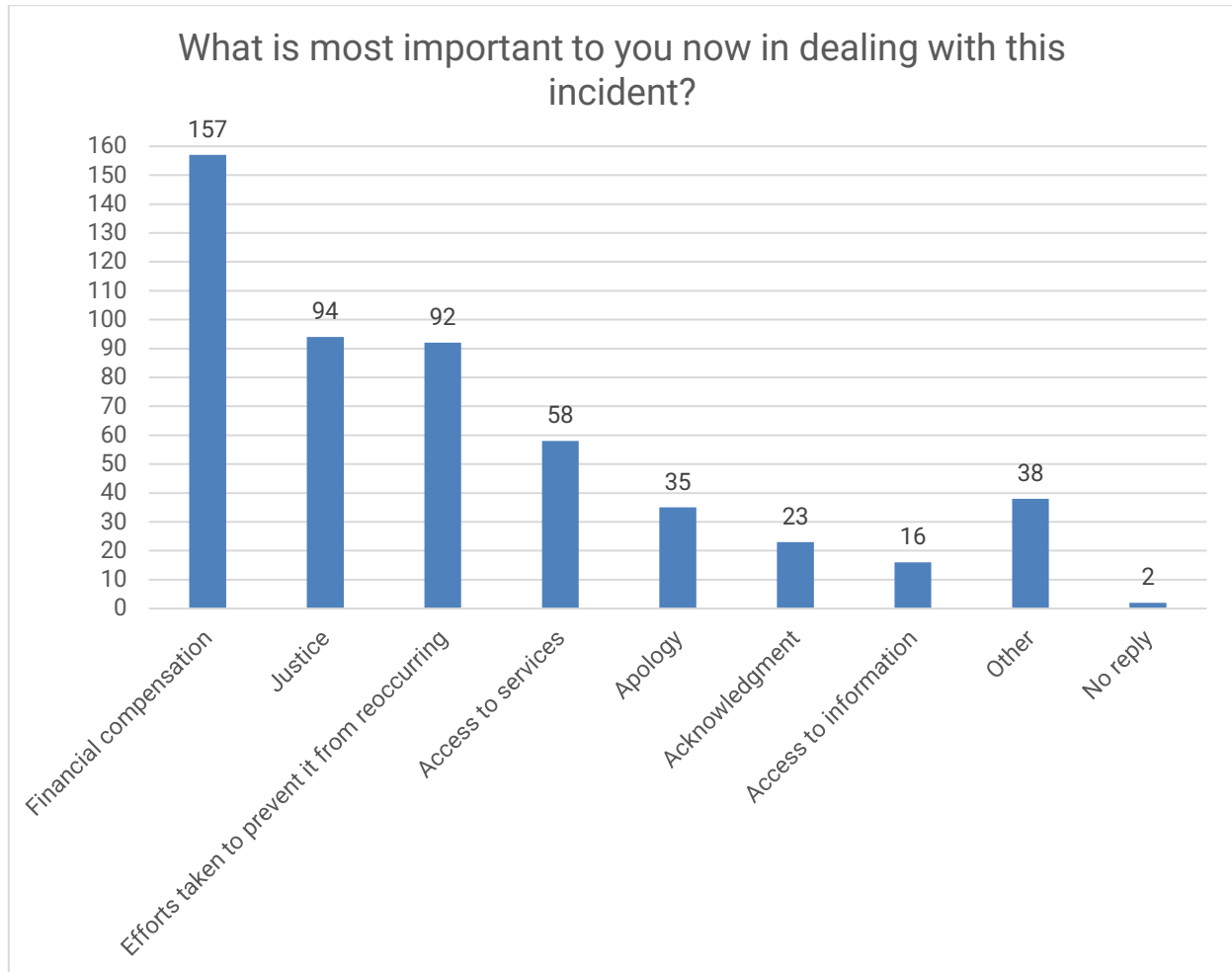
Afghan villagers carry a dead body on a stretcher outside a hospital following an airstrike in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province on September 23, 2019.

A female victim of the airstrike told UNAMA:

"I will never forgive them [the perpetrators] because I suffered a lot. If they gave me money, I could treat my leg, then I might forgive them. I don't know what the outcome of an investigation would be."

Part 5: Addressing the needs of victims

Interviewees were asked what is most important to them now to deal with past incidents. The most common responses were: financial compensation, efforts to prevent recurrence and access to justice. Interviewees also often responded that nothing could be done to change what happened or bring back their killed family members.



A. Financial compensation

The vast majority of interviewees – 157 out of 195 interviewees (81 percent) – said that they are in need of financial compensation to restore them to the position they were in prior to the incident.²⁹⁴ They said they would use the money for a variety of purposes linked to the harm caused, including to pay for medical treatment, rebuild or repair destroyed property, offset loss

²⁹⁴ As highlighted above, the term “compensation” was not necessarily used by interviewees in the strict legal sense of the word as a form of reparation but also encompassing other forms of financial assistance.

of earnings due to family members' deaths or disability, and pay back outstanding debts:

*"If I receive the wealth of the entire world, my son will not be alive again, so for that, I need no financial compensation. But for the treatment of my wife, I need financial assistance."*²⁹⁵

*"According to the doctors, one small shrapnel is still inside my upper body which requires operation and that can be done in Pakistan, so I will need financial compensation."*²⁹⁶

*"I need financial support to continue to treat my injured son. His suffering can still be seen today. I also need some amount of money to rebuild our house. This is what I prefer right now."*²⁹⁷

*"I have spent a lot of money on the treatment of my niece, so if we could be compensated financially, we would be very happy. Although I believe that her good health condition is everything for us."*²⁹⁸

*"Five of my family members still need medicines and treatment. Financial compensation will help us a lot... It can also help in rebuilding my destroyed house."*²⁹⁹

*"Financial compensation is the most important to me and my family right now. As mentioned, I spent a lot in order to reconstruct my house. Financial compensation will restore me somehow to my former financial situation before this tragedy occurred to us."*³⁰⁰

*"We lost one of our family members and lost much money on his burial and condolence ceremonies. We had to pay for medical costs and treatments for our other family members. Currently we face lots of financial problems in our daily life. Our house is destroyed, and we do not have the capacity to rebuild the house. We cannot even afford to send our children to school. So, our family needs financial support."*³⁰¹

*"Right now, the most important for me is financial compensation so that I can rebuild my destroyed house. It will restore me and my family to our former social standing in the community."*³⁰²

*"I am in crucial need of financial support to save the lives of my children as I am disabled and cannot work."*³⁰³

*"Financial compensation is the most important to us at this point. We need money to repay our huge and growing debt to other individuals."*³⁰⁴

²⁹⁵ Interview no 7.

²⁹⁶ Interview no 100.

²⁹⁷ Interview no 58.

²⁹⁸ Interview no 4.

²⁹⁹ Interview no 16.

³⁰⁰ Interview no 13.

³⁰¹ Interview no 6.

³⁰² Interview no 42.

³⁰³ Interview no 53.

³⁰⁴ Interview no 123.



“What should I say. I don’t have a single wheat to eat. We are ten people at home. It is difficult to survive.”

UNAMA, Kabul, 2025.

B. Justice

Around half of those interviewed – 94 out of 195 victims (48 percent) – replied that they wish for justice, asking for perpetrators to be held accountable for their actions:

*"The people who killed my son and injured my wife should be brought to justice and I hope no family will see such a brutal act again."*³⁰⁵

*"The perpetrators of this incident must respond to why they targeted my innocent sister, father and brother."*³⁰⁶

*"Past wars in Afghanistan have greatly affected many civilians, those not involved in armed conflicts. Civilians have been killed, injured, mutilated, and their properties destroyed. The perpetrators of these crimes must be punished."*³⁰⁷

*"If anyone committed war crimes in our country they should be brought to justice and be punished."*³⁰⁸

*"We want justice. Those who were involved in the incident must be prosecuted and punished according to international law."*³⁰⁹

Some victims asked for international legal institutions to initiate investigations and criminal proceedings:

*"International legal and criminal institutions should open a case and investigate and punish the perpetrators of such crimes committed by the previous government forces regardless of which country they live in now."*³¹⁰

*"We ask the UNAMA Human Rights Service to refer our case to credible international organisations, in particular international courts. The perpetrators are currently in power. We cannot lodge a complaint because our life would be in danger. Today, justice is not possible inside the country."*³¹¹

Several interviewees spoke about the responsibility of international military forces to investigate any wrongdoing committed by their forces in Afghanistan:

"[T]he international community, especially, the Western powers, has a moral obligation to assist those severely affected by the unjust war and bloody occupation they brought to our country. The US-led NATO forces killed and maimed thousands of civilians. They ultimately withdrew irresponsibly from the country and left behind the victims/survivors of their two-

³⁰⁵ Interview no 7.

³⁰⁶ Interview no 31.

³⁰⁷ Interview no 33.

³⁰⁸ Interview no 11.

³⁰⁹ Interview no 9.

³¹⁰ Interview no 49.

³¹¹ Interview no 139.

*decade-long brutalities without any compensation or durable relief.*³¹²

*"I am disturbed by the incident, trying to understand why I got shot as I was an innocent civilian trying to peacefully earn some money for my family. Whenever I recall that the perpetrators were walking around with impunity and that there was no entity in the US or NATO to listen to my grievances and hold the offenders accountable – despite them being known as human rights defenders globally – it hurts and will hurt me forever."*³¹³

Some interviewees expressed their distrust in formal justice processes:

*"I don't think the persons responsible will be jailed. It could not be done then during the former government when the persons responsible were still around. Now, no one knows where they are. Who could find them? No one."*³¹⁴

*"I believe it is impossible to get justice now, as the perpetrators are well known, and the Taliban are in power. The [Provincial] Governor was the Taliban commander at the time. Now he rules the province."*³¹⁵

*"Even if you caught all the perpetrators and brought them to the court one by one it would not bring back my husband and the father of my children."*³¹⁶

A number of interviewees also expressed their desire for punishment or revenge against the perpetrators, outside of formal justice processes:

*"Punishment by God."*³¹⁷

*"We are living with deep sorrow and pain. We cannot forget our son. We always pray to God that he punishes the perpetrators with severe punishment."*³¹⁸

*"The officials did not investigate the case properly and did not find the perpetrator. With the help of our extended family, we are searching in our personal capacity [to determine] who the perpetrator is. I am planning a revenge."*³¹⁹

*"If the perpetrator shows up, he will likely be killed in revenge. We only need to have information about [their] whereabouts."*³²⁰

C. Efforts to prevent recurrence

Around half of the people interviewed – 92 out of 195 interviewees (47 percent) – said that they wished to see steps taken to prevent what happened to them from reoccurring:

³¹² Interview no 98.

³¹³ Interview no 49.

³¹⁴ Interview no 16.

³¹⁵ Interview no 19.

³¹⁶ Interview no 74.

³¹⁷ Interview no 64.

³¹⁸ Interview no 115.

³¹⁹ Interview no 73.

³²⁰ Interview no 128.

*"I expect nothing, but I do hope no one else suffers the way I did."*³²¹

*"Nothing can bring back my sons. I wish such a tragedy will not happen to anybody else anymore."*³²²

*"I do not want anybody to go through the same experience as me. I know the hard life of a widow far too well."*³²³

*"We pray that no family will lose their child in the future in such a bad way."*³²⁴

*"I want these unexploded ordnance things to be cleared and no one else shall be affected."*³²⁵

*"[We] hope that such incidents will not happen in the future as they have a very bad impact on the lives of ordinary people."*³²⁶

*"The most important to me is that efforts are taken to avoid such incidents in the future. As I suffered a lot and I am still suffering, I don't want this to happen to my people."*³²⁷

Numerous interviewees also expressed their wish for peace:

"We are all fine now - Alhamdulillah. I want sustainable peace in our country and stop of conflict forever."

*"I don't want to hear a single gunshot anymore."*³²⁸

*"[P]reventing civilian casualties should be a priority for all conflict parties. I hope my village can be spared of fighting in the future."*³²⁹

*"I want a peaceful life for everyone."*³³⁰

*"I pray everyone will be safe and happy."*³³¹

D. Access to services

Around a third – 58 out of 195 interviewees (30 percent) – said that they need access to services to deal with the lasting consequences of incidents. They were asked to specify what types of services they needed, and the most common responses were access to education and health services:

³²¹ Interview no 12.

³²² Interview no 75.

³²³ Interview no 74.

³²⁴ Interview no 14.

³²⁵ Interview no 17.

³²⁶ Interview no 18.

³²⁷ Interview no 107.

³²⁸ Interview no 51(a).

³²⁹ Interview no 85.

³³⁰ Interview no 118.

³³¹ Interview no 127.

*"I want access to services including schools, health [services] and equal development."*³³²

*"I urge the government and international community to ensure justice and fair treatment for everyone, providing essential services such as education, health, and justice. We Afghans are in desperate need of support."*³³³

*"We need proper [medical] clinics and schools."*³³⁴

*"[I wish that] my son is taken outside of the country for advanced medical treatment, and efforts must be taken to prevent war in our country so that no future Afghanistan generation gets harmed."*³³⁵

E. Apology and acknowledgment

35 out of 195 interviewees (18 percent) said they desire an apology while 23 out of 195 (12 percent) interviewees said they need an acknowledgment of what happened:

*"We want apology and acknowledgment, but how? Those people have gone and are not available now."*³³⁶

*"I wish to know why someone did this to us and if they still feel sorry or not."*³³⁷

*"We want official apology. The US government must apologize officially about the incident."*³³⁸

*"I do not know if acknowledgment will benefit us, but still it would be good to have it."*³³⁹

F. Access to information

Most interviewees were able to describe in detail the incident that caused harm to them and/or their loved ones. Only 16 out of 195 interviewees (8 percent) said that access to information was a priority for them.

Those who asked for information mostly sought information about the outcome of any investigation and/or an explanation of why they had been targeted:

*"We want information about the incident. We want to know whether any investigation took place or not. If yes, we want to know the result. If not, we want to know, why was not an investigation carried out about such a big and important incident."*³⁴⁰

"I want the murderer to be identified and asked why they did it. Why did they kill my

³³² Interview no 19.

³³³ Interview no 106.

³³⁴ Interview no 165.

³³⁵ Interview no 54.

³³⁶ Interview no 6.

³³⁷ Interview no 127.

³³⁸ Interview no 9.

³³⁹ Interview no 14.

³⁴⁰ Interview no 9.

husband?"³⁴¹

Numerous interviewees saw justice processes as an avenue through which they might obtain answers about why they were targeted:

*"The other issue I want to ask for is justice, because the perpetrators should be brought to justice and asked why they destroyed the houses of ordinary people."*³⁴²

*"We want the perpetrators to be identified and brought to justice. The most important thing is that the motive behind the incident and the identity of the perpetrators, which have remained unknown. I am still willing to follow up on the case of my father. We want to know the reason why he was killed."*³⁴³

G. Other needs

36 out of 195 interviewees (19 percent) said they had other needs that need to be met in order to deal with the consequences of incidents. The majority of these individuals said that they need assistance in the form of livelihood opportunities, food assistance and other humanitarian support.

Interviewees, particularly women whose husbands were killed in the conflict, expressed the need for livelihood opportunities:

*"We are poor, and my husband has no job. I want you to help my husband find work, or we need to be assisted financially by the government and aid agencies."*³⁴⁴

*"Being a woman and young it is difficult to survive. I am only 25 years' old and I am sewing clothes and dresses to survive. I want the UNAMA Human Rights Service to call for assistance with regards to the provision of livelihood opportunities, as I can sew clothes and know embroidery."*³⁴⁵

*"Assisting us by establishing a small business, such as a shop, in my village, would allow me to support my family while also helping my fellow villagers easily access their basic necessities."*³⁴⁶

*"I am in dire need of financial assistance and livelihood opportunities, so that I would be able to run my life and support my daughters."*³⁴⁷

Some interviewees also said they are in need of food assistance:

"What would it help me now if the perpetrators were brought to justice. I am heavily indebted, and I do not have enough food. Could you enlist me into a food-for-work project? Otherwise,

³⁴¹ Interview no 57.

³⁴² Interview no 43.

³⁴³ Interview no 30.

³⁴⁴ Interview no 118.

³⁴⁵ Interview no 45.

³⁴⁶ Interview no 5.

³⁴⁷ Interview no 44.

*financial compensation or financial aid would help me a lot.*³⁴⁸

*"I wish some humanitarian NGO would support me to get my treatment inside or outside Afghanistan and support me financially to at least have meals three times daily. [...] I sleep with an empty stomach or very little food."*³⁴⁹

Interviewees also emphasized the importance of ensuring the inclusion of widows and persons with disabilities in measures aimed at compensation and assistance for victims:

*"I ask the international community to increase its support to Afghans, and most importantly support to victims who lost part of their bodies and are no longer able to have a normal life."*³⁵⁰

*"[I call] on UN agencies to identify and include widows who lost their husbands in the past conflict in food distribution and other programmes."*³⁵¹

*"I would like to request that the United Nations and other donors do not spare their efforts to fully support this marginalized group of persons with disabilities, particularly when the disability has arisen from past armed conflict. Thanks for raising our voices."*³⁵²

Numerous interviewees called on the *de facto* authorities to take steps to address the needs of victims of armed conflict:

*"We wish the de facto Department dealing with issues of disabled and martyred persons was providing some financial support to my brother's family."*³⁵³

*"We are going through a difficult time. We urge the Islamic Emirate which is in power now to pay sufficient attention to those vulnerable and affected by the war, particularly those harmed by the Taliban movement, in line with available resources."*³⁵⁴

*"I call on the UN to push the Taliban not to ignore the rights of victims of the past armed conflict and prioritize these victims in their work."*³⁵⁵

Part 6: Enforced disappearances

*"Since the disappearance of my brother, our family has been in a position of limbo. In other words, we cannot count the victim as either dead or alive, which has taken much of our happiness and deeply impacted our social ceremonies like engagement and wedding parties, because most of our family members prefer not to express joy."*³⁵⁶

³⁴⁸ Interview no 76.

³⁴⁹ Interview no 143.

³⁵⁰ Interview no 95.

³⁵¹ Interview no 20.

³⁵² Interview no 101.

³⁵³ Interview no 144.

³⁵⁴ Interview no 98.

³⁵⁵ Interview no 95.

³⁵⁶ Interview no 131

International human rights law defines enforced disappearances as when an individual is: “arrested, detained or abducted against their will or otherwise deprived of their liberty by officials of different branches or levels of Government, or by organized groups or private individuals acting on behalf of, or with the support, direct or indirect, consent or acquiescence of the Government, followed by a refusal to disclose the fate or whereabouts of the persons concerned or a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of their liberty, which places such persons outside the protection of the law”.³⁵⁷

Enforced disappearances violate the rights to liberty and security of person, the right not to be subjected to torture or ill-treatment and the right to recognition as a person before the law. It also violates or constitutes a great threat to the right to life.³⁵⁸ The United Nations Working Group on Enforced Disappearance stated that “the very fact of being detained as a disappeared person, isolated from one’s family for a long period is certainly a violation of right to humane conditions of detention and has been represented to the Group as torture”.³⁵⁹ The Human Rights Committee has also found that the situation of relatives who remain without knowledge about the fate or whereabouts of a forcibly disappeared person for extended periods of time constitutes torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.³⁶⁰

While Afghanistan has not ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, enforced disappearances violate a number of obligations of Afghanistan under international human rights law and international humanitarian law and the prohibition of enforced disappearance is part of customary law.³⁶¹

The 2018 Penal Code introduced by the former government criminalized enforced disappearances as a constituting element of crime against humanity,³⁶² but not as an independent offence.

In 2019, UNAMA reported on 34 allegations of enforced disappearances between 2017 and 2018, noting that efforts by the families of the victims to seek information regarding their fate and whereabouts had proven unsuccessful.³⁶³ UNAMA advocated with local and central authorities at the time to conduct investigations to determine the fate and whereabouts of those who had been forcibly disappeared; to inform their families on the results of the investigations; and to hold those responsible to account.³⁶⁴ In 2019, UNAMA also transmitted information on eleven cases of enforced disappearances which took place between 2017 and 2020 to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

³⁵⁷ Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances (1992), preamble.

³⁵⁸ Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Article 1.2.

³⁵⁹ UN Economic and Social Council, *Report of Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances*, E/CN.4/1983/14 (1983), para. 131.

³⁶⁰ Human Rights Committee, Communications No(s): 107/1981, *Almeida de Quinteros v Uruguay*, Views adopted by the Human Rights Committee on 21 July 1983, para. 14; 950/2000, *Sarma v. Sri Lanka*, Views adopted on 31 July 2003, para. 9.5; 1327/2004, *Grioua v Algeria*, Views adopted by the Human Rights Committee on 10 July 2007, para. 7.7; 1776/2008, *Bashasha v Libya*, Views adopted by the Human Rights Committee on 20 October 2010, paras. 3.4, 7.5.

³⁶¹ See also ICRC Study on Customary IHL, Rule 98.

³⁶² Afghanistan Penal Code 2017, Article 335.

³⁶³ UNAMA, *Treatment of Conflict-Related Detainees in Afghan Custody* (April 2019), p. 17. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_-_report_on_the_treatment_of_conflict-related_detainees_-_17_april_2019.pdf.

³⁶⁴ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Preventing torture and upholding the rights of detainees in Afghanistan: A factor for peace* (February 2021), p. 16. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/the_handling_of_complaints_of_gbvawg_english_141223.pdf.

For the purposes of this report, UNAMA conducted eight interviews with the families of victims of enforced disappearance.

A. Impact on families of victims

Family members of victims of enforced disappearance described the emotional impact of not knowing what happened to their loved ones, with some even saying that finding out that their relative had died would be a form of “relief”:

“The whole family is facing some sort of continuous emotional torture. Each day, we hope for there to be a knock on our door and for someone to let us know about whether my brother is dead or alive. Furthermore, his wife and children cannot forget him and expect him to come home every minute. They are even sometimes convinced and prepared to hear the shocking news of his death, to find emotional relief.”³⁶⁵

The relatives of victims of enforced disappearance spoke about how, despite the passage of time, they continue to suffer pain and anguish because they have no information about what happened to their loved ones:

“It has been affecting our families because there is no news about his fate, whether he is dead or alive. Every time, I see his children, they are asking me about their father, but I do not have any response. All family members and especially his children are suffering a lot since this incident. It seems that it will disturb all the family and his children throughout their lives. It seems an endless suffering.”³⁶⁶

Interviewees spoke of the fear that their relatives’ enforced disappearance had caused. One interviewee, whose brother disappeared during a night raid by the National Directorate of Security, said that he was afraid that someone would come for him also and he went into hiding for some time, isolating himself from his family.³⁶⁷ Another interviewee said she had to move after the disappearance of her husband:

“When this incident occurred, we were so filled with fear and anxiety that we completely abandoned our home, village, and area, and moved to another place.”³⁶⁸

Numerous interviewees described health issues they attributed to the worry and distress that accompanied the enforced disappearance of their relatives:

“The [disappeared person’s] mother has been experiencing eyesight impairment and anxiety due to the harmful mental impacts of the incident.”³⁶⁹

“My father still suffers from eye problems and has lost much of his patience. He experiences frequent pain and feels distressed. My mother becomes more weakened each day, becoming

³⁶⁵ Interview no 119.

³⁶⁶ Interview no 130.

³⁶⁷ Interview no 119.

³⁶⁸ Interview no 146.

³⁶⁹ Interview no 119.

increasingly distressed and unhappy.”³⁷⁰

Most families had been financially impacted, because the forcibly disappeared individuals were all men who contributed to their household income prior to their disappearance. In some cases, the person forcibly disappeared was the family’s sole breadwinner.

B. Efforts to find missing relatives

All interviewees described extensive efforts they made to try to find their missing relatives, having approached various entities, including the former government, the Taliban (pre-takeover)/*de facto* authorities (post-takeover), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNAMA Human Rights Service, and other international and national non-governmental organisations for assistance in their search.

A man whose son was a victim of enforced disappearance in 2018, following his arrest by men wearing National Directorate of Security uniforms, said he filed 68 petitions with the former government and 16 petitions with the current *de facto* authorities, with no outcome to date:

“I carried these petitions to many places and many people, but no one helped us. Whenever I took a petition to the province or command, it would get lost. No one would provide any information about it. Neither did we receive any results, nor did anyone help us. No one listened to our plea.”³⁷¹

Another individual said he filed complaints with the Chief of Police, General Raziq [the then Kandahar Police Chief], the ICRC and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in an effort to find out what had happened to his brother after his enforced disappearance by Afghan National Police officers in 2014. His complaint was referred to an Afghan National Police Commander who refused to meet him and who eventually responded to his written complaint saying he was unaware of his brother’s arrest. When the man went back to the Police Headquarters regarding his complaint, he was informed that it had been lost. After the Taliban takeover, the man approached the *de facto* General Directorate of Intelligence asking them to arrest the man who had arrested his brother. He was arrested by the *de facto* General Directorate of Intelligence, but was released by *de facto* officials, who cited the general amnesty.³⁷²

Another interviewee, whose brother was forcibly disappeared in 2016, filed complaints with various entities including the AIHRC and the ICRC. He said:

“I met with General Raziq four times, accompanied by elderly community leaders. Eventually, General Raziq told us that we should leave the case of our brother alone. He said that he had been alive for about twenty days, but now he was dead, and we should not search for him anymore. I asked him to at least show us where his remains were so we could find some traces and possibly make a grave for him. However, we never received this information. The

³⁷⁰ Interview no 129.

³⁷¹ Interview no 145.

³⁷² Interview no 131.

outcome was unsuccessful.”³⁷³

Many interviewees had paid significant amounts of money trying to find their relatives, including bribes to government officials:

*“To obtain any information about the whereabouts of my brother and the circumstances of the case, we have spent hundreds of thousands of Afghanis, mainly in giving tips [bribes] to local officials, and for transportation costs traveling to Kabul and Kandahar back and forth. But at the end of the day, none of our efforts yielded any positive results, only untrue promises and deceptions. Secondly, my brother was an ordinary retail shopkeeper, after his disappearance, his small business, which was the only source of income for his family diminished.”*³⁷⁴

*“We have spent a huge sum of money to bribe the relevant previous government officials to help us facilitate the release of the victim.”*³⁷⁵

C. Families’ calls for truth and accountability

The majority of interviewees remain without answers as to the enforced disappearance of their relatives. One individual said that, despite his efforts, there was no investigation undertaken by the former government into the enforced disappearance of his brother, but after the takeover, the *de facto* authorities did investigate and found his brothers’ body. The circumstances around the killing remain unknown.³⁷⁶ The families interviewed continue to hope for answers about the fate of their loved ones:

*“Our family still suffers from this tragic incident. We cannot completely cope with the aftermath. We are still hoping that one day my brother will reunite with us. It is not easy for us to forget my brother and stop trying to find him.”*³⁷⁷

*“We are still waiting for him to come back. We acknowledge that he is likely martyred, but we are still waiting for him.”*³⁷⁸

*“It is important for us to identify these people and obtain information from them to understand why they took my son, what the reason was, and what his fault might have been. We need to know why he was taken away in such a manner, where he might be now, and what has happened to him.”*³⁷⁹

Interviewees also emphasized the importance of preventing recurrence of similar incidents and holding perpetrators accountable, saying that they did not want other families to face the same situation³⁸⁰:

³⁷³ Interview no 129.

³⁷⁴ Interview no 119.

³⁷⁵ Interview no 145.

³⁷⁶ Interview no 128.

³⁷⁷ Interview no 119.

³⁷⁸ Interview no 132.

³⁷⁹ Interview no 145.

³⁸⁰ Interview no 129.

*"Many people disappeared in Kandahar during the Republic regime. The relatives of victims need to know where those who disappeared are. They are asking for justice and for accountability to see the perpetrator(s) to be held accountable to prevent the reoccurrence of such incident. My case is an example among hundreds of families in Kandahar. No one responded despite many efforts we have made."*³⁸¹

*"The Kandahar Strike Force [NDS-03] was a notorious special forces unit which had the direct backing of the CIA and was famous for conducting brutal night raids disregarding all human rights principles and laws of war. This unit has persecuted and tortured many innocent Afghan civilians based on flawed intelligence. We request the international community and international judicial organs to hold them accountable."*³⁸²

Part 7: Perspectives of the *de facto* authorities

The collapse of the Republic Government and Taliban takeover of Afghanistan resulted in the cessation of the main channels through which victims applied for or received assistance.

There is little publicly available information available about the extent and forms of support currently provided to victims of armed conflict by the *de facto* authorities, beyond public announcements made by *de facto* officials regarding the provision of pensions to victims and their relatives. For example, on 2 April 2025, spokesperson for the *de facto* authorities, Zabihullah Mujahid, addressed media to clarify reports about an annual payout for families of victims of war. He stated that 12.5 billion AFN (approximately 166.67 million USD) from the annual budget (which has not been made public)³⁸³ had been allocated through the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs to orphans, widows and persons with disabilities either affiliated with the Taliban, with the former regime, or other civilians.³⁸⁴

In order to better understand the services provided to victims of armed conflict by both *de facto* institutions and non-governmental organisations, and given the limited public information available, UNAMA interviewed *de facto* officials at provincial level about the extent and forms of services that their *de facto* institutions provide and the gaps that they identified in this context.³⁸⁵

A. Responses provided by *de facto* entities at provincial level

UNAMA interviewed 23 *de facto* officials about the services provided by their departments to victims of armed conflict. The main entity with responsibility for addressing the needs of victims of armed conflict is the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs and its Departments at provincial levels.

³⁸¹ Interview no 130.

³⁸² Interview no 119.

³⁸³ United Nations, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security: Report of the Secretary General*, A/79/947-S/2025/372 (11 June 2025), para 3.

³⁸⁴ Zabihullah (ذبيح الله م.) (@Zabehulah_M33), X (formerly Twitter), 2 April 2025, 7:35PM. Available at:

https://x.com/Zabehulah_M33/status/1907449357068067220 and https://x.com/Zabehulah_M33/status/1907449379914486026.

³⁸⁵ The information gathered through interviews with *de facto* officials provide insights into the perspectives of those officials interviewed, but may not represent the full views or the policies of the *de facto* authorities.

All nine interviewees from provincial *de facto* Departments of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs said that they provided some form of pension, or payment, to victims of armed conflict and their relatives. The amounts cited by each *de facto* Department varied: for persons with disability, from between 2,000 and 20,000 AFN per month (depending on the severity and nature of the disability), and from between 2,000 and 7,000 AFN per month for widows³⁸⁶ and orphaned children. Most of the *de facto* officials interviewed emphasized that they take a non-discriminatory approach to the registration of beneficiaries for pensions, stating that former ANDSF members and their relatives are also receiving support and that relatives of former ANDSF members receive the same amount of financial support as anyone else who receives a pension from their department.³⁸⁷ Several interviewees noted that due to funding constraints, they had been required to reduce the amount of funding and/or the number of people they supported. Other forms of support cited by interviewees from *de facto* Departments of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs included the provision of wheelchairs to persons with disabilities, vocational training and facilitating job opportunities for persons with disabilities with local businesses and the provision of food assistance.

UNAMA interviewed six officials from the *de facto* Department of Labour and Social Affairs. Most mentioned providing support to child victims of armed conflict in the form of orphanages. One *de facto* official said they provide pensions to family members of individuals killed in armed conflict.

Three officials from *de facto* Departments of Health were interviewed. One mentioned that individuals wounded during the armed conflict continue to come to them to seek medical treatment they sustained, for example shrapnel in their bodies. Another noted that in addition to primary health care, the *de facto* authorities operate clinics which deliver counselling and physiotherapy, as well as managing drug rehabilitation centres.

UNAMA also interviewed five *de facto* Provincial Governors. While most said that the *de facto* Departments of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs were the primary entity responsible for the needs of victims, two said that their offices maintain a discretionary fund used to provide financial support to people in need, including victims of armed conflict.

One of the *de facto* officials interviewed noted that it was the first time that someone had ever come to speak with them about the needs of victims of armed conflict.³⁸⁸

B. Gaps in support to victims and communities harmed by armed conflict

The *de facto* officials interviewed were asked what they perceived to be the priority needs of victims and communities harmed by armed conflict. Only one interviewee stated that he did not perceive any gaps in the services currently available to victims of armed conflict.³⁸⁹

The most commonly cited barrier to providing support to victims was **funding limitations**, with interviewees asserting that the resources available are often insufficient to meet even the basic

³⁸⁶ One *de facto* official said that a widow's pension would cease if she remarried.

³⁸⁷ Interview no 16; Interview no 20; Interview no 19.

³⁸⁸ Interview no. 9.

³⁸⁹ Interview no 10.

needs of victims and their families.³⁹⁰ Several interviewees said that the support from the international community was inadequate and/or unequal to what was provided prior to the Taliban takeover, impacting their ability to provide victims and communities with basic services.³⁹¹ Interviewees often called for the international community, including member states, the UN and international non-governmental organisations to provide **increased support to Afghanistan**.³⁹²

While noting that the funding limitations in the current context inhibit the provision of support to victims, the *de facto* officials interviewed also provided their perspectives on what they perceive to be the priority needs of victims. Many of the priorities mentioned by the *de facto* officials reflected issues raised by victims themselves (as set out in Part 5 of this report). The priorities identified by the *de facto* officials – and summarized below – relate to needs they perceive are not currently being met for victims of armed conflict:

- The importance of addressing the **specific needs of persons with disabilities**, with possibilities including introducing a quota for the employment of persons with disability;³⁹³ vocational education;³⁹⁴ ensuring the availability of specialized health services, including the provision of prostheses, wheelchairs and psychosocial support;³⁹⁵ and undertaking awareness raising to address discrimination against persons with disability.³⁹⁶
- The need for **vocational and livelihood opportunities** for victims of armed conflict, including those who had acquired disabilities. Interviewees noted that the provision of cash assistance and food items is a short-term solution, not affording people opportunities to become self-reliant in the long-term.³⁹⁷ One *de facto* official commented that, in his view, victims and their families did not want “handouts”, but rather sustainable employment, training and business opportunities.³⁹⁸
- The gaps in **health care** available to victims of armed conflict, with numerous interviewees noting the need for psychosocial support.³⁹⁹ Medicine shortages and a lack of qualified medical staff were also cited as challenges in the *de facto* officials’ respective areas of responsibility.
- The **humanitarian needs of victims**, such as shelter and food.⁴⁰⁰ Interviewees also spoke of the importance of reconstructing houses⁴⁰¹ and other infrastructure, such as schools,⁴⁰² that were destroyed or damaged in the conflict.

³⁹⁰ Interview no 1; Interview no 11; Interview no 16.

³⁹¹ Interview no 5; Interview no 18.

³⁹² Interview no 16; Interview no 20; Interview no 21; Interview no 2.

³⁹³ Interview no 6.

³⁹⁴ Interview no 21.

³⁹⁵ Interview no 3.

³⁹⁶ Interview no 6.

³⁹⁷ Interview no 12; Interview no 5.

³⁹⁸ Interview no 14.

³⁹⁹ Interview no 9; Interview no 17.

⁴⁰⁰ Interview no 15; Interview no 16; Interview no 18.

⁴⁰¹ Interview no 20; Interview no 17; Interview no 8.

⁴⁰² Interview no 4.

- The **needs of widows and women-headed households**, including the challenges they face in supporting their families.⁴⁰³ Several *de facto* officials proposed vocational training as a way of supporting women to become self-reliant and reducing their need for external assistance.⁴⁰⁴
- Importance of **ensuring access to education for children**, in particular mentioning children with disabilities due to the former armed conflict.⁴⁰⁵

Some interviewees mentioned the **need for access to justice, apology or acknowledgment of harm** for victims,⁴⁰⁶ including stating that apologies should be offered to victims,⁴⁰⁷ and even expressing the view that apologies, justice and compensation are the “biggest needs” of victims of armed conflict.⁴⁰⁸

The majority of interviewees who discussed concepts of access to justice, apologies and acknowledgements of harm were focused on what they see as the responsibilities of international military forces that had participated in armed conflict in Afghanistan, rather than responsibilities of the Afghan parties, including their own forces, to the conflict. One interviewee, citing a 2016 airstrike in Kunduz city,⁴⁰⁹ noted that there had been no apology by the international military forces responsible for the attack, stating that “people want justice” for these incidents.⁴¹⁰

Other *de facto* officials expressed the view that member states involved in the conflict in Afghanistan have “moral obligation” to help rebuild the country and assist Afghans.⁴¹¹

The *de facto* officials interviewed also spoke more generally as to their views on **peace in Afghanistan**. Many stated that they believe that issues related to the previous conflict have been resolved and communities in Afghanistan are living side by side in peace, regardless of their affiliation during the conflict.⁴¹² Others, however, accepted that there is a need to counter discrimination and increase tolerance, suggesting public awareness programs to foster acceptance and respect within communities.⁴¹³ Several *de facto* officials also expressed the view that communities need to “forget the past and move on”⁴¹⁴ and that “revenge” will only create further problems. Some of these views are clearly at odds with the perspectives of victims, as set out earlier in this report, who are living with the daily consequences of what happened to them and are unable to simply “forget the past and move on”.

Part 8: Perspectives of non-governmental

⁴⁰³ Interview no 19.

⁴⁰⁴ Interview no 1; Interview no 16.

⁴⁰⁵ Interview no 11; Interview no 14.

⁴⁰⁶ Interview no 11; Interview no 4.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview no 11.

⁴⁰⁸ Interview no 4.

⁴⁰⁹ UNAMA, *UNAMA investigating allegations of 32 civilian deaths from air strikes in Kunduz* (6 November 2016). Available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/unama-investigating-allegations-32-civilian-deaths-air-strikes-kunduz>

⁴¹⁰ Interview no 15.

⁴¹¹ Interview no 19; Interview no 4; Interview no 5.

⁴¹² Interview no 10; Interview no 3; Interview no 21; Interview no 22.

⁴¹³ Interview no 12; Interview no 11.

⁴¹⁴ Interview no 14.

organisations

A number of non-governmental organisations, both national and international, as well as UN agencies, also provide support to victims of armed conflict in Afghanistan in a variety of sectors. UNAMA interviewed 23 non-governmental organisations that provide assistance to victims of armed conflict in various areas, including cash assistance, education and vocational training, health care, demining and others. The interviewees included both national and international non-governmental organisations providing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.

A. Impact of armed conflict

Interviewees were asked to share their observations about how the armed conflict continues to impact the communities they support. They highlighted a range of issues, which largely echoed those cited by victims [see Part 3: Impact of conflict on victims] including:

- The **mental health impacts** on victims of armed conflict, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.⁴¹⁵
- The prevalence of **physical disabilities** among victims of armed conflict.⁴¹⁶
- The needs of people **internally displaced** as a result of conflict.⁴¹⁷
- The ongoing health needs of those wounded in the conflict, especially **persons who had limbs amputated** as a result of explosions.
- The destruction of infrastructure.⁴¹⁸
- The risk posed by **explosive remnants of war** and abandoned improvised mines.

Several interviewees commented on the wide-ranging, ongoing nature of the impact of armed conflict on victims and their families:

*"Incidents [...] have deeply affected the lives and well-being of victims and their families. Many have lost a family member - in some cases a child, in others their mother, or the breadwinner of the family. Others were physically harmed in those incidents and continue to suffer from physical issues or are disabled, unable to take up employment and contribute to the family's income and make a living. Their psychological well-being has been deeply affected by the painful experience they have gone through."*⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁵ Interview no 7; Interview no 10.

⁴¹⁶ Interview no 15.

⁴¹⁷ Interview no 18; Interview no 21.

⁴¹⁸ Interview no 9.

⁴¹⁹ Interview no 12.

B. Gaps in support to victims and communities harmed by armed conflict

Non-governmental organisations were asked what they perceive as the gaps in services for victims and the needs of communities. The gaps cited by non-governmental organisations aligned with those identified by *de facto* authority members in their interviews and also with the needs cited by victims themselves.

- The most common challenge for non-governmental organisations in providing support to victims was **funding limitations**. They noted that resource constraints hinder their ability to meet the needs of communities, and called for additional funding from donors. One service provider said that funding for some of their projects is extended on a monthly basis, which is disruptive and poses challenges in terms of retention of staff, administration and other logistics.⁴²⁰
- Several non-governmental organisations spoke about **interference by the *de facto* authorities** affecting their ability to deliver services, in particular citing the restrictions placed on women and girls. A service provider from Kandahar noted that the *de facto* provincial authorities prevent female beneficiaries of their projects, who are women with disabilities, from attending vocational trainings that are intended to help them gain employment.⁴²¹ Another stated that prior to the Taliban takeover, psychologists in their organisation were able to provide psychological support to both women and men, whereas now women psychologists can only treat women and male psychologists can only treat men, which limits the amount of care their organisation can provide.⁴²²
- Numerous non-governmental organisations spoke about the need for **access to basic services** for victims, in particular medical care and shelter. Some noted the disparity in services available in rural areas compared to urban centres. Interviewees also said that the *mahram* requirement imposed by the *de facto* authorities' creates barriers to women's access to services. For example, women without *mahrams* who live in rural areas are prevented from travelling the long distances required to seek medical treatment.⁴²³ One interviewee said that in Bamyan province, they met with victims of armed conflict who asked for access to health services in their districts because they cannot afford to travel to the hospital in Bamyan city.⁴²⁴
- Numerous interviewees spoke about the need for the *de facto* authorities to ensure a **non-discriminatory approach to providing services** to victims of armed conflict, in

⁴²⁰ Interview no 16.

⁴²¹ Interview no 3.

⁴²² Interview no 9. Note: While there is no explicit prohibition on psychologists or doctors treating patients of the opposite sex in Afghanistan, UNAMA has verified reports of *de facto* Department for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice inspectors inspecting health clinics (in addition to other workplaces, restaurants and bazaars) to advise against the intermingling of women and men. See: UNAMA, Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan: October - December 2024 Update (27 January 2025), p. 2-4. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/human_rights_situation_in_afghanistan_october_-_december_2024_-_english.pdf.

⁴²³ Interview no 18.

⁴²⁴ Interview no 15.

particular with regards to victims affiliated with the former government and its security forces.⁴²⁵

- Most interviewees spoke of the need for **livelihood opportunities, job creation and other financial support** for victims of armed conflict.⁴²⁶ They said that widowed women and people with disabilities, who struggle to find employment, are in particular need of support.⁴²⁷
- With regards to the **specific healthcare needs** of victims of armed conflict, non-governmental organisations said that there are insufficient resources to meet demand for psychosocial support,⁴²⁸ physiotherapy and rehabilitation services⁴²⁹ and orthopaedic centres for the provision of prostheses to amputees.⁴³⁰ Others spoke more generally of the need for a stronger healthcare sector and for issues such as staff and medicine shortages to be addressed.⁴³¹
- Several interviewees spoke about the need to **raise awareness about the rights of victims of the armed conflict** and the legacy of the armed conflict. They proposed mediation and transitional justice processes, as well as awareness campaigns in mosques and through the media to promote forgiveness over revenge, promote harmony within communities and improve understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities.⁴³² Some interviewees spoke of the need for perpetrators to face justice and be held accountable for their crimes.⁴³³ Some non-governmental organisations said that they thought it would be difficult to overcome the legacy of armed conflict and promote forgiveness in the current context, because people have more pressing needs such as shelter and financial assistance.⁴³⁴ Interviewees also said that the current political climate in Afghanistan is not conducive to transitional justice or mediation efforts, with one stating:

*"We cannot talk freely because of the constraints imposed by this government. If you cannot share your ideas or problems and challenges it exacerbates the problems faced by the community in daily life. There is no department addressing the right to be heard. These restrictions are a barrier to the country addressing the legacy of armed conflict. They are stopping the country from moving forward."*⁴³⁵

Part 9: Conclusions

As is acknowledged at the outset of this report, to date, efforts to address the rights of victims of armed conflict in Afghanistan have been uneven and vastly insufficient.. This can be

⁴²⁵ Interview no 3; Interview no 19; Interview no 7.

⁴²⁶ Interview no 6; Interview no 7; Interview no 14; Interview no 17; Interview no 10; Interview no 8; Interview no 9.

⁴²⁷ Interview no 2; Interview no 3; Interview no 4; Interview no 8; Interview no 14.

⁴²⁸ Interview no 21; Interview no 10.

⁴²⁹ Interview no 3; Interview no 20.

⁴³⁰ Interview no 5.

⁴³¹ Interview no 4; Interview no 19.

⁴³² Interview no 2; Interview no 11; Interview no 3.

⁴³³ Interview no 12.

⁴³⁴ Interview no 5; Interview no 7; Interview no 18.

⁴³⁵ Interview no 16.

attributed to the fact that the armed conflict resulted in the prioritization of other issues, such as security, and a general lack of political will to reckon with the past, influenced by individuals with vested interests in leaving the issue of historical human rights violations and abuses unaddressed. Moments which may have presented opportunities to begin a conversation about the rights of victims – the Bonn Conference of 2001, the publication of the AIHRC's *A Call for Justice* report in 2005 and the subsequent adoption of a government action plan focusing on transitional justice, the Doha Agreement of 2020 – passed by without meaningful steps being taken to acknowledge the harm done to Afghan civilians and to establish mechanisms for recognizing victims' rights to truth, justice, reparation, including guarantees of non-recurrence.

While armed violence in Afghanistan has very significantly decreased since the Taliban takeover, the situation of many victims of armed conflict remains dire. There has been no progress towards fulfilling victims' rights and the humanitarian crisis which has faced Afghanistan since the takeover has, for some victims, further compounded aspects of the harm caused.

There is a clear need for Afghanistan to come to terms with its past by recognizing the suffering inflicted by armed conflict and commence the journey towards fulfilling the rights of victims under international law. The voices of victims must be at the heart of any efforts in this regard and while Afghanistan has a long journey ahead, the aim of this report is to reopen the conversation which needs to be had in order to move forward.

Impact of the conflict on civilians

The deep, irreversible harm suffered by civilians in Afghanistan is plain in the testimonies shared in this report. Throughout the conflict, UNAMA – along with Afghan civil society and the international community – consistently called on parties to the conflict to take adequate measures to mitigate harm to civilians. Despite this, it is clear that there were failures by all parties to meet their obligations under international law with regards to the protection of civilians.

The harm that victims have experienced permeates all areas of life; from physical injuries leading to disability, economic loss and impacts their social life and emotional state. Despite the passage of time, the lack of action to address victims' rights and needs means that many continue to feel the impacts years or even decades later.

Efforts made by victims to seek redress

The interviews UNAMA conducted highlight, through the voices of victims, the limited degree to which parties to the conflict acknowledged and took responsibility for the harm they caused, and to what extent, if any, victims' rights to justice, truth, and reparations have been addressed.

The challenges discussed by victims mainly related to significant obstacles and delays when seeking financial or other forms of support through mechanisms established by the former government, leaving other sources such as NGOs, UN agencies and the international humanitarian community to fill the gaps.

The Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of

Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law recommend that states develop means of informing victims of their rights and remedies as well as all available legal, medical, psychological, social, administrative and other services to which they may have a right of access.⁴³⁶ Just over half of interviewees had, however, not sought to make a complaint or claim in the aftermath of an incident, citing the various barriers to doing so – lack of awareness of processes, bureaucratic impediments as well as their perceptions that attempting to seek recourse would be pointless and/or may result in reprisals against them. Those who had made complaints had approached a multiplicity of different actors looking for a response, further highlighting the lack of clear pathways and processes through which victims could seek redress. Traumatized victims and/or their relatives were left to navigate a complex and tortuous space in their attempts to seek redress.

Among those who had sought redress, the majority expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome, often stating that they received no response or were denied assistance, indicating the ineffectiveness of mechanisms that were in place.

Among those who received a response, numerous interviewees referred to having received some form of “compensation”. This term was not necessarily used in a strict legal sense signifying a form of reparation but could also refer to rehabilitation or forms of victim assistance. The types of support received included one-off and/or *ex gratia* payments, as well as medical care and pensions for persons who had acquired disabilities or lost a family member. These were received from various actors, including the former or current government, other parties to the conflict, and/or non-governmental organisations. However, interviewees routinely reported that they found it difficult to understand where to get support and how to navigate the process. Additionally, in the cases where some form of support was eventually received, it was mostly considered insufficient to address the harm that was experienced. It was never clear that any assessment had been undertaken to assess the nature of the incident and violation, or the scale of the harm that was done. No system is in place to provide victims of armed conflict with the support that they need and redress the harm they experienced because of serious human rights violations and abuses.

For most interviewees who had received apologies, these were not accompanied by an acknowledgement of responsibility, with the party they approached often attributing the harm caused to “an accident”. Others noted that the apology they received was not accompanied by any other action – for example, a formal justice process to hold perpetrators accountable – and therefore they did not find the apology itself meaningful.⁴³⁷

Very few interviewees who had approached the responsible parties to seek justice had obtained what they viewed as a satisfactory outcome. In most instances, victims did not know whether any action had been taken. In others, victims expressed dissatisfaction with the process. UNAMA noted, in its last Protection of Civilians report before the Taliban takeover, the need for the former government, international military forces and the Taliban to strengthen

⁴³⁶ UN General Assembly, Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (2005), Article 24.

⁴³⁷ See e.g. the Basic Principles Article 22(e) which state that public apologies should be accompanied by an acknowledgement of the facts and acceptance of responsibility.

investigations into incidents resulting in civilian casualties.⁴³⁸

Although the interviewees mostly discussed their experiences attempting to seek redress from the former government, the concerns and issues raised remain current under the *de facto* authorities, who have not taken concrete steps aimed at realizing victims' rights. As the duty bearers of Afghanistan's human rights obligations, the *de facto* authorities bear primary responsibility for fulfilling victims' rights. Other States which were parties to the conflict also have obligations to make reparation for the harm caused by violations of international law attributed to them.

Addressing the needs of victims

Victims must be central to the design and implementation of any measures or process aimed at addressing their rights in the aftermath of armed conflict.

When asked what was most important to them now, the most common responses were: financial compensation, access to justice and efforts to prevent recurrence. Interviewees also often responded that nothing could be done to change what happened or bring back their killed family members. The vast majority of victims and their families were placed in more dire financial situations due to the loss or incapacitation of a breadwinner, damage to their homes or properties, and the cost of medical care for their loved ones. This therefore informed the priorities of interviewees, as shared with UNAMA. Victims have, however, suffered different violations, and they have a range of needs and priorities which may change over time.

Current forms of support for victims of armed conflict

While, overall, the *de facto* officials interviewed acknowledged that victims are in dire need of support, they largely failed to acknowledge the role of the Taliban in the former conflict with regards to harm caused to civilians. They also did not reflect on their own responsibilities, as the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan, to take steps to fulfil the rights of victims of armed conflict. They did, however, provide certain insights about some of the challenges they observe in addressing victim's rights at provincial level, which were broadly aligned with many of the priorities shared by both victims themselves and non-governmental organisations.

Part 10: Recommendations

The length of the conflict in Afghanistan and the number of actors involved, combined with the current, dire, humanitarian situation facing the country requires a coordinated approach to address the rights of victims. There is also a need for all actors to acknowledge their role in contributing to civilian harm and to take responsibility for righting past wrongs. The *de facto* authorities bear responsibility for upholding Afghanistan's international human rights obligations. Under international law, other States which were parties to the conflict also have obligations to make reparation for the harm caused by violations of international law attributed to them.

⁴³⁸ UNAMA and OHCHR, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Annual Report 2020* (February 2021), pp. 92-96. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_report_2020_revs3.pdf.

Given the current situation in Afghanistan – a humanitarian crisis compounded by aid cuts and the impact of sanctions applied to the *de facto* authorities themselves – there is a clear need for former parties to the conflict to find ways to support initiatives aimed at realizing the rights of victims, particularly with regards to reparations.

It must be also acknowledged that the current policies of the *de facto* authorities with regards to human rights, and in particular the rights of women and girls, has stalled their engagement with a number of member states, including those who were parties and/or contributed forces during the armed conflict in Afghanistan. This also creates challenges for joint engagement on the rights of victims of armed conflict. There are, however, some avenues being created for engagement on other issues such as counternarcotics and the private sector, which may provide a model for engagement between the *de facto* authorities and member states on victims' rights.⁴³⁹ These recommendations are therefore framed in a way that envisions interaction and cooperation between the *de facto* authorities and member states who participated in armed conflict in Afghanistan. They would also require a level of engagement and commitment – by both the *de facto* authorities and member states – to fulfilling victims' rights in Afghanistan.

The recommendations set out in this report provide a series of initial steps which should be taken in respect of the fulfilment of victims' rights in Afghanistan. They are not intended to lay out a comprehensive pathway to transitional justice, recognizing that, first and foremost, such a process would need to be informed by consultations with victims and their relatives to ensure a holistic, culturally appropriate and victim-centred approach. A full review of the legal, institutional and other frameworks in Afghanistan would also be needed to create an enabling environment to facilitate truth, justice and reparations for victims. It is therefore noted that efforts beyond the recommendations contained in this report will ultimately be necessary in order to fulfil the rights of victims.

Consultation

Victims, their voices and priorities must be at the centre of any efforts aimed at fulfilling their rights.

It is essential for victims to participate in the process of designing and implementing redress programs and other policies that seek to address their needs. While this report can serve as a starting point to understanding the needs of victims of armed conflict, further consultation and discussion is a necessity.

Recommendations:

1. The *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should consult with victims of armed conflict about their needs and should, on the basis of consultations, establish comprehensive

⁴³⁹ Following the recommendations of the Independent Assessment on Afghanistan pursuant to Security Council resolution 2679 (2023) (S/2023/856, annex) and discussions at the third meeting of special envoys on Afghanistan, which was held in Doha on 30 June and 1 July 2024, UNAMA launched a working group on counter-narcotics and another on the private sector. See: United Nations, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security: Report of the Secretary General*, A/79/797-S/2025/109 (21 February 2025).

programs for redress and other assistance to victims. Consultations should be inclusive and gender-balanced and protect the safety, security and confidentiality of all participants.

2. The *de facto* authorities should conduct a full review of existing institutional capacity to provide redress to victims of conflict-related violations of international law, including by identifying gaps in the legal and institutional framework.

Truth-seeking

The right to truth entitles victims, their relatives and the public to seek and obtain information on the causes leading to their victimization and on the causes and conditions pertaining to the gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law and to learn the truth in regard to these violations. This includes the fate and whereabouts of victims who may be missing and, for example, the identity of perpetrators and the extent to which the violation may have been officially authorized.

Truth-seeking initiatives are critical to the realization of victims' rights because in addition to documenting violations, they can serve to recognize victims' experiences by providing them with opportunities to speak about what happened to them and provide an acknowledgement of the harm suffered.

Recommendations:

3. The *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should establish a mechanism through which victims, their relatives and the public can seek information and learn the truth about violations.

Reparation

Reparation is critical to helping victims of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law overcome the devastating impacts of their experiences. In a reparations program, the State offers benefits with the acknowledgement that a violation was committed and harm done, for which it takes responsibility.

The victims that were interviewed for this report were clear in stating that reparation – most often in the form of financial compensation to address the losses suffered – were a priority for them. Other forms of reparation, such as service packages for education, health and housing and, more generally, infrastructure (compensation); the need for medical and psychological care (rehabilitation) and the search for the whereabouts of the disappeared (satisfaction) were also raised.

It is clear that victims have a range of needs; they have suffered different violations and their needs and priorities are different. The form of reparation may vary and should be targeted to the specific situation of the victim and their family members. They can be directed to individuals as well as to groups, communities, and even regions. Reparation can, in turn, inform the design of complementary humanitarian and/or development assistance programmes.

Recommendations:

4. On the basis of consultations with victims, the *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should establish comprehensive programs for reparation and victim assistance.
5. The *de facto* authorities should seek to cooperate with former parties to the conflict in Afghanistan, who also bear responsibilities to victims, in the establishment of reparation and victim assistance programs.
6. Member states should dedicate financial assistance to Afghanistan that is informed by the needs and priorities of victims of the armed conflict.

Guarantees of non-recurrence

People interviewed for this report continuously reiterated the need to ensure that their experiences are not repeated in the future, consistent with the concept of “guarantees of non-recurrence” which requires tangible actions by states to prevent the recurrence of violations.⁴⁴⁰ This requires institutional and social reform to create an environment which at its core promotes and protects human rights and international humanitarian law.

Recommendations:

7. The *de facto* authorities should use vetting – in a manner compliant with international norms and standards – to remove perpetrators of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law from security forces.
8. The *de facto* authorities must provide training on international human rights law and international humanitarian law to security forces, including law enforcement personnel.
9. The *de facto* authorities must ensure Afghanistan complies with its obligations under international human rights law by taking measures to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, including by:
 - a) Rescinding discriminatory edicts and decrees that curtail the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls, enabling their access to secondary and tertiary education and work, respecting their freedom of movement and ceasing interference with other aspects of their daily lives;
 - b) Ensuring that legislation, policies, edicts and other instructions issued by the *de facto* authorities are in line with international human rights law;
 - c) Taking immediate legal, policy and practical measures to prevent human rights violations, in particular unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions and torture and ill-treatment, and ensure accountability – in line with international human rights norms and standards – when violations occur.

⁴⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (2005), Article 23.

10. The *de facto* authorities and all former parties to the conflict should take urgent action to address the risk posed by unexploded and abandoned ordnance, including demining efforts and public awareness and education campaigns to educate the community on the risk.

Obligations to investigate and prosecute

States have obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law to investigate and prosecute alleged violations. Criminal accountability – in the form of investigation and prosecution of perpetrators – was often cited as a priority for victims interviewed for this report, however they also often noted their concerns or fears that such processes are rarely approached impartially and may even result in retaliation against them.

Recommendations:

11. The *de facto* authorities should establish mechanisms for the receipt and investigation of allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law during armed conflict in Afghanistan.
12. All member states whose military forces were present in Afghanistan should ensure the independent investigation and prosecution of alleged violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by their own personnel in Afghanistan, in a manner consistent with international standards.

Enforced disappearances

The family members of individuals who were forcibly disappeared during the conflict continue to lack answers about the fate of their loved ones. They have the right to know the fate and whereabouts of their relatives.

Recommendations:

13. The *de facto* authorities should consider declaring themselves bound by the obligations under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
14. The *de facto* authorities should establish mechanisms for the receipt and investigation of allegations of enforced disappearance to provide families with information about the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones, address their needs and provide them with reparations.
15. All parties to the armed conflict should make available any records or information on the whereabouts of the missing (whether living or dead).

Addressing the needs of victims

The *de facto* authorities are the duty bearers for the realization of the human rights of the population, including the rights to adequate food and housing, education, health, social

security, water and sanitation and work.⁴⁴¹ Victims of armed conflict have clear needs for targeted support and services linked to the range of harms they have suffered – including, for example, counselling, health care to address the continuing impacts of their injuries, and reconstruction of their homes and businesses destroyed or damaged in the conflict. The majority of victims interviewed for this report were, however, not in receipt of such support or aware of how or where such support might be available. The *de facto* officials and service providers interviewed also noted significant gaps in extent and forms of available support for victims.

Recommendations:

16. The *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should, through the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, conduct a comprehensive mapping exercise to understand the forms of support currently available to victims of armed conflict.
17. The *de facto* authorities of Afghanistan should, through the *de facto* Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, consult with victims of armed conflict to understand the services they need. Consultations should be inclusive, gender-balanced and non-discriminatory, protecting the safety, security and confidentiality of all participants.
18. The *de facto* authorities should develop resources and information for victims of armed conflict about the services available to them and disseminate information widely and equally among communities.

Addressing the specific needs of persons with disabilities affected by armed conflict

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which Afghanistan is a State party, obliges the *de facto* authorities to take steps to realise the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in daily life on an equal basis with others. Victims of armed conflict who had acquired disabilities raised two key issues: the discrimination they experience and the barriers to participating in employment.

Recommendations:

19. The *de facto* authorities should develop public awareness campaigns and activities aimed at improving understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities and addressing negative attitudes and stereotypes towards persons with disabilities in the community.
20. The *de facto* authorities should take steps to ensure the inclusion of person with disabilities in the labour market, including through: prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment; employing persons with disabilities in the public sector and ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to technical and vocational education and training programs.

⁴⁴¹ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966.

Addressing the specific needs of women and girls affected by armed conflict

Almost all of the women consulted for this report whose male relatives were victims of the armed conflict expressed the need for opportunities to engage in employment to support their families. The restrictions placed on women and girls by the *de facto* authorities prevent women's employment in many sectors of the labour market (including the civil service).⁴⁴²

Recommendations:

21. The *de facto* authorities take steps to ensure the inclusion of women in the labour market, including through: prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender and sex with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment and ensuring that women have access to university, technical and vocational education and training programs.
22. The *de facto* authorities should rescind restrictions which limit women's ability to participate in the labour market, in particular:
 - a) The bans on education for women and girls beyond grade six, as well as on women studying at medical institutes;
 - b) The requirement for women to be accompanied by a *mahram* for travel over 78 kilometres;
 - c) The bans on women's employment, including with non-governmental organisations and in most areas of the civil service.

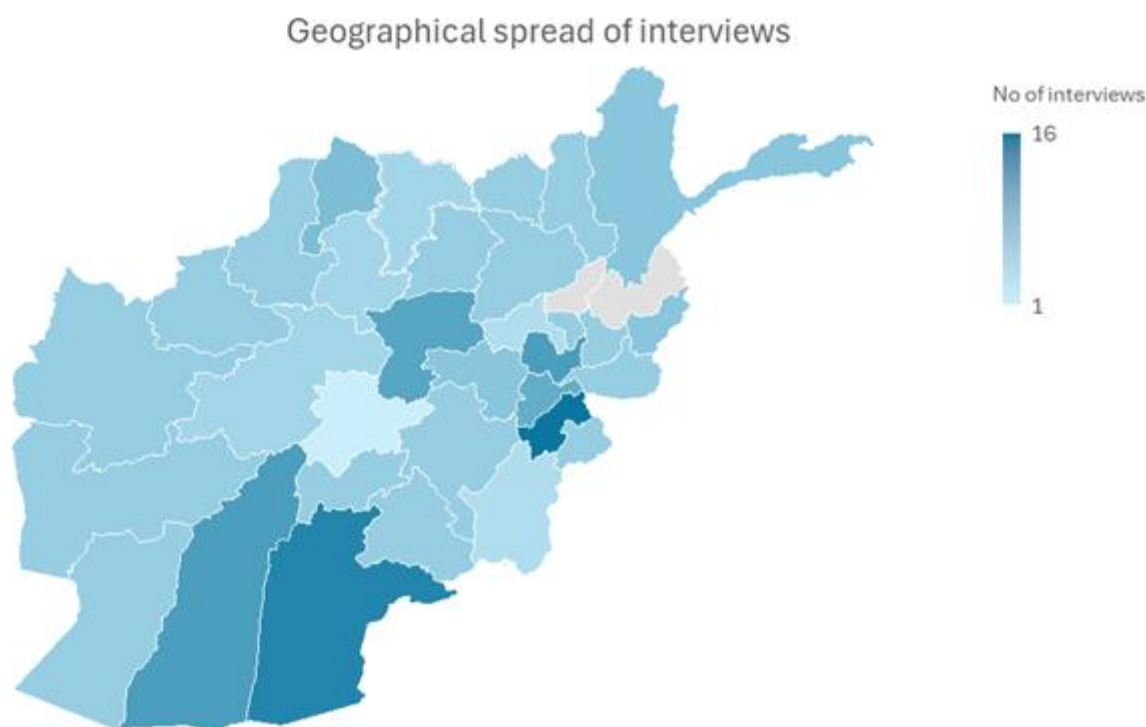
⁴⁴² On restrictions imposed by the *de facto* authorities see: UNAMA, *Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October – December 2024* (27 January 2025), Annex: Timeline of decisions by the *de facto* authorities impacting women and girls. Available at: https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/human_rights_situation_in_afghanistan_october_-_december_2024_-_english.pdf.

Annex A: Demographic breakdown of interviewees

Between June 2024 and December 2025, UNAMA interviewed 195 individuals about the lasting impact of armed conflict. Out of 195 persons interviewed, 52 were women (27 percent).

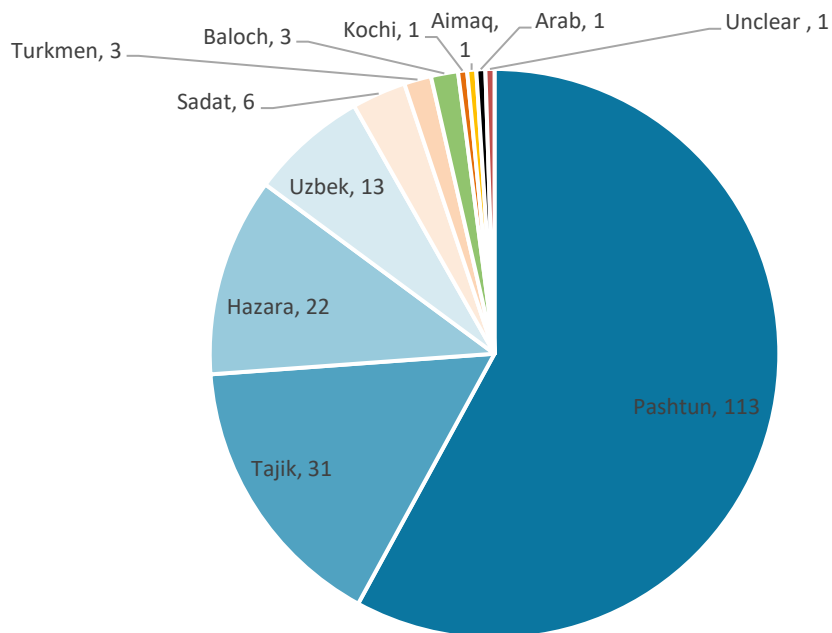
While UNAMA made utmost efforts to ensure a diversity of interviewees in terms of their gender, age, ethnicity, geographical location and the type of incident that affected them, the interview sample may not be fully representative of the broader affected population.

UNAMA interviewed individuals from 32 provinces of Afghanistan.⁴⁴³ Below is a graph showing the geographical spread of the interviews.

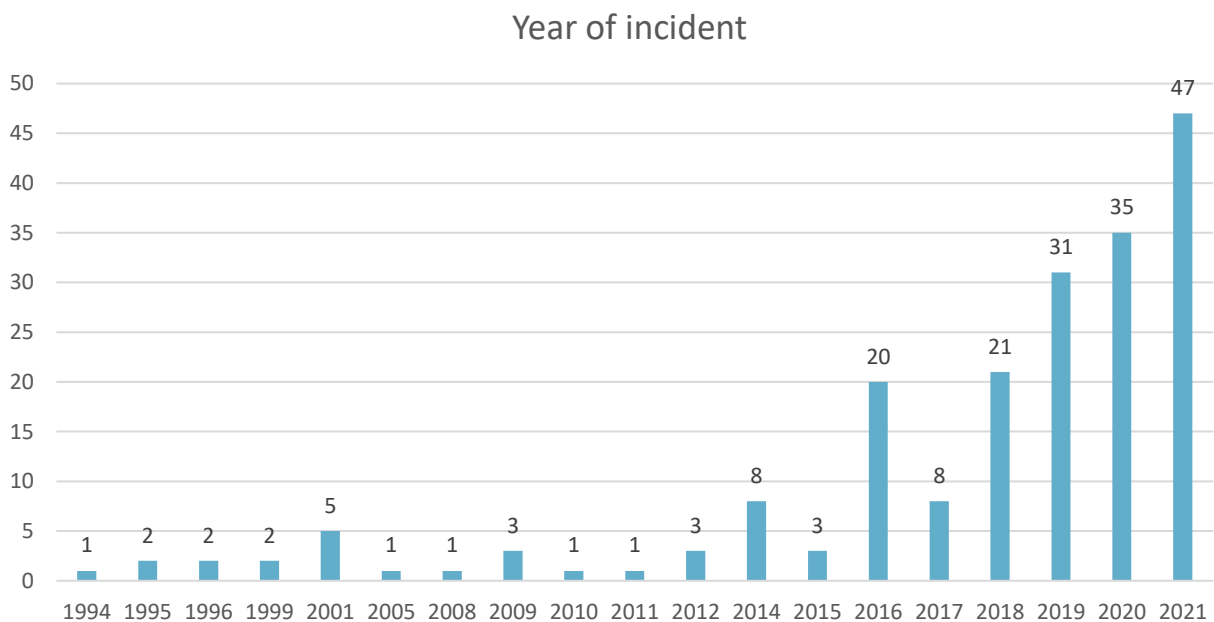


⁴⁴³ All provinces of Afghanistan with the exception of Panjshir and Nuristan provinces.

The respondents identified themselves as belonging to the following ethnic groups.

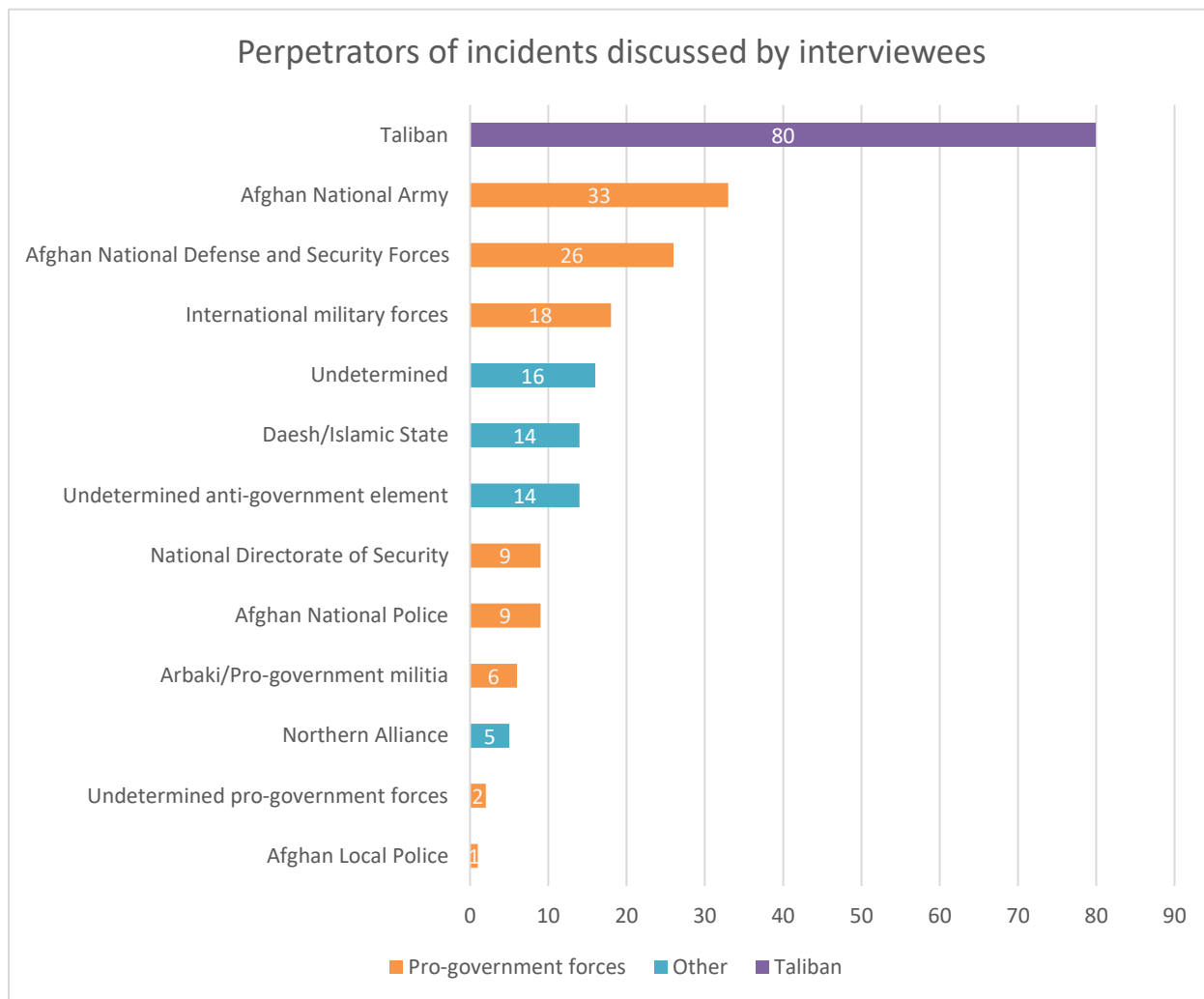


The incidents covered in interviews took place between 1994 and 2021. All incidents took place before the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021.



The perpetrators of incidents discussed by interviewees are set out below.

Some incidents were attributed to more than one perpetrator because responsibility could not be determined (for example, in cases of civilian casualties caused by ground engagement between two parties to the conflict).



Annex B: Comments received from the *de facto* Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Date: 19.02.1448 (Hijri)

Comments and response of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan on the draft UNAMA Human Rights Section report with the title “Rights of victims in aftermath of the armed conflict in Afghanistan”

We thank the Human Rights Section of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for sharing the draft report labeled “Left behind: Rights of victims in the aftermath of the armed conflict in Afghanistan.” We have carefully reviewed the report.

We appreciate any sincere and impartial efforts aimed at reflecting the situation of victims of conflict, raising their concerns, and ensuring their rights, provided that such efforts contribute to improving the lives of victims and realizing their legitimate rights.

It is an established fact that the people of Afghanistan have suffered physical, psychological, social, and economic consequences as a result of prolonged conflicts, affecting the lives of millions of Afghans. This reality must be fully understood and acknowledged.

Nevertheless, in our view, the report has serious shortcomings in several areas, particularly with regard to the comprehensive reflection of historical facts, legal accuracy, balanced attribution of responsibilities, and impartial assessment of the issues. It has not applied sufficiently consistent standards in reflecting the responsibilities associated with the various fundamental dimensions of the conflict. In our view, this has undermined the report's balance, legal accuracy, and comprehensive reflection of the situation.

Therefore, we present the following observations and comments:

1. Regarding the main causes of conflict and responsibility

The report referred to the adverse consequences of the conflict but did not adequately or explicitly identify the main causes of these consequences.

The fundamental cause of the widespread harm, deaths and injuries, displacement, psychological trauma, and social problems suffered by the people of Afghanistan was foreign military intervention in Afghanistan, which began with the military invasion of Afghanistan by the United States and its international coalition and continued for twenty years, affecting Afghanistan's independence and sovereignty, and the fundamental rights of the Afghan people. If the military intervention did not occur, Afghanistan would not have faced a crisis of such magnitude.

Therefore, when assessing the victims of the conflict, loss of human life, and destruction, the fundamental responsibility for the initiation, continuation, and expansion of the conflict should

also be attributed to the states and forces that were the main actors responsible for the conflict.

Under the principles of international law and the international obligations of states, primary responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict, casualties, and resulting harm should be attributed to the parties that initiated the conflict and subsequently became the principal factors responsible for its continuation.

2. Regarding the legal nature of the conflict

In the background section of the report, the conflict in Afghanistan has been defined as a “non-international armed conflict.” However, this terminology does not reflect the historical and legal realities. This cannot disregard the involvement of the United States, NATO, and dozens of other countries, including their military personnel, warplanes, intelligence networks, special forces, direct engagements, airstrikes, and extensive military interventions, and then characterize the conflict as a non-international armed conflict rather than an international armed conflict.

From the very beginning, the Islamic Emirate considered this war a legitimate resistance against foreign occupation and has consistently emphasized its international nature. Therefore, this is important to assess the legality of the conflict and should be thoroughly and cautiously assessed in accordance with international legal standards.

3. Regarding the non-recurrence of war, peace, and the general amnesty

The report’s findings advocate for the non-recurrence of conflict and promoting sustainable peace and stability. This objective is consistent with the policy of the Islamic Emirate. To achieve this goal, the Islamic Emirate announced a general amnesty to prevent revenge, hostility, and further violence, that created an opportunity to end the conflict and provide an appropriate environment for reconciliation, social unity, and lasting stability.

However, the report indicates that the general amnesty is inconsistent with Afghanistan’s international obligations. Accordingly, the report’s recommendations, which directly or indirectly question the legitimacy, effectiveness, or continuation of the general amnesty, or the proposed measures that could weaken this policy in practice, are viewed as being explicitly inconsistent with demands of war victims which is non-occurrence of violence and durable piece.

Following the end of conflict, priority should be given to consolidating peace, promoting reconciliation, and preventing the re-emergence of hostilities. Therefore, general amnesty is not regarded as a means of prolonging conflict but rather as an important measure for ending war, rebuilding mutual trust, and strengthening social cohesion. Any recommendation that, in practice, weakens this policy or creates ground for the return of confrontation and retaliation is considered contrary to the objectives of sustainable peace, social stability, and the prevention of a new conflict.

4. Regarding seeking apologies from perpetrators and acknowledging responsibility

The report reflects the demand of some victims that perpetrators and those responsible for violations should acknowledge responsibility for their actions and apologize to the victims. In reality, such a demand should be directed toward those parties that, during the decades of

conflict in Afghanistan, they were responsible for violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as for harm inflicted upon civilians.

However, the report addresses this demand primarily toward the Islamic Emirate, while the foreign states involved in the conflict, as well as the military forces and other armed groups that are considered responsible for large-scale casualties and destruction throughout the war, are not addressed in a similar manner.

The parties that conducted military operations and caused extensive human suffering throughout the conflict should acknowledge responsibility for their actions, formally apologize to the Afghan people and the victims, and take practical and effective measures to compensate for the damages caused by the war.

5. Regarding the fifth recommendation in the draft report

According to the fifth recommendation, the report calls upon the Islamic Emirate to coordinate and cooperate in establishing programs for compensation, reparations, and assistance to victims, involving the engaged parties in past and all relevant institutions and stakeholders.

Given the fundamental role played by foreign states and forces throughout the conflict, it would be more appropriate for UNAMA, as a first step, to call upon the international community and those states to provide the necessary financial and technical resources for victim compensation and support. Subsequently, the Islamic Emirate could be requested to facilitate the delivery of such assistance by providing the necessary conditions and arrangements, so that aid can be delivered to Afghan victims in a transparent, and effective manner.

6. Responsibility for supporting and compensating victims

The report noted the scarcity of resources available for supporting and compensating victims. However, it did not present a comprehensive picture of responsibility in this regard. According to international legal, ethical, and humanitarian principles, the primary responsibility for compensation, reconstruction, and long-term support for victims should rest with those states and parties that played a direct role in the conflict, military operations, and the resulting large-scale loss of life and property in Afghanistan.

These parties should also undertake practical measures to compensate for the consequences of the war, support victims, and effectively address the remaining damages. Unfortunately, to date, sufficient and tangible measures have not been taken by them to fulfill these responsibilities, provide effective compensation for victims of war to ensure durable support for victims.

At the same time, it should be recognized that the Islamic Emirate itself has been affected by the consequences of decades of war, destruction, and economic constraints. Nevertheless, within the limits of its available resources and capacities, it has made efforts and will continue to support and assist the Afghan people, particularly the victims of war.

Details of these measures are presented in the following sections.

Therefore, addressing sole responsibility to the Islamic Emirate for meeting the needs of victims and providing compensation is not in line with the principle of fair attribution of responsibilities.

The report should reflect the role of all responsible actors regarding supporting and compensating victims in a balanced, impartial, and non-discriminatory manner.

7. Imbalance in direction of recommendations

Out of the report's total 44 recommendations, 36 are directed particularly to current Afghan authorities, three are addressed to all parties involved, and only four are directed to the state members of United Nations.

The distribution of these recommendations does not appear to be proportionate to the historical realities of the conflict, the degree of responsibility for its various fundamental dimensions and the main factors involved. It was expected that the responsibilities of the main foreign parties to the conflict and other involved elements would have been reflected in the recommendations in a balanced and proportionate manner. However, in practice, the report addresses the majority of the recommendations toward the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, while giving limited attention to the responsibilities of other main parties to the conflict. Such a distribution is not consistent with a balanced and fair reflection of the responsibilities of all parties involved in the conflict.

8. Regarding the consistency of the application of legal standards

In certain recommendations of the report, those states and international forces that engaged in the conflict and military operations in Afghanistan are called upon to conduct investigations into potential violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In this regard, cautious and non-conclusive terminology has been used.

At the same time, the report referred to numerous incidents in which civilians were killed or injured and suffered other serious harm because of operations conducted by foreign forces. However, it uses the term "potential violations" when referring to these incidents, whereas conclusive language has been used against the Islamic Emirate, without applying the same cautious standard.

This dual and different application of legal terminology and standards is not consistent with the principles of impartial and balanced legal assessment. If the standard of "potential violations" is applied to one party, the same standard should be applied equally to all parties involved.

9. Reflection on the International Criminal Court's approach

The report manifested the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor, that focused investigations on the situation in Afghanistan since 2021 restricted to alleged crimes by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and ISIS. This is despite the existence of grave violations and allegations of concerning various parties, particularly international forces involved in decades-long conflict in Afghanistan.

This limitation of investigative priorities, which in practice excludes the obligations of other main parties to the conflict, is not consistent with the fundamental principles of justice, equality, and impartiality. The credibility of international judicial mechanisms can be preserved only when consistent and non-discriminatory standards are applied to alleged violations by all parties.

Unfortunately, in reflecting this decision, the report provided no critical legal assessment of the decision and did not discuss the implications of this selective approach. This indicates further need for evaluation of the report to maintain its balance, impartiality, and legal credibility.

10. Regarding research methodology

According to the report's methodology, most of the interviews were conducted between 2016 and 2021. In our view, to present the comprehensive dimension of Afghanistan's twenty-year conflict, it was necessary to give balanced consideration and adequate space to all victims and different phases and incidents should have been analyzed adequately.

Furthermore, the report included information and incidents covering the period from 1994 to 2021. It is worth noting that this period coincides with the formation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan until the end of the presence of United States' Forces and their allies.

This framework for collecting information creates the impression that the report's primary focus is largely on the actions and obligations of the Islamic Emirate's forces. However, the issue of victims' rights and accountability should be assessed in a balanced and impartial manner with respect to all parties involved in the conflict. Moreover, the report refers to diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and geography in selecting interviewees, but no comparable standard appears to have been applied to maintain balance among the parties to the conflict.

11. Regarding evidence and the attribution of responsibility

In numerous instances, the report attributed responsibility to specific parties based on oral testimony of individuals. Any allegation should be based on sufficient, credible, and verified evidence so that the legal credibility and evidentiary value of the report may be preserved.

For example, the report included claims of an individual who allegedly abstained from lodging a complaint due to fear that it would backfire and result in him being forced to marry his daughters to members of the Taliban. This claim is baseless, unfounded, not verified, and lacking any reliable evidence, and it does not correspond with the evident realities of the situation.

According to accepted norms and fact-finding principles, serious and sensitive allegations of this nature should be raised based on credible, reliable, and corroborated evidence, rather than on the personal assumptions, fears, perceptions, or unverified statements of individuals. Documentation of such unsubstantiated claims not only undermines the professional and legal credibility of the report but may also contribute to misconceptions, unfounded accusations, and the misleading of public opinion.

12. Legacy of the war, victims' rights, and dealing with the past

The report recommended that Afghanistan should officially recognize the suffering caused by armed conflicts, reconcile with past and take practical measures to ensure the rights of victims in accordance with international law. Although the report made recommendations directed towards other actors, most of its recommendations directly addressed to the Islamic Emirate of

Afghanistan.

Many states and their military forces were directly involved in the outbreak and continuation of decades-long conflict of Afghanistan. Therefore, if the legacy of war, victims' rights, and dealing responsibly with the past are considered, it would be appropriate and fair for these recommendations to first of all be directed toward those states and parties that played a fundamental and direct role in the conflict and that bear significant responsibility for its consequences and the damages that resulted from it.

Directing these recommendations solely toward the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, without attribution of responsibility with similar clarity to the other main parties involved in the conflict, is inconsistent with the principles of balance and impartial assessment.

13. Application of international legal standards

In some sections of the report that explain international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and other international instruments, the international legal obligations are phrased in a manner that primarily addresses the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. However, given to Afghanistan's decades-long conflict, the responsibilities and obligations under international law apply to all parties involved in the conflict.

Therefore, international legal obligations and responsibilities should be addressed to all parties involved equally, impartially, and without discrimination, to preserve the standard and credibility of the legal assessment.

14. Recommendations regarding perpetrators of violations

The report recommended that individuals involved in violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law should be dismissed from Afghanistan's security structures. The crucial question in this regard why this recommendation was not express in the same explicit terms to foreign states and military forces that had a military presence in Afghanistan for approximately twenty years where numerous allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law are documented. When the principle of accountability is raised, then it should be applied equally to all parties involved in the conflict.

15. Method of attributing responsibility

The methodology used in the report for attributing responsibility is questionable. According to the report, based on statements from interviewees, 80 incidents are directly attributed to the Islamic Emirate Forces, whereas the responsibility of international forces is limited to approximately three incidents.

At the same time, other involved parties related incidents attributed to under various names "Unidentified Pro-Government Forces" "Afghan National Army" National Directorate of Security), militia and unidentified. As a result, the number of incidents attributed to those actors appears comparatively less. The report does not provide a convincing explanation why such differences exist in the attribution of incidents and responsibility, or why incidents involving the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan are highlighted significantly, but a similar standard has not been applied

to other parties to the conflict. Such a selective approach raises serious questions regarding the balance and credibility of the report.

16. Allegations of discrimination

The report also highlighted allegations that certain individuals have been deprived of assistance due to their ethnicity. The Islamic Emirate rejects such allegations and emphasizes that there is no policy of discrimination based on ethnicity, language, region, religion, or political background in the provision of assistance, services, and support.

17. Reflection of the security situation

The report noted a significant decrease in the level of violence after 2021. Although it describes some of the changes in the security situation and does not reflect a comprehensive picture of the current situation, which creates the impression that armed conflict is still ongoing on.

The use of accurate and balanced terminology in reports is of particular importance, as such terminology directly influences readers' perceptions. Therefore, descriptions of Afghanistan's current situation should be described in terms that fairly reflects the post-war situations since the end of the war.

18. Measures by Islamic Emirate to support victims of war

The Islamic Emirate considers all citizens of Afghanistan as part a body and deems to serve them, as an Islamic and human responsibility.

In terms of supporting victims of war, the families of martyrs, widows, orphans, and people with disabilities, it makes no discrimination based on ethnicity, language, religion, region, age, gender, or previous administrative or military affiliation. To this end, the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, within the framework of applicable laws and available resources, has undertaken various practical measures to meet the needs of victims and implement support programs.

The Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs has established an organized system for the registration, verification, and information management relating to these vulnerable groups. In addition to providing cash assistance, non-cash assistance, healthcare, rehabilitation, and social services, it has strengthened mechanisms for transparency, oversight, complaint registration, and public awareness.

Under the former administration's 2009 law, only-war affected persons with disabilities were qualified, and those with 100 percent disability were entitled to a monthly allowance of 1,500 Afghanis, which was insufficient to meet their needs. However, that law was later suspended due to its shortcomings. At present, all persons with disabilities, including those associated with the Islamic Emirate, those associated with the former administration, civilian persons with disabilities, and individuals with congenital disabilities, are registered without discrimination. Monthly cash assistance is provided according to the degree and category of disability through the banking system. Likewise, the families of martyrs, orphans, and widows receive similar services without discrimination.

The process of registration and verification is carried out through specific assessment and

approval by commissions, and bank-based payments. Survey teams visit eligible families, and services are delivered through a transparent, fair, and organized mechanism.

The Ministry's leadership has undertaken continuous visits to provinces and districts and has established a dedicated call center, electronic registration systems, and complaint-handling teams to improve the effectiveness of services and strengthen accountability. To date, nearly 30,000 people have registered their concerns through the contact center.

Regarding allegations that assistance has been discontinued, the Ministry states that certain orphans became ineligible under the law upon reaching the age of 18 years and therefore ceased to qualify for benefits. Changes in assistance provided to widows and people with disabilities are made on the basis of official criteria and assessments, not because of discrimination.

Since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, a total of 654,063 individuals have been registered across the country, including 385,856 orphans, 97,218 widows, and 170,988 persons with disabilities. Within this group, 128,090 are from the families of those described as martyrs of the Islamic Emirate, while 52,572 are from the families of the previous administration. Services are provided to people with disabilities and civilian victims without any form of discrimination.

From 1400 to 1403 (Solar Hijri calendar), approximately 45.908 billion Afghanis were distributed to eligible beneficiaries through the state budget via the banking system. In addition, with the support of charitable organizations, food assistance, winter clothing, wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs, and other assistive devices worth millions of U.S. dollars were distributed.

The Ministry has activated specialized rehabilitation centers that provide physiotherapy, orthopedic services, and psychological and mental health services to thousands of people with disabilities. Thousands of orphans and widows have also received specialized medical treatment and healthcare services at various health centers throughout the country and abroad. Furthermore, prosthetic legs and other mobility aids have been provided and continue to be supplied so that people with disabilities can carry out their daily activities more easily.

To promote economic self-sufficiency, thousands of widows, orphans, and female-headed households have been provided with sewing machines, home bakery equipment, and other productive equipment. In cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, employment opportunities have been created for thousands of orphans and people with disabilities. Efforts are also being coordinated to implement the legal requirement that 3 percent of positions in government institutions be reserved for people with disabilities.

Additionally, thousands of people with disabilities and family members of martyrs have been given the opportunity to perform Hajj. Hundreds of individuals have been enrolled in educational and academic programs, and thousands have received technical and vocational training. Equipment for small businesses, including shops and livestock, has been distributed. For housing purposes, a residential township project covering 420 jeribs of land has been launched in Sar-e Pol and Maidan Wardak provinces, and the project is expected to expand to other provinces as well.

The Ministry has also implemented public awareness programs in cooperation with the media, community religious leaders, and other institutions. It emphasizes that since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, efforts have been made to provide economic, healthcare, rehabilitation, educational, and social services to orphans, widows, and persons with disabilities in a fair and transparent manner, so that they may live with dignity and play an active role in society.

19. Purpose and practical impact of the report

The depiction of the pain and suffering of victims is effective only when it is accompanied by practical solutions, accountability for responsibilities, effective compensation mechanisms, and concrete measures to ensure the realization of victims' rights.

If reports merely recount the tragedies of the past but fail to adequately reflect the responsibility of those states and parties that played a fundamental role in the conflict, then they will not effectively create the conditions necessary for achieving justice and compensation for victims.

Therefore, it is essential that such reports fully observe the principles of impartiality, balance, legal accuracy, and the fair reflection of the responsibilities of all parties involved in the conflict.

Conclusion

The Islamic Emirate once again expresses its sympathy with all victims of the wars in Afghanistan and remains committed to supporting them.

Within the limits of its available resources, the Islamic Emirate has undertaken practical measures to assist and serve the victims of war, the families of the deceased, widows, orphans, and persons with disabilities and will continue these efforts.

We believe in genuine justice, effective reparations, and sustainable support for the victims of Afghanistan's conflict can only be achieved when all parties involved in the war, particularly those states and forces which had direct military presence in Afghanistan, acknowledge their legal and moral responsibilities and take practical steps to ensure the rights of victims and provide compensation for the damages caused by the conflict.

We hope that, prior to the final publication of the report, the above observations and comments will be given serious consideration so that the final version may be more fully aligned with the principles of impartiality, balance, legal accuracy, and international legal standards.

End.

Annex C: List of interviews and incidents

The below sets out a list of incidents described by interviewees. In some instances, details have been withheld by request of the victim.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
1	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], in [location], my father was killed by mortar fired by the Afghan National Army. A heavy fighting took place in the area between the Afghan National Army and anti-government elements. My father wanted to take his family members to a secure place, when suddenly a mortar which was fired by the Afghan National Army reached him and he was killed."
2	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], at around 09:00, I began my day like any other. After having breakfast and bidding farewell to my mother, kissed her hands, I set off for my office. My son's property dealing shop and my office were shared. We were operating from the same office. Thanks Allah, he did not go with me at that same time. As I arrived at my office and settled onto a couch, about five minutes later, a deafening explosion occurred. Dust, yelling, and blood were everywhere. In an instant, two individuals, including the manager of my office, lost their lives, while four others, including myself, sustained injuries. It was a "bomb Boshka-e" (improvised explosive device), which had been secretly planted inside my office and detonated remotely. The explosion destroyed my office and even inflicted damage to my adjoining residence. I was taken to the hospital and underwent operations around eight times; my leg has been broken and sustained injuries all over."
3	Withheld	Withheld	"In the evening of [date], our neighbour asked my son for a ride from [our village], to [city], due to a family emergency. At first, my son, [name], who was a taxi driver, refused because he was concerned about the poor security conditions in [the village]. However, the neighbour insisted, explaining that they might lose the patient if they didn't get help immediately.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			Finally, [my son] agreed to give them the ride. Tragically, upon his return to the village, the Afghan National Army check post opened fire on the taxi with AK-47s. This resulted in the killing of [my son] and minor injuries to a woman caused by the shattered windows and the subsequent crash into a wall after the driver lost control of the vehicle. I was contacted by a resident of the area who informed me that my son had been injured. I decided to go and pick up my son to take him to the hospital. Unfortunately, we were not allowed to reach the scene in time. After some time, we were allowed to reach our son, but unfortunately, he had bled a lot, which cost him his life."
4	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], I received a call from my family that Taliban fired on the Afghan National Army from the back of my house in [location], and as result of counter firing by the Afghan National Army, my niece was injured in the shoulder. On the way to the hospital, the Taliban stopped our ambulance. They immediately allowed us to pass when they saw the injured girl. When we reached [location], the Afghan National Army stopped our ambulance and after one or two minutes and for unknown reason started firing on the ambulance from two sides injuring my wife and one nurse."
5	17 April 2022	Maidan Wardak province, Jalriz district, Sanglakh area, Dard Sarae village	"In the morning of April 17, 2020, I was at my home. I had a guest from Kabul, and we were enjoying tea together. My son took the animals for grazing outside home. Suddenly, I heard an explosion. At first, I thought it might be celebratory gunfire for the wedding, as on that day there was a wedding ceremony in our village. About 20 minutes later, a neighbour informed me that my son, Fahim, had died in the explosion and was lying in the field. I rushed to the scene, and when I arrived, I felt an immense loss as I saw my son's body in pieces, his brain exposed. I sat there in shock, watching as my villagers and relatives gathered the fragments of his body. Fahim had been killed instantly

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			by an anti-personnel explosive device, likely a remnant from the previous war with Russia.”
6	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], around 06:00hrs, in [location], an Afghan National Army/Afghan Local Police check post opened fire on three members of my family who were hunting birds in the area. My brother was killed on the spot, while my mother and my other brother were seriously injured. There was no ground engagement at the time of the incident, and the Afghan National Army/Afghan Local Police intentionally opened fire at civilians. My mother and my brother who were injured were hospitalized in the provincial hospital.”
7	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], in the afternoon, my 10-year-old son [name] opened the front door of our house and faced a police patrol tank which opened fire on him. He was shot in the chest. When my wife saw the scene, she ran to save our son and was also shot in the forehead. My son died on the spot, and my wife was severely injured.”
8	Withheld	Withheld	“In the late afternoon of [date], my brother along with my cousin and two friends were returning from a funeral ceremony when they were targeted by a drone attack in [location]. The four of them were traveling on two motorbikes after attending the funeral of two Taliban members who had been killed in a night raid operation. As they made their way home, a drone attack struck them. Tragically, three of them lost their lives, and [one] was injured. At the time of the drone attack, [one of the victim’s] father was at the mosque. People heading toward the mosque informed him that a drone attack had occurred, and it had killed four motorbike passengers. He immediately realized that his son and his friends were on the same route. When he reached the scene, he found the shattered remains of his son’s body and those of his friends on the road. Overwhelmed with grief, he stood stunned, unable to comprehend the loss.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			The community then began the heart-wrenching task of collecting the scattered flesh of their bodies.”
9	30 January 2020	Kunduz province, Dasht-e-Archi district, Wazir Khan Jam, Pul-e-Salam area	“On 30 January 2020, in the afternoon, my father, my mother, my uncle, my aunt, and a granddaughter of my uncle were on their way from Daftani village of Dasht-e-Archi district to our home in Mamakhil village of Chahardara district. On the way, their Toyota Corolla vehicle was targeted by a US drone at Pul-e-Salam area of Wazir Khan Jam locality of Dasht-e-Archi district of Kunduz province (along the Kunduz Dasht-e-Archi Amin Road). As a result of the attack, all of above-mentioned people were killed and their vehicle was destroyed. The day before, one of our close relatives passed away in Dasht-e-Archi. My family and the family of my uncle were going there to participate in the funeral ceremony.”
10	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], at around 19:00, in [location], a Taliban-planted remote controlled improvised explosive device exploded. As a result, three civilians were killed and two more including me were injured. The improvised explosive device exploded around 30 meters away from my vehicle. The shrapnel of the improvised explosive device hit my body and my head and it severely damaged my eyes. The improvised explosive device targeted me because of my activities as civil society activist and human rights defender. Prior to the incident, I was actively and voluntarily carrying out civil society activities. I was a member of [a provincial civil society network]. A group of Taliban from [location] was regularly conducting improvised explosive device attacks in [my city].”
11	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date] at 19:30, my family members and I were busy with our dinner at our home, in [location]. Suddenly a D-30 artillery which was fired by the former Afghan National Army battalion from [district], impacted the corridor between two living rooms of my house and resulted in killing two and injuring six more members of my family including myself.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			Right after that terrible incident, my neighbours arrived to our house and took us out of the soil and rubble. The neighbours transferred all the injured ones to the district health clinic. From there, two of the injured people were taken to the provincial hospital. After surgical operations and one week of hospitalization, the injured people recovered and were discharged from the hospital."
12	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], we had guests at our home in [location] and enjoyed some quality time. Around 22:45, we went to bed. Suddenly, a few helicopters began flying over our village. They circled over our houses and grape gardens before opening fire. I woke up and sat up in bed, confused about what was happening. I completely forgot that my younger son was irrigating a garden. The garden wasn't ours; he was paid to irrigate it. We are daily wage labourers. My phone rang. It was my younger son who was out irrigating. When I answered, he said: "I am wounded". I was in shock and couldn't move or speak for a minute. Then, I pulled myself together and told my wife: "Get up, let's go and see what happened." I grabbed a torch and opened the door. As I stepped out, a soldier shouted: "Do not move". He grabbed me tightly by the neck, put a hood on my head, handcuffed me, and made me face the wall. They took my phone, and when I asked what was going on, they said in Dari: "Do not talk". This lasted about five minutes. I could hear their voices on the VHF radio, some speaking in English, talking about someone being under the culvert. Minutes later, the helicopter fired at the culvert. They then transferred us to Kabul, where I was kept for two nights at the National Directorate of Security. I couldn't identify the exact location. After that, I was transferred to Bagram prison, where I was held for eight more nights. During this time, I was treated well and questioned a few times. They

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			showed me pictures of Taliban members, seeking information about them, but I had no clue who they were. They didn't beat me but asked me not to provide shelter to the Taliban. During my detention, I kept thinking about the call I received from my wounded son and was worried if he was okay. After ten days, they released me from Bagram prison and gave me 200 AFN for transportation. I returned to the village and asked my cousin to send me a car. When I got close to home, I saw a group of people crying. I was told that two of my sons were killed: the one who had called me that night, and another who had gone to rescue him but failed and hid under the culvert, which the helicopter then fired upon. My second son was just 22 or 23 years' old and had been married for only two months. His newlywed bride is now a widow, grieving her lost dreams. [Crying]."
13	Withheld	Withheld	"The incident occurred nearly 15 years ago, on [date], when a conflict erupted between the former Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and Taliban fighters in [my village]. During the exchange of gunfire and heavy ammunition, a projectile struck my house, causing a fire; destroying it and burning all the household equipment. This horrific incident claimed the life of my 17-year-old son. In addition, my grandchild was injured. Following the tragedy, the villagers came to help me evacuate my remaining family members trapped under my home's collapsed roof."
14	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], at around 18:30, my three grandchildren were playing in the yard of our house in [my village] when suddenly a mortar shell hit the house. As a result, my 6-year-old granddaughter died on the spot and two of my grandsons aged 12 and 7 were wounded. We took both first to [the provincial hospital] and then to [location] Emergency hospital where both were released after one

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			week. I have no clear idea who the perpetrator was. I just know that a police check post was in the vicinity of our house, and I think the primary target was that.”
15	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], around 13:30 in [province], an unexploded ordnance detonated, killing two boys, and injuring nine other boys including my two children. The incident happened when the children found the unexploded ordnance in a non-residential area near a playground and hit it with stones until the device detonated. Reportedly, the unexploded ordnance was left over from the previous armed conflict between the former Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and the former Taliban, as the former Afghan National Defence and Security Forces including Khost Protection Forces used to target the former Taliban’s operation centres in the area.”
16	Withheld	Withheld	“Almost eight years ago, in [province], around midnight, I was guarding a solar panel system that provided water to the community. Suddenly, I heard the loud sound of a rocket. A few minutes later, my brother called, urging me to hurry home because our house had been destroyed. When I arrived, I found nothing but dust and destruction. Tragically, two of my children – aged 4 and 14 – had been killed, and my four other children – aged between 3 and 12 – and my wife were injured. The injured were transported to the hospital. My brother explained to me that there had been crossfire between the Taliban and an Afghan National Army outpost in the area. The Taliban fired from our village towards the Afghan National Army outpost. And in response, the Afghan National Army launched a mortar shell that tragically hit my house.”
17	Withheld	Withheld	“I had a four-wheeled handcart and travelled from street to street, selling plastic pots/goods. My oldest son, [name], was just 12 years’ old when he was killed. Being illiterate myself, I deeply understand the struggles of an

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			uneducated person. That's why I encouraged [my son] to attend school instead of helping me sell plastic goods on the streets. On the morning of [date], after breakfast, I asked him to go to school while I took my cart to sell plastic items. Just five minutes after he left, we heard a massive explosion that shook the windows. Anxiously, I rushed to the scene. People had already gathered and told me it was my son, [name]. I found him covered in blood, with a severe head injury. We took him to the hospital in [location], but it was too late; he was already dead. The police investigated to determine whether it was an improvised explosive device or unexploded ordnance. I believe it was an unexploded ordnance. We live in a hilly area in [location], which had recently experienced heavy rain and flash floods. The unexploded ordnance might have been uncovered during the rains and floods."
18	Withheld	Withheld	"I am living in [province], working as a farmer and have no military or political background in the past. On Friday, [date], I was working with my son [name] in our tomato land near to a mosque to collect the harvest. I was a little far and my son was close to the mosque when a drone came and fired on the mosque. We did not know who sent this drone to attack the mosque. We all dropped to the ground and after a few minutes, I saw my son was hit by shrapnel in the head. I took my son and immediately carried him to the [provincial] hospital and after some basic treatment, moved him to [location] Emergency hospital. My son had some physical and mental problems in the beginning, but now he is getting better."
19	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], the Taliban attacked [my district] and defeated local forces. I was working, doing farming with my father, uncle, nephew and others from my village. We were arrested, and our hands were tied behind our backs. We said we are civilians and not involved in the fighting. They said you are Hazara and should be killed. My father and uncle were killed along with five other villagers.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			I was injured and so were others. I was 15 years' old at the time. The Taliban burnt all our houses, destroying them. All victims were civilian farmers. None were fighters. When the Taliban arrived in the area, we were cutting wheat (myself, my uncle and father) and so we fled. We fled the wheat field at 8am. We had fled from our village to [another area] when we were captured by the Taliban. In total five males were injured, including me. I was injured at 8am when my hands were tied with rope. I was shot with a Kalashnikov in my right shoulder and right foot. The people who died were killed after their hands were tied behind their backs. They were then shot by Taliban. The perpetrators were speaking Pashto, Urdu and Chechnyan. I don't know their names. They were 20 military members of the Taliban. After we were tied up another 200 Taliban arrived. The Taliban were carrying rocket propelled grenades, pistols and Kalashnikovs. They burnt the harvest, cows, sheep, goats and our houses. They took some of our horses. I saw the Taliban burn twelve villages. Sometimes I still can't sleep properly after all these years. I keep remembering my father and uncle being killed. I recall how they were killed and how my home and village were burnt. And no one assisted me."
20	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], in the afternoon, my cousin, a taxi driver whose regular activity was to transport police officers from [location] to [location] was stopped by the Taliban at a checkpoint in [area]. The Taliban shot him dead. We later learned that the Taliban claimed responsibility on Twitter for the incident saying that he was a police officer, but he was not. He was a civilian. Later that day, a taxi driver who used to drive the same way called me to inform me about the incident and where his body was. I went to pick up the body, took it to the hospital to wash it and then brought it home."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
21	8 January 2009	Kandahar province, Maywand district, Khask-e-Nakhood bazaar area	“I do not remember when the incident took place exactly, but I think it was in the winter of 2009. The Taliban attacked foreign forces while they were in Maywand district bazaar, Kandahar province. They conducted a suicide attack against the foreign forces who came out of the base, visiting the bazaar. In this incident, four civilians – all shopkeepers – were killed and around ten civilians, including shopkeepers, were injured. The target was foreign forces who came out from their base to the bazaar. They [the international military forces] were talking with shopkeepers while the incident happened. A few foreign forces were also affected. After the incident they [international military forces] blocked the area and no one was allowed to come near. My brother and his son-in-law were killed in this incident and one of my nephews was seriously wounded.”
22	8 November 2020	Kandahar province, Maywand district, DAC area	“The incident occurred in the fall of 2020. I do not remember the exact date. It was a very big incident and affected a lot of civilians. It was in the bazaar of Maywand district, Kandahar province. The Taliban carried out the attack. A Mazda vehicle full of explosive materials was detonated by a suicide attacker, which caused a lot of casualties and destruction in the bazaar and affected the houses near the incident area. My brother-in-law was killed in this incident. He was in his shop and selling goods in Maywand district bazaar, Kandahar. His name was Obaidullah, but he was known as Pahlawan. He owned four shops in Maywand bazaar and ran the shops alongside his relatives. He was killed in the attack, and all his four shops were destroyed along with the goods. He was from the Baloch tribe. At the time of the incident, I was also present in the bazaar, but I was far from the location of the incident. I witnessed the incident, seeing many people killed and most of the shop destroyed. The Taliban carried out the attack to target security forces, but civilians were affected.”

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
23	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], in [location], an unexploded explosive ordnance (type unknown) detonated. My son and my brother were cutting firewood and their axe happened to touch it. Both were killed on the spot."
24	23 August 2019	Zabul province, Qalat district, Kakarano Chinna area	"My cousin, Ahmad Zia, who was unmarried, used to work as a driver in the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in Qalat City, Zabul province. On 23 August 2019, at around 15:00, he disappeared with his governmental vehicle. He did not return at night. His phone was switched off. Our family informed the Police's Crime Branch and the National Directorate of Security about the incident. In the early morning [24 August], we received a call from the Police Department that the victim was in Taliban detention in Arghandab district of Zabul. We [the family] decided to gather a few community elders and tribal influential figures and went to meet with the then-Taliban [shadow] district governor. The delegation was on its way to Arghandab district centre when the International Committee of Red Crescent health staff called the rest of our family members in Qalat [the victim's father was on his way to Arghandab] and announced they had found the corpse of a martyr in Shankhil village, Shajoy district, adjacent to Arghandab district, killed by the Taliban. It was my cousin. Our delegation asked the Taliban [shadow] district governor the reason for why my cousin was abducted, detained and assassinated. In response, the Taliban governor only said that the victim was with them for a while, but that now he was in Shajoy district. He then asked them to leave. The delegation then asked around about the incident. They found eyewitnesses. According to them – they were shopkeepers – they were present at the murder scene [in Arghandab district]. My cousin was shot multiple times in the body and head, and then he was pulled with a car on the ground, so more than half of his body was unrecognizable. Afterwards, a taxi

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			driver was paid by the Taliban to move the body out of Arghandab district. They accused my cousin of being a National Directorate of Security spy.”
25	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], in [location], an airstrike carried out by pro-government forces hit a mosque targeting former Taliban fighters. As a result, two adult males were killed, and six other males were wounded, including my son. The mosque was partially damaged due to the explosion.”
26	Withheld	Withheld	“On the night of [date], our village was bombarded by international military force (IMF) helicopters as we were irrigating our fields. After the bombardment ceased, my father went to check on the rest of the villagers. Tragically, as he reached the mosque at the centre of the village, he was targeted and shot by an IMF helicopter, which was supported by a ground patrol battalion of the Afghan National Army. Afghan commando forces raided our house, breaking down the doors as they entered. They beat us, confined us to one side of the house, searched the premises, and took my father’s iPhone and my HTC phone. They even tore apart the pillows. The following day, the IMF bombarded our area again. After the bombardment, we managed to hold a funeral ceremony and bury my father’s body. Regarding the perpetrators, I am not sure of their exact affiliation, but those who conducted the operation were speaking Dari and Pashto, and they had dogs with them.”
27	Withheld	Withheld	“I am a resident of [location]. I am still living there with my family. Since the past two decades, I am a farmer and had no link with the Taliban, despite our village being dominated by them. On [date] in the evening around 18:00, my children were playing in the yard of the house where a mortar landed inside the yard. As result, my three children – aged 10, 8 and 4 – died on the spot, and my other son was injured in his right

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			leg. We took the injured boy to [the provincial] hospital first and then moved him to [location] Emergency hospital.”
28	Withheld	Withheld	“On the day of the incident, my family and I went to my in-law's house in [city]. We were invited to a wedding ceremony. We are also neighbours. It was around 10:00 when a rocket hit the roof of the room. Fortunately, everyone was outside, except for my baby who was 4 or 5 months old and sleeping in bed. My baby was struck by four shrapnel pieces: two in the head and two in the chest and abdomen. We rushed him to hospital, and thankfully, he survived after extensive treatment. He was hospitalized for several days, and I spent a significant amount of money on his care. I even had to sell my shop to cover the costs. As for who and how the rocket was fired, I do not know. However, the date coincided with Afghanistan's Independence Day, so it was likely launched by armed groups opposing the government.”
29	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], in [location], a pressure plate improvised explosive device was allegedly planted by the former Taliban on the main road to target the former Afghan National Security Forces (Afghan National Police/Afghan Local Police) forces, but the pressure plate improvised explosive device detonated against my family's private Toyota car and resulted in the killing of my brother's wife and my nephew, and injuring of two women in my family and one former Afghan Local Police officer, who also belonged to my family. All the victims were my family members or relatives. The injured victims were taken to private and provincial public health hospitals in [city] for treatment. My family's car was also damaged in the incident. At the time of the incident, they were returning home from a ceremony in that car.”
30	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], at around 18:00, in [location], three unidentified armed men with their faces covered pulled my father out of a vehicle, shot and killed him. The perpetrators then contacted us using my father's cell phone and asked us to

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			fetch the body. To date, the motive behind the incident and the perpetrators remain unknown. The Taliban have denied any involvement in the incident. My father had no personal enmity with anyone. He worked as director of the district hospital. At the time of the incident, he was returning home from his office in the city. He was a renowned surgeon. He had not been threatened by any party prior to his assassination. Before the incident, the Taliban had arrested him once, but released him safely. The Taliban asked him to provide medical treatment for their fighters wounded in battles against the government. My father treated all wounded people, regardless of whether they belonged to one side or the other in the armed conflict, whether they were members of the Taliban or pro-government. On two occasions, he was summoned by the National Directorate of Security to provide the identity of the patients he had operated on. He explained that he was committed to providing medical treatment to anyone who needed it, without revealing their identity."
31	9 September 2019	Takhar province, Darqad district, Alqanaq village	"On 9 September 2019, in the evening, an airstrike was carried out against the Taliban in our village named Alqanaq, Darqad district, Takhar province. Our village was under Taliban control at the time. A rocket fired by the International Military Forces hit a residential area of the village, seriously injuring my 11-year-old sister Banazgul in the eye as she played outside the house. A dozen mujahideen (Taliban fighters) were also killed and wounded as a result of this incident."
32	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], during the night, in [location], former Afghan National Security Forces, Afghan National Army, National Directorate of Security and Afghan National Police jointly conducted a military operation against the Taliban in our village and fired a few mortars and D-30 artilleries that hit the village. One of the mortars hit our house as my parents and all our family members were inside a rickshaw escaping from the village to a safe location. One of the mortars hit the rickshaw, killing my parents, two of my sisters and a brother

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			and injuring my two minor brothers and one of my sisters. It was a very terrible time. At the time of the incident, Taliban fighters were close to our village, a few hundred meters away. The target was the Taliban, but it missed and hit our house. Some mortars also hit other parts of our village. Six months later, my sister who was wounded also died as a result of this injury.”
33	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], in [province], as I was leaving the village [...] to go to [another location] to carry out my personal work in [a village located between the two locations], Taliban ambushed and opened fire on a pro-government militia vehicle. A bullet fired by the Taliban missed its target, hitting me in the shoulder and injuring me. An ambulance from [district] immediately reached the area and took me to the clinic, then, thanks to one of the last helicopters from the republic regime, I was transferred to the [provincial] hospital for further medical treatment. After surgery, the bullet was removed from my shoulder. After the surgery, I spent a week in the [provincial] hospital, then 40 days in [city], under the care of doctors.”
34	5 July 2019	Paktya province, Chamkani district, Chargai/Kheranai villages	“It was 5 July 2019, at around 10:00, when a green coloured helicopter was seen flying over our villages Chargai and Kheranai. I had two houses: one located in Chargai village and another house in Kheranai village of Noozae Khola area of Chamkani district, Paktya province. I was in my house in Kheranai village when the helicopter started bombarding the Chargai village located in a mountainous area. It bombarded my house and other houses located along it for an entire distance of 6-7 km. During the bombardment of my house in Chargai village, my daughter, Badshah Gula (8 years’ old) was burnt by the flame of the rocket propelled grenade fired by the helicopter that hit the house. She became unconscious. My son Barakatullah (12 years’ old) was hit by the shrapnel of the rocket propelled grenade in his chest and head, and he was killed on the spot.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			I saw the smoke rising from the house in Chargai village; therefore, I along with another son, Fatehullah, went to our house in Chargai village from Kheranai village. We saw a true doom's day had occurred in our house. We took my daughter Badshah Gula who was injured and placed her inside my vehicle to transfer her to hospital, but concomitantly I saw that the helicopter also bombarded my second house in Kheranai village where another son of mine, Najibullah (10 years' old), my nephew Karim, (16 years' old) Mirza, my niece, Ayesha (15 years' old), were also hit by the shrapnel of the rocket propelled grenade and they were injured. We turned the vehicle to our house in Kheranai village to take our injured family members and transfer them to hospital. There, we took Najibullah, Karim and Ayesha into the vehicle. Another niece of mine, Bibi Halima (18 years' old), who was unmarried, also got in the vehicle to accompany the injured family members to the hospital. When we were all sitting in the vehicle, the gunner of the helicopter started firing at our vehicle. The gunner shot my injured son Najibullah in the chest and my niece Bibi Halima also in the chest and both were killed on the spot. We left both Najibullah and Halima as dead bodies at home and put the injured kids in another vehicle of a villager and drove them to Shahr-e Naw hospital in Chamkani district for immediate emergency treatment."
35	5 August 2016	Paktya province, Chamkani district, on the Gardez-Chamkani road near the district administrative centre	"On Friday, 5 August 2016, after Jumah prayers at our mosque, around 14:00, my father took my grandmother in his car. Accompanying them were my mother Ezat Bibi, my 2-year-old brother Usman, and my father's cousin Matiullah, aged 36. At that time, I was 18 years' old. After saying goodbye to my family, I returned to our clinic to manage the medical store. Around 16:00, a friend came to inform me about an explosion on the main Chamkani-Gardez road and urged me to check the victims. When we arrived at the site, I was devastated to find my parents, youngest brother, grandmother, and cousin

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			lying dead. I fainted from the shock and later regained consciousness at home, where the five bodies were laid out in white shrouds. My remaining family, including my stepmother, four brothers, and three sisters, were in a state of shock. We could not accept the reality of what had happened to our family, especially to my parents. The explosion occurred as my father's vehicle was crossing the Noozae Khola area in Chamkani district. A pressure plate improvised explosive device planted by the armed opposition [the Taliban] exploded, killing everyone in the vehicle."
36	Withheld	Withheld	"It was around 6:30 [at the wedding of the daughter of a prominent local politician]. During this time, [the politician] and several other political figures were inside the wedding hall. Most of the guests had already arrived. I remember that a huge noise of explosion came into my ears. I fainted for a few minutes. When I managed to open my eyes, there was darkness, dust, and smoke everywhere. I tried to stand and see what happened. When I got up, I saw a large number of people lying on the ground, covered in blood. I saw [the politician's] one hand, and his leg was missing. Other political figures were also lying on the ground. The suicide bomber's head was stuck to the ceiling of the hall, and half of his body was on the ground. I was not able to walk or go outside of the wedding hall. I waited until I heard the sound of ambulances and police cars. Then I was taken outside the wedding hall by a police officer. Once there, I saw two Black Hawk helicopters flying in the sky, checking the explosion area. I was hit by glass shards, and I had injuries in my head and legs. It was a big explosion, that made history in our province. More than 50 ordinary people were injured and died. I was transferred to the National Directorate of Security headquarters for treatment."
37	20 May 2021	Sar-e Pul province, Sayed Abad district, Chakaran area	It was around noon on Saturday, 20 May 2021. I was cultivating onions on a piece of land near my house in our village, Chakaran, Sayed Abad district.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			There was another village near ours called Moghul Jar where the Taliban fighters had built their base. On the other hand, near our village, the Afghan National Army, with their military ammunition, had stayed to attack the Taliban. The Afghan National Army opened fire towards the Taliban fighters. The Taliban fled and left the village, but a few minutes later, a military aircraft of the Afghan National Defence Security Forces reached the skies above our village and dropped three bombs. Two of the bombs impacted my house and one hit the roadside near my house. I had four rooms in my house; all of them were destroyed, and everything was burnt. My four-year-old son Zakir was inside the room, sleeping. He was killed on the spot when parts of the detonated bomb hit his body, and the roof of the room fell down on him. My wife was wounded in her wrist and head; my other son was injured on his leg and hand, and he still cannot use his hands properly. My daughter was wounded in the face, but she is fine now. I survived because I was a little further away on my land. I brought my hurt family members to the Sar-e-Pul public hospital for medical treatment.”
38	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
39	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
40	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
41	Withheld	Withheld	“The incident took place at around 14:00 in [location]. [Our village] was under the control of the Taliban and [the neighbouring village] was under the control of former Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. Our house was beside a mosque, inside of which the Taliban fighters used to stay. The government troops attacked the Taliban fighters. Their target was the mosque in which the Taliban fighters stayed. They fired rockets and grenades towards the village. One rocket hit my house where my children and our relatives’ kids were playing. Four male children aged 7, 8, 10 and 12 died on the spot. One of

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			them was my son; the other three my nephews. My 13-year-old daughter and one female guest were also injured. They were wounded in their legs and abdomen. The house was completely destroyed.”
42	Withheld	Withheld	“I live near an Afghan National Army outpost. [Some time before the collapse of the former government], the Taliban forcibly entered our home at night and used it as a base. My family and I were very afraid of what could happen to us. The next day, an Afghan National Army officer contacted me and warned me that if the Taliban did not leave our house, they would launch mortars and other heavy ammunition against it. He warned me to transfer my family elsewhere. I asked the Taliban commander in the area to immediately leave my house. It was a big house which they found convenient to use to hide and build a defensive position. But they were risking that my house would be destroyed. Despite my pleas to the Taliban, explaining that the Afghan National Army would destroy my house, they refused to leave. My fear became real when the two camps started fighting. They used mortars and other heavy weapons. When the fight started the Taliban first shot at the Afghan National Army outpost. In response, the Afghan National Army launched several mortars. One such mortar directly impacted my house, causing it to catch fire. My house was totally destroyed.”
43	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], in the morning around 5:30, I woke up and planned to go to the mosque for morning prayer. Twenty minutes later I heard the sound of a huge explosion, and my room was full of dust. At first, I thought that my house was hit by a mortar, but later I found out that a car full of explosive materials was detonated by the Taliban in front of the [hospital] which is located close to [a military base]. The main purpose of the explosion was to demolish the wall of the [military base] to get access to the base. Many other civilians were wounded in this explosion.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			As a result of the explosion, I was injured by shrapnel to the forehead, while my mother and my 12-year-old son were injured due to shattered glass. We were taken to the clinic for treatment and two of our relatives who got serious injuries were moved to the hospital. In addition, our house was partially destroyed by the powerful blast. The door, windows and all glass in our house were destroyed."
44	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
45	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
46	9 August 2021 (approx.)	Khost province, Musakhil district, Zarra Kot, Lamar Kalay	"It was almost 16:00, almost six days before the collapse of the Republic regime, and there was intense fighting between the former government and the Taliban. We were inside our house and got too frightened. My father Barat, sister Nazifa, brother Abid, and my beloved sister Sayera were present in the same room inside the house. We experienced a profound fear when an unexpected explosion occurred within our residence. Later, it was discovered that the explosion was caused by a mortar shell fired by one of the fighting parties. The origin of the shell remains unclear, but it struck our house directly. I found myself uncertain about the appropriate course of action. The explosion caused extensive damage to the house. The conflict escalated significantly. My father, sisters, and brother were found lying in their blood. I could not take them to the hospital at that time. Tragically, my father and one of my sisters passed away from their injuries and were martyred. My other sister and brother sustained injuries and were admitted to a private hospital in Khost city the same night."
47	Withheld	Withheld	"The incident occurred at around 14:40 on the main road. While traveling from [location] to [another location] with three colleagues, we were attacked by unidentified gunmen, later confirmed to be Taliban insurgents. They kidnapped me and my colleague, while the other two managed to escape. [My colleague]

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			and I were held captive for almost two and a half months. I am certain that our captors were Taliban fighters. Around 14:40, eight gunmen blocked the highway. They approached our vehicle and demanded that both of us get out. They forcibly pulled me by my left shoulder, dragged me into their car, and hit me on the head with a pistol butt when I resisted. My head bled, staining my clothes. They seated me in the backseat between two armed Taliban members, blindfolded me, tied my hands, and took all my belongings. After about a two-hour drive, they made me walk blindfolded and with my hands tied for approximately 15 to 20 minutes. They eventually unfastened my hands and forced me to run and walk with them for four hours, during which we traversed mountainous terrain. It was getting dark, and no Afghan National Defence and Security Forces came to rescue us. At night, another vehicle arrived, and my colleague and I were taken blindfolded and with tied hands. We were driven for three hours to a house where we were questioned and beaten by the Taliban members about our background and employment. After spending three nights in this house, a new group of Taliban took us on a four-hour drive to a mountainous area, where we walked with tied hands and blindfolded. We were kept in a stable for 18 nights, chained and blindfolded, amidst the stench of animal waste. The Taliban interrogated us about our family details, beating us, verbally abusing us, and threatening us with court proceedings. On the 19th night, they deemed us guilty of numerous anti-Islamic activities based on their court verdicts and ordered us to contact our families to leave final messages. I couldn't recall any phone numbers, but [my colleague] managed to contact his family. At this moment, they took us to an open area in the mountains and fired some stray bullets to make us tell our families that we would soon be killed if their demands were not met.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			The next morning, we were moved to another location where we were kept in a nomad's tent for four nights, constantly terrorized. Another group of Taliban moved us between various locations, blindfolded and with our hands tied. At one point, we were taken to a house with bullet-marked walls where we stayed for two nights. From there, we were transported under suffocating conditions to what we believed was [location], where we were imprisoned and treated relatively well for 14 nights. I don't exactly remember the other places we were taken, but we were finally shifted to another province. We were then moved again, placed in a room with cow dung on the walls for two nights, and later in a ground-floor room with insects for three nights. We pleaded for better accommodation and were finally moved to a new location where we were told we would be released the next day. The following morning, we were taken to [another location], where we were recorded confessing that we were not maltreated. Finally, we were dropped off in [the provincial capital], where people were waiting to take us home."
48	Withheld	Withheld	"One day when I was away from the city, busy with driving, I was suddenly informed that I should rush to the hospital to see my injured brother. A Taliban suicide attacker had blown himself up near the [Governor's office]. I did not know what the target was. My brother is a self-employed middle-class civilian. He was in that area at the time of the explosion, and as a result, he got critically injured."
49	8 October 2016	Nimroz province, Delaram district, in Haji Ghulam market	"One afternoon around 15:00, on 8 October 2016, in Nimroz province, Delaram District, in Haji Ghulam market where I was running a retail shop, a few armed Taliban arrived and stood in front of my shop. They were being followed by the District Police of the previous regime. Soon after, the Taliban began to flee the scene. The police indiscriminately opened fire with their AK47 and PK machine

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			guns. As a result, I was hit in both ankles and got critically injured, while my neighbour shopkeeper was killed. Due to the blood loss and severe pain, I fell unconscious. The locals evacuated me to the closest private clinic to receive first aid. Later, I was transferred to a better private hospital, Mohmand in Kandahar, to undergo a surgical orthopaedic operation. I remained hospitalized for some time. It was revealed that one of my feet had been paralyzed due to the gunshot."
50	1 January 2020 (approx.)	Zabul province, Dai Chopan district, Sra Qala area	"I will talk on behalf of the victim who is not in a sufficiently good health situation to be interviewed. According to my information as the relative of the victim, although I cannot recall the exact date, it was most probably 1 January 2020, four and a half years ago. It was in the afternoon, in the Sra Qala area, Dai Chopan district, adjacent to Mizan district, Zabul province. My sister-in-law's family members – three sons, a married daughter, and her male child – and herself were at her home. The Republic check post's police closest to their home became engaged in an armed clash with the Taliban. Soon after the battle began, a mortar shell or a rocket hit one of the rooms accommodating the victim and her grandchild. As a result, the room was damaged, the child was killed, while the victim sustained injuries. We never knew where the rocket came from or who fired it, because it was a harsh ground engagement with both parties exchanging light and heavy fire."
51 (two interviewees)	18 June 2021	Jawzjan province, Aqcha district, Aqcha Namay area	[Father of the victim, Ghawsodeen]: "It was Friday in the early morning around 04:00, on 18 June 2021. I was going to the mosque to perform the morning prayer. As it was summer and the weather was hot, my entire family, including my two young sons, my sick mother, and my married sister, who had come to visit my ailing mother, were all sleeping in the yard of our house. Suddenly, a rocket from an Arbaki check post hit our home located in the Aqcha Namay area, Aqcha City, Aqcha district, Jawzjan province. When I opened my eyes, I saw my mother and sister lying motionless in blood, along with my two sons,

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			aged five and six. I rushed to pick up my mother and sister, but I collapsed on the ground, due to also having sustained some wounds. Neighbours quickly came to our aid, and I realized that my mother and sister had been killed while my two sons were seriously injured. One had been injured in his foot and the other one in his abdomen, and both became disabled." [Victim, Bilal]: "I was peacefully sleeping under the mosquito net when I suddenly woke up from a terrifying dream. To my surprise, I saw my mother gently wrapping my foot with a cloth. The next thing I knew, I found myself in the hospital. After spending ten days in the hospital, I realized that I could not move my foot. It felt as though the light of day had turned into the darkness of night. I underwent two operations on my foot, but unfortunately, they were not successful. Since then, I cannot walk without stilts because of the severe damage my foot sustained."
52	3 October 2016	Jawzjan Province, Darzab district, district bazaar area	"It was Monday morning when a boy knocked on the door of our house. He said that a big explosion had occurred in the district bazaar area and that my husband was injured. A vast number of people were affected. All casualties, including my husband, were taken to the Darzab District hospital. My father-in-law rushed to the hospital, and on the same day, he took my husband to the Jawzjan Provincial Hospital. My husband begged his father, saying that he would die and wanted to see his children and me, but I failed to see him because I couldn't afford a taxi fare. My husband had undergone a surgical operation in the hospital; however, he passed away the following day due to a severe wound he sustained from the explosion."
53	Withheld	Withheld	"It was Friday morning around 10:00. We – eight people, including my family and my brother-in-law's family – left our home and were traveling [by car] to attend the burial ceremony of my 20-year-old nephew, who had been killed by the government's mortar a day earlier."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			However, on the way, our vehicle struck a pressure plate improvised explosive device which exploded, killing my husband, and injuring myself, my six-year-old daughter, and my one and a half year old son. Furthermore, the incident killed four relatives, including my brother-in-law's wife and her two-year-old daughter, an adult male relative, and the driver. The Taliban had planted the improvised explosive device on a road against government tanks. When our vehicle was hit, it exploded, leaving carnage behind. My husband was alive for about four hours, lying about twenty meters away from me, my daughter about ten meters away, and my son about five meters away. My husband asked me to help him, trying to give me his phone from his pocket to call someone for help, but I replied that I could not move because my two legs were broken. Then he pushed with his hand to try to take his phone, but couldn't. Similarly, my brother-in-law's wife was also alive. Both my husband and my brother-in-law's wife managed to call for help before dying. The government attempted three times to collect the casualties, but each time, the Taliban attacked them from a destroyed house where they sheltered. On the fourth attempt, the government launched a big attack on the Taliban's position and managed to collect the casualties. But unfortunately, my husband and my brother-in-law's wife had already died by that time. They rescued me and my two children."
54	6 September 2016	Jawzjan province, Sheberghan city, Afghan Tapa village, Khoja Burhan area	"It was the morning, around 09:30, on 6 September 2016, when a boy knocked on the door of our house and said that an explosion had occurred in the pastureland. He said that it had wounded my son and nephew, and one more male child. I rented a car and rushed towards the scene, where I saw all three boys, including my son, lying in blood on the ground. The incident occurred half an hour before I arrived at the scene, in pastureland in Khwaja Burhan area, Afghan Tapa village, Sheberghan city of Jawzjan province, when a sheep

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			stepped on an unexploded mortar bullet, which detonated, killing the sheep and wounding the three boys.”
55	25 October 2015	Jawzjan province, Khamab district, Etefaq Payeen village, Danagee area	“It was Sunday evening prayer time, the 25 October 2015. I was holding my newborn baby inside our living room. My husband was going to the mosque to perform evening prayer when suddenly a government mortar impacted in front of our house gate in Danagee village, Khamyab district Jawzjan, killing my husband. Its shrapnel seriously injured four others, including my 17-year-old daughter, my brother-in-law and his 9-year-old son – who had fled one day earlier from their village due to the ongoing armed conflict and sheltered in our home – as well as the wife of my other brother-in-law, who was our neighbour. Moreover, it partially destroyed our house.”
56	25 October 2015	Jawzjan province, Khamyab district, Danagee village	“My father and I were staying at my uncle's house in Danagee village of Khamyab district, Jawzjan, where at evening prayer time around 16:30 on 25 October 2015, a mortar struck their house. I was knocked unconscious. When I regained consciousness, I noticed many neighbours had gathered; yelling and making noise. I noticed that I had become blind in one eye, my uncle had been killed, and four more – including my father, a female cousin, and two uncles’ wives – were also wounded and lying in their blood. It was the government mortar, fired from Khamab bazaar area near the district governor's department. Moreover, one of our relatives was an eyewitness to the firing of that mortar and had told them not to fire it because there were no Taliban. The Taliban had attacked the government base from another village and subsequently fled from the area. However, the government targeted civilians’ houses with their blind rockets and mortars, and one of the mortars impacted my uncle’s house.”
57	Withheld	Withheld	“My husband was a young and talented doctor. He studied medicine for seven years and had recently been appointed as a medical doctor at a hospital in

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			[location]. On [date], around 20:00, while on his way home, unidentified gunmen shot and killed him."
58	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], late afternoon, heavy fighting started in [location] between the Taliban and the Afghan National Army after the Taliban launched mortars at the Afghan National Army military base. The battle lasted for hours, with both sides exchanging mortar and rocket fire. Unfortunately, one of the mortars hit our home, destroying several rooms and injuring me and my son, [name], with shrapnel. I sustained minor injuries, but my son was seriously injured. We took him to [the provincial] hospital, but due to the severity of his injuries, he was referred to another hospital and discharged after seven days from there. He continued visiting the hospital once a week for three months."
59	Withheld	Withheld	"Almost two years ago, at around 13:00, two of my cousins and a fellow villager were heading to [city] to purchase materials for basic household needs. The road was in poor condition, so they disembarked from the vehicle and walked on foot. One of them unknowingly stepped on a mine that was planted there, triggering an explosion. Among the three individuals, my cousin and the fellow villager were martyred, while another cousin sustained minor injuries. The blast threw him a considerable distance, but his injuries were not severe."
60	2 April 2018	Kunduz Province, Dasht-e-Archi district, Laghmani village of	"As far as I remember, it was 2 April 2018, around 12 noon. I was at the graduation ceremony of the Gujjar Akhundzada madrassa in Laghmani village of Dasht-e-Archi district of Kunduz province when two mini helicopters belonging to the Afghan National Army arrived. People were sure that there would be no attacks because the organisation of the ceremony had been coordinated with the Kunduz Provincial Governor and security organisations in Kunduz Province. Hundreds of people from Kunduz and some other provinces took part in the gathering. As it was lunchtime and the meal – the charity food

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			– was ready, dozens of farmers, labourers, and other poor men from the area and children from the neighbouring villages as well as students of two schools in the area, arrived at the madrassa to eat for free. Suddenly, the gathering was attacked. Neighbouring houses and the school buildings in the area were also targeted. For almost 20 minutes, the two helicopters fired rockets and struck places. As a result of the attack, 64 civilians, including men and boys, were killed, and 203 civilians injured, including men and boys. Around 70 people, including myself, suffered very serious injuries.”
61	Withheld	Withheld	“On [date], an unexploded ordnance exploded in an open area next to the hills near our village. As a result of this incident, my 8-year-old son died and three male children of my relatives aged between 9 and 12 were injured after hitting the explosive device with a stone. At the time of the incident, the children were learning the Holy Quran at a local mosque.”
62	19 July 2018	Kunduz, Chahar Darah district	“On 19 July 2018, at around 10:00, in Kunduz province, two US fighter jets dropped three bombs on my house and two other adjacent houses of my relatives. As a result, the three houses were completely destroyed and my 14 civilian relatives – family members of my two brothers and one sister’s families, including two men, two male children, six female children and two women – were killed. Only one male child survived the attack. After the incident, people came to remove the bodies of the victims from the destroyed houses. All the bodies were found, except for those of two female children.”
63	11 January 2016	Takhar province, Darqad district, Noorkhel-e- Payan (lower part of Noorkhel) village	“On 11 January 2016, during the night, in Noorkhel-e- Payan, lower part of Noorkhel village of Darqad district, in Takhar province, a mortar shell was fired by the Afghan National Army from Noorkhel-e-Bala, upper part of the Noorkhel area. It hit the roof of the living room of my brother, Nazer Mohammad, who was a civilian; killing him, his wife and his three-month-old baby girl. In the room where the mortar hit, there were also four of my brother’s other children; three sons and a daughter. They were unharmed. At the time, my family and I

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			were also living in the same house. At the time of the incident, I suddenly heard a horrible noise. I immediately realized that the mortar had hit my brother's living room. I then went to his room and saw that my brother, his wife and baby were killed. After that, our neighbours arrived at the house.”
64	Withheld	Withheld	“The reason for the incident was that I and three other villagers went to the area to find the body of my brother-in-law, a member of Taliban, who had been killed by pro-government militia and the Afghan National Police that morning. When we arrived in the area, we were ambushed by police and pro-government militia forces. They shot at and injured me and the other villagers. They did not allow us to retrieve the body of our relative. They disrespected his dead body, closed the back of the car and went around the village while the women of the deceased's family, including his mother and wife, came out of their houses to receive the body. The villagers came and took us to the clinic. The doctors at the hospital dressed my wounds, but they could not get a bullet out of my knee.”
65	27 November 2019	Kunduz province, Imam Sahib district, Qurghan Tepa village	“On 27 November 2019, members of four families – including my family, the family of my father, the family of my sister and the family of one my relatives – were on our way to participate in the wedding party of my cousin in Aikhimchal village of Imam Sahib district. On the way, our pickup vehicle hit a pressure plate improvised explosive device. As a result, of the sixteen passengers in the vehicle, the driver, my daughter and I survived, but the other thirteen individuals, including one man, three women, three boys and girls, were killed and the vehicle was destroyed. Six of the victims were my family members: my wife, my two sons and three daughters. The area where the incident took place was under Taliban control. The incident took place on a mined road. There was no sign of danger or anything to show that there were improvised explosive devices or any other sign to prevent us from going there or using that road. The driver was a local resident who had sufficient information about

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			the minefields in the district. According to the people in the area, the pressure plate improvised explosive device had recently been planted by the Taliban to target Afghan National Security Forces.”
66	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
67	8 February 2020	Balkh province, Chimtal district, Qal’a-e Razaq village	“It happened on 8 February 2020, 07:00 in the morning, at Qal’a-e Razaq village, also known as Jar Qal’a, Chimtal district, Balkh province, when an aircraft bombarded the area. My cousin, his older son, as well as two other male civilians, who all were his neighbours and friends, were sitting and chatting together after morning prayers at their village mosque. My cousin had a grocery shop which was next to his house, and they were all sitting together when suddenly an aircraft flew overhead and rapidly bombarded the area. This bombardment caused two deaths – one male child and one adult male – and three wounded – one male child and two adult males – all who were civilians. The casualties also included a 13-year-old boy who was wounded while playing in the yard of his house. Among the victims were my cousin, Shah Rasoul, 45 years’ old, who was wounded severely, and his son Mohd Rasoul, 18 years’ old, who was killed. Mohd Rasoul died on the spot as result of the severe injuries he received in this incident. His body was torn into pieces, and we could hardly collect his body and bury him in the morning of the next day. Shah Rasoul was hit all over his body with shrapnel. We could not even touch his body with our hands because he was wounded all over his body and bleeding. Additionally, Shah Rasoul’s house was partially damaged. The walls of the external gate to his house and the door of his house were partially damaged. There were no Taliban casualties in this case. All were ordinary civilians.”
68	18 September 2020	Samangan province, Darah Suf-e-Payin district, Tajik Dehi village	“On 18 September 2020, around 23:30, a devastating battle broke out between the Taliban and the Government. We were really scared and did not expect the fight to escalate so seriously. We had witnessed many battles between the

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			Taliban and the government in Dara e Sufi Payin. The Taliban reached the bazaar area, with some taking positions in the main mosque, others in the bazaar, and some near our house. When the fight started, we moved inside our homes and stayed there. After approximately two hours, at 13:30, an Afghan National Army airplane started flying overhead. I thought the fight had ended, but I was wrong. The airplane launched two rockets at our house. The house belongs to my father, Haji Aziz, where my brothers and I live together. It is a two-story house. When the rockets hit our house, it was partially damaged, and eight members of my family were injured. A piece of shrapnel hit my teenage daughter Sediqa, 17 years' old, in her abdomen, causing severe bleeding and damage to her large and small intestines. My nephew Fazela, 16 years' old, sustained severe injuries to her leg. Four small boys suffered injuries to their eyes, head, and legs. Two elderly women, my mother-in-law, Mah Gul, aged 80, and my brother's mother-in-law, Durdana, aged 82, were slightly injured."
69	Withheld	Withheld	On [date], I participated in a written exam at [a government office]. I remember that around 10:00 in the morning, a very strong explosion occurred. [...] The Taliban exploded a car bomb in front of the National Directorate of Security, which was only about 10-20 meters from where we were taking the exam. After the explosion, some Taliban fighters entered the National Directorate of Security compound and started shooting. [...] I sustained injuries to my eye and hand. A piece of glass, approximately 10 cm in size, struck my eye, and a piece of metal hit my hand. I was transported to the provincial hospital for immediate treatment, then to the provincial hospital for surgeries. Afterward, I returned to my village. The Taliban members occupying my village believed I had been inside the National Directorate of Security and

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			accused me of being a government spy. [...] The villagers and the Taliban were convinced that I was in the National Directorate of Security compound. They took me to their place and sentenced me to be shot and killed in a public trial. Fortunately, my family members and community elders from two major tribes intervened and vouched for my innocence. After the Taliban took over in August 2021, they arrested me again and accused me of being a spy and injured in the National Directorate of Security attack. After further mediation by community elders, they eventually released me. I now live in a remote area, far from my village. I have been insulted by both the villagers and the Taliban. I am living in dire circumstances. The incident has cost me my eye, my livelihood, my job, and my sense of humanity.”
70	Withheld	Withheld	“My son lost his life in a suicide attack. [...] A Taliban suicide attacker targeted a police officer in a market which resulted in the killing of my son.”
71	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
72	Withheld	Withheld	“My husband was working as a vaccinator at [district hospital]. [...] Our neighbours told us that he had been arrested. We started searching for him to no avail. Finally, we found him at a mountain, his hands were tied, he was blindfolded, and he was dead – he had been shot.”
73	Withheld	Withheld	“My father was working as a vaccinator for the district hospital. [...] People said that he was arrested. When the family was searching for him, they found him with tied hands, blind-folded – he was dead. He was shot down.”
74	22 September 2014	Kunar province, Asadabad city, in front of Shahidano Park	“When I learned that my husband died in a suicide attack it was just as if darkness surrounded me. It was such a bad day. For me, it was the end of the world. I could not imagine how to go on. I had three children. I gave birth to our youngest son about one month after the incident.”

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
75	Withheld	Withheld	"My sons had their push carts and soup-stands in the main bazaar. [...] There was a suicide attack there. Three of my five sons died, and another one lost his arm... What does it matter who did it? It won't bring my sons back."
76	7 October 2019	Nangarhar province, Jalalabad city, Spina Manai area	"I had started the paperwork to re-join the Afghan National Police. For that, I had to go to a recruitment centre to do some paperwork. When I was coming back in a bus with other recruits and civilians, there was a <i>zaranj</i> vehicle at the Spina Manai area, full of explosives and it exploded. [...] When the vehicle exploded, I was knocked unconscious. When I came to my senses, I was inside the vehicle and my two friends were also sitting inside, but they were dead. I still have shrapnel in my right leg and behind my left ear."
77	12 May 2020	Nangarhar province, Kuz Kunar district, Zargran area	"I was on the way from Behsud district to Kuz Kunar district to attend a funeral ceremony of Sheikh Akram, an Afghan Local Police commander. When I arrived to the funeral ceremony, there were many people. [...] A suicide attacker blew himself up. I fell over and went unconscious. There were other bodies on top of my body. [...] People came to rescue the victims; they thought I had been killed. But then they saw me move, and they took me to another place and I was asked to sit down and wait for transportation. I was confused. They put bandages over my eyes as I was bleeding. I do not know how long it took or how many people were transferred with me. I was in and out of consciousness; passing out. I know they took me to a hospital, and I got an injection, then I lost consciousness. I was injured in many parts of my body. I found myself all wrapped in bandages, and I was unconscious almost all the time. My relatives could not recognize me, but my son identified me as he recognized my palm. [...] I stayed in the public hospital for 17 or 18 days. When I was discharged, I had a lot of pain in both eyes. I went to a private clinic and was taking a treatment for four months. [...] Still, I cannot see well in my left eye, just as if there was a curtain. And I am always having pains. I do not know who the perpetrators were. Most probably somebody who hates foreigners."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
78	13 May 2018	Nangarhar province, Jalalabad city, Zone 4, Mastofiat Square	"It was in 2018. I was going to the Provincial Department of Education in Jalalabad where I worked. It was at around 10 in the morning. When I was near to the Provincial Finance Department Office in Jalalabad, a suicide attack happened, and then, shooting started. I think it was Daesh, as they claimed responsibility in the media. I was wounded in my leg and foot. I reached the nearby ICRC clinic, but they did not have enough medicines, they bandaged my leg and I was transported to the Provincial Public Health Hospital where they operated on me and removed a shrapnel from my ankle."
79	5 September 2020	Kunar province, Sarkani district, Barogai Shah area	"On 20 September 2020, in Barogai Shah of Sarkani district in Kunar province, we were in our house when a fight broke out between the Taliban and the Afghan National Army. They were shooting at each other but during this ground engagement a mortar of the Afghan National Army hit our house. Me, my nephew and my brother's wife were injured, our house was damaged a bit and some household goods were burnt down... The other injured people recovered quickly, but I was severely injured - my intestines and liver were injured."
80	28 November 2019	Khost province, Alisher district	"We are nomads and have so many sheep and goats, and camels. Because of this, we do not stay in one place. Wherever the weather is good, there is rainfall, and the land is green with grass, we stay there... On 28 November 2019, at around 23:45hrs, in Khost province, Alisher district, near the zero point of the Durand Line, a US drone targeted my family members while they were on the way home in a white Toyota Corolla. This attack resulted in the deaths of my father; my mother; my brother's wife; my sister; and my fellow villager. My brother's wife had given birth to a baby boy that night at home and was taken to a local clinic for treatment. While returning home, they were targeted by the drone. All of them were martyred; no one was left injured or alive. The newborn baby was not among the victims as he had not been in the car and was left at home."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
81	Withheld	Withheld	"My elder brother, [name], was shot and killed by Taliban fighters... He was a Prosecutor of the Public Security Unit, Khost Appeal Prosecution Office... He was on the way to his office driving his car when shot by Taliban armed men... He was shot seven times in the abdomen. He died at the hospital from his injuries. From there, we brought his body back home and held the funeral ceremony."
82	2005	Kandahar province, Panjwai district, Sayedan village, Zang Abad area	"I do not know the exact date of the incident but it happened in 2005... American forces bombarded my house in Kandahar province, Panjwai district, Sayedan village, Zang Abad area. They got the information that Taliban were present in the village. I lost consciousness after the incident, and I was in a coma for a few days or more as a result. I lost ten members of my family including my father, mother and siblings in the incident. I, along with my brother and sister, survived. I lost everything. Nothing was left for us. My siblings and I were seriously injured. I feel the harm of the incident until now and it will continue throughout my life. People told me that in my village all houses were destroyed by the bombardment, only me along with my two siblings and another female kid in the village were left at the scene. Other villagers either lost their life or left their house before the bombardment."
83	Withheld	Withheld	"About three years ago, during the firefight between the Taliban and former government, a mortar round hit our house in [location]. I don't know which conflict party was responsible for it. In this incident, I lost a son. Myself, my husband, one daughter and another son were wounded."
84	10 May 2019	Faryab province, Dawlatabad district, Charshangho village	"Five years ago, and it was the afternoon time I asked my children to go and collect our cattle that I had sent to a pasture... I heard an explosion. When I went out, I saw an explosive device had exploded, killing and injuring some children. My one son was killed on the spot and another person's son was severely wounded. My injured son was treated thanks to the collective action of our neighbours – some donated money, others lent it – so that we could

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			take him to Pakistan for treatment. My son survived but still complains of pain to this day...The device was an unexploded ordnance or mine, but we don't know to which specific parties it belonged."
85	15 August 2018	Dou Aba village, Chelgazi area of Qaysar district Faryab province	"On 15 August 2018, at daytime, during armed conflict between the Taliban and former government armed forces, ANA bombarded an area called Chine's camp of Dou Aba village, Chelgazi area of Qaysar district Faryab province, where a group of civilians, including men and children had gathered after the ANA had left the camp. As a result, eight local civilians were killed and five others, including my son Aismatullah, were injured... He lost an eye and one of his fingers. Now he is blind in one eye."
86	16 January 2018	Faryab province, Khwaja Sabz Posh district administrative centre, bazaar area	"Six years ago, during armed conflict between the Taliban and former government, a mortar fired by the Taliban hit the overcrowded bazaar area of Khwaja Sabz Posh. As it was the bazaar day of the district, hundreds of people were there in the bazaar area. Several people were killed and tens of people, including myself and my uncle, were injured. Some shops and civilian properties were damaged and destroyed. I recovered well after a while as the level of my injury was low, but two years after the incident my uncle, who also was my father-in-law, could not survive and he passed away due to severe wounds."
87	31 December 2018	Faryab province, Shirin Tagab district, Islam Qala area, along Khwaja Sabz Posh-Shirin Tagab highway	"I don't remember the date of the incident, but can say that about six years ago, during armed conflict between the Taliban and previous government, a rocket hit my house in Islam Qala village of Shirin Tagab district, Faryab province, while all family members were in the house. As a result, my two daughters (aged 16 and 7) were killed. Myself, my son, wife and another daughter were wounded, and my wife delivered our baby prematurely, who also died... My 14-year-old son got a permanent disability and was paralyzed. He can't move the lower part of his body."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
88	Withheld	Withheld	"We were in our village [...] I had told [my brother] not to take the animals to the stream because the conflict was going on and instead get them some water from the well which was next to our home. He agreed. Suddenly, a mortar shell hit the well and where he was standing. He was injured and his one leg broke into pieces."
89	Withheld	Withheld	"I along with my mother went outside and wanted to buy some stuff. We were in the shop when the conflict started between the Taliban and special forces in the city. [...] We just reached our home by the time a rocket propelled grenade hit our home. I was shocked and overwhelmed and not able to move because my feet got paralyzed for a moment. The intensity of the conflict was increasing. We witnessed some police with their guns coming to us. They knocked on our door and asked us to leave the building as they wanted to turn it into a fort and fight from our home. We told them that we do not have any other place to go. "My father is sick", we pleaded. However, they shouted and insisted we had to leave. My father who was already sick, got shocked and traumatized and passed away the next day, probably due to extreme stress and pressure. The security forces came again to our home and asked us to leave. They hit my mother with the butt of an AK47. We did not have any other choice but to leave our home."
90	Withheld	Withheld	"It was about to get dark in the evening and I was outside in the yard with my son. He was leaving home. I told him not to go outside and get inside the room. He was within the yard of our home when a mortar suddenly hit our neighbour's home. I could not tell who was hit or from where the mortar came. Unfortunately, the mortar shell killed a person in the neighbouring home and injured my son. One leg and one arm of my son were injured. His one leg is now disabled, and his hand is working but with some constraints."
91	Withheld	Withheld	"While on the way back to our home, I saw people walking hurriedly and escaping the area. I asked one person: "What is going on?" He said that the

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			Taliban had attacked the district and occupied the market. When I arrived home, I witnessed that my home was hit by a mortar and my husband had died. Also, some animals including cows and sheep were killed. Two mortars had hit my home and resulted in both physical damage and financial loss. After the burial of my husband, we left the area and shifted to another location. After some time when I returned home, everything had been looted, and nothing remained. My husband was a shopkeeper in the district. His shop was also looted."
92	Withheld	Withheld	"The conflict started between the Afghan National and Defence Security Forces and Taliban. A mortar bomb hit the neighbours' house and the mortar shells hit my husband in his stomach. He got wounds and he was taken on a cart to another village. In the village, he was provided some basic treatment in a clinic. Later I arranged for him to be shifted to the provincial hospital for treatment. The wounds continued getting worse day by day. We took him to another hospital, but due to internal bleeding and infections, he died."
93	Withheld	Withheld	"The ANA fired rocket propelled grenades towards my daughter's home, striking her in the left side of the chest and tragically killing her while she was breastfeeding her one-year-old son. Additionally, a mortar shell hit a neighbouring home, resulting in the deaths of one woman and the serious injury of another. When this incident occurred, my daughter's mother-in-law called to inform me that my daughter had been injured. However, due to the heavy exchange of fire, we were unable to go and pick up my daughter. We shouted over the loudspeaker, calling on the ANA to stop firing as there were women who needed to be immediately transferred to the hospital, but they did not allow us to proceed. Early the next morning, when we decided to take the injured to the hospital, two of them, including my daughter, lost their lives due to excessive bleeding."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
94	Withheld	Withheld	"We were all sitting in the yard of our house when our house was bombarded by an airstrike. As a result of the attack, nine of our family members – four male children, three female adults, and two male adults – died, while six others, including myself and my younger brother, were severely injured."
95	Withheld	Withheld	"It was late evening hours. A clash started between the Taliban and ANA. Our houses were in the area where the Taliban were based, and the ANA fired a few mortars that landed in the village. Two mortars landed in the house of my uncles... I rushed to their house as I live just next door and saw there were casualties among their family members. The mortar killed three sons and one daughter. Seven family members of my uncles were injured, including my uncles, one of their wives, a son and three daughters. His three daughters have been permanently paralyzed and no longer have a normal life. The house was badly damaged."
96	Withheld	Withheld	"We were living close to the former Afghan Local Police security post... Early in the morning, an armed clash erupted between the then Taliban fighters and the former Afghan National and Defence Security Forces in the area. The Taliban attacked the Afghan Local Police post near our house with rockets and mortar rounds from a distance of about two or three kilometres... On the fourth day of the ground engagement, some mortar rounds hit our house. I was inside the house and my father, who was standing near the main door, was hit by shrapnel. He sustained injuries to his chest and neck, severing arteries extending to his heart. He was bleeding profusely. We immediately took him in a rented vehicle to [the local] hospital. He was admitted to the emergency ward, but while undergoing surgery, he succumbed to his severe injuries. We brought his body back to the village and buried him in our family graveyard in the late afternoon."
97	Withheld	Withheld	"The Taliban came in front of our house. They attacked an international military forces/ANA convoy and left the area immediately. After a few minutes,

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			a jet aircraft arrived and bombed our house. The attack killed my father and my brother who was 13 years' old. I was also injured together with my mother [name], my 11-year-old sister [name], two of my sisters and eight of my brothers."
98	February 2014	Zabul province, Arghandab District, Laghar Baba Zyarat area	"The incident occurred in early 2014 at around 11:30. I was driving a pick-up vehicle with ten other passengers onboard, including my cousin and elder brother who was the usual driver, but was sick on that day. We had left our place of origin in the Daychopan district and were heading toward Qalat city. While passing by the Laghar Baba Zyarat area in Arghandab district, the car hit a remote controlled improvised explosive device planted on the roadside by the Taliban, which detonated. I, along with my cousin who was sitting in the front seat (and who lost his eyesight due to the incident) got critically injured compared to other passengers, including my elder brother. I was evacuated to a nearby Afghan National and Defence Security Forces check post for first aid, followed by a transfer to the provincial Afghan National and Defence Security Forces brigade where the US troops were deployed too. Without my consent, the US military surgeons amputated my injured leg, which made me feel hopeless... It took me nine months to be able to stand again [with a prosthetic limb], but as a permanently crippled person."
99	Withheld	Withheld	"We were sitting in a shop which is just close to the door of our house, when two mortar rounds impacted our house and the shop. As a result, three children of my family died on the spot and four others (my uncle, my aunt and two children) were injured... We know that the perpetrators were Afghan security forces, but no action has been taken."
100	Withheld	Withheld	"A group of around 20 teachers affiliated with a university were travelling to [another province] by bus... A roadside improvised explosive device targeting our shuttle bus detonated. As a result, two people died (one on the spot and the second later in the hospital) and more than 18 others were injured. The

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			local people took us in their personal vehicles to the hospital, and after two days, me and two of my colleagues who had severe injuries were moved to [a larger] hospital for further treatment.”
101	2017	Zabul Province, Arghandab district, Lodinano China Dab area	One day at around 9:00 in the morning, I do not remember the exact date, but the year was 2017, in Lodinano China Dab area in Arghandab district, Zabul Province, I was driving a tractor loaded with wood for sale. The vehicle drove over a remote-controlled improvised explosive device planted on the road, which triggered its detonation. The explosion was heavy and blew up my tractor into rubble. My feet were seriously injured. The nearest Afghan National and Defence Security Forces members rushed to the scene, and they began to try to rescue and evacuate me when the Taliban, in ambush, opened fire. I was excessively bleeding and stuck on the battlefield. After a while, the Taliban were pushed back and I was transferred to hospital.”
102	3 August 2019	Sar-e Pul province, Gosfandi district, Alaghan village	“It was Saturday, August 3, 2019, in the morning. The Taliban attacked the Arbaki fighters’ check post, and a firefight erupted between them. A few minutes later, Afghan National and Defence Security Forces members also arrived in our village. Both parties were shooting at and attacking each other. During the fight, an explosive item—I am not sure, but my father says it was a rocket propelled grenade—impacted our house. It came and exploded on our house’s lawn. We were lucky that no one was outside the rooms; otherwise, we would not be alive. The explosion was very heavy; I still remember its sound. At that time, I was a 16-year-old boy. The parts of the rocket propelled grenade projectile were distributed all around, our rooms’ windows were broken, roofs were destroyed, and nine of our family members, including me, were wounded. My mother and my uncle’s wife, my two nieces, one nephew, and three of my cousins were injured as a result of the incident.”
103	14 July 2012	Samangan province, Aybak city, Almas wedding hall	“Around 06:30 in the morning, at Almas wedding hall in Aybak city, during the wedding of Ahmad Khan Samangani’s daughter, several political figures,

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			including Ahmad Khan Samangani, were inside the hall. I was standing at the entrance gate with other high-ranking political figures, welcoming guests. A group of people arrived together, and we all entered the hall. Suddenly, I heard a massive explosion. I fainted, lost consciousness, and my body was severely burnt. A police officer carried me outside the wedding hall, and an ambulance took me to Aybak hospital. However, my treatment was not possible in Samangan, so my brothers transferred me to Uzbekistan, where doctors did their best. I was in a coma for one month and stayed in the hospital for three months, incurring \$10,000 in expenses, which my brothers covered. Once I regained consciousness, I sold my lands to repay them.”
104	Withheld	Withheld	“Local Taliban fighters shot and killed my nephew.... The Taliban accused him of having close ties with the National Directorate of Security... [He] was killed by two motorcyclists with a silenced pistol in the evening of [date], in the main bazaar... The Taliban claimed responsibility for the murder via their local radio, labelling him a notorious spy for the National Directorate of Security. During the incident, I was inside my hotel, which is 1.5 km from our house... On the day of his assassination, [my nephew] stayed at the hotel with me until the late afternoon. Twenty minutes after he left, I heard from our hotel staff that he had been shot. I cried loudly and ran to the scene where I found [my nephew] covered in blood but still alive. He had been shot seven times in the neck and abdomen. We rushed him to the public health hospital, but he died at the hospital gate from his injuries. It was the most painful moment of my life, and I pray no one else endures such suffering.”
105	Withheld	Withheld	“The Taliban came to our village and started firing at the Afghan National and Defence Security Forces, who reacted to the shooting of the Taliban. One of the bullets accidentally hit my 15-year-old nephew. My brother rushed to evacuate his injured son, despite having also been shot and injured. My nephew died on the spot and my brother died in the hospital.”

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
106	Withheld	Withheld	"I was at my hotel when my cousin called me with urgency and a trembling voice, asking me to come home immediately. I was worried about my elderly mother's health. When I arrived home, I saw my aunt was distressed. Assuming my mother was seriously ill or had passed away, I was struck by the silent and tense atmosphere. There were a large number of our relatives including my uncles, cousins and aunts present in the house. My cousin then told me, tearfully, that [my son] had been shot and killed by the Arbaki police near his house. I fainted upon seeing my son's lifeless body; my family revived me after a few minutes. It was a devastating moment for all of us. Later, I learned that [my son] had confronted the Arbaki police, asking them not to watch his house from the roof of their post because there were women inside the house, and it is inappropriate based on Islamic teaching and Afghan culture to look inside someone's house from the outside [...]. The argument escalated, leading two Arbaki officers to shoot him multiple times in his chest and abdomen."
107	Withheld	Withheld	"I went to [my high school]. As I was leaving the school with my sister and our friend, the first vehicle borne improvised explosive device detonated outside. The force of the explosion knocked us to the ground. Amid the chaos, we heard people shouting to evacuate the area. My sister and [my friend] managed to stand up and run, but I couldn't. At that moment, I didn't realize I was injured until my sister saw me and said: "You're hurt!" I looked at my left leg and saw that it was bleeding. During this exchange, a second vehicle borne improvised explosive device exploded across from the school. The air was thick with smoke, the ground stained with blood, and the cries of terrified girls filled the air—it felt like doomsday. After the second explosion, I lost consciousness. When I woke up, I found myself in [hospital] in [location]. After receiving first aid and a medical examination, it was discovered that my left leg had been hit by shrapnel, which

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			they could not remove. I stayed in the hospital for two nights before being discharged.”
108	Withheld	Withheld	“My son had just graduated from high school and was attending a preparation course to get ready for the National Kankor Examination and enrol in university. On the afternoon of [date], while he was at the gate of the learning centre about to enter, a massive explosion occurred. In the blink of an eye, dozens of students, including my son, were killed or wounded. My son was injured by shrapnel from the bomb, which affected his eyes, ear, and arms. I was at home when they brought him back, covered in blood. The shock caused my blood pressure to spike and I lost consciousness. Since then, my right leg has not functioned properly. It was a terrible day. [Crying].”
109	Withheld	Withheld	“I was travelling from the district to my village to collect my belongings... While I was on my way to my village, I was on the top of a mountain when fifteen members of the Taliban military attacked civilians and killed five people. I was injured in the attack. I was shot by the Taliban in my left leg with a bullet from a Kalashnikov. Three internally displaced persons who were camping in the area where we were attacked took me to my home and then my brother took me to a clinic... I was medically treated for 14 days for the injury from the bullet wound in my left leg.”
110	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
111	June 2021	Nimroz province, Khashrod district, 24 Market of Ghor Ghor bazaar	“Someday in June 2021, at around 4pm, in the 24 Market of Ghor Ghor bazaar, in Khashrod District, Nimroz, the Taliban forces who were controlling the outskirts of the district, engaged in harsh combat with the Afghan National and Defence Security Forces... I was a shopkeeper in the bazaar. I, along with other shopkeepers, fled to abandon the battlefield. We were shocked and frightened. I was riding a motorcycle, and due to the cross-firing, the motorcycle rolled over, which resulted in breaking my shoulder and injuring

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			other parts of my body. Despite the wounds, I was evacuated from the scene by my relatives.”
112	Withheld	Withheld	“There were heavy clashes in the area between the Afghan National Security Forces and Taliban. Past heavy clashes in the area had already forced many families to leave. My nephew had already left the area with his family. On that evening, my nephew took his four-year-old son on his motorbike and went to his residence to take some necessary clothes. Heavy firing was going on between the Taliban and Afghan National Security Forces. One bullet hit him and injured him. His son then used his father’s mobile to call his grandfather, who then informed me and other relatives. We came and tried to evacuate my nephew... He succumbed to his wounds. We were not able to evacuate him to a medical facility due to the heavy clashes.”
113	Withheld	Withheld	“My brother was on his way home when the head of our village invited him for a dinner that night. My brother accepted the invitation. It was around 20:30 when we heard the sound of an explosion and we got to know that the location of the incident was the house of the head of the village. We rushed to his house and learned that six persons were already dead and two were injured. My brother was among those killed and when I saw his dead body I was shocked and did not know what to do... The explosion was a drone attack that bombed the guesthouse of the village head. As a result, three of his sons, one of his nephews, his brother-in-law and my brother were killed. Those killed were named [name] 22 years’ old, [name] 6 years’ old, [name] 20 years’ old, [name] 12 years’ old, [name] 15 years’ old, and [name] 55 years’ old. [The village head] and [one of his guests] sustained serious injuries. They were evacuated to [province] and [a neighbouring country], respectively, for treatment. [The guest] succumbed to his injuries. The villagers approached the local authorities, including the Provincial Governor, the Chief of Police and the

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			head of the National Directorate of Security, who all said they did not have information on the incident. However, later they said that their information was that it was an American drone that targeted a suspected Taliban member.”
114	Withheld	Withheld	“The Taliban attacked the former Afghan National and Defence Security Forces base, leading to a ground engagement between the two sides. I was there, watering the field. An artillery round fired by the Afghan National and Defence Security Forces towards the Taliban missed its target and landed in the agricultural area owned by us. A fragment from the explosion severely wounded me. I lost consciousness and woke up later in [the provincial] hospital, where I was taken by my family and villagers. My left leg and arm were badly injured by shrapnel, and I lost a lot of blood at the scene.”
115	Withheld	Withheld	“After I left for the village, some Taliban fighters had returned to our house, drank tea, and had lunch. They then forced my son to accompany them, despite his protests that only women and children were home. About three kilometres from our house, they shot him in the face multiple times, killing him instantly. Villagers brought his body back and gathered for the funeral. Seeing my son’s blood-covered body, I fainted from the shock. He was my eldest son, my best advisor, and the backbone of our family. I have six other sons and five daughters, but none can fill the void he left. My wife, the mother of the victim, was speechless upon seeing his body.”
116	Withheld	Withheld	“I work for [a national NGO]... We were attacked while returning to the city after providing assistance to people in the district. Four staff were involved in the incident. I and the driver were in one ambulance, while two other colleagues were in another. Unknown gunmen attacked us, resulting in me and another colleague sustaining injuries. I sustained an injury in my hand while [my colleague] was severely injured in the leg.”
117	Withheld	Withheld	“We were sitting in the yard of the house when an airstrike hit our house. As result, me, my three sons, my niece and my nephew were injured. We were

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			taken to hospital for treatment. We know that it was done by an airstrike, but we have no idea who the perpetrators were.”
118	Withheld	Withheld	“I attended a wedding ceremony of our Hazara Shia relative with my two daughters and my son... Around 22:30, a massive explosion took place in the men’s section of the hotel. The blast shattered glass and sent dust flying; turning the happiness and joy into a tragedy, yelling, and fear. The white tablecloths were stained red with the blood of participants. People, including the wounded, were running out of the hotel. Everyone was searching for their loved ones inside and outside the hotel salons. I was in shock and terrified. I managed to find my two daughters in the female section. They had been injured by glass and shrapnel, though their wounds were not severe. One of my daughters had a deep wound in her leg. We walked out of the hotel. In the panic, I completely forgot about my son who came to the wedding and was there in the men’s section. By morning, we learned that he was missing, with no information on whether he was alive, injured or killed. Later that day, we discovered his body in the forensic department. We took him and buried him with all our hopes.”
119	16 March 2019	Kandahar province, Kandahar city, PD7, Mirbazar area, Malak Yar Mohammad Masjid village	On 16 March 2019, at midnight, in Kandahar province, Kandahar city, PD7, Mirbazar area, Malak Yar Mohammad Masjid village, around twenty armed and uniformed CIA-backed personnel – but operating under the National Directorate of Security 03 – broke into our home during a night raid search operation. At the time, our home was surrounded. They were looking for my brother, accusing him of allegedly maintaining ties with the Taliban. Aminullah [my brother] was arrested along with my cousin. They were transferred blindfolded from home to an unknown location. My brother has not returned home to this date.”

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
120	Withheld	Withheld	"I was on my way home from school when I got injured by the shrapnel of a mortar round that was probably fired by the Afghan National and Defence Security Forces. The Taliban were present in the area where I was injured, and an active clash was going on in the area between the Afghan National and Defence Security Forces and the Taliban at the time of the incident. None of us could understand who the exact perpetrator was, but the Taliban were present in the area where I was hit and the Afghan National and Defence Security Forces was around when both parties were firing towards each other and also using heavy weapons against each other. I lost my energy and lost consciousness. After, I got to know that people in the area helped me to stand up and informed my father of my situation. I saw that my left arm was hit by shrapnel."
121	Withheld	Withheld	"A mortar fired by the Afghan National Security Forces landed in a local weekly market. It killed and injured around 30 civilians, including myself by shrapnel to my head. I was buying a few household goods at the time of the incident. I lost consciousness after I got injured. There was no fighting at the time of the incident. I do not know why the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces fired the mortar from their mobile check post in the area."
122	Withheld	Withheld	"The conflict started between the Taliban and the former Afghan National and Defence Security Forces. Both parties were using small artillery fire and heavy weapons. As a result, due to the impact of several heavy weapons, my brother died and our house was burnt in a fire. My brother was 22 years' old. He was married and had one child... It is difficult for us. My sister-in-law who is also living with us is still not feeling well and remain mentally depressed. We are facing financial problems, as my brother was a daily wage and working for our family. We are spending bad days after his death."
123	Withheld	Withheld	"As my husband was returning home late from work, our village was suddenly engulfed in terror. ANA helicopters were circling overhead, while a ground unit

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			patrolled the area. Without warning, the helicopters began bombarding the village and the ground unit opened fire. Tragically, my husband and two of his cousins lost their lives in this horrific attack. My two sons and I were injured, and we continue to endure pain from the pieces of shrapnel that still remain inside our bodies.”
124	Withheld	Withheld	“Two suicide attackers entered the mosque in [location] and began shooting at the worshippers. They first shot the guards at the gate before entering the mosque. We had just completed Juma Prayer and the mullah Imam, along with other tribal elders, was preparing to present an appreciation letter to a villager who had donated rugs and other items to the [shrine]. The attackers started firing at the first line of worshippers, where I was present. At the same time, I heard a deafening explosion and fell unconscious. The explosion was caused by suicide bombers detonating their vests inside the mosque. As a result, more than thirty-five innocent civilians, including adults and boys, were martyred, and around one hundred people were injured, including myself.”
125	Withheld	Withheld	“My son and five other villagers were killed in what I believe was a drone strike. They were gathered in a room when the airstrike occurred. All of them were killed in the airstrike; no one survived. This airstrike was carried out by the Americans, who were supposed to protect us but instead killed six civilians, including my son. On that night, government forces were also present on the ground as part of a night operation. However, it was the airstrike that took the lives of my son and the other five civilians. This night remains the most painful and devastating experience of our lives, shattering our hopes and leaving us with lasting sadness and depression.”
126	Withheld	Withheld	“One morning, I took my flock out and drove them towards the mountain to graze... I saw a piece of metal in the bush. I was a boy. I wanted to see what it was. I reached out to lift it, and then I lost consciousness, not knowing what happened to me. The metal was a bomb. The bomb exploded on me. One of

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			my arms was injured at the wrist, and I lost two fingers on the other. My chest was completely shattered. I lost my eyesight in both of my eyes. The rest of my body was also damaged by the bomb fragments, but by the grace of God, I survived."
127	Withheld	Withheld	"My son, who was just 17 years' old, worked as a waiter at a wedding hall. My husband was employed there as a cleaner... During the wedding ceremony of a Shia Hazara family, an explosion occurred at the hotel, tragically killing my son. Fortunately, my husband was unharmed. The hotel was closed for several months as a result. Not only did I lose my son, but I also lost the primary breadwinner of our family."
128	October-November 2019	Kandahar province, Spin Boldak district	"My brother was working as a car dealer in Wesh border in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province. He disappeared while going to Wesh border from home. He was stopped by policemen affiliated to the chief commander of the border police and was taken to an unknown location... On the same day, two of my cousins also disappeared. I struggled a lot to find them, but could not... I did everything to find them, but no one was able to help me, including all the security and government officials in the province. When the Taliban took over power, a few months later they were able to find corpses of the three victims in Rig area of Spin Boldak. They were buried in the Rig area of Spin Boldak district, Kandahar province."
129	23 June 2016	Kandahar province, Kandahar city	"My brother worked at a shop in Kandahar that sold pottery, where he was paid four thousand per month. He used to help people and offer prayers... One day a few soldiers came to our house. They asked us questions like how many brothers we were and what jobs we had. After that, the soldiers arrested my brother and said that their commander wanted to speak to him. Since then my brother is missing and we have no information about him."
130	24 October 2016	Kandahar province, Kandahar city, PD4	"I think it occurred around ten-eleven years ago. Someone in our family has the exact date. I can find it. The incident happened in PD4 of Kandahar city."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			Several police officers, under the leadership of late General Abdul Raziq Asakzai, came to my nephew's shop where he was working and picked him up on the allegation of being a Taliban member. He has disappeared from the date of the incident until now."
131	24 January 2014	Kandahar province, Kandahar city, PD10, Dorahi area, close to Boldak Adda	"On 24 January 2014, in the evening, in Kandahar province, Kandahar city, PD10, Dorahi area, close to Boldak Adda, in a butcher shop, a few Afghan National Police aboard a private car arrested and transferred my brother to the police station which belonged to a ruthless police officer. He was arrested over allegations of connections with the Taliban... We were not able not to obtain any credible information about the whereabouts of my brother even though we searched all private or so-called black sites used as detention facilities by General Raziq both in Kandahar city and Spin Boldak district following the collapse of the Republic."
132	October-November 2018	Kandahar province, Panjwai district, Salihan area, Myubeen village	"Bismillah was imam of a mosque in Myubeen village of Salihan in Panjwai district of Kandahar province. We assumed that he was kidnapped by an Afghan Local Police commander. The family members of the victim have struggled and travelled to various villages where corpses were discovered to see whether it may belong to Bismillah. However, the dead body of Bismillah is still missing and the family is still looking for it."
133	1-10 August 2021	Nimroz province, Khashrod district, Ghor Ghor bazaar	"At around 8am, in the Ghor Ghor bazaar, the capital of Khashrod district, my brother's car got caught in a ground engagement between the Taliban fighters – who were pushing forward their offensive to take control of the district – and the Republic's Afghan National Police. During the exchange of live fire, one of the police officers standing in a tower opened fire on the passenger car, reportedly blaming them for moving the car, because the police intended to use the civilian car as a human shield against the Taliban assaults. My brother was shot dead after he was hit in the head, while other passengers were not harmed. We transferred the corpse home in the afternoon of the same day."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
134	28 May 2012	Kunduz province, Kunduz city, PD2	"During a funeral ceremony, two identified gunmen opened fire on Pashtuns taking part in the ceremony. My two brothers were killed."
135	5 July 2021	Badakhshan province, Faizabad district, Yaftal-e-Bala area, Talbazang village	"Three years ago, on 5 July 2021, at around midday, in Talbazang village, Yaftal-e-Bala area, Faizabad district, Badakhshan province, when we were having lunch, I heard the sound of an airplane, followed by the sound of an explosion. Then I do not know what happened as I was unconscious and, when I opened my eyes, I was at Faizabad hospital. At the hospital I understood that the previous government's planes, belonging to ANA, had carried out an air attack on Taliban positions and that one bomb thrown by a plane had missed its target and landed on the house of my brother. During the incident the house was destroyed and my nine-year-old nephew was killed. Eight other people were injured: myself, my son, my mother, my brother's wife, my three nieces and a man who was driving his car near our house."
136	10 October 2019	Badakhshan province, Jurm district, Iskan village	"On 10 October 2019, in Iskan village, Jurm district, Badakhshan province, while we were bringing sandbags for the construction of our house, an improvised explosive device exploded in my house. It killed three members of my family: my brother, my cousin Rahman and my nine-year-old son. It also injured three other members of my family: my daughter, my nephew and my cousin. The incident occurred when my family members saw a piece of iron among the sandbags. When they touched it, it exploded."
137	28 February 2018	Badakhshan province, Jurm district	"The Taliban shot dead my niece, who was 25 and had a son. It was a rainy night and I was in Jurm district. My niece and her son were asleep in their room... They [Taliban members] entered the house of my niece and forced her out of the room... The perpetrators brought my niece to the other room, shot and killed her."
138	21 October 2018	Baghlan province, Dushi district, Kilagai area	"On 21 October 2018, at around 12:30 pm, Kilagai area, Dushi district of Baghlan province, the ANA fired artillery shells from their security post. An

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			artillery shell hit an open area of our village, Utmankhil, where children were playing cricket. As a result, five children were killed, including two of my sons, and two were injured.”
139	Withheld	Withheld	“As I was returning home from the bazaar with my father and several passengers, two armed men, whose faces were covered, stopped my car. One of them approached us and asked my father to get out. My father got out and I continued driving several meters. I stopped again and tried to talk to them. One of them shouted at me and asked me to leave. I went home but did not tell my family. I took my nephew and decided to go and look for my father. As I was going out, a villager arrived on a motorcycle and told me that my father had been martyred [killed]. Later, I saw that some local people had brought my father’s body in a Mazda-type vehicle. The local people who picked up my father’s body told me that after capturing him, the armed men had taken my father approximately ten meters away, shot him in the face and killed him. It was hard for the local people to recognize him because his face was so damaged. My father was a community elder. He was not affiliated with any government or military party.”
140	22 August 2010	Baghlan province, Tala wa Barfak district, Tirgaran area, Dehan-e-Tayak	“On Sunday, 22 August 2010, New Zealand’s armed forces together with government armed forces carried out a night raid on our village, Dehan-e-Tayak, in Tirgaran area of Tala wa Barfak district. It was midnight. I was asleep when my father woke me up. I woke up and saw that there were helicopters and that New Zealand’s armed forces had already surrounded us. They called my name and that of my uncle. My uncle was not at home. He was in another village. Other members of our group had put their weapons in our house. We tried to get those weapons out from the house. My father and my brother took some weapons to carry them away. I escaped

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			using a different way. My father, my brother and my mother tried to leave our house using the main village road. As they moved, my mother was “unaware” and mistakenly used a light to see the path they were taking. When the forces saw the light, they targeted them. The helicopters targeted them with rockets and other weapons. My father and my brother were killed and my mother was injured.”
141	9 May 2020	Badakhshan province, Jurm district, Abe-Raghak village	“On 9 May 2020, at 09:00 in the morning, in Abe-Raghak village of Jurm district, Badakhshan province, my 12-year-old son was killed by an unexploded ordnance while trying to bring our cow from Abranchak village to Such village. Our village was under Taliban control and there was armed conflict between the Afghan National Security Forces and the Taliban. The incident happened near the battle line, just as the vehicles of the former government’s military forces were crossing the area, and an unexploded ordnance exploded, seriously injuring my son.”
142	Withheld	Withheld	“It was afternoon hours when my uncle and I were building a mud wall in our farm, when an improvised explosive device detonated that injured myself and my uncle. My uncle had minor injuries and recovered soon, but I lost my right eye and the left eye was destroyed, and I lost my eyesight since then. The improvised explosive device was most probably planted by Taliban to target persons who were occasionally coming to the village.”
143	Withheld	Withheld	“I was on my way home when I stepped on an improvised explosive device that was planted during the clashes between the Taliban and Afghan National Security Forces. I was evacuated to the provincial hospital by my relatives where my right leg was amputated, and two fingers of my right hand were also amputated. The rest of the fingers of the same hand are still not working.”
144	Withheld	Withheld	“My three nephews found an unexploded ordnance near our house. The children were playing with the device, which detonated and killed two of the

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			children and wounded the other. The device was left from the clashes between the Taliban and the Afghan National Security Forces.”
145	20 October 2018	Kandahar province, Kandahar city	“On 20 October 2018, at around 12:45, we saw a commander named Zhargai, accompanied by his brother and ten other armed men wearing National Directorate of Intelligence uniforms, arrive at our home. They took us outside and arrested [my son] Fida Mohammad, putting him into a vehicle. [My other son] Khan Mohammad wanted to rescue him, but he was taken into the vehicle. They then left with their Ranger pickups. I ran after them for a long distance, but eventually lost hope and gave up. When I went to the fifth police station, I told them that my sons had been taken. They told me that they had not taken anyone and that it had nothing to do with them. They gave me their number and told me to stay in touch with them. They said they would inquire about the incident and revert to us, but we did not receive any information or updates from them. The victims are still missing.”
146	February 2019	Kandahar province, Kandahar city	“My husband, Ahmad Masood, was serving as a police officer in the Republic government. When the Taliban began its offensive to take control of Kandahar in presumably early 2019, there were many battles. He left home to secure his shop, but he was last seen in a place called Haji Lala Kala where intense fighting was taking place. The area was divided between the Taliban and government forces. During that time, people were being taken and disappeared, and my husband has been missing since then. I have no credible information about what might have been done to my husband. It has now been over than three years, and we have no information about him. Our financial situation has deteriorated significantly because he was the only one providing food for our family. When my husband went missing and was presumed dead, we faced severe poverty. I even wanted to sell my youngest daughter, but no one was willing to buy her.”

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
147	Withheld	Withheld	"I lost my husband and son. My son was about 18 years' old. He had just graduated from grade 12 about three days prior to the incident. During day hours they were on their way to the garden for gardening. They impacted on a planted improvised explosive device, and both died. After the incident we had very bad days and our financial condition was not well."
148	18 August 2019	Balkh province, Dawlat Abad, Hayatan village, Nahr-e Qarshak	"It was a pressure plate improvised explosive device, planted just a night before this incident by the Taliban fighters that controlled our village against the former Afghan National and Defence Security Forces. However, in the early morning at about 7am, a Toyota taxi car unknowingly drove over the mentioned bridge and the improvised explosive device. It caused a very big explosion... As a result, 13 civilians including seven men, a woman and five girls were killed. The taxi was completely damaged. All of the victims who died in this case were from our village and ordinary civilians. They had nothing to do with the conflict at that time. They were just travelling for their regular work and life purposes that day. No one survived this explosion; we collected pieces of their dead bodies from everywhere in the surroundings. It was a horror, and we were extremely shocked and crying. We could not distinguish between the bodies, as all were torn into pieces. We collected legs, heads, hands and put them all in four big bags. All were in blood."
149	Withheld	Withheld	"About [withheld number] years ago, Taliban attacked the [location] police station with a vehicle borne improvised explosive device. There was a high number of casualties. In the incident, my husband who had a cart and sold biscuits and chips was injured. As a result of the incident, he was paralyzed and not able to move his hands or feet. He was the only breadwinner of our family. After his injury, I was obliged to work to feed my family and for his treatment. However, his treatment required high amounts of money... The doctor said that he needs to be transferred to Pakistan or Iran for further

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			treatment, but which none of us was able to afford. Finally, after of a lot of hardship, he lost his life.”
150	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
151	6 September 2018	Laghman province, Badpakh district, Garouch area	“On 6 September 2018, in Laghman province, Badpakh district, Garouch area, the National Directorate of Security 02 with air support from international military forces conducted a night search operation in our village, which started around 23:00 and continued until 03:00 in the night. Around 60 Afghan and American military forces members participated in the raid. At approximately 1am they knocked on our door. When I opened the door, they fired and three bullets hit my mouth and back... I fell to the floor. My mother came and picked me up. The soldiers were still searching the house and fired again. They fired into the room; fortunately nobody was wounded this time. Then, they left and went to my grandfather’s house. My grandfather was about 80 years’ old, but they shot him and killed him. After that, they arrested his 47-year-old son, handcuffed him and told his wife he would be released soon. But they took him about 10 meters away where he was also shot and killed by the security forces. Then they entered my uncle’s house. He was 75 years’ old. They shot him in the head and killed him. During the night search operation ten men were killed in total, including three drivers and one daily labourer, and four men were wounded. I still have a bullet in my back; doctors told me it would be too dangerous to remove it.”
152	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
153	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
154	23 May 2020	Laghman province, Alishang district, Salaow area	“It was the night of Eid-ul-Fitr and I was applying henna on my daughters' hands when we suddenly heard a terrifying sound. Someone had thrown a bomb at our home. All my family members were injured. My husband, two daughters, one son, and one of my brother-in-law's daughters died due to

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			severe wounds in the hospital. My other in-laws and me were also wounded in the incident."
155	23 May 2020	Laghman province, Alishang district, Salaow area	"Four years ago, on 23 May 2020, around 9pm, in Malaw village of Alishang district, we were in our house when fighting was going on between the Taliban and the former regime's national armed forces. A mortar of the Afghan National Army hit our house. Me, my wife and my brother's wife were injured, my three-year-old daughter and my oldest brother were killed, and our house was destroyed and some household goods were also burnt. After the incident, my brother who was not injured transferred us to the district clinic. After receiving first aid, we were transferred to the provincial hospital by the clinic ambulance. The other injured recovered quickly, but I was severely injured."
156	Withheld	Withheld	"The Taliban arrived at our home and killed my son in front of our home. My son was 23 years' old, and the Taliban killed him without any reason. He had not committed any crime, nor was he a government official. At the time he had a young daughter, six months' old. I also lost my four children due to an unexploded ordnance detonation. My children found a mortar shell and put it on the fire in the yard of the house. The detonation killed my two daughters of 21 and eight years' old and two sons of 15 and three years' old."
157	Withheld	Withheld	"I was driving a truck with bricks and arrived at a National Directorate of Security check point. I got stuck in the midst of a conflict between the National Directorate of Security and the Taliban. I was in the area in between the clash. Some bullets and mortar shells impacted my body. The bullets and shell sharpeners impacted my left leg, abdomen and left shoulder. I got severally injured. There were a lot of other casualties, and I was among them. I was taken to the hospital and stayed there for about four days and nights. My leg is still injured and not working properly. The doctor told me that if it goes on like this, they will cut my leg."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
158	Withheld	Withheld	"The conflict between Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and the Taliban started in [our village]. We were five persons at home: my father, mother, two brothers (5 and 7 years' old) and myself. Due to the conflict, my father said: "Let's go to [another] village", where my uncle was living. As the conflict was tensing gradually, my father said we might be harmed from the crossfire. We just left the home and closed the main door when three Talibs arrived and asked my father that who are you and what are you doing. My father politely responded [explaining who he was]. They told my father that you are a spy and working for the government and wants to inform them of our location. My father said that I am not, but I am taking my children and family to a safe place. The two other Talib members called over to the one in Pashto: "Shoot them". They started shooting, and one of the bullets impacted the chest of my father and he died at the place of incident. My mother got a bullet in her right leg, and I got a slight injury in my stomach. Taliban left the place, and after the sounds of gunshots the neighbours came towards us. The villagers shifted us to the [local hospital] and then the [provincial hospital]. I remained for five days in the hospital and my mother for ten days."
159	Withheld	Withheld	"I wanted to go a wedding ceremony in [another village]. I had moved a bit away from my home. That's when two bike riders arrived and started shooting at an Afghan National and Defence Security Forces vehicle. A bullet hit my right arm, and I fell and went unconscious. About midnight I got conscious again. I found myself in [the provincial hospital]. I stayed there for about six days and nights."
160	Withheld	Withheld	"The Taliban came to our village and burnt all the houses and harvest in the villages. All the villagers migrated to the mountains and erected tents. Suddenly the Taliban military approached and burnt the tents and started killing civilians in the area. My husband and father-in-law were killed."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
161	Withheld	Withheld	"Taliban military attacked and killed several civilians and burnt houses. My house was burnt by Taliban military and all our goods and livestock were stolen. We lived in the mountains for three months until the Taliban militia and military came to the mountains and killed my father, who was a civilian. After the killing of my father we were in big trouble. All my brothers and my sister were very small. I was the oldest sibling and took responsibility for my family together with my mother."
162	Withheld	Withheld	"My father was collecting bush wood for fuel in [our village] when he was killed by [a local commander]. I was two years' old, and my uncle took responsibility for and custody of me. When my father was killed, he was 28 years' old. I have one older sister. We were part of a very poor family and had not enough land for cultivation. That is why my father always worked as a farm labourer on the lands of other people in our village."
163	Withheld	Withheld	"My father was working in the land... He was collecting wheat during the harvest when war erupted between two local commanders... During this war my father was targeted by [one side] and was killed. I was seven years' old."
164	16 February 2020	Kandahar province, Shah Wali Kot district	"It has been five years since my husband was killed by former Afghan National and Defence Security Forces forces during a night raid in Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar province. It was on 16 February 2020, approximately. Our private residence was close to a Taliban checkpoint. My husband and my brother were outside our home when former Afghan National and Defence Security Forces forces conducted a military operation against the Taliban, starting shooting... As a result, my brother and husband were shot. My husband was killed; my brother was wounded."
165	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
166	Withheld	Withheld	"As [my husband] came back from the mountains to bring flour for us, he was arrested by Taliban military... They tied his hands behind his back using his turban. They killed him with Kalashnikov gunfire. They shot him in his mouth."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			After three days the people took his dead body and buried it. We did not see his dead body. One of my son's, named [name], was 14-year-old when arrested by Taliban... He was shot by them. Fortunately, he survived. We had no access to proper medicine or hospital care for him. We transferred him to a very small clinic in [district]."
167	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
168	25 February 2014	Nangarhar province, Lal Pur district, Chiknawar area, Khwezoo village	"It was about 11 years ago. There was a fight at the Torkham border in which my husband was killed. He was a driver and when he was driving his car in that area he got caught in an exchange of fire. I do not know who was fighting and what happened exactly. I was at home, cooking and taking care of my new twin daughters – they were nine months' old – when I got a phone call from my brother-in-law. He told me that my husband was shot in the chest and taken to the hospital, but pronounced dead on arrival."
169	Withheld	Withheld	"My husband worked in construction in [location]. He was returning home from work when a drone hit the vehicle he was travelling in. They thought he was Taliban and carried out an aerial attack and he died."
170	Withheld	Withheld	"My husband had a photo studio in [location]. There was a suicide attack in front of the [location] police office and my husband was wounded. He lost a hand and his leg and he was paralysed. Now he is in a wheelchair."
171	Withheld	Withheld	"It was the first day of Ramadan. My husband left home to buy groceries and as he was crossing in front of the police checkpoint in [location], a vehicle borne improvised explosive device exploded and he was killed."
172	Withheld	Withheld	"My mother was coming back from work and there was an explosion in the bus she was travelling in. My father is disabled and can't work. My mother was the one earning money for our family. I called my mum many times. I was pregnant at the time. Eventually I found her in the hospital; she had been killed."

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
173	Withheld	Withheld	"My husband and my father-in-law were selling vegetables in the market. An explosion happened and it killed both of them."
174	Withheld	Withheld	"My husband had gone to harvest wheat to earn some money and there was an improvised explosive device explosion in the field. He was in a coma and did not survive. Other workers were also injured to their hands and feet."
175	Withheld	Withheld	"My uncle had invited us to [another village] for a wedding ceremony. The incident happened while we were on our way there – an explosion hit our car. We were around twenty metres behind the international military forces tanks, and instead of hitting them, the explosion hit us... Seven of my family members were killed, including my husband. [name] who is 17 years' old was injured. My cousin, [name], who is 40-41 years' old also got injured by the shrapnel of the explosive device to his head, eyes and hands. He also lost his mother [name] and his two children: [name] who was two years' old and [name], 11 years' old."
176	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], when I was married and 30 years' old, upon Taliban military defeating the military forces of the United Party, the Taliban immediately started house to house searches in [village] and arrested all the men and took them to the mountains. The Taliban also transferred everyone from my village to [village]. The Taliban also arrested all the men from [a third] village and took them to the mountains. My husband was one on the arrestees who was executed by the Taliban in the mountains. The Taliban military killed 80 men from [my] village. During this time, I saw many males being executed by the Taliban. It wasn't a battle; it was executions. All of us women and children fled from [village] to the mountains. Some villagers – especially old community members and small children – succumbed due to the cold and died in the heavy snow. We lacked equipment to survive outdoors.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			After 15 days the Taliban military announced a ceasefire, and the women and children returned to their villages. On returning home, they found that Taliban military had looted and burnt all the houses. Some of the houses were completely burnt and others were only partly destroyed by fire. All the women went to the mountains to recover the bodies of the men and found they had been executed. The Taliban military had tied their hands behind their backs and shot them, mostly in their faces, making it very difficult to recognize our relatives. I eventually found my husband's body."
177	Withheld	Withheld	"On [date], the Taliban military under commander [name], as well as [name], [name] and [name] occupied [city]. They immediately started searching homes and looking for Hazara persons in [city] especially in [village]. My father was 40 years' old when arrested at his home in [village] by the Taliban. He was taken outside and executed together with 69 other villagers in [area] of [city], near the mountains. My mother was also executed by the Taliban at this time, because she cried out to the Taliban: "Please don't kill my husband", so they killed them both... They were killed in front of me and my three brothers and five sisters. I was just a child, seven years' old, at the time. When we saw the dead body of our father, all of us threw ourselves on his body and hugged him. The Taliban later returned to our village and resumed house to house searches. One of my brothers was 15 years' old and seriously beaten by the Taliban military with a Kalashnikov until he became unconscious. We were shouting loudly in our house to make the Taliban stop beating my brother. I remember me with my siblings shouting. We saw the Taliban military bring a large vehicle and steal the blankets, quilts, mattresses and other household items from our home. The weather was very cold at the time. After the Taliban military stole all of our property, they burnt our house and other houses in our village.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			All of the women and children from our village fled to [the mountains] on foot through heavy snow. During the journey, many babies and old women died during the night on the mountain in the snow due to exposure to the cold.”
178	Withheld	Withheld	“I was on my way home from the doctor. My brother and I were walking by foot. We were walking through [location], when I stepped on an unexploded ordnance. The desert is a contaminated area with unexploded ordnances all around. I can’t blame anyone; anyone could have put it there. [...] I lost both of my legs. [...] I have never worked for any political parties or any of the parties to the conflict. I am a neutral person.”
179	Withheld	Withheld	“My car was parked in the yard of my home. [...] They planted a bomb underneath my car. It was the Taliban who did it. [...] I lost both of my legs.”
180	Withheld	Withheld	“That day around 5 years ago, I went to get food. We were stopped by the Taliban and they started shooting at us. I was hit by four bullets; they hit my legs and arm. I was on a motorbike; the guy riding behind me was hit and fell off. I kept riding for around an hour to get away. I stopped in a cemetery and called my colleagues; they took me to [the hospital].”
181	22 September 2019	Helmand province, Musa Qala district, Shabarozi village	“One day, almost six years ago, we were going to a wedding ceremony in Musa Qala, Helmand province. It is the ceremony where we take henna to the bride’s family. So we were in many cars crossing the river to go there when a raid happened. There were Afghan security forces and when we saw them, we stopped. They started shooting at us. Our driver told them to stop, saying: “There are women and children with us”, but they did not listen. I lost my sister who was one year older than me and my nephew. Many of our relatives were killed in this river. I don’t know who is responsible, but I think it was Afghan forces and international military forces. They had some helicopters which were also shooting at us from above. It was like a bombardment. The helicopters killed those who hadn’t already been shot by people on the ground.

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			I lost consciousness at one point. We lay there all night until the morning. None of the security forces came to check on us. One of the vehicles exploded from the shooting. I was shot in the leg and was also injured by the exploding vehicle. In total, more than 14 of my relatives were killed: my cousin, my sister, my nephew, five grandchildren of my aunt, her son, my other cousin, my uncle's grandchild, two other relatives of my aunt, my aunt's daughter, and the artist/musician who was with us for the party. More than seven were wounded, in addition to myself, my cousin lost her arm, my aunt's cousin and son lost limbs, my aunt's daughter-in-law lost her leg, her other daughter-in-law was wounded, her grandchild hurt her arm, our driver was also wounded."
182 (two interviewees)	Withheld	Withheld	"It was [year], we were displaced to [district] due to fighting, then returned to [the city] after the fighting stopped. But the fighting resumed. There was around four-five months of heavy fighting there. [...] When we returned, we went to [our neighbour's] place and I stepped on a mine which exploded. I am sure the perpetrators were Taliban. They were using our houses during the fighting and planted improvised explosive devices to protect themselves. I lost my right foot and calf."
183	Withheld	Withheld	"I was on my way from the bazaar to go home. I was in a taxi car. We passed a police checkpoint and they said go ahead. But when we reached [district], we got stuck in crossfire between the Taliban and the former government forces. The persons seated on the other side of the car were able to safely leave the car. But on my side there was firing and I had to run around the car to get to the other side. I was shot with three bullets to my left leg. It was the police who fired the bullets which hit me. The police who were there took me to the public health clinic. The bullets had gone through my leg. [...]"

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			Five or six months later, another incident happened. Again, I was on my way from the bazaar to go home. It was in the same district. My mum had asked me to visit a particular bazaar to buy food for our guests. I was returning home on foot when a conflict broke out between the Taliban and the former government forces. When the first bullet hit me, I fell to the ground. I continued to be struck by bullets. In the beginning, I was still conscious and I used the scarf I was wearing on my head and pressed it against my bleeding wounds. But then I got hit by more bullets, and I could not press all of them. I was bleeding on the ground and waited for someone to help me.”
184	Withheld	Withheld	“The incident happened in the mosque. I used to be an assistant to the imam and make announcements in the mosque. Just after the Friday prayer, one of our elders held a short speech to the congregation. Suddenly we heard gunshots. In our district, firing guns at wedding ceremonies and other celebrations was banned. It seemed to be coming from the gate to the mosque. The elder noticed this too. Suddenly a man came into the mosque. I remembered I had heard that if this kind of incident happens, you should lay down on the ground. So I did so. The man exploded his suicide vest. I didn’t notice, but a piece of shrapnel struck the back of my head. Then a second man came into the mosque and he was shooting. I escaped to the back of the mosque where we kept the loudspeakers. This is when I noticed I was bleeding. There were some security guards in the mosque. When they tried to intervene against the second attacker, he also blew himself up, exploding his suicide vest. After this second explosion, all became quiet and calm. I came out of hiding, but I was not in a good condition.”
185	Withheld	Withheld	“There was fighting going on between the Taliban and the previous government’s forces. That day, I was standing at the gate to my house to be

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			able to see what was going on. This is when I was hit by a bullet. It went into the left side of my ribcage, and out through my right shoulder. I could not tell you which side fired the bullet. When I got injured, community members arrived and they brought me to the [hospital]."
186	9 March 2011	Paktya province, Gardez city, Spin bazaar	"It was around 7 in the morning, on 9 March 2011. It was in Paktya province, Gardez city, Spin bazaar. I was selling vegetables in the market, when an explosion happened. My head, left leg and abdomen were hit by shrapnel. My younger brother was there with me. He was further away, and not injured, but I remember him crying and yelling. After the explosion, the people who were in the market and the police took me to the public hospital. I was immediately referred to Kabul Emergency Hospital. I spent two months there. Then they referred me to the ICRC. I spent around four to five months there, receiving physiotherapy. I had a brace around my leg to support it. No one claimed responsibility for the explosion. We don't know anything about the motive or the target."
187	Withheld	Withheld	"An improvised explosive device targeted a police ranger vehicle, it was planted by Taliban, and some fragments damaged my ribs and stomach. Two other people were wounded; one was the driver of the vehicle. It was a small attack."
188	23 May 2020	Logar province, Barak-e Barak district, Padkhab Roghani village	"It was around five years ago at Eid-al-Fitr. I was on my way from my work as a house painter; I had finished a job at one house and was going to another. It was in Logar, Barak-e Barak district, Padkhab Roghani village, near to my residence. It was around 10pm. I was on a motorcycle. I came upon the National Directorate of Security who were conducting a night raid. They shot me three times; I fell on the ground. The National Directorate of Security came over and I told them some bad words, asking them: "Why did you shoot me?"

Interview No.	Date	Location	Victim description
			They said they thought I was Taliban. Then they shot me three more times in my arm and heart and just left me there. After the shooting, people heard what had happened and came outside. I introduced myself and my relatives came and took me to Emergency Hospital in Logar. I was in a very critical condition and my heart almost stopped. I was transferred to Kabul Emergency Hospital later that night and I stayed nine nights there, undergoing three surgeries. The doctor at emergency hospital advised me to rest for six months at home, but due to economic issues I went back to work after four months. After the incident I still have pain, still now in the cold weather I have pain in the toes on my left foot.”
189	Withheld	Withheld	“I was injured four times. [Three times by different improvised explosive devices; one time by deprivation of liberty by the Taliban, before the takeover.] I was not a military person but had connections and friends who were. One of my friends was special forces with the international military forces. Sometimes I had weapons and military vehicles through them. [...] I have wounds all over my body: legs, back, chest. In the first incident I was wounded in my shoulder and back. I was also beaten badly by the Taliban. [...] War is misery. I am very sad and remorseful about my situation. Once, my older brother was [deprived of his liberty by the Taliban] because of me. [They] used to call me and ask – what kind of torture would you like for your brother? Shall we put a plastic bag on his head or should we waterboard him?”
190	Withheld	Withheld	Withheld
191 (three interviewees)	2016	Logar province, Barak-e Barak district	“It was late 2016, we were in our relative’s house in Barak-e Barak. There was fighting between the Taliban and the Afghan National Security Forces. A mortar landed on the house and the two boys – Shahir Ahmad and Wahid ur-Rahman – were wounded. Shahir Ahmad’s older brother was killed. Wahid ur-Rahman was wounded in the back and shoulder. Shahir Ahmad had his right leg amputated below the knee.”

