



2018 ELECTIONS VIOLENCE - TALIBAN CAMPAIGN TO DISRUPT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON CIVILIANS

KABUL, 6 November 2018 - A special report released today by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) describes the deliberate campaign of violence and intimidation conducted by the Taliban to disrupt parliamentary elections, including attacks against civilians and civilian objects, resulting in record high numbers of civilians killed and injured on an election day.

The “2018 Elections Violence” report documents how on 20 October and subsequent days when delayed polling took place, UNAMA verified 435 civilian casualties (56 deaths and 379 injured). Most civilian casualties occurred on 20 October, with 388 civilian casualties (52 deaths and 339 injured) from election-related violence. This is the highest level of civilian harm compared to the four previous elections held in Afghanistan. The level of civilian harm linked to parliamentary elections is particularly high compared to previous election cycles when factoring into account the deaths and injuries resulting from electoral-related violence experienced over the preceding months during the voter registration and campaigning periods.

The report documents grave concerns over the numerous attacks by Anti-Government Elements, mainly Taliban, directed at civilian objects and populated civilian areas during the elections, including attacks against schools used as polling centres. These attacks were mainly carried out using indirect-fire systems such as rockets, grenades and mortars, as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), all of which have indiscriminate effects. Indirect fire aimed in the direction of polling centres and other civilian areas, accounted for 38 per cent of civilian casualties, while non-suicide IEDs, mostly placed at or near polling centres, many of which were located in schools, clinics and mosques, accounted for 23 per cent. Shooting by Anti-Government Elements during ground fighting accounted for an additional 12 per cent of civilian casualties.

More than 100 children and over 50 women were killed or injured in the violence (23 children and 2 women killed).

The report also highlights a pattern of threats, intimidation and harassment, including abductions, carried out by the Taliban prior to the elections. These incidents, taken together with a series of public statements made by the Taliban on the elections, reveal a deliberate campaign intended to disrupt and undermine the electoral process, and deprive Afghan citizens of their right to freely participate in the political process without fear.

The Taliban’s actions forced many ordinary Afghans to choose between exercising their right to participate in the political process and risking their own safety.

According to international human rights law, everyone has the right to take part in public affairs, to vote and to be elected to government without discrimination and without unreasonable restrictions. All citizens – whether voters, candidates or election-related staff – have the right to be free from fear and intimidation at all stages of an elections process.



Information concerning UNAMA's recording of violence during the voter registration process for parliamentary elections is contained in the May 2018 special report entitled, 'Emerging Trends of Election-Related Security Incidents in Afghanistan.' This report together with today's release –both of which make numerous recommendations to enhance efforts to reduce the potential risk of harm to civilians in election periods- is available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports>.

* * *

UNAMA supports the Afghan people and government to achieve peace and stability. In accordance with its mandate as a political mission, UNAMA backs conflict prevention and resolution, promoting inclusion and social cohesion, as well as strengthening regional cooperation. The Mission supports effective governance, promoting national ownership and accountable institutions that are built on respect for human rights. UNAMA provides 'good offices' and other key services, including diplomatic steps that draw on the organization's independence, impartiality and integrity to prevent disputes from arising, escalating or spreading. The Mission coordinates international support for Afghan development and humanitarian priorities.