



## UNAMA SPECIAL REPORT ON INCREASING HARM TO CIVILIANS FROM IEDS

**KABUL, 7 October 2018** - Anti-government elements must immediately end the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of all improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in areas frequented by civilians, said UNAMA in a special human rights report released today.

The special report – titled “Increasing Harm to Afghan Civilians from the Deliberate and Indiscriminate Use of Improvised Explosive Devices” – documents a sharp increase from 1 January - 30 September 2018 in the killing and maiming of Afghan civilians by IEDs, which have caused almost half of the civilian casualties from conflict-related violence.

The special report outlines serious concern over the increased number of deliberate and indiscriminate attacks by anti-government elements against the civilian population. These attacks primarily involved the use of suicide and non-suicide IEDs: bombs designed, planned and placed to detonate among crowds of civilians to kill and maim Afghan men, women and children; destroy livelihoods; disrupt lives; and create terror among survivors.

The report identifies the victims of these deliberate attacks as including midwifery students and students preparing for university entrance exams; players and spectators at cricket and wrestling matches; worshippers at mosques; humanitarian aid workers; education officials; civilian government staff providing essential services to Afghans, as well as civilians seeking to access those government services; and election workers, and men and women attempting to participate in the electoral process.

Of grave concern, the report documents how medical personnel and journalists responding to suicide and other IED attacks were also targeted with such devices.

“Deliberately targeting civilians is a war crime and cannot be tolerated,” said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan.

“Beyond the immediate and direct harm caused to victims and their families, the long-lasting effects of suicide and other IED attacks on the wider civilian population cannot be ignored,” said Yamamoto, who is also head of UNAMA. “The unpredictable nature of these types of attacks has caused Afghans unbearable suffering and forced them to live in fear of the next explosion, severely curtailing their ability to carry out normal lives.”

Suicide and other IED attacks directed at the civilian population as well as the indiscriminate use of these tactics are serious violations of international humanitarian law. The widespread use of IED attacks directed against Afghanistan’s civilian population, including religious or ethnic minorities, may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity, and requires investigation by competent authorities.

UNAMA maintains that all parties must immediately cease the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian objects, and provides recommendations in the report for immediate measures to be taken to prevent further civilian deaths and injuries from these attacks.

The full report is available online: <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.*