



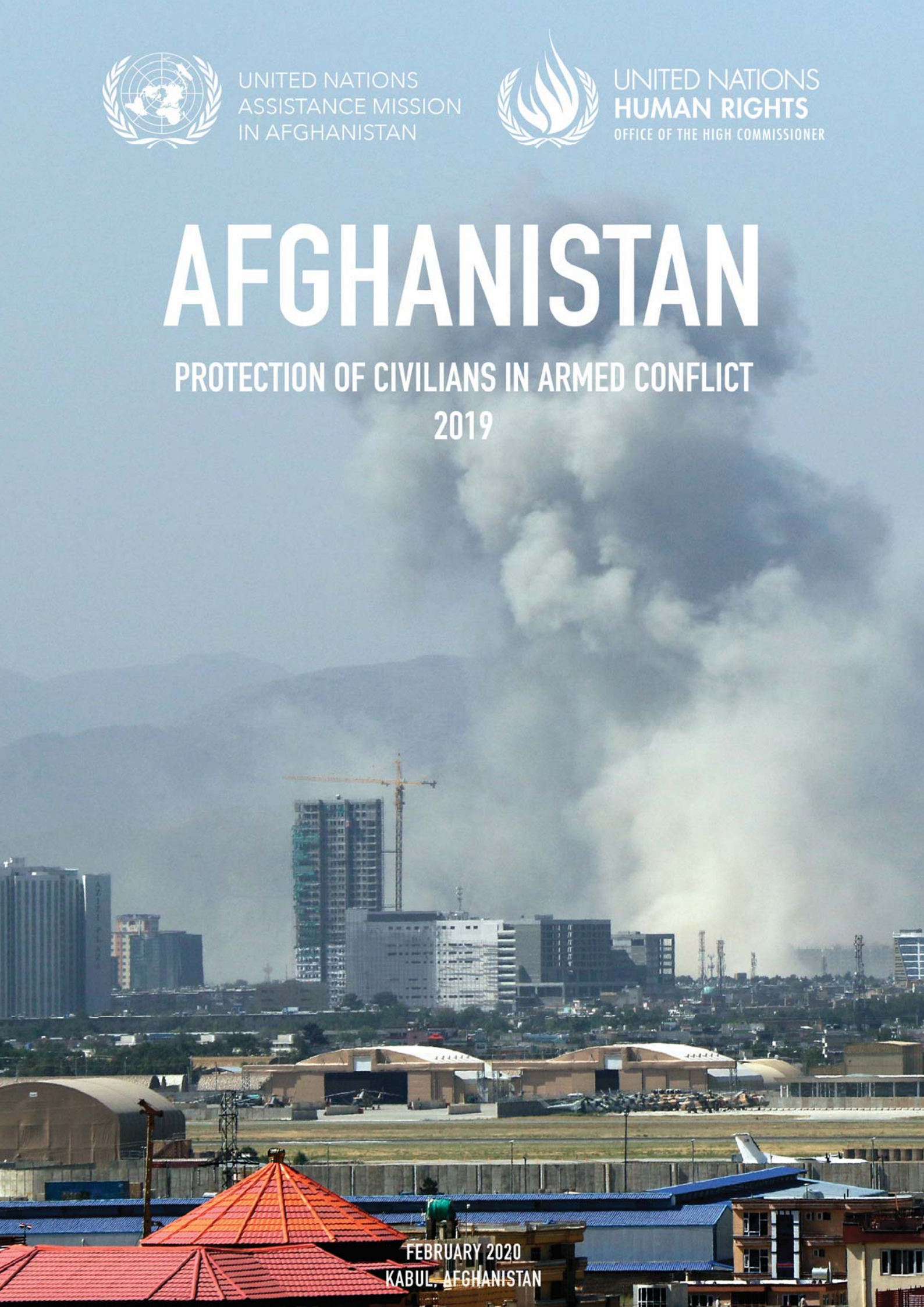
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AFGHANISTAN

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT
2019



FEBRUARY 2020
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The armed conflict in Afghanistan continued to take a heavy toll on the civilian population in 2019 with UNAMA recording over 10,000 civilian casualties for the sixth year in a row. Since UNAMA began systematic documentation in 2009, it has documented more than 100,000 civilian casualties, with more than 35,000 killed and 65,000 injured. The impact of the conflict, however, goes well beyond the numbers, taking into account the extensive and durable harm caused to the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

UNAMA documented 10,392 civilian casualties (3,403 killed and 6,989 injured) as a result of the armed conflict, representing a five per cent decrease

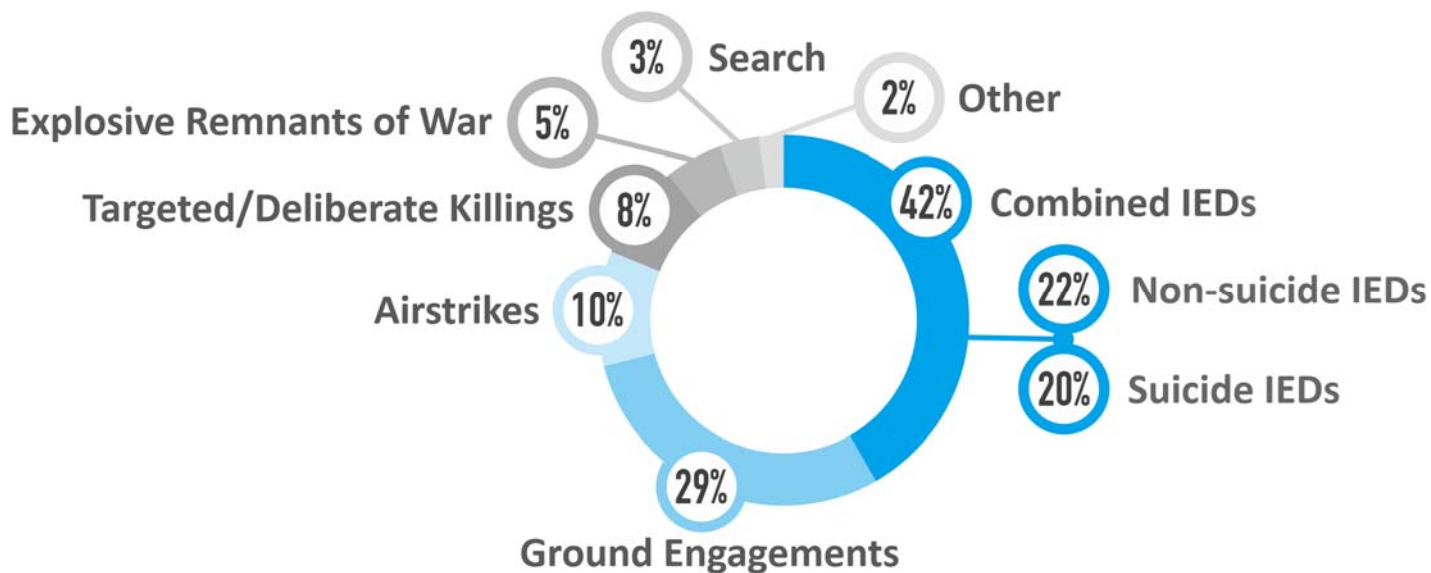
as compared to 2018 and the lowest overall level of civilian casualties since 2013.¹⁰ This reduction was driven by decrease in civilian casualties caused by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP). Civilian casualties caused by the other parties increased, particularly by the Taliban and by the international military forces.

There were significant fluctuations in violence throughout the year, coinciding with gains and setbacks made during negotiations between the Taliban and the United States of America in Doha. The first half of the year was characterized by an intense campaign of airstrikes by international military forces and search operations by Afghan forces, particularly by the National Directorate of Security Special Forces. These operations contributed to a

Total Civilian Casualties 2009–2019



Civilians Casualties by Incident Types in 2019



higher number of civilian deaths attributed to Pro-Government Forces¹¹ than Anti-Government Elements¹² at the midyear point, a trend that UNAMA had not documented before 2019.¹³ This was followed by a particularly violent third quarter, which showed the highest number of civilian casualties of any quarter since UNAMA began systematic documentation in 2009.¹⁴ This was mainly due to a spike in civilian casualties from suicide and non-suicide IED attacks by Anti-Government Elements, primarily the Taliban, as well as election-related violence. Despite low levels of civilian casualties in the fourth quarter as compared to the same time period in 2018¹⁵, the year ended with record high levels of civilian casualties from airstrikes and search operations in a single year and the highest number of civilian casualties from non-suicide improvised explosive devices (IEDs) since 2015.

Anti-Government Elements continued to cause the majority (62 per cent) of civilian casualties in 2019. Their use of IEDs in both suicide and non-suicide attacks continued at extreme levels in 2019; combined, they remained the leading cause of civilian casualties, accounting for 42 per cent of the overall total. UNAMA documented 4,336 civilian casualties (885 killed and 3,451 injured) resulting from suicide and non-suicide IED attacks combined, representing a six per cent decrease from 2018. However, civilian casualties attributed specifically to the Taliban from combined IED tactics reached the highest levels UNAMA had ever recorded in a single year.

Suicide IED attacks, including complex attacks, by Anti-Government Elements in 2019 caused 2,078 civilian casualties (378 killed and 1,700 injured), representing a 26 per cent decrease as compared to 2018. However, the decrease was mainly due to a

Suicide attacks, including complex attacks by the Taliban increased substantially in 2019.

substantial drop in these attacks by ISIL-KP.¹⁶ Suicide attacks, including complex attacks by the Taliban, on the other hand, increased substantially in 2019, as did their attacks using large vehicle-borne IEDs (“truck bombs”).¹⁷

UNAMA documented an upsurge in civilian casualties from non-suicide IED attacks in 2019 from both the Taliban and ISIL-KP. Attacks from these devices resulted in 2,258 civilian casualties (507 killed and 1,751 injured), representing a 24 per cent increase as compared to 2018. The Taliban still caused more than three times as many civilian casualties from non-suicide IEDs as ISIL-KP. Of grave concern, the Taliban continued to use pressure-plate IEDs that functioned as anti-personnel mines. UNAMA documented incidents in which these devices emplaced by the Taliban detonated from the mere weight of a child. UNAMA reiterates its call on the Taliban to completely ban its use of pressure-plate IEDs, which are victim-operated and inherently indiscriminate, and to uphold its previous commitments not to use anti-personnel mines in its operations.

Ground engagements, mainly between Pro-Government Forces and Anti-Government Elements, remained the second leading cause of civilian casualties in 2019. UNAMA documented the lowest number of civilian casualties from ground

engagements since 2013. From 1 January to 31 December 2019, ground engagements in Afghanistan caused 3,057 civilian casualties (763 killed and 2,294 injured), representing a 10 per cent decrease in comparison to 2018 and the third year of sustained overall reductions. The overall decrease of civilian casualties from ground engagement was mainly caused by a 37 per cent drop in civilian casualties by direct fire, and partly offset by an increase of seven per cent of civilian casualties from indirect fire. In contrast with previous years when Anti-Government Elements caused more civilian casualties from ground engagements, in 2019, Pro-Government Forces caused slightly more civilian casualties using this tactic, mainly due to a relative increase in civilian casualties from indirect fire by Afghan national security forces. Civilian casualties from ground engagements by Anti-Government Elements decreased 11 per cent as compared to a 25 per cent overall increase by Pro-Government Forces.

Of particular concern, Anti-Government Elements continued to deliberately target civilians using a variety of tactics including suicide and non-suicide IEDs.¹⁸ UNAMA documented a 31 per cent decrease in 2019 as compared to 2018, which was mainly due to a sizeable drop in civilian casualties from suicide attacks, including complex attacks, perpetrated by ISIL-KP against civilians. Civilian casualties from deliberate attacks against civilians that were attributed to the Taliban only decreased by six per cent whereas those attributed to ISIL-KP decreased by 48 per cent. However, despite the overall decrease, UNAMA is particularly concerned with the spike in civilian casualties of deliberate attacks targeting judges and prosecutors, healthcare workers, and aid workers as well as the continued

attacks by ISIL-KP against the Shi'a Muslim population, most of whom also belong to the Hazara ethnic group. This includes the deadliest incident of the year, on 17 August - a sectarian suicide attack in Kabul by ISIL-KP on a wedding, mainly attended by Shi'a Muslims, in which 91 civilians were killed and 143 others sustained injuries, including women and children. UNAMA is also outraged by the Taliban's attacks on human rights defenders and aid workers, who are working for the development and protection of human rights, such as on 8 May, against the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Counterpart International, in Kabul, which also impacted Care International, and the abduction and killing, in September, of Abdul Samad Amiri, a human rights defender from the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in Ghor province.

Following a disturbing pattern of attacks against civilians and civilian objects during the parliamentary elections in 2018, UNAMA documented attacks against voters, campaign workers, candidates and others involved in the electoral process leading up to and during the presidential election in 2019, mainly perpetrated by the Taliban. Their widespread use of indirect fire in populated areas on polling day caused significant levels of harm, striking civilians – including children – in their homes, while IEDs placed at or near polling centres exposed voters to extreme risk. UNAMA reiterates that attacks deliberately targeting civilians and civilian objects are serious violations of international humanitarian law that may amount to war crimes.

UNAMA documented nine incidents of Anti-Government Elements resorting to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment under the guise of enforcing decisions of their parallel justice structures, in-

cluding executions. UNAMA stresses that such punishments amount to human rights violations and abuses, and severe punishments such as executions constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law that may amount to war crimes.

In 2019, UNAMA documented 1,045 civilian casualties (700 killed and 345 injured) a slight overall increase in civilian casualties from airstrikes by Pro-Government Forces, the fifth year in a row of sustained increases, leading to record high civilian casualty levels.¹⁹ Airstrikes provoked 10 per cent of all civilian casualties in 2019, the majority (72 per cent) of which were caused by international military forces. Although the Afghan Air Force gained the capacity to conduct strikes at night from December 2018 onwards, which carried the potential of increasing civilian casualties attributed to them, UNAMA documented a decrease in such casualties attributed to them.²⁰

UNAMA is particularly concerned about targeting policies used by USFOR-A to deliberately target individuals who were neither directly participating in hostilities nor performing a continuous combat function within an armed group, such as individuals who may be financially contributing to the Taliban or ISIL-KP.²¹ UNAMA reiterates that individuals who are supporting an armed opposition group –

UNAMA documented the fifth year in a row of sustained increases in civilian casualties from airstrikes, leading to record high civilian casualty levels.

politically, financially or otherwise - but who do not have a continuous combat function in the organized armed group, are not considered to be members of the armed group under international humanitarian law.²² As civilians, they are protected from attack, unless and for such time as they directly participate in hostilities.²³ Should these individuals engage in criminal activity, the appropriate response is law enforcement, not military action.

UNAMA continued to document high levels of civilian harm from the use of force during search operations (“night raids”) by NDS Special Forces and the Khost Protection Force, as well as a Paktika-based pro-Government armed group called “Shaheen Forces”, to which UNAMA attributed civilian casualties for the first time in 2019. UNAMA documented several incidents of intentional killing of civilians, some of which amount to summary executions, in the context of these search operations.

Women and children continued to suffer disproportionately from the armed conflict. UNAMA documented 1,202 women casualties (345 killed and 857 injured), an increase of four per cent compared to 2018. An increase in women casualties from the combined use of suicide and non-suicide IED attacks more than offset decreases from aerial attacks and ground engagements. UNAMA documented 3,149 child casualties (874 killed and 2,275 injured), a three per cent increase from 2018. Women casualties comprised 12 per cent of overall civilian casualties while children comprised 30 per cent.

Children continue to be recruited and used by the Taliban, Afghan national security forces, and pro-Government armed groups. While progress has been made by the Afghan national security forces

on preventing formal recruitment of children through the work of the Child Protection Units in Afghan National Police recruitment centres, use of children, particularly by Afghan Local Police at check posts, remains a problem, as does the use of boys for sexual purposes.²⁴ The majority of recruitment and use cases verified by UNAMA, however, were attributed to the Taliban. UNAMA notes that the Taliban’s Commission for the Prevention of Civilian Casualties and Complaints took some positive steps forward in 2019 in terms of investigating allegations of recruitment of children by Taliban commanders, and encourages further efforts be made on prevention.

Despite the criminalization of *bacha bazi*²⁵ (a form of sexual abuse and exploitation of boys) in the revised Penal Code, UNAMA continues to receive reports of such crimes perpetrated mainly by the Afghan national security forces. UNAMA is aware of only one case of *bacha bazi* that has been successfully prosecuted under the relevant provisions of the revised Penal Code since it came into effect in February 2018.²⁶ A culture of silence, shame, and victim-blaming pose significant challenges to accountability efforts.

The ability of all people in Afghanistan, particularly children, to enjoy their human rights to education and the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health was compromised by the conflict due to attacks on schools, hospitals, teachers and healthcare workers, as well as acts of threats and intimidation. In 2019, attacks against schools and hospitals also occurred in the context of the presidential elections when they were used as polling centers. UNAMA is concerned about the high number of disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks perpe-

trated by the Taliban throughout the year that caused damage to schools and hospitals, and harmed the students and patients inside. UNAMA is also concerned about the impact on the provision of healthcare and on healthcare workers from Pro-Government Forces' search operations within these facilities.²⁷

Attribution of Civilian Casualties

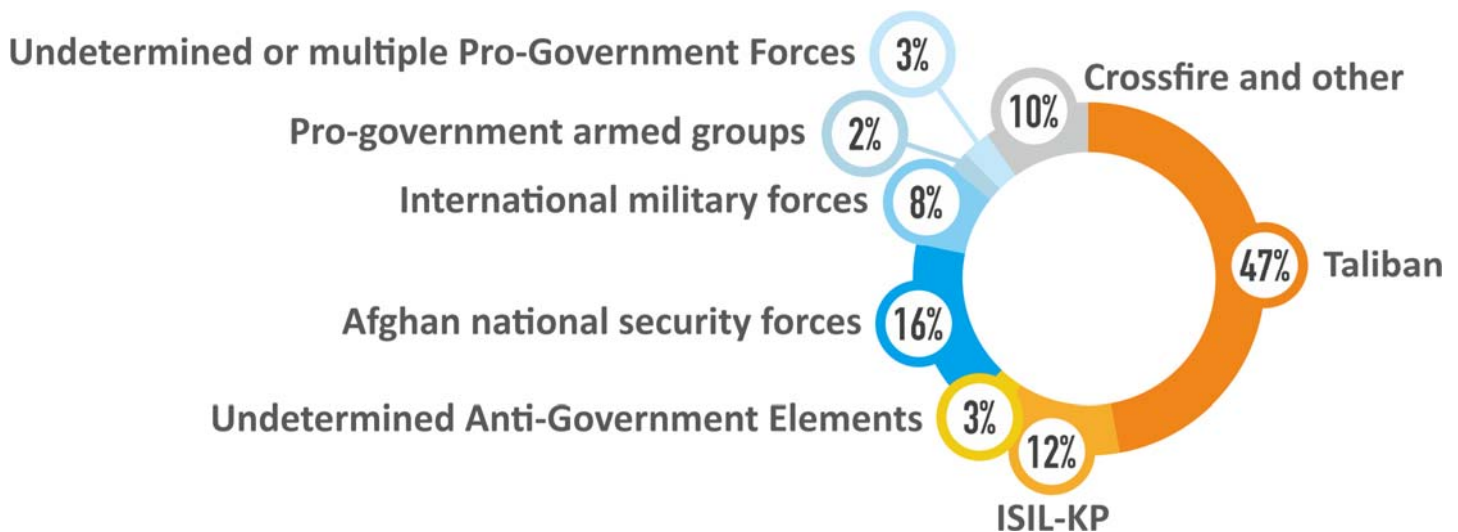
UNAMA attributed the majority of civilian casualties – 62 per cent – to Anti-Government Elements, with 47 per cent attributed to the Taliban, 12 per cent to ISIL-KP, and three per cent to undetermined and other Anti-Government Elements.

Pro-Government Forces caused 28 per cent of civilian casualties in 2019 – 16 per cent by Afghan national security forces, almost eight per cent by international military forces, almost two per cent by pro-Government armed groups and just under three per cent by undetermined or multiple Pro-Government Forces.²⁸

UNAMA attributed the majority of civilian casualties – 62 per cent – to Anti-Government Elements, with 47 per cent attributed to the Taliban, 12 per cent to ISIL-KP, and three per cent to undetermined and other Anti-Government Elements.

Crossfire during ground engagements between Anti-Government Elements and Pro-Government Forces that could not be attributed to a specific party caused seven per cent of civilian casualties. Cross-border incidents attributed to Pakistani Military Forces caused less than one per cent of civilian casualties.²⁹ The remaining two per cent of civilian casualties, mainly caused by explosive remnants of war, could not be attributed to any party.

Civilian Casualties by Parties to the Conflict in 2019



Anti-Government Elements

In 2019, UNAMA attributed 6,447 civilian casualties (1,668 killed and 4,779 injured) to Anti-Government Elements, an eight per cent decrease compared with 2018.³⁰ After reduced Taliban and ISIL-KP activity during the first six months of the year, civilian casualties attributed to Anti-Government Elements peaked in the third quarter, mainly due to Taliban attacks.

UNAMA attributed 4,904 civilian casualties (1,301 killed and 3,603 injured) to the Taliban, a 21 per cent increase compared with 2018, comprising 47 per cent of all civilian casualties.³¹ UNAMA attributed 1,223 civilian casualties (309 killed and 914 injured) to ISIL-KP, a decrease of 44 per cent compared to 2018, comprising 12 per cent of all civilian casualties.³² UNAMA attributed 320 civilian casualties (58 killed and 262 injured) to undetermined Anti-Government Elements.

In contrast to 2018, civilian casualties from non-suicide IEDs surpassed civilian casualties from suicide attacks in 2019, and was the leading cause of civilian casualties by Anti-Government Elements for the year. Non-suicide IEDs caused 2,258 civilian casualties (507 killed and 1,751 injured), a 24 per cent increase from 2018. Suicide attacks were the second leading cause of civilian casualties attributed to Anti-Government Elements, resulting in 2,078 civilian casualties (378 killed and 1,700 injured). This represented a 26 per cent decrease from 2018, mainly driven by a 76 per cent decline of civilian casualties attributed to ISIL-KP suicide attacks, while civilian casualties from Taliban suicide attacks increased by 133 per cent. UNAMA documented a 11 per cent decrease in civilian casualties from ground engagement attributed to Anti-Government

Elements, causing 1,229 civilian casualties (261 killed and 968 injured).

Pro-Government Forces

UNAMA documented 2,933 civilian casualties (1,473 killed and 1,460 injured) attributed to Pro-Government Forces. This represents a 13 per cent increase in civilian casualties as compared to 2018 and highest number of civilian casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces since UNAMA began systematic documentation in 2009. The rise was mainly driven by an increase in civilian casualties in the context of ground engagements, as well as a slight overall increase in civilian casualties from airstrikes, which remained at record-high levels. Civilian casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces showed a 33 per cent increase for the first three quarters of the year, followed by a 39 per cent decrease during the fourth quarter as compared to the same time periods in 2018. The majority of civilian casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces occurred in the context of ground engagements (43 per cent), followed by airstrikes (36 per cent) and search operations (12 per cent). Airstrikes were the leading cause of civilian deaths attributed to Pro-Government Forces, accounting for almost half of all civilian deaths attributed to them.

UNAMA attributed 1,682 civilian casualties (680 killed and 1,002 injured) to Afghan national security forces in 2019, a slight increase as compared to 2018.³³ UNAMA attributed to international military forces 786 civilian casualties (559 killed and 227 injured), an 18 per cent increase as compared to 2018. UNAMA documented 184 civilian casualties (102 killed and 82 injured) by pro-Government armed groups, a two per cent in-

In 2019, civilian casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces increased by 13 per cent as compared to 2018, mainly due to ground engagements.

crease from 2018, and notably still double the number of civilian casualties as in 2017.

Pro-Government Forces caused 1,260 civilian casualties (363 killed and 897 injured) during ground engagements, representing a 25 per cent rise from 2018, reversing two years of consistent reductions. UNAMA documented 1,045 civilian casualties (700 killed and 345 injured) from airstrikes.³⁴ Of these, it attributed 755 civilian casualties (546 killed and 209 injured) to international military forces, 231 civilian casualties (113 killed and 118 injured) to the Afghan Air Force, and the remaining 59 civilian casualties (41 killed and 18 injured) to undetermined pro-Government forces. Search operations caused 360 civilian casualties (278 killed and 82 injured) with approximately three-quarters of the cases caused by NDS Special Forces, Shaheen Forces and the Khost Protection Force, all of whom are supported by international actors.³⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

UNAMA offers the following recommendations to the parties to the conflict to support their efforts to protect civilians, prevent civilian casualties, and uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law:

All Anti-Government Elements:

- Cease the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of all IEDs particularly in populated areas.
- Cease the use of indirect fire (mortars, rockets and grenades) in populated areas.
- Immediately cease the deliberate targeting of civilians, including members of the civilian government administration, human rights defenders, judges, journalists, prosecutors, schoolteachers, first responders and aid workers.
- Cease all attacks and threats against healthcare facilities and healthcare workers, including polio vaccinators and campaigners; cease all attacks and threats against schools and education personnel, and ensure that children's access to education is not impeded by military operations.
- Immediately cease imposing cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment on individuals.
- Indiscriminate attacks or attacks deliberately targeting civilians and civilian objects. Apply a definition of 'civilian' that is consistent with international humanitarian law; enforce statements by Taliban leadership that prohibit attacks against civilians and in civilian-populated areas; implement directives ordering Taliban members to prevent and avoid civilian casualties; and publicize Taliban civilian protection policies.
- Immediately stop using victim-operated IEDs such as pressure-plate IEDs, which function as improvised anti-personnel mines, and uphold previous commitments made concerning the banning of anti-personnel mines.
- Strengthen measures to implement directives prohibiting the recruitment and use of children and ensure accountability for those commanders who recruit and use children.
- Provide immediate and clear instructions to commanders concerning the protected status of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and other human rights defenders as civilians working for the rights of all individuals in Afghanistan so that they may be able to continue to carry out their work unimpeded and unharmed.
- Cease all threats and attacks against media, and any other acts impacting freedom of the press and freedom of expression.
- Strengthen the work of the Commission for the Prevention of Civilian Casualties and Complaints, including its relationship with the Mili-

Taliban

- Ensure that all directives and orders comply with international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of precaution, distinction and proportionality and hold accountable those conducting

tary Commission, and increase its focus towards preventing civilian casualties, in addition to investigating incidents, including through training for fighters on international humanitarian law.

All Pro-Government Forces:

- Conduct a timely and comprehensive review of target verification procedures and precautionary measures, including pattern of life assessments, particularly in the context of airstrike operations, with a view to evaluating their effectiveness and producing recommendations for improvement.
- Strengthen post-operation reviews and investigations following allegations of civilian casualties with a view to identifying broader patterns of harm, improving operational practice, and ensuring accountability.
- Increase transparency of investigations into civilian casualty incidents and communicate results to civilian victims and their relatives; ensure adequate, effective, and prompt reparations be provided for harm suffered; and consider additional non-monetary forms of redress, such as apologies, to restore trust amongst affected communities.

Government of Afghanistan

- Immediately disband and disarm all pro-Government armed groups, including the Khost Protection Force and Shaheen Forces, or formally incorporate members into the Afghan national security forces following a robust vetting procedure; increase transparency and accountability concerning operations of National Directorate of Security Special Forces, which appear to fall outside of the official Governmental chain of command and to be coordinated with international

actors; and investigate all allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law with a view to ensuring accountability for violations and abuses they commit, including summary executions.

- Cease the use of indirect fire (mortars, rockets and grenades) and other explosives with wide area effects in populated areas; continue to develop and improve tactical directives, rules of engagement and other procedures in relation to the use of armed aircraft.
- Increase efforts to protect religious leaders, as well as the Shi'a Muslim religious minority population from sectarian-motivated attacks, including enhancement of existing protection and security measures, strengthening preventative mechanisms, and ensuring better coordination and communication with affected communities.
- Continue to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan national security forces to effectively conduct counter-IED operations, including IED exploitation, and ensure that the Government dedicates all necessary resources to ensure the full implementation of the national counter-IED strategy.
- Strengthen age assessment and vetting procedures, and expand the functions of the Child Protection Units in the Afghan National Police to incorporate pro-active monitoring at check posts to prevent and stop incidents of use of children in combat and non-combat roles by members of the Afghan national security forces; enforce the provisions in the revised Penal Code concerning *bacha bazi* and ensure accountability for crimes of sexual violence against children.

International Military Forces

i. US Forces - Afghanistan

- Devote increased resources to the Civilian Casualty Mitigation Team to enable it to conduct more in-depth and timely assessments of civilian casualty incidents, and to expand the functions of the team to allow for engagement in lessons learned exercises.
- Thoroughly review and strengthen current tactical protocols to prevent civilian casualties, particularly in the context of airstrikes carried out in support of Afghan and/or international military forces on the ground who come under attack, and strikes carried out on structures in any context.
- Continue to conduct post-operation reviews and investigations, and ensure transparency, following allegations of civilian casualties from airstrikes and search operations, with a view to identifying broader patterns of harm, improving operational practice and promoting accountability, and ensuring adequate, effective and prompt reparations are provided for harm suffered.
- Strengthen efforts to review incidents of civilian casualties with Afghan counterparts where they result from partnered operations; provide further training and assistance to Afghan national security forces in conducting effective battle damage assessments; and increase engagements with affected communities, including through Afghan partners, on incidents in which civilian casualties have occurred.
- Review and revise targeting policies towards individuals who are neither directly participating in hostilities nor performing a continuous

combat function for an armed group to bring them in line with international humanitarian law.

ii. Resolute Support

- Continue to support the Government of Afghanistan in implementing the National Policy on Civilian Casualty Prevention through the continued provision of training, resources and related support to the Afghan national security forces at the policy, operational and tactical levels, in particular to put in place mitigation measures to prevent harm to civilians from indirect fire, explosive weapons with wide area effects and armed aircraft.

ENDNOTES

10. In 2018, UNAMA verified 10,994 civilian casualties (3,803 killed and 7,191 injured).
11. “Anti-Government Elements” include members of the Taliban and ISIL-KP, as well as members of other armed groups involved in armed conflict with, or armed opposition against, the Government of Afghanistan and/or international military forces. See Annex II: Main Parties to the Conflict and Annex III: Glossary.
12. “Pro-Government Forces” refer to Afghan National Security Forces and other forces and groups that act in military or paramilitary counter-insurgency operations and are directly or indirectly under the control of the Government of Afghanistan. For the purposes of UNAMA protection of civilians reports, Pro-Government Forces include pro-Government armed groups. See Annex II: Main Parties to the Conflict and Annex III: Glossary.
13. See UNAMA Mid-Year update on Protection of Civilians (July 2019) available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports>.
14. From 1 July to 30 September 2019, UNAMA documented 4,489 civilian casualties (1,256 killed and 3,233 injured).
15. From 1 October to 31 December 2019, UNAMA documented 1,930 civilian casualties (725 killed and 1,205 injured), compared to 2,754 civilian casualties (933 killed and 1,821 injured) in the same period in 2018.
16. In 2019, ISIL-KP carried out seven suicide attacks, including complex attacks causing 455 civilian casualties (183 killed and 272 injured) as compared to 36 such attacks in 2018 causing 1,892 civilian casualties (557 killed and 1,335 injured), which represents a 76 per cent decrease.
17. In 2019, the Taliban carried out 29 suicide attacks, including complex attacks causing 1,499 civilian casualties (165 killed and 1,334 injured) as compared to 21 such attacks in 2018 causing 642 civilian casualties (216 killed and 426 injured), which represents a 133 per cent increase.
18. In 2019, UNAMA documented 2,832 civilian casualties (817 killed and 2,015 injured) from attacks of Anti-Government Elements that deliberately targeted civilians.
19. See, section IV(b)(i) on *Airstrikes* for more information of this report.
20. In 2018, UNAMA documented 95 civilian casualties from the 2 April 2018 Afghan Airforce airstrike in Dasht-e-Archi district of Kunduz province (see UNAMA Protection of Civilians Annual Report 2018, pp. 34 and 35, available at <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of->

- civilians-reports). Without this single incident, UNAMA would have documented a 10 per cent increase of civilian casualties caused by the Afghan Air Force in 2019.
21. This includes, for example, individuals who may collect “tax” or zakat, as well as individuals who may be involved in financially supporting Anti-Government Elements through the processing of illicit drugs or other means. See UNAMA Special Report: Airstrikes on Alleged Drug-Processing Facilities, Farah, 5 May 2019 (published in October 2019), available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports>.
 22. ICRC, Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities under International Humanitarian Law, May 2009, p. 32-35.
 23. ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 6. For more information on the legal analysis concerning this topic, please read UNAMA Special Report: Airstrikes on Alleged Drug-Processing Facilities, Farah, 5 May 2019 (published in October 2019), available at: <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports>.
 24. See the listed parties under Annex I of the Secretary General Report on Children and Armed Conflict (A/73/907), 29 June 2019.
 25. *Bacha bazi* is a harmful practice whereby boys are exploited by wealthy or powerful men for entertainment, particularly for dancing and sexual activities; it is criminalized in the revised Penal Code, which came into effect in February 2018.
 26. The perpetrators were not members of Pro-Government Forces or Anti-Government Elements.
 27. See section IV.b.ii on *Search operations* of this report.
 28. Percentages are rounded. As a result, the breakdown figures may not always add up to the aggregated figure.
 29. See section V.d. on *Cross-border incidents* for more information of this report.
 30. In 2018, UNAMA attributed 6,970 civilian casualties (2,238 killed and 4,732 injured) to Anti-Government Elements.
 31. Of the incidents attributed to the Taliban, the group publicly claimed responsibility for 81 attacks resulting in 1,712 civilian casualties (204 killed and 1,508 injured).
 32. Of the incidents attributed to ISIL-KP, the group claimed responsibility for 50 attacks (mostly targeting civilians) causing 788 civilian casualties (181 killed and 607 injured).
 33. In 2018, Afghan national security forces caused

1,629 civilian casualties (640 killed and 989 injured).

34. This is compared to 2018 when UNAMA recorded 1,013 civilian casualties (534 killed and 479 injured) resulting from airstrikes by Pro-Government Forces.
35. This is compared to 2018 when UNAMA recorded 353 civilian casualties (284 killed and 69 injured) from search operations by Pro-Government Forces.