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## 579 Civilians Killed in Four Months: UNAMA

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A top United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) official said about 579 civilians had been killed in the first four months of this year and most of the killings were carried out by militants.

Speaking at a news conference in Kabul, the UNAMA head Jan Kubis, said 79 percent of the casualties were caused by militants, nine percent by Afghan and international soldiers, while 12 percent were killed in non-combatant violence.

He said although civilian casualties had dropped by 21 percent compared to the first four months of last year, still there were worries about civilian casualties in the future. About 1,216 people were wounded in the first quarter of this year, he said.

Disturbed about suicide attacks and roadside bombs, he said, most fatalities arose from such incidents and urged Afghan security forces to do their best to prevent civilian casualties once they take complete charge of the country's security.

The UN special representative applauded the pledges made at the recent Chicago conference but said some participating countries did not mention civilian casualties during their speech.

A week ago about nine people, including children and women, were killed and another 19 wounded when passenger busses hit roadside bombs in Ghazni and Helmand provinces. Local officials blamed the Taliban for the blasts but the movement rejected the allegations.

In southeastern Paktia, officials said NATO-led soldiers killed eight family members, including women and children four days ago. The alliance said they have initiated an investigation on the killings.

According to previous UN report, about 3,021 civilians were killed in 2011.