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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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AFP

August ‘second deadliest month’ for Afghan civilians: UN

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KABUL: A total of 374 civilians were killed and 581 injured in August as a result of the war in Afghanistan, making it the second deadliest month for civilians since 2007, the United Nations said Friday.

The UN’s special representative in Afghanistan, Jan Kubis, said that although fatalities were down in the first half of the year, the summer months had been particularly bloody.

“Civilian casualties have decreased overall through the first eight months of the year compared year on year. However, this trend began reversing during this summer with a greater number of civilian deaths and injuries occurring in July and August than in the same period last year,” he said.

“In fact, August was the second deadliest month for civilians since Unama (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) began recording civilian casualties, with 374 civilians killed and 581 injured.”

He said anti-government forces were responsible for 85 per cent of the deaths over the summer period and the number of civilians killed during the holy month of Ramazan, between July and August, was more than double last year.

August 14 was the bloodiest day since December 2011, with 50 people killed in attacks across the country, including a suicide bombing in the southwestern province of Nimroz.

UN figures released last month showed that the number of Afghan civilian casualties fell for the first time in at least five years in the first six months of 2012, dropping by 15 per cent compared with the same period last year.

A total of 1,145 Afghan non-combatants lost their lives in violence, mostly insurgent attacks, between January 1 and June 30 compared with 1,510 in 2011, the UN said.

In total, nearly 13,400 civilians have died in the conflict in the past five years.

Despite the presence of about 112,000 Isaf soldiers and 352,000 Afghan soldiers and police, the coalition has failed after 11 years of fighting to put down the Taliban insurgency as foreign forces prepare to withdraw all combat troops by the end of 2014.