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By Associated Press

Blast in Afghanistan Kills 19 En Route to Wedding

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An explosion from a roadside bomb tore into a minibus carrying people to a wedding in northern Afghanistan on Friday, leaving 19 dead and 16 wounded, authorities said.

Spokesman Shir Jan Durani said the group was traveling to Dawlat Abad district, about 450 kilometers (270 miles) northwest of the capital, Kabul.

District police commander Bismullah Muslimyar said six children and seven women were among the dead in the blast, which occurred at 6 a.m. after a nighttime police patrol.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai strongly condemned the attack.

“Planting a mine on a road used by civilians and the killing of innocent people represents hostility toward humanity,” he said in a statement.

Earlier this month, the U.N. Security Council expressed serious concern at the high number of civilian casualties in the war, especially among women and children.

The Taliban and other militants are responsible for the overwhelming majority of civilian deaths in the country. About 77 percent of the deaths between January and June can be attributed to insurgents, a UN report said.

Insurgent-placed homemade bombs continue to be the deadliest weapon for civilians, accounting for 29 percent of all such deaths in the period, it said.

Separately, six football fans died and 36 were injured Friday when their bus collided with a fuel tanker on a narrow road about 400 kilometers (240 miles) northwest of the capital, provincial governor Mohammad Aleem Saaie said. The fans were traveling to Kabul for the final round of the country's football championships.