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## IED Casualties Up 124% Among Afghan Troops

Saturday, 19 January



**Afghan troops suffered a 124 percent increase in the number of casualties from improvised explosive attacks last year, a sign of their increasing role on the battlefield**

The 2012 statistics show the number of attacks against Afghans rose in the second half of 2012.

For US troops, however, deaths and injuries from improvised explosive devices (IED) in Afghanistan dropped by almost half in the same year, the Pentagon said.

More surveillance equipment, metal detectors and intensive training have also helped bring down the US casualties, according to Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, the Pentagon's Joint IED Defeat Organisation chief.

IEDs have been one of the top threats for the US forces in Afghanistan but is clearly in decline, killing 104 US troops in 2012 compared with 196 in 2011, a 46 percent drop. The makeshift bombs also wounded fewer troops, from 3,542 in 2011 to 1,744 in 2012, a 50 percent drop, according to Pentagon statistics.

There were 15,222 IED "events" in 2012 - an event being a bomb that explodes, is found and defused, or the discovery of a cache of explosives. Overall, IED attacks in Afghanistan dropped by about 8 percent in 2012 from a record high in 2011.

Barbero said the Afghan Taliban insurgents will continue to use IEDs "as the weapon of choice" when the spring fighting season starts in Afghanistan.

There are around 66,000 US troops in Afghanistan helping over 300,000 Afghan security forces fight insurgency.