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Children casualties up by 27 percent in Afghanistan: UNICEF

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The United Nations Children’s Fund – UNICEF expressed concerns regarding children’s casualties in Afghanistan war and violence and urged all parties involved in the Afghan war to take necessary precautions in a bid to prevent civilian and children casualties.

UNICEF in a statement said, Children living in armed conflict today face unprecedented threats. These include grave violations such as the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, sexual violence against children, killing and maiming of children, and recurrent attacks on hospitals and schools.

These grave violations are highlighted in the latest annual report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, issued today by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui.

Such violations must stop, said UNICEF on Wednesday.

UNICEF in its statement said, “In Afghanistan, targeted attacks against schools were reported, including improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks, burned schools and the abduction and killing of education personnel. Acts of intimidation, threats against teachers and students, and the forced closure of schools were also reported. Ten cases of the use of schools for military purposes in Afghanistan are noted in the report.”

The statement also added that at least ten children were killed and seven others were injured following an explosion in eastern Paktia province of Afghanistan on 3rd June.

According to UNICEF, at least three children were killed and seven others were injured following an airstrike by coalition security forces in eastern Kunar province of Afghanistan on 6th June. While an Afghan man was killed together with his three children on 4th June.

UNICEF said that childrens’ casualties in Afghanistan shows an increase of 27 percent during the first quarter of 2013. At least 1,304 children were killed during armed conflict in 2012, UNICEF said.

A spokesperson for UNICEF in Kabul said UNICEF uses the opportunity of the publication of the Secretary-General’s Report to reiterate that all parties to armed conflict must do everything to ensure the safety of children and the protection of their rights.