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After Taking Over Security Tasks, ANSF Casualties Rising

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Transition of security responsibilities from NATO to ANSF was completed in June. Capability of ANSF to tackle Taliban insurgents on its own is being closely observed by NATO and Afghan authorities. The more successful they are, the easier it will be for US and its allies to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan.

Now full security responsibilities of Afghanistan have been handed over to ANSF. Almost all the military operations against insurgents are being led by Afghan security forces. ISAF is switching to supporting role. The confidence and ability of Afghan security forces to wholeheartedly accept taking the leading role in defense of their country are admirable. Nonetheless, by assuming more security task, it has been noticed that the dying rate of Afghan army and police has also escalated.

Interior Ministry announced Monday that insurgents had killed nearly 300 Afghan local and national police in one month, illustrating how casualties among local forces are mounting now that NATO-led coalition troops have handed over responsibility for combat operations.

The Defense Ministry said it did not have monthly figures for the number of Afghan soldiers killed but according to an AP count, 807 Afghan security force members – including soldiers and police – and 365 civilians have been killed so far this year through the end of May. A total of 63 coalition troops were also killed in that span. Last year through the end of May, Afghan security forces lost 365 soldiers and police, and 338 civilians were killed. Coalition forces lost 177 troops during that time.

Keeping in view the increase in death toll of Afghan soldiers and police, it is feared that their causalities will go on increasing as the NATO will move nearer to its plan for complete withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

The insurgents claim to have infiltrated the ANSF ranks and there have been scores of incidents where Afghans soldier have killed their foreign counterparts or their own colleagues. There have been reports saying about Afghan police defecting to Taliban. Given the scenario, the rising death toll of Afghan forces will result in their further discouragement and demoralization. And once the Afghan army and police – that are pillars of Afghans' hope - fall into such troubles, it will definitely prove to be catastrophic for Afghanistan and beneficial for the Taliban. More fighting will result in more deaths.

As we will move ahead, the insurgents are expected to intensify their attacks and there will be more clashes between them and the ANSF. This might cause some of the Afghan soldiers and police to even abandon their services. If that happens, insurgents will get more power and Afghanistan will fall into further chaos.