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## UN documents 4,853 civilian casualties in Afghanistan in past 6 months

July 9, 2014

<sup>1</sup>The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said Wednesday that 4,853 civilian casualties have been documented during the past six months.

The latest figure shows an increase of 24 per cent over the same period in 2013, UNAMA said following a statement.

The statement further added that 1,564 civilians were killed and 3,289 others were injured from 1 January to 30 June 2014.

Ground engagements caused two of every five civilian casualties in 2014 accounting for 39 per cent of all civilian casualties: 1,901 in total, up 89 per cent from 2013, with 474 civilians killed and 1,427 injured.

According to UNAMA, combat among parties to the armed conflict in Afghanistan surpassed improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as the leading cause of conflict-related death and injury to Afghan civilians in the first six months of 2014.

Ground engagements and crossfire hit children and women with unprecedented force, with associated child casualties more than doubling in the first six months of 2014 and two-thirds

more women killed and injured by ground engagements compared with 2013, the UN mission said.

“The nature of the conflict in Afghanistan is changing in 2014 with an escalation of ground engagements in civilian-populated areas,” said the United Nations Special Representative for the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, Ján Kubiš. “The impact on civilians, including the most vulnerable Afghans, is proving to be devastating.”

In the meantime, Director of Human Rights for UNAMA, Georgette Gagnon said, “In 2014, the fight is increasingly taking place in communities, public places and near the homes of ordinary Afghans, with death and injury to women and children in a continued disturbing upward spiral/ More efforts are needed to protect civilians from the harms of conflict and to ensure accountability for those deliberately and indiscriminately killing them.”

UNAMA said improvised explosive devices used by Anti-Government Elements, the second leading cause of civilian casualties in 2014, were behind 1,463 civilian casualties, up seven per cent from 2013 and the highest number of civilian casualties from this tactic recorded in a six month period since 2009.

Suicide and complex attacks by Anti-Government Elements, the third leading cause of civilian casualties, killed 156 and injured 427, with the total of 583 civilian casualties.

The militant groups were blamed for 74 per cent of all civilian casualties while Afghan forces were blamed for 8 per cent of civilian casualties and coalition forces for 1 per cent of the civilian casualties.

UNAMA also added that compared with the first six months of 2009, when UNAMA began to monitor civilian casualties, the number of civilians killed by Anti-Government Elements doubled in 2014 (from 599 to 1,208), while the number of civilians killed by Pro-Government forces has been cut by half (from 302 to 158), almost entirely due to reduced civilian casualties from aerial operations of international military forces.