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## Afghans killed in roadside bombing

**Fourteen civilians died when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province.**

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A roadside bomb has blown up a minivan in Afghanistan's south, killing 14 civilians, including women and children, and wounding several more people.

The incident occurred in the Nahr-e-Saraj district near Sangin in southern Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold and one of the country's most dangerous provinces, Dawood Ahmadi, a provincial governor spokesman, said.

Roadside and other bombs are by far the most lethal weapons deployed by Taliban fighters and are responsible for most of the war casualties suffered among Afghan security forces, foreign troops and civilians.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said in a statement that Afghan and foreign troops provided medical assistance at the scene and evacuated the wounded.

Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, strongly condemned the attack and said that people who planted bombs on roads frequently used by civilians were "brutal and ignorant terrorists who are enemies of Islam and innocent Afghans".

Violence is at its worst in Afghanistan since US-backed Afghan troops ousted the Taliban in 2001, with record deaths on all sides of the near-decade long conflict.

The United Nations said this month there were 6,215 civilian casualties in conflict-related incidents in Afghanistan, including 2,412 deaths and 3,803 injuries, between January and the end of October this year.

The report said casualties rose by 20 per cent in the first 10 months of the year compared to 2009, and held Taliban and other armed groups responsible for 76 per cent of the deaths or injuries suffered by civilians.

The number of foreign troops killed this year has passed 700.