

[Afghanistan: UN urges protection of civilians as casualties remain high in first quarter](#)

27 April 2017 – The United Nations mission in Afghanistan today urged all parties to the conflict to take immediate and concrete measures to better protect civilians from harm, as the latest data for 2017 shows continued high numbers of civilian casualties.

“It is civilians, with increasing numbers of women and children, who far too often bear the brunt of the conflict,” [said](#) Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in a press release. “With the so-called fighting season imminent, I appeal to all parties to take every measure possible to prevent unnecessary and unacceptable harm to Afghan civilians.”

In the first quarter of 2017, UNAMA documented 2,181 civilian casualties – 715 dead and 1,466 injured, a four per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2016. Civilian deaths decreased by two per cent while civilian injuries decreased by five per cent.

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Ground fighting remained the leading cause of civilian casualties, accounting for 35 per cent of all civilian casualties.

Anti-Government elements caused 62 per cent of civilian casualties, 447 dead and 906 injured for a combined 1,353, reflecting a five per cent increase compared to the same period in 2016.

UNAMA attributed 451, or 21 per cent of, civilian casualties – 165 dead and 286 injured – to pro-Government forces, a decrease of two per cent compared to the same period in 2016.

The mission documented 148 civilian casualties – 72 dead and 76 injured – from aerial operations, a disturbing increase compared to 29 civilian casualties – eight dead and 21 injured – in the first quarter of 2016.

Improvised explosive devices (all non-suicide switch types) remained the second leading cause of civilian casualties, responsible for 409 civilian casualties – 126 dead and 283 injured, a decrease of one per cent compared to the same period in 2016 and comprising 19 per cent of all civilian casualties.

Suicide and complex attacks continued to cause record levels of civilian harm. The Mission recorded a five percent increase in civilian casualties from these tactics – 374 civilian casualties, 108 dead and 266 injured, accounting for 17 per cent of all civilian casualties.

Pressure-plate improvised explosive devices caused 218 civilian casualties, 86 dead and 132 injured, a 12 per cent increase.

Civilian casualties from unexploded ordnance increased by one per cent to 203, 50 dead and 153 injured, of which children comprised 81 per cent.

UNAMA is extremely concerned by increases in both child and women civilian casualties, particularly deaths. The Mission recorded a 24 per cent increase to 273 women civilian casualties, 88 dead and 185 injured.

Also in the first quarter, the mission recorded 735 child casualties, 210 dead and 525 injured, a three per cent increase compared to the same period in 2016.