

[Afghanistan: Violence at voter registration sites 'assault on democracy,' UN envoy warns](#)

Afghanistan has suffered “a disturbing pattern” of attacks on voter registration facilities since the process began last month, which add up to an “assault on democracy”, the United Nations mission there said Thursday.

According to a [new report](#) from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 23 election-related security incidents have already been recorded since voter registration began on 14 April, ahead of parliamentary elections due to take place in October, resulting in 271 civilian deaths and injuries.

UNAMA said these incidents include the 22 April suicide attack on a crowd gathered outside a national identity card distribution centre, in the capital Kabul, which killed and injured a total of 198 civilians.

“These attacks at election facilities are nothing less than [an assault on democracy](#),” said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan.

He stressed that Afghans who were turning up to register were “exercising their constitutional right and putting hope for Afghanistan’s future above concerns about their personal safety.”

The report details how some 75 per cent of the security incidents have taken place at schools or mosques, which are doubling-up as election-related facilities, and describes allegations of intimidation of staff there and those seeking to take part in the vote.

“Elections-related violence should remind everyone that efforts toward peace in Afghanistan cannot be set aside,” said Mr. Yamamoto, urging the Taliban to take up President Ashraf Ghani’s peace offer, participate in the elections, and start direct talks with the government to put an end to the suffering of the Afghan people.

The report also urged anti-government and terrorist groups to stop violence at election-related sites and called on the government to do more to protect voters.