

Conflict-related child deaths hit new high in Afghanistan, UN warns

16 May 2017 – Deeply concerned by the continued increase in conflict-related child deaths in Afghanistan, the UN Assistance Mission in the country ([UNAMA](#)) has urged parties to the conflict to take immediate measures to reduce harm.

“I was [appalled](#) to hear that an unexploded mortar round killed five boys from the same family” on Sunday, said the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, in a news release issued yesterday.

“The children were playing outside their home [...] A family destroyed in seconds – this horror is just one of too many incidents documented at the onset of this fighting season,” he added.

The first four months of 2017 witnessed the highest recorded number of child civilian casualties resulting from conflict-related incidents in Afghanistan, including the highest number of children killed, for the same comparable period since the Mission began documenting cases.

Between 1 January and 30 April 2017, UNAMA preliminarily recorded 283 child deaths, a 21 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2016. Children are killed by explosive remnants of war in civilian-populated areas and in ground fighting.

Many of the more than 700 children injured have suffered life-changing injuries, including loss of limbs, as well as significant and lasting trauma such as witnessing the death of siblings, parents, destruction to their homes or displacement.

UNAMA again urged parties to the conflict to prioritize the protection of children and welcomed the commitment of the Government to formally ratify [Protocol V](#) to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The Mission urged all parties to the conflict to commence marking, clearing, removing and destroying explosive remnants of war left behind from fighting in areas under their territorial control.