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Civilian Casualties in the First Six Months of 2020



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Special Investigation Unit

Civilian Casualties in the First Six Months of 2020

Report Summary

Findings by AIHRC indicate that in the first six months of 2020 a total of 2957 civilians have been killed or injured in 880 different security incidents (1,213 killed, 1744

injured)
SUBMIT COMPLAINTS (HTTP://WWW.AIHRC.ORG.AF/APPS/COMPLAINT/)

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The aforementioned figures indicate that civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020 have dropped by 11 percent compared to the first six months of 2019.

Based on the findings by AIHRC, 3,338 civilians were killed or injured by warring parties in the first six months of 2019 with 979 killed, and 2359 injured. The figures indicate that on average 16 people have been killed or injured everyday in the first six months of 2020.

Civilian Casualties Segregated by Age and Gender

There has been a 0.5 percent reduction in women civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020 compared to the first six months of 2019.

There is a total of 297 women civilian casualties (126 killed, and 171 injured) in the first six months of 2020; whereas at the same period in 2019, there were 301 women civilian casualties (113 killed, and 188 injured). In addition, the children civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020 have dropped by 33 percent compared to the first six months of 2019.

The number of children civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020 is 630 (225 killed and 405 injured). The number of children civilian casualties in the first six months of 2019 was 951 (159 killed, and 792 injured).

The Perpetrators of Civilian Casualties

Based on our findings from the armed conflicts, the perpetrators of civilian casualties are as follows:

The Taliban: 48.5 percent,
Unknown perpetrators: 26.7 percent,
Government forces: 15.5 percent,
The ISIS: 6.3 percent, and
The international forces: 2.3 percent.

The remaining percentage of civilian casualties was caused by Pakistani rocketfire in Kunar, Kandahar, Paktia, and Khost.

A total of 1438 civilians have been killed or injured due to Taliban attacks in the first six months of 2020 which involves 542 civilians killed, and 896 injured.

Compared to the same period in 2019, the figures indicate a 24 percent reduction in civilian casualties caused by Taliban attacks. In the first six months of 2019, a total of 1,912 civilians were killed or injured due to Taliban attacks.

Civilian Casualties Segregated by Type of Incidents

Target Killing:

Findings by AIHRC indicate that in the first six months of 2020, target killing accounts for 31 percent of all civilian casualties. In total, 945 civilians have been affected by target killing in the first six months of 2020 with 533 civilians killed and 412 others injured.

Using IEDs:

Our findings show that in the first six months of 2020, a total of 766 civilians have been harmed by IED blasts, such as roadside mines, magnetic mines, self-improvised mines or car-bombs. Among casualties caused by IEDs, 259 have been killed, 507 other have been injured. The aforementioned figure amounts to 26 percent of total civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020. Furthermore, it is important to note that compared to the first six months of 2019, there has been seven percent increase in civilian casualties caused by this war tactic.

Rocket Attacks:

According to our findings, rocket attacks or heavy arm fires account for 12.7 percent of all civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020. The rocket attacks have caused 378 civilian casualties in this period of time, with 117 killed and 261 injured. Compared to the first six months of 2019, there has been a 47 percent reduction in civilian casualties caused rocket attacks. It is important to note that the highest number of casualties were women and children.

Suicide Attacks:

Compared to the first six months of 2019, there has been a 109 percent rise in civilian casualties caused suicide attacks in the first six months of 2020. The Islamic State of Khorasan Province has claimed the responsibility for the majority of the attacks.

The number of casualties caused by suicide attacks is 347, with 110 civilians killed and 237 others injured. This number accounts for 11.7 percent of all civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020. It is important to note that there has been a 46 percent reduction in civilian casualties caused by suicide attacks that the Taliban claim the responsibility for.

Ground Battles:

According to the reports, a total of 327 civilians were victimized in ground battles between government forces and the armed opposition groups with 82 civilians killed, and 245 others injured. This amounts to 11.5 percent of civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020.

Compared to the first six months of 2019, the number of civilian casualties caused by armed conflicts or ground battles in the first six months of 2020 has declined by 66 percent. The major reason for this decline is because the government's armed opposition groups have shifted their warfare from cities to less populated areas, and the government forces conduct military operations in the areas that are controlled by government's armed opposition groups.

Airstrikes:

The airstrikes have caused 189 civilian casualties (108 killed and 81 injured) in the first six months of 2020.

Compared to the same period in 2019, there has been a 44 percent reduction in civilian casualties caused by airstrikes. 341 civilians were killed and injured in the first six months of 2019 that included 233 civilians killed and 108 other injured. **Night Raids:**

Our findings indicate that compared to the first six months of 2019, there has been a 90 percent reduction in civilian casualties caused by night raids. Overall, four civilians have been killed and one other has been injured by night raids in the first six months of 2020; whereas, AIHRC had recorded 51 civilian casualties caused by night raids in the first six months of 2019.

Attacking on Public Infrastructures:

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([HTTP://WWW.AIHRC.ORG.AF/APPS/REGISTER_CIVIL_SOCIETY/](http://www.aihrc.org.af/apps/register_civil_society/))

According to International Humanitarian Law, it is forbidden to attack on any public infrastructure, unless it turns into an active threat; thus, the warring parties are compelled to avoid attacking on public infrastructures, private properties, establishments with hazardous sources of energy, cultural sites, and places which are for public use.

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Example: On May 12, 2020, a hospital in the Dasht-e-Barchi area of Kabul was attacked by terrorists. In this attack sixteen civilians (13 women, two children, and one man) were killed, and 16 other, including five children were injured. No group has yet claimed the responsibility of this attack and the government has not succeeded to identify the perpetrators yet.

Attacking Journalists and Media

According to IHL, the journalists should be safe during armed conflicts.

However, the journalists have not been very safe in the first six months of 2020, and AIHRC has recorded 55 cases of violence against journalists, like murder, injury, beating, kidnapping, arresting, threatening and insulting.

There have been 14 casualties among the journalists (four killed, and 10 injured) in the first six months of 2020.

Civilian Casualties by Geographic Location

Findings by AIHRC indicate that the North-Western Zone has endured the highest number of civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020. A total of 692 civilian casualties have been recorded in this zone (319 killed, and 373 injured). The mentioned figure amounts to 23 percent of all civilian casualties in the first six months of 2020. The following is the number and percentage of civilian casualties according to the zones:

Central Zone: 554 victims (228 killed, and 326 injured), 18.7 percent;

Eastern Zone: 580 victims, 19.6 percent;

North-Eastern Zone: 344 victims, 11.6 percent;

Northern Zone: 270 victims, 9.1 percent;

Western Zone: 240 victims, 8.1 percent; and

Southern Zone: 276 victims, 9.3 percent. [1]

Recommendations

Following its previous recommendations on the observance of the principles of IHL, AIHRC once again calls on the warring parties to pay special attention to the Commission's recommendations and put serious effort to implement them. Otherwise they have to assume heavier liability with more severe consequences. All parties involved in Afghanistan war are urged to respect IHL principles (the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols), especially Article 3 common to all four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II adopted in 1977 which obliges the warring parties to respect civilian lives during armed conflicts. Any violation of these rules would lead to greater liability for the violators who shall be prosecuted, irrespective of time and place.

Peace is what Afghans really demand. In addition to supporting this demand, AIHRC calls on warring parties to begin the Intra-Afghan peace talks while promoting justice and human rights.

All warring parties are urged not to harm civilians under any circumstances. According to IHL, intentional killing or harming of civilians are clear examples of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

All parties to the conflict are urged to refrain from fighting in residential areas or anywhere that could harm civilians and never use human beings as human shields. Similarly, taking hostages, assassinations targeted killings and extra-judicial trials of civilians are never justified and no military faction is allowed to do so.

Armed opposition groups are urged to provide the AIHRC staff with the opportunity to visit the areas under their control on an ongoing basis.

6- The armed opposition groups of the Government are strongly urged to investigate cases of human rights violations in the areas under their control and to prevent inhumane behavior practiced by their local commanders. In addition, they should report to the public about their investigations.

Once again, the government's armed opposition groups are urged to reconsider their definition of civilian people or refer to IHL principles. This way, they shall never again attack on any civilian government employee, civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists, media and international aid organization workers, nor the public infrastructure and healthcare facilities.

Since reports by AIHRC and other international organizations have identified IEDs by the Taliban as the major cause of civilian casualties, they are strongly urged to stop using this war tactic.

The Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GOIRA) is urged to identify and prosecute all IHL and human rights violators.

GOIRA should review and modify its war policies and procedures in a way that reduces civilian casualties and ensures accountability of the perpetrators of civilian casualties.

GOIRA is urged to take serious steps to ensure better security for all its citizens, especially religious minorities, religious scholars, human rights defenders and civil society activists.

We call on GOIRA to investigate all cases of civilian casualties, especially those that are caused by government forces, and bring the perpetrators to justice, then report about their actions to the public.

We call on GOIRA, especially defense and security forces to be more careful in using heavy weapons or conducting airstrikes. Using heavy weapons or airstrikes should be the last military option; in addition, weak intelligence should never be relied on.

The government and aid agencies should increase their assistance to the survivors, families of the victims and the displaced persons.

The GOIRA is recommended to draft 'Government's Action Plan to Support Victims of Terrorism' in cooperation with AIHRC and other national or international agencies to facilitate better supporting of victims.

We call on International Criminal Court to start their Afghanistan investigation as soon as possible; this will end the culture of impunity.

The people of Afghanistan have suffered long years of war and many groups have committed terrible crimes. Obviously, there can be no lasting peace without addressing those crimes. The negotiating parties on peace in Afghanistan should listen to victims of war and agree on a mechanism that would lead to a lasting peace.

To avoid civilian casualties and conduct a thorough investigation into human rights and IHL violations, we call on Afghanistan's National Security Council and Taliban's political bureau in Qatar to establish a working mechanism and effective relations with AIHRC, the UN and other organizations committed to protect civilian population.

The AIHRC calls on GOIRA, the Taliban, the US Government and the international community to pay serious attention to the four mechanisms proposed by the AIHRC to engage people, war victims and experts in intra-Afghan peace negotiations and to provide an opportunity to apply these proposed mechanisms.

Last but not least, we call on the security organs, the legal and judicial authorities of the country to seriously investigate the case of the attack on two of the AIHRC employees, bring the perpetrators to justice and share the results of their actions with the public and the AIHRC. GOIRA should ensure the safety of AIHRC employees and offices.

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Western Zone: Herat, Farah, Nimruz, Badghis, Ghor.

Central Zone: Kabul, Wardak, Ghazni, Parwan, Kapisa, Logar, Panjsher, Bamian, Daikundi.

Northern Zone: Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, Sar-e-Pul, Faryab.

North-Eastern Zone: Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar, Badakhshan.

Northern Zone: Paktia, Paktika, Khost.

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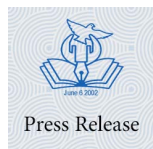
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PRESS RELEASE

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Press Release



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AIHRC calls for inclusion as a guiding principle in peace talks (https://www.aihrc.org.af/home/press_release/8974)

Press Release



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The Commission continues to call for the identification and prosecution of perpetrators of attacks against its employees
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مؤید سره اریکه ونیسی

پایه خونیول

کمیسیون مستقل حقوق بشر افغانستان

۸ گری مخکی



در روز تصویب میثاق بین‌المللی حقوق مدنی و سیاسی، از مهم‌ترین اسناد بین‌المللی در حمایت از حقوق بشر و آزادی‌های اساسی و بازتابنده حقوق مشهور به نسل اول حقوق بشر، کمیسیون مستقل حقوق بشر بر حفظ دستاوردهای مدنی و سیاسی دموکراتیک مردم افغانستان در روند مذاکرات صلح تأکید می‌کند.

کمیسیون باورمند است که برترین گزینه‌ها برای دستیابی به صلح عادلانه و پایدار، احترام به کرامت انسانی همه شهروندان، به رسمیت شناختن تنوع اجتماعی و فرهنگی موجود و رعایت برابری حقوق و آزادی‌های اساسی همه است که فقط در نظام سیاسی دموکراتیک و حقوق بشر بنیاد امکان پذیر است.

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PHOTO OF THE DAY

