



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on indiscriminate violence nationwide including Nangahar & Kabul

In January 2019 *Human Rights Watch* issued a report commenting on events of 2018 including noting that:

“The Taliban claimed to target only Afghan government and foreign military facilities, but they used indiscriminate means that killed and injured hundreds of civilians” (Human Rights Watch (17 January 2019) *World Report 2019, Afghanistan*, p.2).

A report released in January 2019 by *Reuters* states that:

“...the Taliban and other insurgent groups carrying out near daily attacks, mainly targeting security forces and government officials. Civilians, however, almost invariably bear the brunt of the violence” (Reuters (15 January 2019) *Afghan Taliban claim lethal car bomb attack in Kabul*).

A report issued by the *Guardian* in January 2019 notes:

“Civilian deaths and injuries in Afghanistan from explosive weapons rose by more than a third last year...” (Guardian (11 January 2019) *Afghanistan bucks global trend with sharp rise in civilian casualties; Number of innocent people killed or maimed in Afghan war rises 36% despite overall fall in casualties worldwide*).

In December 2018 the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan* notes in a report:

“The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) condemns the attack carried out last night in an area of Kabul city heavily populated by civilians” (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (25 December 2018) *UNAMA condemns attack in civilian-populated area of Kabul*).

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in December 2018 notes that:

“The December 24 attack was the deadliest in Kabul since a suicide bomber blew himself up in the middle of a religious gathering last month, killing at least 55 people. The incident was the 22nd attack in Kabul since January. In all, more than 500 people have been killed and more than 1,000 injured in attacks in the capital this year” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (25 December 2018) *Dozens Killed, Injured In Militant Raid On Kabul Government Compound*).

Amnesty International in December 2018 states:

“This past year has been one of the deadliest for Afghans. Every month there have been at least two attacks targeting civilians only, with an average casualty rate of more than 10 people killed in each attack...” (Amnesty International (13 December 2018) *Human Rights for a Stronger Afghanistan*).

The *United Nations Security Council* notes in December 2018 that:

“Violence during the parliamentary elections on 20 October caused the most civilian casualties recorded in a single day to date in 2018, as well as the most civilian casualties on any election day since UNAMA began documenting such incidents in 2009. In total, 435 civilian casualties (56 people killed and 379 injured) were recorded on election day. Nearly all the casualties resulted from deliberate or indiscriminate attacks by anti-government elements, primarily the Taliban” (United Nations Security Council (7 December 2018) *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, p.8).

A report issued in December 2018 the *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* notes in a report that:

“Ongoing hostilities across large parts of the country, including ground engagements, aerial operations, and an indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are causing extreme levels of physical and psychological harm” (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (6 December 2018) *2019 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview*, p.6).

A report released in December 2018 by *Amnesty International* notes that:

“Responding to the deaths of at least 40 people and the wounding of at least 60 in a bomb attack at a religious event in Kabul today, Amnesty International’s Deputy South Asia Director Omar Waraich said: “This sickening attack once again lays bare the growing risks to civilians in Afghanistan, where a record number of civilians were killed in the first half of 2018 – many of them children. “Any attack in which civilians are deliberately targeted constitutes a war crime under international law, yet those killed in Kabul today will merely become another statistic. “Armed groups must immediately halt all attacks targeting civilians and indiscriminate attacks, while the Afghan government must make the protection of civilian lives its absolute priority. “This attack also once again highlights the irresponsibility of countries in the European Union who claim Afghanistan is a safe place for refugees and asylum seekers to be returned to.” “ (Amnesty International (20 November 2018) *Afghanistan: Horrific Kabul bomb attack underlines growing threat to civilian lives*).

In November 2018 the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan* notes in a report that:

“The majority of the Taliban’s attacks involved the use of indirect-fire systems such as rockets, grenades and mortars, as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), all of which have indiscriminate effects, and small arms fire” (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (6 November 2018) *Afghanistan Protection of Civilians Special Report: 2018 Elections Violence*, pp.1-2).

This report also notes that:

“Following the opening of the polling centres, UNAMA began receiving reports of attacks targeting polling centres, with the intensity of the attacks increasing throughout the day. The deadliest attack occurred in the late afternoon of 20 October in Kabul city, when a suicide attacker detonated his explosive device outside of a polling centre located in a municipality office, killing 13 civilians (nine civilian men and four Afghan National Police officers performing civilian functions) and injuring 40 (34 men and six women)” (ibid, p.5).

A publication released in October 2018 by the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan* points out in a report that:

“Civilians living in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kabul, Helmand, Ghazni, and Faryab were most impacted by the conflict. UNAMA notes with extreme concern that Nangarhar became the province that recorded the most civilian casualties in the first nine months of 2018 with 1,494 civilian casualties (554 deaths and 940 injured), more than double the number of civilian casualties recorded in that province during the same period in 2017...” (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (10 October 2018) *Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Quarterly Report*, pp.1-2).

A report published by *Amnesty International* in October 2018 notes that:

“Kabul has turned to be the most insecure city in Afghanistan. Indeed, in August 2018, UNHCR stated that Kabul was no longer a safe internal flight alternative for those fleeing conflict or persecution in their area of origin...” (Amnesty International (8 October 2018) *European states should stop forcing people to danger in Afghanistan*, p.2).

In October 2018 the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan* notes in a report the

“...increased number of deliberate and indiscriminate attacks by Anti-Government Elements against the civilian population” (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (7 October 2018) *Increasing Harm to Afghan Civilians from the Deliberate and Indiscriminate Use of Improvised Explosive Devices*, p.2).

This report also states:

“In addition to direct targeting of civilians, Anti-Government Elements continued to conduct indiscriminate IED attacks in civilian areas that caused significant harm to the Afghan population. These included the use of indiscriminate suicide IED attacks as well as the use of victim-activated pressure-plate IEDs, which are inherently indiscriminate in their means of detonation. On 22 July a suicide attack was carried out at the entrance to Kabul airport amongst a large presence of Afghan forces, who were providing security during the arrival of the First Vice President of Afghanistan, General Abdul Rashid Dostum. A large number of his supporters were also in the crowd, and as a result, 27 civilians were killed and 79 more injured. Daesh/ISKP claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁸ This attack is emblematic of many of the indiscriminate suicide attacks, particularly in Kabul city, targeting government officials using large amounts of explosives and in populated areas, killing and injuring civilian passers-by going about their daily lives” (ibid, p.6).

A report published by *Human Rights Watch* in May 2018 notes that:

“In the past two years, the Taliban have intensified their attacks in large urban areas, ostensibly targeting Afghan government and foreign military facilities but using means that cause massive, indiscriminate casualties. These attacks have killed hundreds of civilians” (Human Rights Watch (8 May 2018) *“No Safe Place”, Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Afghanistan*, p.1).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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