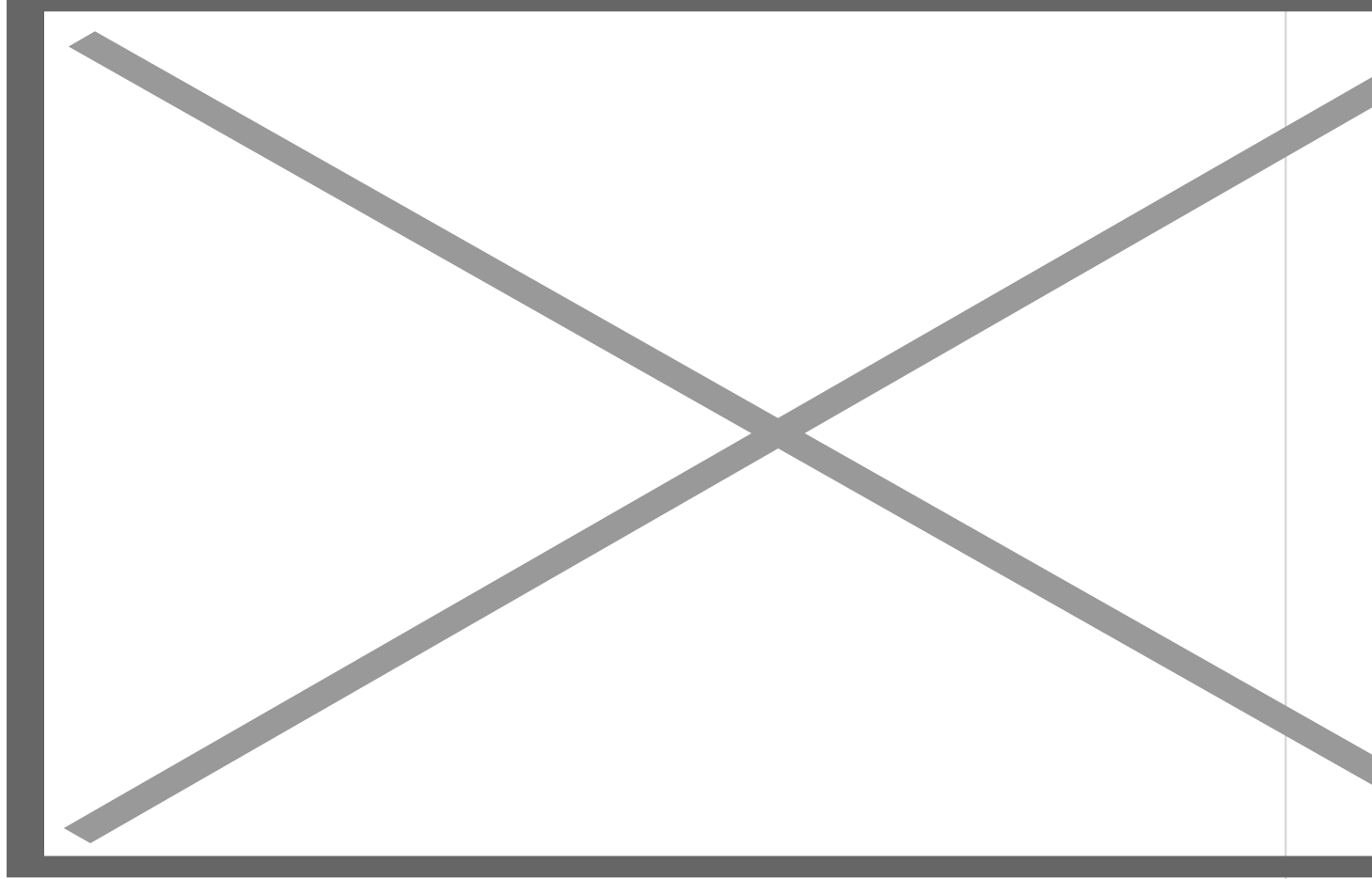


Afghan women protest attack on girls' school as death toll climbs to 53

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Kabul, October 5 (RHC)-- In Afghanistan, the death toll in last week's attack on an educational center in Kabul has risen to 53, with more than 110 people injured. Most of the victims were young women and girls.

On Friday, a suicide bomber struck inside the building as hundreds of students studied for a university entrance exam. It was the latest attack on the minority Hazara community, which has repeatedly been targeted by the ISIS-K militant group.

Afghan women have taken to the streets of Kabul and other cities to protest the killings. In response, Taliban soldiers fired warning shots over the protesters' heads; smashed some of their cellphones; beat them; cursed at them; and forced them to disperse.

Asya Asghari, the older sister of Um al-Banin, one of the students killed in Friday's bomb attack, told reporters: "We are really worried. It's hard for us. All the schools are closed to girls. In the educational center, an unfortunate incident happened. Not only was Um al-Banin martyred, but also Samira, Zahra and the security guard named Tahir, who were all like members of our family and served to protect us in the educational center. It is a very painful scene, but we will continue with the lessons, and we will never give up or stop."

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