

# *Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan Now Higher Than Ever*

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United Nations, July 26 (RHC)-- More than 1,500 Afghan children were killed and wounded in the war, pushing overall casualties in the country to the highest six-month total ever recorded by the United Nations.

The numbers of civilian casualties in Afghanistan have reached record levels, the United Nations reports, with at least 1,601 killed and 3,565 wounded in the first six months of 2016.

The U.N. attributes the majority of the civilian casualties to anti-government groups, most notably the Taliban, which was strongly criticized in the report for their continued use of "indiscriminate tactics, including carrying out devastating complex and suicide attacks in civilian areas."

The Islamic State group, which has made some limited inroads in Afghanistan, accounted for 122 casualties in the first six months of 2016 compared with 13 casualties attributed to it in the same period last year. Casualties caused by pro-government forces increased by 47 percent over the same period last year, according to the United Nations.

Afghan forces were responsible for 22 percent of casualties overall, and the international troops remaining in the country caused two percent, while 17 percent could not be attributed to one side or the other.

The increasing number of casualties caused by the government, meanwhile, was largely due to the wide use of heavy explosives during ground battles, investigators reported.

Afghanistan recently witnessed one of the deadliest attacks ever when twin blasts in Kabul on Saturday, claimed by Islamic State militants, killed at least 80 people and injured more than 230, most of them civilians.

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