



10 July 2014 - Ground engagements and crossfire in Afghanistan has hit children and women with unprecedented force.

Child casualties associated to engagements and crossfire have more than doubled in the first six months of 2014 and two-thirds more women killed and injured by ground engagements compared with 2013.

Total child civilian casualties increased 34 percent in the first six months of 2014 to 1,071, including 295 killed and 776 injured, while total women civilian casualties increased 24 percent to 440, including 148 killed and 292 injured.

Ground engagements took the lives of 112 children and injured 408, with the total 520 child casualties, an increase of 111 percent over 2013. Ground engagements killed 64 Afghan women and injured 192, with the total 256 women casualties, up 61 percent over 2013.

While civilian casualties caused by IEDs also increased to unprecedented levels over the same period in 2013, deaths and injuries caused by mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire in ground engagements jumped dramatically as the frequency and intensity of these incidents increased in 2014, particularly in areas with concentrated civilian populations.

“The nature of the conflict in [Afghanistan](#) is changing in 2014 with an escalation of ground engagements in civilian-populated areas,” [said Ján](#)

[Kubiš](#)

United Nations Special Representative for the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. “The impact on civilians, including the most vulnerable Afghans, is proving to be devastating.”

[UNAMA](#) attributed 74 percent of all civilian casualties to anti-Government Elements and nine percent to pro-Government Forces (eight percent to Afghan national security forces and one percent to international military forces), while 12 percent occurred in ground engagements between insurgents and Afghan forces, which could not be attributed to a specific party. The remaining casualties were caused mainly by explosive remnants of war.

“Attacks which fail to distinguish between a military and civilian objective and attacks that deliberately target civilians are serious violations of international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes,” underscored Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.