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UNAMA CONDEMNS TALIBAN ATTACKS IN KABUL CITY THAT KILL FIVE AND INJURE 56

KABUL, 6 January 2016 – The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) condemns a spate of bombings in civilian areas of Kabul by the Taliban in the first few days of the new year.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for three separate suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (SVBIED) attacks in the Afghan capital between 1 and 4 January, killing five civilians and injuring at least 56. The victims – which included ten children and nine women - were killed or injured while going about their everyday lives in homes, restaurants, shops, offices or traveling on a busy public street. Four United Nations civilian staff were also injured.

"The use of highly explosive devices in civilian populated areas continues to cause extreme harm to Afghan women, children and men," said Mark Bowden, the Deputy Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and acting head of UNAMA. "Loss of life, maiming, destruction of homes, businesses and personal property and widespread fear – these are the real consequences of suicide attacks in urban areas."

On New Year's Day, the Taliban attacked Le Jardin restaurant, killing two civilians and injuring 18, while on 4 January, Taliban carried out two suicide attacks near Kabul International Airport, which killed three civilians and injured 38. Notwithstanding heavy civilian casualties, the second attack on 4 January took place in a heavily populated area, destroying or damaging over 80 private homes and shops.

There was a further magnetic bomb attached to a car that exploded in the Wazir Akbar Khan area of Kabul last night.

International humanitarian law explicitly prohibits attacks against civilians and requires all parties to uphold their legal obligations to at all times avoid harm to civilians.

The attacks occurred while many Afghans held hope for the restart of a peace dialogue for Afghanistan.

UNAMA extends its condolences to the families of all of those killed in the incidents and wishes a speedy recovery for those injured. In February UNAMA will release its annual report on civilian casualties in Afghanistan covering 2015.

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