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Roadside bomb kills eight Afghan civilians: officials

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At least eight civilians including women and children were killed when their van struck a roadside bomb in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday, officials said.

The incident occurred in the Jaghuri district of Ghazni province, Deputy Provincial Governor Mohammad Ali Ahmadi told AFP.

It comes weeks after the NATO combat mission which began in 2001 was downgraded to support and training duties to help the Afghan army and police.

"Eight civilians, including one woman and a child, were killed in this morning roadside blast. One child and one woman were wounded," he said, adding that the injured child and woman were taken to the hospital in critical condition.

Asadullah Safi, the deputy police chief of the province told AFP that four of those killed belonged to one family.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack but roadside bombs have been the Taliban's weapon of choice in their war against foreign and Afghan security forces, now in its fourteenth year.

The bombs also increasingly kill and wound civilians.

According to a UN report released in December, civilian casualties hit a record high in 2014, with 3,188 civilians killed and 6,429 injured by the end of November, a 19 percent jump compared to the year before, making 2014 the deadliest year for non-combatants.

Last year also saw a 33 percent rise in casualties among children and a 12 percent increase among women.