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Massive' Hardships for Afghans: ICRC

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KABUL - Civilians in Afghanistan "face massive difficulties" as the summer fighting season reaches its peak, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

The Taliban, in a statement, said its fighters ambushed a convoy of foreign troops in Kandahar province, destroying two U.S. tanks with rocket-propelled grenades. They also said at least four people were killed by Taliban fighters in Logar province.

There was no independent confirmation of the claims.

The operations are part of al-Farooq, a campaign launched by the Taliban early this year.

The ICRC, in a statement, said a deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan is leaving many civilians without access to basic needs like healthcare.

"The summer fighting season is at its height, and civilians, above all, are paying the price -- either directly, as victims of the violence, or indirectly, as they face massive difficulties obtaining healthcare," ICRC said in a statement.

British, Pakistani and Afghan leaders met in London recently to discuss developments in Central Asia. Pakistan expressed frustration with the fallout of the conflict, though Afghan President Hamid Karzai said a political solution was needed in his country to end the violence.

Lasting peace would come "through an inclusive and dignified process, involving the Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami and other armed opposition groups," Karzai said, London's readout of the meeting stated. (UPI)