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## Afghan civilian casualties up by 30 % in 2013: UN envoy

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A United Nations envoy says there has been a “troubling” rise in civilian casualties in Afghanistan in the first three months of 2013.

During a NATO ministerial briefing in Brussels on Tuesday, UN special representative for Afghanistan, Jan Kubis said that civilian deaths had increased by 30 percent compared to the same time last year.

Kubis said that about 475 civilians were killed and 872 others wounded from January to March this year.

Earlier this month, Taliban militants attacked a courthouse in the western Farah Province, killing about 50 people and leaving many more wounded. Kubis said the attack has been amounted to a “war crime.”

On Tuesday, four children were killed in a roadside bomb attack in Afghanistan’s southern Kandahar Province.

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 as part of Washington’s so-called war on terror. The offensive removed the Taliban from power, but insecurity continues to rise across the country, despite the presence of thousands of US-led troops.

A great number of Afghan civilians are also killed in US-led drone strikes. Washington claims that its airstrikes target militants, but local sources say civilians have been the main victims of the attacks.

In the first six months of 2012, over 1,140 Afghan civilians were killed and around 2,000 were wounded, mostly by roadside bombs, according to the statistics released by the United Nations. Thirty percent of the casualties were women and children.