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<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2016/12/18/casualty-toll-hits-nearly-1400-november>

Casualty toll hits nearly 1,400 in November

Dec 18, 2016

About 1,359 individuals suffered casualties in 127 attacks across Afghanistan in November, showing 59 percent decrease in casualties and 34 percent decrease in attacks compared to October.

In October, 3,285 people were killed and wounded in 193 attacks, but the casualties this month increased by 83 percent and attacks by 35 percent over September.

Most of the casualties in October resulted from face-to-face clashes and air strikes.

A Pajhwok's tally shows six out of 10 people suffered casualties in face-to-face clashes, two in suicide attacks and the remaining two in other attacks.

In November, half of the attacks took place in Nangarhar, Uruzgan, Faryab, Kabul and Balkh provinces and the rest in 25 other provinces. Pajhwok could not report casualties in Panjshir, Bamyan, Daikundi and Samangan provinces this month.

In October, a majority of attacks took place in Nangarhar, Helmand, Jawzjan, Kandahar and Faryab provinces, whereas there was no report about casualties in Panjshir, Bamyan, Daikundi and Nuristan provinces.

Reasons of decreased attacks

A military affairs analyst, Gen. Zalmay Wardak, said experience over the past few years showed every year the conflict had subsided in the end of autumn and at the start of winter.

He explained because leaves fell off trees in autumn season which made insurgents unable to find proper place for hiding and they did not want to risk their lives.

He said insurgents keeping in view cold weather conditions used to retreat in order prepare themselves for future fighting season.

However, Defence Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Dawlat Waziri said in addition to cold weather, severely crushing of rebels by governmental forces in previous months had rendered the insurgents unable to conduct attacks.

“Usually in winter, insurgents go across the border for receiving military training and equipment, thus their attacks decrease,” he added.

He didn’t did not name the country, but Pakistan has been often accused of assisting insurgents against Afghanistan.

Casualties

Reports show 748 people were killed and another 611 wounded in November.

Those killed and wounded last month included insurgents, governmental forces and civilians -- including women and children.

However, due to controversial figures provided by different sources, Pajhwok could not publish exact number of casualties as differentiation in all those killed and wounded was impossible.

In November, the bloodiest day 10th of the month, when 34 people were killed and 144 wounded on the day.

One-seventh of last month’s casualties happened in Nangarhar and the rest in other provinces. Most casualties that month occurred in Uruzgan, Faryab, Kabul and Balkh provinces and the least in Baghlan, Kapisa, Nimroz and Takhar provinces.

In October, most casualties took place in Helmand, Farah and Nangarhar provinces.

October attacks were more deadly than November.

The number of attacks in November decreased and the attacks too were less deadly as compared to October’s ones. Some 17 individuals were killed or wounded averagely in every attack in October, while 11 people on average suffered casualties in each attack in November.

Gen. Wardak in this regard said: “Civilians suffer casualties when the fighting area is wider and when multipronged attacks are staged and heavy weapons are used. The decreased casualties and

less deadly attacks in November means heavy weapons weren't used and guerilla attacks were carried out by small groups.”

The MoD spokesman also held similar views, citing operations especially nighttime raids against insurgents as a reason behind the decreased average casualties in attacks.

He said insurgents were unable to use heavy weapons and conduct deadly attacks in November, thus decreased average casualties in each attack.

Stop the war!

This is the voice of war victims.

Manugul, head of a family which fled fighting in early November from Pachiragam district to Jalalabad, capital of Nangarhar, said he was happy about the deescalating fighting in Nangarhar.

“The de-escalation is temporary, the government should put efforts into permanently ending the conflict. Both the sides should announce ceasefire in order the Afghans do not be displaced like us.”

Manugul's family is currently living in a home of his cousin in Jalalabad. Manugul said his wife, a young son and a minor child were killed during recent clashes between security forces and militants in Pachiragam.

He said currently he was struggling with work to eke out a living after leaving behind household and necessary items in Pachiragam. He narrowly escaped and managed to flee his area.

Another resident of Kosakala locality of Khwaja Sabzposh district in northern Faryab province, Mohammad Naeem, whose child was killed last month after a Taliban-fired mortar shell landed at the wedding ceremony of his relative. His two daughters and wife were injured in the incident. Naeem also calls for ceasefire and wants peace in the country.

Naeem said the security situation in his area improved after the weather turned cold. He said if the government didn't make efforts at permanently ending the war, then insurgents would enhance their attacks like they did in the past in summer.