



## **STATEMENT BY UN ENVOY TADAMICHI YAMAMOTO CONDEMNING THE ATTACK TARGETING CIVILIANS ATTENDING PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION IN KABUL**

**KABUL, 23 July 2016** – On behalf of the United Nations in Afghanistan, I condemn in the strongest possible terms today's deadly attack that killed and maimed hundreds of civilians gathered to peacefully demonstrate in Kabul city. Preliminary figures indicate that the attack killed at least 59 civilians and injured 245 others.

Two explosions occurred at Dehmazang square in Kabul city today targeting a peaceful demonstration, causing horrendous levels of civilian harm. One suicide attacker detonated his device among the demonstrators while police reportedly shot and killed a second attacker.

This attack is particularly heinous because it targeted civilians as they exercised their rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression.

An attack deliberately targeting a large, concentrated group of civilians amounts to a war crime. This incident is an outrage that cannot be justified. It is an attempt to spread terror amongst civilians and stifle the freedoms that Afghans have sacrificed so much to obtain. The United Nations stands firmly with the people of Afghanistan as they seek to exercise their fundamental human rights.

I reiterate that international humanitarian law prohibits the deliberate targeting of civilians and international human rights law requires the Government and non-state actors to respect and protect the rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. The perpetrators of today's attack must be held accountable.

On behalf of the United Nations in Afghanistan, I express our deep condolences to the families of the victims and wish a speedy recovery for the injured.

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