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Afghanistan: At least 40 killed in suicide attack on Faryab mosque

At least 40 people were killed in a suicide blast in northern Afghanistan on 26 October 2012 during the religious festival of Eid al-Adha. The bomb exploded as people were leaving Eid prayers in Eid Gah mosque in Maymana, capital of Faryab province.

While senior provincial government and security officials were present at the prayers, the vast majority of victims appear to have been civilians - many were women and children beggars waiting outside the mosque.

“This attack has once again underscored the disregard armed groups in the Afghanistan conflict hold for civilian lives and places of worship,” said Polly Truscott, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Programme.

The Taliban has not claimed responsibility for this attack, however the UN has previously said that attacks like this one are consistent with previous patterns of Taliban attacks. The Taliban leader Mullah Omar has repeatedly urged his movement to prevent civilian casualties – most recently in his October 2012 Eid statement

“Amnesty International urges all armed groups to stop using civilians as human shields, or harming civilians in indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks in violation of international law. The use of so-called improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or suicide bombers in areas where there is a danger of civilian casualties must stop.”

“Amnesty International once again calls on the International Criminal Court to investigate the conflict in Afghanistan”