

**UNAMA****United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan**

Strategic Communication and Spokespersons Unit, Kabul, Afghanistan

Press Statement<http://unama.unmissions.org>**UNAMA CONDEMNS RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST SCHOOLS IN AFGHANISTAN**

KABUL, 12 MAY 2012 –United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is seriously concerned that the protection needs of civilians, especially children and their right to education are being violated through reported attacks by anti-Government elements targeting schools and education officials over the past few weeks. It is imperative that all parties to the conflict respect the civilian status of schools and work to protect and promote the rights of children, particularly girls, to education.

Over the last year UNAMA has monitored unacceptable levels of violence by anti-Government elements directed against schools, education institutions, their staff and/or students. Last week, insurgents targeted education officials traveling in Paktika province that left five civilians dead and seven others injured. In Khogyani District of Nangahar province on 8 May, anti-Government elements set fire to a secondary school for girls in Wazir village. Two school buildings and school equipment were destroyed. Anti-government elements have also conducted a campaign of intimidation against community leaders and staff at the school to force its closure. UNAMA condemns these attacks that aim to limit access to education and to intimidate civilians.

These attacks and acts of intimidation demonstrate a disregard for the protection of civilians, especially children, and of civilian institutions. They are a serious violation of international humanitarian law and of the right to education including for girls.

UNAMA calls on anti-government elements to stop such heinous attacks targeting children and education officials. UNAMA calls for the respect of international humanitarian law and for the right to education for all Afghans. UNAMA also calls on the Government of Afghanistan and international military forces to ensure that effective security measures are in place to protect schools, students and teachers. UNAMA strongly urges anti-Government elements to uphold and demonstrate the commitments to education they have made in public statements.

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All media contact details are online at: <http://unama.unmissions.org>