

### [Dozens Killed and Injured in Afghanistan Mosque Bombing](#)

A mosque in the remote eastern Afghan village of Jawdara was rocked by a bomb during Friday prayers last week. The mosque sits in the district of Haska Mina, about 30 miles from the provincial capital of Jalalabad. 62 worshippers were immediately killed, with authorities raising the number over the weekend to 73 killed and 36 injured. Of this number, at least 23 were teenagers or younger. The mosque was full when the explosion went off, and locals and authorities spent the weekend sifting through rubble looking for survivors.

Both the Taliban and the Islamic State (ISIS) are known to have a presence in the region, but neither has taken credit for the blast. Villagers believe ISIS is responsible, as the group has just gained a foothold in the region. The residents also believe it is retribution for their cooperation with the Afghan government. For their part, the government blames the Taliban, but a spokesman for the terror group issued a statement on Twitter denying responsibility and citing eyewitness reports that the government launched a mortar into the mosque. The attack comes mere weeks after a United Nations report was released which cited 1,174 civilian casualties in Afghanistan between July and September. That number accounts for the deadliest quarterly statistic since the United Nations began recording the data.

Jawdara was struggling to survive even before the attack, as only a few hundred residents remain in the village. Earlier this year, militants from the Islamic State cut off the water supply to the village, which forced many people to leave. Only 70 families remained in Jawdara, and the death toll of the blast dictates that most of these families have lost at least one member. For the families that remain, poverty and despair has become their reality. The Jawdara cemetery was unable to accommodate all of the dead, so many bodies had to be buried in a small apricot orchard.

The attack comes just a month after similar attacks in the provincial capital of Jalalabad. In that instance, the Islamic State targeted three schools and a peaceful protest in bombings that claimed 68 lives. The rise of radicalism in Afghanistan's eastern province has become a serious concern for the Ghani administration, where government forces are struggling to contain the chaos. Many families have fled the region entirely due to the violence. In one such example, about 200 families left their homes in Nangarhar province and set up a makeshift village in the Daka desert. Calls for the Afghan government to intervene against authoritarian militia commanders who surreptitiously rule villages have gone unanswered, which has left Afghan civilians to the mercy of radical groups. This is a particular problem in the mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan near the border with Pakistan, which has long been regarded as a safe haven for terrorists and terror organizations.