

Over 60 Percent of Afghans Suffer Mental Health Problems

By [Global Research](#)

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KABUL: Scarred by decades of war, social problems and poverty, more than 60 percent of Afghans suffer from stress disorders and mental health problems, officials warned on Sunday.

“This is a major problem,” Suraya Dalil, Afghanistan’s acting public health minister, told a ceremony in Kabul on World Mental Health Day. “More than 60 percent of Afghans are suffering from stress disorders and mental problems.” The picture is particularly grim in parts of the country where government healthcare workers are unable to provide basic services because of Taliban insurgency, she said.

“Extreme poverty, insecurity, violence and gender disparities are the major factors contributing to worsening mental health in Afghanistan.” The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that more than 60 percent of Afghans, mostly women, suffered from psychosocial problems or mental disorders. The WHO said that because only a fraction of the health budget is spent on mental health, a large majority of people suffering from these disorders received no care at all.

“There are only 200 beds for psychiatric services in the country, with only two psychiatrists in the country covering the entire population,” said WHO representative Peter Graaff. Public health ministry spokesman Ghulam Sakhi Kargar Noryghli said the 60 percent estimate dated from a study carried out with the WHO in 2004.

“Since war has continued, poverty or economic problems have increased in some parts of the country. We believe that the number of those suffering from mental illnesses has increased and now it is more than 60 percent,” he said. The population of Afghanistan is estimated at roughly 28 million.

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