

Hundreds dead in harsh Afghan winter

by UPI

KABUL, Afghanistan -- Aid and government officials in Afghanistan issued warnings in the face of extreme cold and heavy snow that has resulted in more than 200 deaths. Four western Afghan provinces experienced rare snowfalls for the low-lying areas and several northeastern areas report the heaviest snow in decades, the BBC said Friday. Officials with the International Committee of the Red Cross said villagers in the western provinces aren't prepared for winter conditions as they typically experience snow only a day or two each winter. The weather pattern is hitting nearby countries as well. Baghdad, Iraq -- to the west on the other side of Iran from Afghanistan -- experienced its first snow fall in memory on Jan. 11. Herdsmen make up the majority of the deaths but women and children are reported among the perished. Thousands of head of livestock died as well.

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