Islamabad - The National Assembly was informed on Thursday that 23 villagers lost their lives and 99 lost limbs inside Pakistani borders because of explosions of local landmines during a prolonged military standoff with India.

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Thousands of victims in bordering areas were still waiting for compensation of their massive financial losses as defence ministry officials miserably failed to assess their losses, it was further stated. The 23 people lost their lives in the bordering areas of Lahore, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Sindh and Kasur.

The House was told that so far the heirs of the 23 people killed and those injured were paid a meagre amount of Rs 3.5 million as compensation. The House was told that a total of 150 people got affected physically in landmine blasts.

Earlier, MNA Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed of PPP asked the Defence Ministry to give the estimated loss of life and property, separately. He also wanted to know the total loss suffered by the public in district Kasur and whether any amount has been allocated to compensate the losses of life and property of the people of that area.

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Maj Tanveer said so far only Rs 3.5 million had been distributed among the affectees of landmines in bordering areas.

In Lahore, 4 lost their lives because of mines, 17 lost limbs, one got serious injury and seven minor injuries while a total of only Rs 0.7 million was paid as compensation.

In Sindh, two villagers lost their lives, four lost limbs, one suffered serious injury and only Rs 0.2 million was paid as compensation.

In Gujranwala, 8 villagers lost lives, 55 lost limbs, 8 were seriously injured, and five suffered minor injury. Only Rs 1.9 million was paid as compensation.

In Bahawalpur, six villagers lost their lives, 13 lost limbs, four got serious injuries and one minor injury. Rs 0.6 million was paid as compensation.

In Kasur, three villagers were killed by landmines, 10 lost limbs, and only Rs 0.4 million was paid as compensation of such big loss of lives and limbs.

The parliamentary secretary told the House that so far damage caused to land/property is concerned, compensation is being paid to the victims of the bordering areas after scrutiny of the claims.

The House was informed that compensation is paid through corps headquarters on the basis of Rs 50,000 for Shaheed and from Rs 10,000 to Rs 25,000 depending upon the type of injury/loss of limbs.

However, the MNAs seriously criticised the government policy of giving meagre compensation amounts to the affectees of local landmines.

MNA Kunwar Khalid Younis was of the view that why only Rs 50,000 were being paid to the heirs of the deceased, while they needed more money.

The defence ministry also came under fire for so far not giving compensation to the claimants who were waiting for the money against their financial losses.

The MNAs said the properties and crops worth billions of rupees of the villagers were destroyed, but they were still waiting for the payment of compensation. They regretted that Defence Ministry was yet to assess the real damages caused during the standoff.

However, the parliamentary secretary said an amount of Rs 999 million
been allocated for the affectees. He said the government was still in the process of verifying the claims of the victims and as soon as the assessment was completed, they will get the compensation.

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