



Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 24 January 2011

Current security situation.

A report from the *United States Department of State* under the heading ‘2009 Human Rights Report: Afghanistan’ notes:

“The security situation in the country deteriorated significantly during the year because of increased insurgent attacks, with civilians continuing to bear the brunt of the violence. Armed conflict spread to almost one-third of the country, including previously unaffected areas in the north and northeast. The marked deterioration in security posed a major challenge for the central government, hindering its ability to govern effectively, extend its influence, and deliver services, especially in rural areas. The security environment also had an extremely negative effect on the ability of humanitarian organizations to operate freely in many parts of the country, particularly in providing life-saving care. Insurgents deliberately targeted government employees and aid workers. Efforts to contain the insurgency by military and nonmilitary means continued. Reports of human rights violations were actively exploited and sometimes manufactured by the Taliban and other insurgent groups for propaganda purposes.” (United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Afghanistan*)

The same report continues adding:

“Civilian casualties increased sharply due to insurgent actions. According to the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan's (UNAMA) Annual Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, the year was the deadliest for civilians since 2001, with 2,412 civilian casualties, compared with 2,118 in 2008, an increase of 14 percent. Taliban and antigovernment elements were responsible for 67 percent of civilian casualties, killing 1,630 civilians, compared with 1,160 in 2008, an increase of 41 percent since 2008. The MOI reported 2,590 civilians killed and 3,646 injured during the year. Taliban and antigovernment elements continued to threaten, rob, attack, and kill villagers, foreigners, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers. As in 2008, suicide and improvised explosive device (IED) attacks killed more Afghan civilians than any other tactic.” (ibid)

In a section titled ‘Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life’, the report continues:

“Taliban and insurgent attacks escalated in both number and complexity during the year. According to the June report of the UN Secretary General, in the first half of the year, security incidents in Kandahar city and the airport district of Damam increased by 80 percent compared with 2008. On February 17, a suicide bombing in Kandahar killed 80 men and boys and injured 90 individuals. On August 25, in Kandahar, a truck bomb killed at least 65 and injured more than 100 persons, mostly civilians; although Taliban spokesmen

denied involvement, it was widely believed the Taliban were responsible for the attack, which may have targeted a foreign business” (ibid)

A January 2011 report from *Human Rights Watch* under the heading ‘Afghanistan Events of 2010’ states:

“While fighting escalated in 2010, peace talks between the government and the Taliban rose to the top of the political agenda. Civilian casualties reached record levels, with increased insurgent activity across the country. An additional 30,000 United States troops increased international forces to more than 150,000.

Endemic corruption and violence marred parliamentary elections in September 2010.” (Human Rights Watch (January 2011) *World Report 2011 Afghanistan Events of 2010*)

In a section titled ‘The Conflict’ the same report adds:

“The armed conflict remains most acute in the south and southeast, with a marked deterioration in security in the north. In the first nine months of 2010 the United Nations documented the deaths of 2,135 civilians, an increase of more than 10 percent compared to the same period in 2009, largely due to increased insurgent attacks that often take the form of drive-by shootings or suicide bombings. US and NATO-caused civilian casualties dropped in the first six months of the year compared to the previous year. However, the third quarter saw an increase in civilian casualties, which matched an increase in the use of air attacks and night raids. US, NATO, and Afghan forces were responsible for more than 350 civilian deaths during the first nine months of 2010.” (ibid)

A December 2010 *UNHCR* report under the heading ‘Security Incidents’ notes:

“In the first six months of 2010, the southern and south-eastern regions accounted for over 50 percent of all security incidents in the country. The security incidents also appear increasingly more geographically dispersed than in prior years. In the period from mid-June to mid-September 2010, the overall number of security incidents increased by 69 percent compared to the same period in 2009. The deterioration of the security situation has been attributed to a number of factors, including increased international troop levels and a corresponding increase in security operations by the Afghan National Security Forces, and increased activities of anti-Government groups. In January 2010, ISAF began the deployment of 34,000 additional troops to Afghanistan to support national security forces in their stabilization efforts. Jointly-conducted large military operations by Government and international forces were initiated in Helmand and Kandahar provinces. The “surge” of international forces, coupled with Operation Moshtarak, and Operation Hamkari, as well as the ensuing Taliban response, contributed to the intensification of the conflict and an increase in civilian deaths in those provinces.

UNHCR is also mindful that over the coming months some 150,000 US/NATO troops, backed by tens of thousands of Afghan forces, will be seeking to make military gains against the Taliban, thereby increasing the likelihood of

an intensification and broadening of the conflict.” (UNHCR (17 December 2010) *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan* - pg. 36)

A *UN Security Council* report under the heading ‘Security situation’ states:

“During the reporting period, the number of security incidents was 66 per cent higher than during the same period in 2009. Violent activities peaked on polling day and decreased thereafter. The violence on polling day, while high when measured in terms of the number of incidents, was characterized by widespread, low-level security incidents designed more to frighten potential voters than to kill. A common tactic was the launching of rockets and mortars against polling centres.

As during the previous reporting period, the focus of the Afghan National Security Forces and international military forces was on holding territory regained from anti-Government elements in Helmand Province over the summer and on continuing operations to gain control over Kandahar City. A high number of mid-level anti-Government elements continue to be killed or arrested as part of these operations, whose tempo and scope increased during the reporting period. Despite this pressure, anti-Government elements were able to sustain high levels of activity in areas into which they had recently expanded, particularly in the north and the north-east, where the international military presence is less dense.” (United Nations Security Council (10 December 2010) *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*)

An *IRIN News* report under the heading ‘Afghanistan: Little relief for growing number of conflict IDPs’ notes:

“KABUL, 14 October 2010 (IRIN) - Over 100,000 people have been forced out of their homes by clashes in different parts of Afghanistan over the past 12 months but by no means all of them have received aid, according to aid agencies and affected people.” (IRIN News (14 October 2010) *Afghanistan: Little relief for growing number of conflict IDPs*)

In a section titled ‘Violence spreading’, the same report adds:

“Insecurity has, meanwhile, rapidly spread to the previously peaceful northern and central parts of the country: At least 200 families left their homes in Imaam Sahib District in the northern province of Kunduz over the past three months, the provincial ARCS office said.

“The Taliban have established a presence in Archin, Chardara and Imaam Sahib districts as a result of which some families are leaving the areas,” said Mahbubullah Faizi, spokesman of Kunduz governor Mohammad Omar who was killed in a blast on 8 October.

Hundreds of families allegedly displaced by conflict in the northeastern province of Kapisa have sought shelter in the eastern outskirts of Kabul.” (ibid)

Another *IRIN News* report under the heading ‘In Brief: IDP numbers up in Afghanistan – UN’ states:

“KABUL, 17 March 2010 (IRIN) - Armed hostilities have boosted the number of internally displaced persons to over 296,000 but an effective humanitarian response is being hampered by insecurity, the UN Secretary-General says in a new report to the UN Security Council” (IRIN News (17 March 2010) *In Brief: IDP numbers up in Afghanistan – UN*)

The same report continues adding:

“The deterioration of Afghanistan’s security situation has continued, with 2009 being the most volatile year since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, averaging 960 security incidents per month, as compared with 741 in 2008. The situation worsened in January 2010, with the number of security incidents 40 per cent higher than in January 2009,” it said” (ibid)

References:

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

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Human Rights Watch

Electronic Immigration Service (EIN)

European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI)

Freedom House

IRIN NEWS

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

UNHCR

UN Security Council

United States Department of State