

## **Chronology of Events in Afghanistan, November 2003\***

### **November 1**

#### **"Unidentified men" torch district office in Konar Province. (Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency / AIP)**

"Unidentified men" reportedly captured Watapur District office in Konar Province and set it on fire after taking control of it for two hours. The sources said the assailants did not harm staff of the district and warned government staff not to come there again. It is said the assailants took the weapons from the district office with them. Watapur is located about 35 km to the east of Asadabad, the capital of Konar Province.

#### **UN office attacked in Jalalabad. (Iranian radio *Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

A rocket attack was carried out on a UN office in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar Province. It was reported that no losses and casualties were sustained in the attacks.

#### **District attacked by gunmen in Nangarhar province. (Associated Press / AP)**

Officials in the Rodat district of the Nangarhar province said assailants opened fire with assault rifles and machine guns at the headquarters of the local administration. Security forces returned fire and beat back the attackers in an hour-long gun-battle, said Mohammed Asif Qazizada, Nangarhar's deputy governor.

#### **Blast claims two lives in Khost Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

As a result of an explosion two people have been killed and two others injured in Yaqobi District, Khost Province. The commander of Military Division No 25, Gen Khiyal Baz, confirmed the report and said that the explosion took place as a result of a conflict between two tribes in the area.

### **November 2**

#### **Fighting between militias in Sari Pul continues, two civilians killed. (AP)**

Fighting in northern Afghanistan killed two people as clashes between the militias of rival commanders entered their third day, a local commander said. A woman and child died in the clashes in Sari Pul province, said Gen. Abdul Sabor, a commander under Gen. Atta Mohammed. At least three fighters had died in the fray on November 1. The violence began October 31 night in Kohistanat district, with forces under Uzbek

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Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum and his Tajik rival, Mohammed, battling with Kalashnikov rifles and rocket-propelled grenades. Each side has blamed the other for starting hostilities. Gen. Kamal Khan, one of Dostum's commanders in the province, claimed there had been a cease-fire in Sari Pul since November 1 evening.

**Associated Press report on the same news on November 4:** The death toll in fighting between rival troops in northern Afghanistan rose to nine, and top regional officials were heading to the area to negotiate a cease-fire. Seven people were also injured in the fighting in Kohistanat district in Sari Pul province, said Gen. Abdul Sabor. Sabor said officials from both sides, along with U.N. representatives and human rights activists, were heading to Sari Pul to try to end the fighting.

**Eight from Afghan family in the province of Nooristan die in air raid. (Reuters)**

At least eight members of an Afghan family were killed in an aerial bombardment in Afghanistan's eastern province of Nooristan, a top official in the area said. The victims killed in night raid on October 31 were relatives of Ghulam Rabbani, an influential tribal chief of Arsent village in the remote Vigol district, colonel Ghulamullah Nooristani, police chief of Nooristan, said. "The total number of casualties has not been ascertained yet, but I do know that eight people in Rabbani's house have been killed as a result of the bombardment," he said. Nooristani did not have further details or say who may have carried out the attack, but sources in the capital assumed the raid was carried out by U.S.-led forces stationed in Afghanistan, as they control the country's air space.

**Afghan official reports intimidation of voters in Kandahar, Zabol, Helmand and Urozgan provinces. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh)**

Mohammad Omar Sati, the deputy head of the regional constitution office, said with regard to the process of the registration of the names of the representatives for the Constitutional Loya Jerga [grand assembly] in four provinces namely Kandahar, Zabol, Helmand and Urozgan that some of the representatives are unable to participate in the process of the registration of names out of fear of threats in some of the districts of these provinces. He added that in the Gazab and Shahed-e Hasas districts of Urozgan Province the representatives have failed to participate in the registration process due to enmity between the clans in these districts. Furthermore, arms have not been collected and the powerful commanders threaten the representatives so that they act in accordance with their wishes.

**November 3**

**Afghan Constitutional Commission posted the draft on internet. (Afghan Constitutional Commission website).**

Afghan Constitutional Commission posted the draft Constitution on their website at <http://www.constitution-afg.com>. The complete documentation, as well as its Dari and Pashto original and an English translation of the Constitution, are also available.

**Former Mujahadeen Leader Said Kidnapped in Nangarhar province. (AP)**

The governor of Nangarhar province said a prominent former *mujahadeen* leader had been kidnapped from his home in Jalalbad. Haji Din Muhammad said officials went to

visit Maulawi Yunus Khalis over the weekend after hearing a report he had declared *jihad* against the government, but were told that he had been abducted by unknown assailants.

#### **November 4**

##### **Afghan leader meets ethnic minorities. (Afghan news agency Bakhtar)**

Hamed Karzai, the head of the “Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan”, at a meeting with the representatives of Hindus and Sikhs living in Afghanistan, heard their problems and demands. In this meeting, Kangaram Motrija and Otar Sing spoke on behalf of the others and said that most of the Hindus and Sikhs have returned to Afghanistan after the establishment of the Transitional Administration. Supporting the peaceful policy of the government, they asked the government to pay attention and solve some of their problems. As a result, the Head of State assigned a commission to look at their problems.

#### **November 5**

##### **Former Afghan commander gunned down in Kabul. (AP)**

Gunmen assassinated a powerful militia commander who switched sides during Afghanistan's civil war and fought alongside the Taliban, Kabul police said. A sport utility vehicle with blacked-out windows pulled up to Agha Shirin Salangi's home and shot him with a Kalashnikov rifle, said Kabul Deputy Police Chief Amin Khalil Zada. Salangi, an ethnic Tajik, died from his injuries later at a hospital. Salangi had fought under the late northern alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massood but turned on him in the early 1990s. He was jailed after being accused of betraying Massood and linking up with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Salangi was later released and lived at his home north of Kabul, but took up the Taliban cause in 2000. With the Taliban, Salangi fought several battles to capture the critical Salang Pass, the vital route across the Hindu Kush mountains that connects northern and southern Afghanistan.

#### **November 6**

##### **Former Taliban Minister Muttawakkil reportedly sentenced to death by Taliban. (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL *Afghanistan Report*)**

The spiritual leader of the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Mullah Mohammad Omar, has issued a death sentence against former Taliban Foreign Minister Mawlawi Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil. Muttawakil, who has been characterized as a moderate member of the former regime, was reportedly released from U.S. custody in October after he allegedly tried to mediate between the Afghan Transitional Administration and resurgent Taliban forces.

## **November 7**

### **Afghan airline re launches internal flight. (AP)**

After a gap of more than two decades, Afghanistan's commercial airline relaunched its service connecting the capital Kabul to the southern city of Kandahar. Ariana Afghan Airlines flew a group of reporters and a handful of regular passengers on a Boeing 727 from Kabul airport. The 450-kilometer journey takes one hour. Ariana plans a weekly flight to Kandahar and aims to expand its network across the country, said airline vice president Ehsan.

### **Taleban attack on district leaves one dead in Zabol Province. (AIP)**

A government official said that a Taleban group carried out an attack on Khak-e-Afghan District office in Zabol Province and killed one watchman and injured another person on the night of 6-7 November. The people of the area told officials that they saw Taleban moving corpses from the area, the official added.

**Agence France Presse report on the same news on November 8:** The militants attacked Khak-e-Afghan administrative building in Zabol province at 1:00 am, Zabol deputy governor Mawlawi Mohammad Omar said. One government militiaman was killed in the fighting which lasted three hours. "Seven to eight Taliban bodies were also seen being carried by Taliban fighters early in the morning in nearby villages," Omar said. The Taliban also kidnapped four close relatives of the district chief and threatened to kill them unless the governor surrendered the district to the militants, he said. "Roads to Khak-e-Afghan district are still blocked by Taliban fighters and they are in control of it," he said.

### **Indian killed in Kabul. (Agence France Presse / AFP)**

An Indian national working for a private Indian firm was killed by unknown attackers in Kabul. The victim was killed in the Taimani district of Kabul, Interior Ministry said. Unknown attackers opened fire on him, probably with an AK-47 assault rifle. The Indian was working for private Indian construction firm Aster, which was a sub-contractor for the Afghan mobile phone company AWCC, officials said. The victim was killed in his home, according to a humanitarian source.

### **NGO vehicles stolen in Zabol Province. (AIP)**

Unidentified men stole two vehicles belonging to a mine-clearing NGO in Qalat, the capital of southeastern Zabol Province. It was reported that unidentified men robbed two vehicles and some other equipment at gun-point from the mine-clearing NGO in Shenak Pol area in Qalat city.

## **November 8**

### **Defectors from Guldbuddin Hekmatyar faction in Kabul for talks. (Reuters)**

Some former allies of a wanted commander who declared a holy war against U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan and the government have come to Kabul for talks with President Hamid Karzai. The talks are the latest sign of willingness by the Afghan interim government to open dialogue with elements of militant forces - including the ousted Taliban regime. Engineer Tariq and Mawlawi Sarferaz are leading the breakaway

group of the Hezb-i-Islami faction of former Prime Minister Guldbuddin Hekmatyar, on the run since being expelled from exile in Iran under U.S. pressure 18 months ago, he said. Karzai appointed Wahidullah Sabawoon, once a key ally of Hekmatyar who defected several years ago, as presidential adviser.

## **November 9**

### **Bombs rock official residence of the governor of Zabul province. (AFP)**

A powerful bomb exploded at the official residence of the governor of Zabul province overnight, causing damage to the building but no casualties, a senior official said. The remote-controlled bomb was planted in the bedroom of governor Hafizullah Hashim, in Qalat capital Zabul, deputy governor Mawlawi Mohammed Omar said. "The governor escaped unharmed," he said adding that minutes later a second bomb exploded in an arms depot in a military headquarters.

### **Mine-clearing company comes under armed attack in Zabul province. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh)**

Unknown armed people attacked the MCPA, a mine-clearing organization in Qalat [capital] of Zabol Province, at around 20:30 hours in the evening. After threatening the organization's staff, they robbed land cruisers with some cash and computers.

### **Afghan religious scholars against women's participation in constitutional Jerga. (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran)**

Sunni sect religious scholars have prevented women from taking part in the constitutional Loya Jerga in Panjsher and Ghorband Districts of central Parwan Province of Afghanistan. Electing women to the constitutional Loya Jerga, which was to be held on 9 November in those two districts, was suspended after the opposition of religious scholars.

## **November 10**

### **Taliban reportedly hold four districts in Zabul province, three others out of government control. (AFP)**

The Taliban control at least four districts in Zabul province, Zabul's deputy governor said. The former rulers of Afghanistan are now trying to take control of the Zabul capital Qalat, where a powerful bomb went off at the headquarters of the province's governor on November 9, Mawlawi Mohammed Omar said. "There is no government control over Atghar, Naw Bahar, Shenky and Shamasi districts and there is no government official on administrative duty in these districts," Omar said. "There are either Taliban or their supporters at these places." The province is deemed "high risk" by the United Nations, which has banned its personnel from working there. The UN's Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guehenno, told the Security Council on October 24 that the Taliban had established *de facto* control in "several border districts" neighbouring Pakistan, including Barmal and Gayan in Paktika province and Maruf in Kandahar.

"There are some other districts such as Shahjoy, Daychopan and Khak-e-Afghan where the government has no control but the Taliban do not control these areas either." He said Taliban fighters were moving around the districts on motorbikes. "But they aren't powerful enough to threaten the administration," Omar said. Government militiamen were unable to go to the seven districts due to a lack of men and equipment, he said. He said government forces withdrew last month when US-led coalition forces disarmed them due to "wrong information" from the governor of southeast Ghazni province. "Government troops in Naw Bahar district left the area when Americans detained the district chief and disarmed his men," Omar said. He said government forces could return to the districts if the coalition returned their weapons.

**Herat women elect representatives to Afghan constitution assembly. (Afghan news agency Herat News Centre)**

Two members of Council of Professionals have been elected as women representatives to the constitutional Loya Jerga. The election was held in the Women's Cultural Foundation of Herat. 13 women stood as candidates. After a free, secret and direct election, Prof. Taiba Zahedi, a member of the Board of Directors of the Council of Professional, and Prof Masuda Karrokhi, a member of Professors and Researchers Association of the Council of Professionals, won the election with 24 and 16 votes respectively as the female representatives from Herat Province to the Loya Jerga.

**November 11**

**Blast near Afghan UN compound in Kandahar wounds at least one. (Reuters)**

At least one person was wounded when a car bomb went off near a United Nations office in the city of Kandahar. A U.N. source said one person was hurt slightly in the explosion, which took place at around 4 p.m. outside a building belonging to the U.N. Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). Afghan witnesses in Kandahar said one person was killed and two were injured in the explosion, adding that UNAMA staff did not appear to be among the casualties.

**Associated Press report on the same news on November 12:** Afghan authorities have detained five people, including two policemen, for questioning about a car bomb that damaged two U.N. offices and wounded two people in Kandahar. Gen. Mohammed Salim Khan, Kandahar's deputy police chief, said that investigators had taken into custody two local policemen, two Afghan U.N. security guards and a man who lives near the U.N. offices where the explosion occurred.

**November 12**

**Afghan students in Mazar-i-Sharif protest over constitution. (Reuters)**

Around 1,000 students marched through the city of Mazar-i-Sharif to protest a draft constitution they said discriminated against ethnic minorities. The rare public show of dissent, organised with the help of the three main parties controlling the north, underlined the challenge facing President Hamid Karzai and his government. "In this government three languages should be recognised - Persian, Pashto and Uzbek. The

national anthem and some military expressions should be written in three languages, not just in Pashto," it added. The draft constitution names Dari, closely related to Persian, and Pashto as the two official languages and says the national anthem will be in Pashto. Giving the title "Father of the Nation" to Shah was widely seen as placating the Pashtuns, who live mainly in the south and who are broadly supportive of the monarchy. "We do not want national discrimination," said Basir Bahrawi, one of the students organising the demonstration, which ended up outside the main U.N. offices in Mazar. The students were from the youth wings of the Junbish party, allied to local Uzbek commander General Abdul Rashid Dostum, Jamiat-i-Islami, affiliated to Dostum's rival Ustad Atta Mohammad, and Wahdat, which represents the Hazaras.

**Afghan news agency Hindokosh report on the same news on November 15:** General Atta Mohammad, one of the prominent commanders of Jamiat-e Eslami in the north of the country, expressed his views about a demonstration held by mostly Uzbek and Turkmen students of Balkh University on 12 November. He said: "Some of the demands of the demonstrators are baseless. For example, there is no difference between the words Afghan and Afghanistani. The term Afghan has a historical origin and is the symbol of our national unity. Also, complaining about some Pashto terms such as military ranks and the like is completely unfounded". He described as unjustified the demand of the students for the recognition of the Uzbek as an official language. He said: "People speak in many different languages in Afghanistan and it is out of question to recognize all of them as official languages". He also said that such moves are backed by foreigners.

**Afghan ministry provides shelter for 300,000 returnees in Baghlan Province.**  
*(Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran)*

The Minister of Rural Development of Afghanistan has provided 300,000 returnees with shelters in the Baghlan Province.

**Two reported killed, two sexually assaulted on Afghan southeastern highway.**  
*(Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran)*

Dozens of drivers travelling along the Kandahar-Herat highway, have called on the government to send forces and ensure security on the highway in an open letter to the President Hamed Karzai. The letter says armed bandits have attacked more than 20 lorries and passenger vehicles over the past two weeks on the Kandahar-Herat highway. Two people were killed in a clash with bandits and two others were sexually assaulted over the past two weeks.

**US military says it would give up Afghan operations if Taliban stopped fighting.**  
*(AFP)*

The US military said it would cease operations in Afghanistan immediately if the Taliban and other militants stopped their attacks. "We don't have any timetable, but if the militants decide to give up tomorrow, we will stop tomorrow and if they continue we will continue," US military spokesman said in Kabul. Davis said Taliban militants, their al-Qaeda allies and supporters of former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar had been weakened but still threatened peace and security two years after the fall of the Taliban regime. US troops last week launched a fresh offensive against suspected militants in northeast Nuristan province.

## November 13

### **Pakistani government cracks down on Afghan refugees in south-western Pakistan. (World Markets Research Centre / WMRC Daily Analysis)**

The Pakistani police announced that more than 200 illegal Afghan immigrants have been arrested in the last three days, in the south-western province of Baluchistan. The moves have reportedly followed three bomb attacks in the province's capital Quetta, on 10 November, in which nine people were injured. The police have said that these attacks, among others, prompted the action, and that only immigrants with valid certification will be allowed to remain in the province.

## November 14

### **Explosions kill six in Konar Province. (Radio Afghanistan)**

Five Afghans have been killed in two different incidents in Pech Dara District in eastern Konar Province. It was reported that a bomb went off in a bus in Pech Dara of Konar. The explosion killed four people. The witnesses also said that two children were killed in an incident in at the night of November 13.

## November 15

### **Afghan union condemns beating of artists by security officials. (Afghanistan Television)**

In a statement, the Union of Afghan Artists' Association, condemned the harassment and beating of actors of the Radio and Television by the security officials of District 9 of Kabul City. The Union of the Afghan Artists' Associations called on judicial and legal authorities to seriously investigate the case.

## November 16

### **UNHCR officer killed in Ghazni province. (AFP)**

Bettina Goislard, 29, was shot dead around midday in Ghazni town bazaar by two gunmen on a motorcycle who opened fire on her UNHCR vehicle. Her Afghan driver was hit in the arm while a local field assistant escaped injury, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said. The UNHCR has suspended all operations in Ghazni province following the killing. "In the rest of Afghanistan, UNHCR staff are on stand-by, pending decisions on future measures," the agency said. Two suspects have been arrested over the killing, whom Ghazni officials said were Afghan Taliban. Goislard had worked in Ghazni since June 2002, helping some 55,000 refugees and displaced people return home, following other assignments with UNHCR in Rwanda and Guinea, the agency said.

**Pakistan Press International Information Services report on the same news on November 17:** UNHCR announced it is temporarily closing its voluntary repatriation centres for Afghan refugees in Peshawar and Quetta until the security situation inside Afghanistan is clarified. "UNHCR is temporarily suspending the assistance



programme to returning Afghan refugees to ensure they do not arrive at UNHCR offices inside Afghanistan that may not be open," said a press release issued by UNHCR Information Centre.

**Taleban attack leaves five dead in Fariab province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

Haji Daud, a spokesman for the Fariab-based Taleban commander, Mola Mohammad Asim Akhondzada, said that forces loyal to the Taleban fired four rockets on Maymana, the capital of Fariab Province airport. Asim Akhondzada gave no details on possible casualties and added: "Taleban forces launched an attack on a vehicle carrying seven people, including Fathollah Khan, and killed five people and injured two others in Hirak District, Fariab Province". Fathollah Khan had been accused of helping US troops.

**Three killed amid infighting in Laghman province. (Chinese Xinhua News Agency)**

Three people, including one civilian, were killed in Laghman province as troops of two local commanders clashed, an official said. The clash erupted at an area some five kilometers away from Mehterlam Baba, capital of Laghman province, and lasted for about two hours, leaving two soldiers and one civilian dead. The official said that one of the two commanders, Engineer Qararr, was a follower of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

**November 17**

**Afghan students protest in Kabul against proposed presidential system. (AFP)**

Hundreds of students from Kabul University protested against the heavily presidential system of government advocated in the draft of Afghanistan's first post-Taliban constitution. Students said they were also angry that they have not been invited to send representatives.

**At least five dead in coalition air strike in Paktika province. (AFP)**

At least five people were killed in an air-strike near a Taliban-controlled district of southeastern Afghanistan, a police commander and the US military said. The police commander said six Afghan civilians died in the raid, near the border with Pakistan, while the US military said five "al-Qaeda terrorists" had been killed. "US bombardment on the border town of Mangaratay area of Barmal district killed six civilians," Paktika police chief Daulat Khan said.

**November 18**

**Taleban kill suspected spy in Khost Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

It was reported that suspected Taleban forces attacked and killed Haji Sher Mohammad Gorbaz near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border at the night of November 17. His mutilated body was found in the area of Gorbaz, Khost Province. Haji Sher Mohammad Gorbaz was accused of spying on the Taleban and providing information to the US troops about the Taleban and Al-Qa'idah positions in the area.

**Unidentified men kill two Afghans in Khost Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

It was reported that unidentified men killed two Afghans when they were returning from a mosque in Warzah village, to the west of Khost city. The Taleban group had issued a warning earlier that they would kill those people who assist the US troops in Afghanistan.

**Boy killed in blast Jalalabad. (AIP)**

An 11-year-old boy was killed in an explosion near a hospital in Jalalabad city. It was reported that the 11-year-old boy was killed in the explosion which occurred near the northern wall of the public health hospital in the east of Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar Province. The bomb was reportedly planted by unidentified people in the compound of the hospital, and it went off and killed the boy when he was collecting plastic bags and used syringes in the area.

**Afghan president pardons prisoners on eve of Islamic festival. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

Head of the “Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan” Hamed Karzai has granted amnesty to a group of prisoners. Issuing a decree, Hamed Karzai declared: “A group of prisoners and criminals - but not murderers, armed thieves, highwaymen, drug smugglers and kidnappers - are pardoned on the occasion of Id-al Fitr [Islamic festival marking end of fasting month of Ramadan], regardless of the period of their imprisonment.” Under the decree, prisoners who were sentenced to three or fewer years' imprisonment will also be released.

**November 19**

**Suspected Taleban attack on government post in Helmand province kills two. (*Radio Afghanistan*)**

A group of armed men, suspected to be Taleban, attacked a government security post situated between the Gereshk and Sangin districts of Helmand Province. Haji Gol Jan, the security commander of Sangin District, said that a group of Taleban combatants riding in a car attacked the security post with cruisers in the morning. A government soldier was killed and three others persons injured in the attack.

**District in Khost Province comes under rocket attack. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

It was reported that eight rockets were fired on Yaqobi District, 30 km to the northeast of Khost, the capital of Khost Province. Government troops also launched four rockets at the assailants' positions. The fighting lasted 30 minutes and the two sides fired at each other from light and heavy weapons.

**Afghan shot dead near Japan-funded construction site in Afghanistan. (*Japanese news agency Kyodo*)**

An Afghan national working near a road construction project in Afghanistan was shot to death, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said. The Japanese Embassy in Afghanistan confirmed that the person was a military official working at a checkpoint near the

construction site about 50 km from Kandahar. The Ministry has recently cautioned Japanese journalists and aid workers in Afghanistan that they may be targeted for kidnapping by members of the ousted Taleban.

### **Taleban leader threatens to shift battle to Kabul. (London-based newspaper *Al-Hayat*)**

Akbar Agha, commander of the Taleban Movement's Muslims' Army, has threatened to transfer the battle to inside the Afghan capital Kabul in a way similar to what is happening in Baghdad. He stressed that fighting and *jihad* will continue in Afghanistan "as long as there are US and British foreign occupation forces in the country". He revealed that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Afghan Hizb-a Islami, sent messages to Afghan leaders who oppose the presence of foreign troops, proposing the establishment of an expanded *shura* [consultative] council to lead the resistance. Agha reported that preparations are underway to do that. Concerning the circumstances of the kidnapping of the Turkish architect, Agha said: "We kidnapped him because Turkey is part of the international coalition." Asked why the Taleban movement is attacking relief organization workers in Afghanistan when these organizations are extending services to the poor Afghan people, he replied: "These organizations are an extension of the foreign occupation and are carrying out a dangerous proselytizing role. No fewer than 60,000 Afghan students are receiving education at the hands of these proselytizing organizations that seek to make these students abandon their religion. They are doing this after they succeeded in sticking a terrorist label on Arab and Islamic relief groups, prevented them from operating in Afghanistan, and took their place." He said that the calls that the Americans are making to negotiate and conclude a truce "is proof of their failure, frustration, and realization that they have fallen into a quagmire".

He said that his group, which coordinates its operations with the Taleban leadership, is active in the provinces of Ghazni, Zabol, Kandahar and Nangarhar, that they brought several areas in those provinces under their control, and carried out operations in Wadi Juban, Nobahar and Kandahar.

Akhar Agha denied that his group has any links to Al-Qa'idah or that any Al-Qa'idah members operate in the area under its control. Asked if the Taleban is carrying out any media activity, he said: "We are publishing the magazine the *Afghan Times* in the local Pakistani Urdu language and the magazine *Azm* in Pashtu. We seek to explain our ideas and views by issuing statements and holding meetings. We believe that the Afghan people came to know us well when we ruled them, gave them security, and did all we could to serve them."

## **November 20**

### **UN: Afghan commanders harassing disarmed fighters. (Reuters)**

The United Nations said it was investigating allegations that Afghan commanders had demanded money from fighters who received cash in return for handing in weapons under a nationwide disarmament programme. Over 1,000 Afghan militiamen have been disarmed so far in two pilot projects, and the main programme to take away weapons and find people alternative employment aims to cover 100,000 fighters

across the country over the next two years. The programme, called DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration), is seen as crucial to bringing stability to parts of the country where warlords and renegade commanders resort to violence to control territory and lucrative trade routes. "The ANBP (Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme) and UNAMA (U.N. Assistance Mission to Afghanistan) are concerned about continuing reports of alleged harassment of former soldiers by certain commanders in Kunduz," said U.N. spokesman David Singh. In return for laying down arms, former fighters receive \$200 in cash, as well as food, clothes and help in finding a new job. "It has been alleged that some unnamed commanders have been following the soldiers to their villages and demanding half, and in some cases, all the money the soldiers have received during the demobilisation phase of DDR," Singh told a news briefing. "(They are) claiming that they owned the weapons the former soldiers handed in during the disarmament programme. The DDR process, implemented by the ANBP, was officially launched in the northern town of Kunduz last month and has been extended to Gardez in the east. He also said some commanders were trying to enlist civilians in order to earn money from the DDR process. "The ANBP only accepts the list of soldiers supplied by the Ministry of Defence," Singh added. A total of 586 fighters have handed in weapons in Gardez. A further 647 former soldiers have been enrolled in reintegration programmes in Kunduz.

#### **Students demonstrate in Shiberghan. (Reuters)**

Students in northern Afghanistan held a demonstration to protest against a draft constitution which suggests undergraduates will have to pay for their education. More than 1,000 students gathered in Shiberghan, forcing police to block roads in parts of the town. A draft constitution due to go to a national assembly for approval next month states that education is a right that will be provided for free up to secondary level, suggesting the current right to free university education will be abolished.

#### **Pakistan deports 124 Afghans amid sweep of illegal immigrants. (AP)**

Pakistani authorities deported 124 illegal Afghan immigrants rounded up in Quetta, amid pressure on Pakistan to stop Taliban insurgents from operating in its border regions, police said. The deportees were handed over to Afghan authorities at a border crossing in Chaman, about 135 kilometers northwest of Quetta, said the police chief in Pakistan's Baluchistan province. They were among 550 Afghans arrested over the past 10 days who had "no valid documents for entry into Pakistan," police said. A court reportedly ordered the first batch deported, and the rest will probably be ordered home as well.

#### **Afghan drug addicts return home after treatment. (Afghan Herat TV)**

Based on the instruction of Alhaj Emir Mohammad Esmail Khan, some 97 addicts were discharged and returned to their families after being treated at the Addicts Centre of the Campaign Against Drugs Department of Herat Province. Amongst those discharged people some 23 persons were from Helmand, Farah and Ghazni provinces and the rest were from Herat Province who left the centre for their families after having been treated.

### **Women delegates elected to Afghan constitutional assembly. (Xinhua News Agency)**

Elections for women representatives to the forthcoming Afghan constitutional Loya Jirga, or grand assembly, have been completed in most provinces in the country, a spokesman of the Constitutional Commission said. Women delegates for the assembly have been elected in 24 of all the 32 provinces of the country, while elections in the remaining provinces would be held soon, said Abdul Ghafoor Lewal, spokesman of the commission. According to Lewal each Afghan province will have two women representatives at the constitutional Loya Jirga scheduled for December 2003.

### **November 22**

#### **60 suspected Taliban released from jail in Jawzjan province. (AP)**

At least 60 suspected Taliban and Taliban sympathizers were released from a prison in northern Afghanistan, a spokesman for northern commander Abdul Rashid Dostum said. The men, who had been held since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, were released from Shibergan jail in Jawzjan province as part of an amnesty linked to the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, said the spokesman, Faiz Zaki. Zaki said the men were all low-ranking fighters. Human rights groups have criticized the conditions under which they have been held, particularly at Shibergan, where malnutrition and disease ran rampant. Most have never been charged or convicted of any crime.

#### **Rocket explodes in front of Afghan hotel. (Reuters)**

Afghan police said a rocket exploded in front of the Intercontinental hotel in Kabul, but there were no injuries reported. A large hole was blown out of a wall around the main hotel in town, which hosts Western visitors and businessmen. About a dozen police were sifting through the debris looking for clues.

### **November 23**

#### **One dead, four wounded as troops open fire during Kabul protest. (AFP)**

One person was killed and four others wounded after Afghan troops opened fire in Kabul as sacked civil servants forced their way into the Defence Ministry to demand outstanding pay, officials said. "A protestor pulled out a gun and shot at the soldiers on guard inside the building," Defence Ministry spokesman Mohammad Zahir Hazimi said. Ministry guards shot into the ceiling of the main ministry building to disperse protestors but did not shoot directly at the demonstrators, who had smashed doors and windows trying to get in, Hazimi said. Several demonstrators however accused the guards of opening fire on the crowd. Dozens of AK-47 and pistol shell cases could be seen lying on the ground in front of the building and between the building and a main gate. There were bullet holes in the ceiling of the building, broken windows and two sets of doors had been smashed open. Four protestors were wounded and taken to hospital, where one later died of bullet wounds to the head, he said. The other casualties suffered bullet wounds to the hands and legs but were not in danger. The protestors were former Ministry of Defence officers who were demanding payment of

their salaries for the past six months. They were sacked under ongoing reforms at the ministry.

**Mazar-i Sharif takes steps to curb gunmen as disarmament launched. (Afghan Balkh Province television)**

Some gunmen are disrupting the situation in Mazar-i Sharif city in the run-up to the DDR [Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration] process; they have robbed some markets and houses. The security command requires market owners to fix the lamps at their markets. Gunmen should have their gun licences, no-one can carry guns at night and all watchmen and guards of districts and areas should be introduced to Balkh security command.

**November 24**

**Taleban attack on NGO leaves two dead in Ghazni Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

The Taleban have attacked a foreign NGO in Sang-e Atish District phonetic in Ghazni Province. A spokesman for the commander of the Taleban forces in Badghis Province said that their forces have killed two people in the attack and set two vehicles on fire. He added that the dead have not been identified as foreigners or Afghan troops.

**November 26**

**New Islamist group reportedly declares establishment in Afghanistan . (Iranian news agency IRNA)**

A new anti-US group, naming itself the Jaysh al-Muslimin" (The Muslims' Army) declared its establishment in Afghanistan. In its first communique in which the establishment of the group is announced, the Jeysh al-Muslimin has briefly announced that the utmost important task of its members is fighting against the US military forces, interests and allies in Afghanistan. Jeysh al-Muslimin has not defined the tactics it is going to apply in its anti-US campaign, the size of its sympathizers in that country, or its probable links with other anti-US forces. Informed political circles in Afghanistan believe the newly established group must be comprised of the forces affiliated to Golboddin Hekmatyar's opposition Islamic Party, as well as the remainder of the Taleban and Al-Qa'idah forces.

In 2002, too, two new anti-US groups, namely the Saleheddin Ayoubi and the Jehadi-Sunni Group had announced their establishment in four southern and southeastern provinces of Afghanistan.

**November 27**

**Brother of Helmand Province security chief survives attack. (AIP)**

The Helmand Province security chief says his brother has survived an attempt on his life during the Id al-Fitr celebrations. Helmand Security Chief Amir Dad Mohammad Khan said that the Taleban placed some bombs near his brother Mohammad Daud's

vehicles at a festival in Sangin. As a result of the bomb blasts his vehicles were badly damaged. Mohammad Daud, who was standing a little way away from the vehicles survived unharmed. But as a result of the explosion two other people were killed and 15 injured. Sangin is famous for horse and car racing and other festivals, and every year during the Id holidays there are festivals attended by many people.

**Seven prisoners escape from a prison in Khost Province. (Afghanistan Television)**

Seven prisoners escaped from a prison in Khost Province during a visit by their relatives. The relatives attacked and beat a prison official. It is reported that the prison had only one guard on duty while other security guards had taken leave during Id al-Fitr festival. Three of the escaped prisoners were rearrested and the rest are still at large. None of them are political prisoners.

**November 28**

**Explosion in Khost province damages offices, no casualties. (AIP)**

A powerful explosion near the Khost security command injured two policemen and one passer-by last night. It was reported that the explosion occurred in front of a bookshop 10 m from the main door of the Khost security command's headquarters, injuring a passer-by and two policemen, who were sitting near the door of the security command's building. It was reported that the blast had completely destroyed three shops, including the bookshop and inflicted losses on others.

**November 29**

**Afghan governor confirms death of pro-Hekmatyar commander in Konar province. (AIP)**

The governor of Konar Province has announced that a commander of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami party has been killed during the current operations in the province. He said a commander of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami party, Gholam Sakhi, has been killed while trying to escape.

**Taleban free kidnapped Turkish engineer in south Afghanistan. (AIP)**

A Taleban commander has said that in accordance with their leadership's order they have released the kidnapped Turkish engineer in Zabol Province. The Taleban commander said: "We have released Hasan Onal in accordance with our leadership's order, and handed him over to a local council in the Nawbahar District of Zabol Province at 22:30 local time. The council will hand him over to the government."

**November 30**

**Armed men attack NGO, injure four employees in Helmand province. (Radio Afghanistan)**

A group of unidentified armed men broke into the office of a non-governmental organization in Lashkargah, the capital of Helmand Province, injuring four of its employees. The perpetrators of the incident have not been identified so far.

**Driver injured in Taleban carjacking in Zabol province. (AIP)**

The Taleban hijacked the car of the chief physician of the only hospital in Qalat, injuring its driver. It was reported that the car of the chief physician of the only hospital in Zabol Province came under fire by unidentified people in the east of Qalat town. The attackers took the car after shooting at the driver and injuring him.

**Afghan rally in Takhar Province calls for revision of draft constitution. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)**

A number of residents in Taloqan [the capital of Takhar Province] staged a street demonstration, calling for a revision of the draft constitution. The demonstrators issued a communique at the end of the protest, calling for an Islamic Republic system, the recognition of the Uzbek language along with Dari and Pashto languages as official languages, the establishment of a parliamentary system, the withdrawal of certain representatives to the Loya Jerga, the recognition of the identities of ethnic groups and free higher education in Afghanistan. Abdorrauf, an organizer of the demonstration which included a number of ethnic Uzbeks, said that the demonstration was a reminder to human rights organizations and Afghan legislators to pay attention to the demands of the Uzbek minority.

**Taleban claim capturing district in Zabol province. (Pakistani newspaper *The News*)**

The Taleban claimed that their fighters had captured the Mizan district headquarters in Zabol province after killing eight government soldiers. They said the Taleban fighters had overpowered and killed the eight defenders loyal to Karzai's government and captured a number of vehicles and weapons. The Taleban spokesmen said their men had taken control of Mizan. The Taleban claims could not be independently confirmed.

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