



Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 25 July 2012

Information on armed conflict in Afghanistan that has occurred from April 2012 to July 2012

Paragraph 1 of the Introduction to a Draft General Report to the *NATO Parliamentary Assembly* states:

“Eleven winters since the fall of the Taliban and nine since NATO took command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghanistan remains a difficult and challenging operation for the Alliance and its partners. Real improvements have been made in the security of some areas since the ‘surge’ of 2010 and 2011. However, ISAF troop numbers will drop below 2009 levels by the end of 2012 as the transition of security responsibilities to Afghan control continues, with the security situation still fragile and reversible. While the United States, NATO and other partners have significantly degraded the ability of Afghanistan and Pakistan-based al-Qaeda to conduct terrorist attacks, the Taliban is far from defeat.” (NATO Parliamentary Assembly (5 April 2012) *Afghanistan: Towards 2014 and Beyond*)

Paragraph 2 of this report states:

“Operationally, there are reasons for optimism. ISAF has been effective in targeting enemy combatants. Violence is down in Helmand and Kandahar, the Taliban’s heartland and the most deadly provinces over the last decade. There has been less military progress in the eastern provinces bordering Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the heartland of the Haqqani Network. American forces are likely to shift from southern Afghanistan to the east at some point soon, although it is essential to consolidate the success in the south.” (ibid)

Paragraph 3 states:

“Coalition fatalities peaked in 2010 at 711 after rising for seven straight years, falling to 566 in 2011 (iCasualties, 2012). However, according to the United Nations annual report on protection of civilians in armed conflict, 3,021 civilians died in Afghanistan in 2011, up from 2,790 in 2010, with more than 185,000 Afghans displaced, 45% more than in 2010 and more than in any previous year, and an 80% increase in casualties from suicide bombings (United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan and UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2012). The overwhelming majority of civilian casualties – over 90% in January 2012 – are caused by insurgents, not ISAF, according to NATO. Civilian deaths caused by ISAF decreased by 65% in January 2012 compared to January 2011.” (ibid)

A report published by the *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, in a section titled “The level of real world military progress the US, ISAF, and the

ANSF has made against the insurgents to date, and can make through 2014”, states:

“Prior to 2012, security incidents had undergone a sustained year-on-year increase since at least 2005, a result of both growing insurgent strength and a steady increase in ISAF and ANSF troop levels and effort. ISAF claims that the US, ISAF, and ANSF have made major military progress in the last two years, and have halted and reversed the insurgents’ ‘momentum.’ While some of these claims are exaggerated, it does appear that since mid or late 2011 there has been a year-over-year decrease in the number of insurgent attacks. Sources often skeptical of ISAF reporting, including the UN and the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, have for the first time reported a similar drop in security incidents, particularly in the first months of 2012. The latest Department of Defense semi-annual report to Congress was issued on April 27, 2012 and quoted ISAF statistics that showed: ‘Security incidents from October 2011 through March 2012 decreased by 15 percent compared to the corresponding period last year. Notably, data reflects nine straight months (since July 2011) of year-over-year (YoY) decreases in security incidents.’ It also said that, ‘Enemy Initiated Attacks [EIAs] – which, unlike security incidents, do not include potential or attempted IED attacks – were also down 16 percent from October 2011 through March 2012 in comparison to the corresponding period last year. Since May 2011, each month has seen fewer enemy EIAs than the corresponding month from the previous year.’” (Center for Strategic & International Studies (19 June 2012) *Afghanistan from 2012-2014: Is A Successful Transition Possible?*, p.6)

A *Reuters AlertNet* report refers to civilian casualties in early 2012 as follows:

“After five years of rising deaths, civilian casualties in Afghanistan dropped 20 percent in the first four months of the year, the United Nations said, a rare piece of good news as foreign combat forces prepare to pull out by the end of 2014. The killing of civilians has soured the feelings of many ordinary Afghans towards foreign forces and has been a constant strain on ties between the Afghan government and its Western backers in the increasingly unpopular war. ‘There are several elements behind this ... there was perhaps less fighting in the first four months,’ Jan Kubis, the U.N. special envoy to Afghanistan, said late on Thursday. ‘Secondly, indeed, the pro-government forces and notably the international military are taking efforts to reduce civilian casualties. Unfortunately there have been, but they take measures,’ the former Slovakian foreign minister told Reuters. Kubis declined to give the number of people killed and injured in the January-April period but said the figure would be published before a meeting in Chicago later this month when NATO leaders discuss funding for the Afghan security forces. The 20 percent decline was from the same period a year earlier.” (Reuters AlertNet (11 May 2012) *Civilian deaths in Afghanistan fall 20 percent, says UN*)

A *UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office* report, in a section headed “Violence Levels”, states:

“The effects of the winter have now completely subsided. An early end to the poppy harvest has allowed insurgents to rejoin the fight earlier than in previous years and in June nationwide recorded violence levels were higher than figures reported for June 2011. Nationally, Combined Force (ANSF and ISAF) operations continue at a high tempo, particularly in the south, south

west and east which have experienced the greatest number of violent incidents.” (UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (28 June 2012) *Afghanistan Monthly Progress Report: June 2012*)

A *Civil-Military Fusion Centre* global review document, in a section titled “Afghanistan”, states:

“The insurgency had, earlier in 2012, primarily undertaken isolated attacks on small units and bases, ISAF noted. However, a series of coordinated attacks took place in Kabul and in several provinces starting on 15 April, targeting western embassies, ISAF headquarters and other targets in Kabul. In other parts of the country, gunmen attacked government buildings in Logar province, the airport in Jalalabad city of Nangarhar province and a police facility in Gardez, the capital of Paktia province. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks, saying they comprised the start of their ‘spring offensive’. Some insurgents used IEDs to initiate their attacks.” (Civil-Military Fusion Centre (22 June 2012) *Improvised Explosive Devices: A Global Review March, April & May 2012*, p.2)

An *Agence France Presse* report states:

“A suicide truck bomber attacked a US-run base on Friday, sparking clashes that killed up to 15 people in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border, officials said. NATO's US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said none of its personnel was killed in the attack in Khost province, a Taliban flashpoint that borders Pakistan. The Taliban militia, which is leading a 10-year insurgency against foreign troops and the Kabul government, claimed responsibility for the attack.” (Agence France Presse (1 June 2012) *Afghanistan: Attack on US base kills 14 in Afghanistan: NATO*)

A *Christian Science Monitor* report states:

“A twin suicide bombing in Kandahar, Afghanistan’s second largest city, left at least 22 people dead and as many as 50 injured on Wednesday in one of the deadliest bombings so far this summer. A motorcycle bomber detonated himself in an area where truckers gather several miles from the main international military base in the South. When people began responding to help the injured, another suicide bomber detonated himself causing more casualties. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, which they described as aimed at a NATO convoy, and denied reports from Afghan police and government officials that only civilians were killed and wounded. The incident comes after the first part of this year saw lower levels of violence compared with the same period last year. Even if security forces manage to keep violence trending downward, officials say that it is difficult to stop assassinations and suicide bombings like today’s as long as there are even a handful of motivated insurgents.” (Christian Science Monitor (6 June 2012) *Suicide bombings in Afghanistan highlight difficult task ahead for US, NATO*)

A *BBC News* report states:

“France says four of its soldiers have been killed and five others wounded in an attack in eastern Afghanistan. The Taliban said one of their suicide bombers carried out the attack on a Nato convoy in Kapisa province. Several Afghan civilians were also wounded. President Francois Hollande said he

'shared the grief of the families'. After his election last month, he announced French combat troops would leave Afghanistan by the end of 2012, two years before the main Nato pullout. Violence has risen across the country in recent weeks, with the Taliban targeting both the Afghan forces and the 130,000 foreign troops remaining in the country." (BBC News (9 June 2012) *French troops killed by Taliban*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report states:

"Afghan police say 50 suspected Taliban militants have been killed since early on June 11 in what they described as security 'clearance' operations. The Afghan Interior Ministry said joint operations involving the Afghan National Army and NATO-led coalition forces left 30 armed militants dead in the provinces of Baghlan, Logar, Ghazni, Kandahar, and Zabul. The Afghan National Police said its officers discovered and defused roadside bombs and an explosives-rigged motorcycle in Badakhshan, Nimroz, and Badghis provinces. In Helmand Province, Sangin district police chief Mohammad Sharif told RFE/RL that 20 Taliban fighters were killed during an eight-hour battle that began when militants attacked from the nearby district of Musa Qala. Sharif said two local Afghan police were killed in that battle." (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (12 June 2012) *Afghan Officials Say 50 Taliban Killed In Joint 'Clearance' Operations*)

An *Agence France Presse* report states:

"Eleven Taliban attackers struck two Afghan and NATO bases in Kandahar province on Tuesday, while a NATO soldier was also killed in the troubled south, officials said. Seven insurgents stormed a joint Afghan-NATO base in Shah Wali Kot district at around 3:30 am (2300 GMT Monday), sparking a 30-minute gun battle that left all the attackers dead, Kandahar governor's spokesman Jawed Faisal said. NATO's US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said the attackers breached the outer perimeter of the base but no coalition soldiers were killed. But Faisal and provincial police chief General Abdul Raziq said a foreigner had been killed and two wounded, with Faisal describing the fatality as a civilian contractor. Their nationalities were unclear. Hours later, four gunmen wearing police uniforms struck a police and NATO base in Kandahar city, triggering a firefight in which four officers and the attackers were killed, Raziq said. (Agence France Presse (19 June 2012) *Afghanistan: Suicide attacks on Afghan, NATO bases in Kandahar*)

A *BBC News* report states:

"At least three policemen have been killed and six injured after militants wearing police uniforms attacked a checkpoint in the Afghan city of Kandahar, officials say. Officials said the gun battle lasted for about an hour. The attack comes one day after a Nato soldier was shot dead in Kandahar by attackers in Afghan police uniforms. The Taliban say they carried out Tuesday's attack." (BBC News (19 June 2012) *Militants kill Afghan policemen at Kandahar checkpoint*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report of an attack on a NATO-led convoy states:

“Officials say a suicide bomber has attacked a NATO-led convoy in the eastern Afghan province of Khost, killing at least 20 people. Local officials said 17 Afghans, including civilians and security forces, were killed and more than 30 others were wounded in the attack in the provincial capital, Khost. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul said three NATO service members and an Afghan interpreter were among the dead. The troops killed reportedly were Americans.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (20 June 2012) *At Least 20 Killed In Afghan Suicide Attack*)

See also an *Agence France Presse* report on this incident which states:

“A Taliban suicide bomber on a motorbike rammed an Afghan-NATO patrol in the town of Khost on Wednesday, killing 21 people, including three US soldiers, officials said. Another 37 people were wounded in the blast in the eastern town close to the border with Pakistan, where Taliban and other Islamist insurgents fighting US-led troops have strongholds, hospital officials said. It was the second major attack on NATO in Khost in three weeks. The government blamed the Taliban and a spokesman for the insurgent militia later claimed responsibility for the attack.” (Agence France Presse (20 June 2012) *Afghanistan: Taliban suicide attack hits NATO, kills 21*)

An *Amnesty International* report of a Taliban attack on a hotel states:

“On Thursday night, armed Taleban fighters stormed the Spozhmay Hotel in the Lake Qargha area near the capital, taking dozens of hotel guests and staff hostage. In the ensuing siege that lasted almost 12 hours, a fierce gun battle broke out between Taleban fighters and NATO and Afghan troops, resulting in the deaths of at least 20 people – including 15 civilians. It was the most serious single loss of civilian life in Afghanistan since the Taleban attacked Kabul’s Intercontinental Hotel a year ago, killing 22 people, again mostly civilians.” (Amnesty International (22 June 2012) *Afghanistan: Attack on hotel shows Taleban’s disregard for civilian life*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report on the killing of Afghan policemen states:

“Afghan officials say roadside bombs and a Taliban ambush have killed at least 10 Afghan police. Officials said four police were killed June 26 in the Taliban stronghold of Musa Qala in Helmand Province when a roadside bomb they were trying to defuse exploded. In the western province of Herat, officials said four police officers were killed when their patrol was ambushed on June 26.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (27 June 2012) *Taliban Attacks Kill 10 Afghan Police Officers*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report on fighting in eastern Afghanistan states:

“Officials say that Afghan forces, supported by NATO-led air strikes, have repelled an attempt by Taliban insurgents to take over a district in eastern Afghanistan. Mohammad Zarin, spokesman for the governor of Nuristan, which borders Pakistan, said 10 people were killed in the hours-long gunbattle after the suicide bombers and gunmen mounted a fierce attack in the district headquarters of Kamdesh. Kamdesh district is in a mountainous area of the province near the Pakistani border. Zarin said six police and four

civilians were killed in the ensuing fighting.” (Radio Free Europe (29 June 2012) *Ten Killed In Foiled Afghan Militant Attack*)

See also an *Agence France Presse* report on this incident which states:

“Hundreds of Taliban fighters stormed a remote district in eastern Afghanistan on Friday, sparking a fierce 12-hour battle in which 10 people were killed, including four civilians, an official said. Afghan security forces fought off the attack in Kamdush district of Nuristan province, which began in the early hours of Friday morning, with the help of NATO air strikes, provincial spokesman Mohammad Zarin told AFP. Zarin said more than 20 militants -- who he said had infiltrated the district from across the border in Pakistan -- were killed in the counter-attack. ‘More than 20 insurgents were killed and as many injured in the counter attack, their bodies still lay in the battlefield,’ he said.” (Agence France Presse (29 June 2012) *Taliban storm eastern Afghan district, killing 10*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report on a suicide car bomb attack states:

“Afghan officials say that a suicide car-bomb attack in southern Afghanistan has killed at least seven civilians and injured more than 20. Ahmad Jawed Faisal, the spokesman for the governor of Kandahar Province, said the blast went off in Kandahar city near the entrance to Kandahar University, which is located about 2 kilometers from a major U.S. military base. He said all of the casualties were civilians.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2 July 2012) *Afghan Car Bomb Kills At Least Seven*)

See also *Agence France Presse* report which states:

“A suicide car bomb attack outside a university in southern Afghanistan on Monday killed at least seven civilians and wounded more than 20, officials said. The attack happened around 7:00 pm (1430 GMT) in Kandahar city in front of Kandahar University, around two kilometres (a mile) from a major US military base, provincial police chief General Abdul Razaq told AFP. ‘This evening a suicide car bomb exploded near Kandahar university, killing seven civilians and wounding 23 others.’ he said. The provincial governor’s spokesman Jawed Faisal confirmed the death toll and said most of the victims were Afghans working at the US base, which was once the compound of Taliban leader Mullah Omar.” (Agence France Presse (2 July 2012) *Afghanistan: Afghan suicide car bomb kills at least seven: officials*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report on the murder of three NATO soldiers states:

“Britain has announced that the three NATO soldiers who were shot dead in Afghanistan by a man wearing an Afghan police uniform were British. The shooting occurred at a checkpoint in southern Helmand Province. The British Defense Ministry said the soldiers were part of a police advisory team that had visited the checkpoint to conduct a shura, or meeting of village elders. The statement said a man wearing the uniform of the Afghan National Civil Order Police opened fire with a small arm as the soldiers were leaving the checkpoint, killing them. The deaths bring to at least 26 the number of killings so far this year involving Afghan security forces attacking their NATO allies,

and raises to 422 the number of British troops killed in Afghanistan since 2001.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2 July 2012) *U.K. Soldiers Killed By Attacker In Afghan Police Uniform*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report deaths resulting from roadside bombs states:

“At least 35 have been killed in roadside bombs and insurgent attacks in Afghanistan in what is being called one of the most violent days in the country for months. NATO said a bomb killed six of its soldiers in the east, without elaborating. NATO did not give the nationalities of the soldiers, but AFP quoted a U.S. official as saying all six had been American. Earlier, an insurgent attack in the south killed one foreign soldier. Afghan officials said 28 Afghan civilians and police had been killed in southern Kandahar and Helmand provinces.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (8 July 2012) *At Least 35 Killed In Afghan Violence*)

See also an *Agence France Presse* report which states:

“Roadside bombs killed 18 civilians travelling in three vehicles in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar province close to the Pakistan border Sunday, police said. ‘The first blast hit a minivan with around 20 people on board,’ provincial police chief General Abdul Raziq told AFP. ‘A tractor came to pick up the bodies and injured people but a second explosion hit it too and altogether 14 people, including five women, were killed and nine wounded,’ he said. A third civilian vehicle was hit by another roadside bomb in the same district hours later, killing four, including two women, he said. He blamed the attacks on Taliban insurgents, hardline Islamists who have been waging a decade-long campaign to topple the government of President Hamid Karzai, which is backed by 130,000 NATO troops. The deaths come a day after bomb blasts and a rocket attack in southern Afghanistan killed 11 civilians, including at least four children, in the space of 24 hours. For the past five years the number of civilians killed in the war has risen steadily, reaching a record 3,021 in 2011 -- the vast majority caused by insurgents, according to UN figures.” (Agence France Presse (8 July 2012) *Roadside bombs kill 18 civilians in Afghanistan*)

An *Associated Press* report on the killing of civilian contractors states:

“A person wearing an Afghan national security force uniform turned his weapon Sunday against civilian contractors with the U.S.-led military coalition, killing three. In other incidents, five NATO service members were killed in roadside bombings over the past two days. NATO said the attack on the civilian coalition workers occurred in western Afghanistan but disclosed few other details. The gunman was killed during the incident, which is still being investigated. No further information about the civilians who died was released. Afghan security forces or militants dressed in their uniforms have been killing a rising number of coalition forces, but they have not been specifically targeting contractors working for the coalition. So far this year, 26 foreign troops have been killed in this type of attacks.” (Associated Press (22 July 2012) *5 NATO troops killed in Afghanistan*)

An article published by the *Wall Street Journal* states

“As of Tuesday, July 24, 2012, at least 1,921 members of the U.S. military had died in Afghanistan as a result of the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, according to an Associated Press count. The AP count is four less than the Defense Department's tally, last updated Monday at 10 a.m. EDT. At least 1,598 military service members have died in Afghanistan as a result of hostile action, according to the military's numbers.” (Wall Street Journal (24 July 2012) *US military deaths in Afghanistan at 1,921*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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.

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