

Chronology of Events in Afghanistan, August 2002*

August 1

Pashtuns protest against Afghan leader Karzai. (Reuters)

Hundreds of Afghans loyal to local commander Padshah Khan Zadran protested in the eastern city of Khost against President Hamid Karzai's support for the Northern Alliance. The Pashto-speaking protestors accused Karzai, himself a Pashtun, of leaning towards the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance and demanded his resignation. They also demanded the removal of the men Karzai appointed as governors of eastern Paktia and Khost provinces, Raz Mohammad Dalili and Mohammad Hakim Taniwal. The protesters were supporters of Zadran, a powerful Pashtun commander, who was sacked as governor of Paktia by Karzai earlier this year amid local opposition. Since then Zadran, who claims a fighting force of 3,000 men, has occupied the governor's house in neighbouring Khost province and openly opposed Karzai's rule. It was the second day of protest by Zadran's supporters, all of whom gathered at the governor's house before starting their rally. "We will continue these protests until the Northern Alliance gives up control of Paktia and Khost provinces," Zadran told, accusing Karzai of going out of his way to accommodate the Northern Alliance. Zadran also complained about changes made by the central government in the army's 25th Division, command of which was taken away from Zadran's brother Kamal Khan.

Zadran, a strong local ally of the United States in its war against Taliban remnants and al Qaeda, is wanted by Karzai for the killing of residents of Gardez, the capital of Paktia. After his removal as governor, soldiers loyal to Zadran fired dozens of rockets at Gardez, killing several civilians.

Afghan Islamic Press news agency report on the same news [on August 5]: A member of the national council of Khost, Ghazi Nawaz Tani stated: "The demonstrations were not in support of Padshah Khan Zadran but were undertaken for the rights of the people of Paktia and for the arrest of the murderers of Haji Abdol Qadir [former Vice president of the Transitional Authority who was assassinated in Kabul on July 6]. To avoid conflicts we demand the central government appoint the governor at the will of the people of Paktia."

Fighting between Ismail Khan (Tajik) and Mohammed Karim Khan (Pashtun) forces in Herat (Pakistan-based independent Afghan Islamic Press news agency / AIP)

Heavy fighting erupted in Ghowriyan between Ismail Khan and Mohammed Karim Khan forces on July 31. Since then, heavy fighting continues between forces of commander Ismail Khan and a Pashtun opposition commander, Mohammad Karim

* *Disclaimer: Reports contained in this document are selected from publicly available resources and edited by country experts. The information provided here is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country of origin surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim. Further information may be obtained from BO Ankara.*

Khan, in Ghowrian District situated 65 km west of Herat. A spokesman for commander Karim Khan said that the forces of Ismail Khan, accompanied by tanks, attacked Ghowrian in the morning of July 31. He accused Ismail Khan's forces of setting fire to the homes of Pashtuns, adding that the fire was so intense that a dozen of people died in the fire in their homes. Various sources report that around 50 people have been killed from both sides including ordinary people, mainly Pashtuns.

Reuters report on the same news [August 2]: Naseer Ahmad Alvi, a spokesman for Ismail Khan, stated that the attack had been ordered after reports that Karim Khan had been involved in smuggling and looting. "He is controlling the Zar Koh area, and because of his presence, a security threat has been created," Alvi said. He did not say how many fighters and civilians died in the clashes, but said Ismail Khan's forces had arrested 20 rival fighters.

August 2

Pashtun commander says he released prisoners loyal to Ismail Khan. (AIP)

Pashtun commander Amanollah Khan said that he had released Ismail Khan's prisoners at the request of the central government, however, Ismail Khan has not released his prisoners so far.

Grenade attack on UN offices. (UN Integrated Regional Information Network / IRIN)

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the UNHCR offices in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar were attacked with a grenade in the morning. Initial reports said that the bomb smashed some windows but did not cause any injuries.

Voluntary handover of weapons in Wardak province and Hazara areas. (Afghan newspaper *Arman-e Melli*)

It was reported that the nations of Wardak Province and people of the Hazara areas pledged to surrender all their weapons to the relevant departments of the Islamic Transitional Government. Interior Minister Taj Mohammad Wardak, Deputy Chairman of the Transitional Islamic State Hedayat Amin Arsala, government officials, delegations of jihadi organizations and politicians participated in this session. And in this regard they carried out their pledges that they had made in the emergency Loya Jerga.

August 3

Man threatened for working for the Transitional Authority. (Reuters)

U.N. reports say security in southern Afghanistan appears to be deteriorating because of banditry and increased activity by U.S forces searching for al Qaeda and Taliban remnants. There have been several armed robberies and murders committed in broad daylight in Kandahar recently. "It is reported Mr Azizullah had received numerous death threats on his life for working with the current Interim Government as he refused to work for the Taliban regime," a U.N. report says.

August 5

Afghan government warns commander Zadran to halt protests (Reuters)

Afghan authorities have warned local commander Padshah Khan Zadran to halt anti-government protests in his power base in the eastern city of Khost. Zadran dismissed the warnings and vowed to resist any attack by Kabul. [Official] Kabul Radio said "The state warns these criminal elements to stop their subversive activities, otherwise it would be forced to take action under the authority given to it by the Loya Jirga ". The Kabul Radio also broadcast a statement by the former Afghan King Zahir Shah saying that Zadran does not enjoy his support.

AIP report on the same news [August 6]: A member of a tribal council of Khost, Ghazi Nawaz Tanai, said, "Demonstrations have been halted temporarily in Khost because the former Minister of Borders and Tribal Affairs of the interim government of Afghanistan, Amanollah Zadran, has reached an agreement with the tribes. I am personally in touch with the head of the transitional government, Mr Hamed Karzai. " Stating that they wanted Khost, Paktia and Paktika's delegates to be represented in the transitional government, Ghazi Nawaz said that no delegation had come from the capital to negotiate with them.

August 6

UNHCR temporarily suspended repatriation activities in Islamabad (Pakistan Press International Information Services)

UNHCR temporarily suspended repatriation activities in Islamabad when an Afghan refugee set his clothes on fire and incited a crowd to throw stones at UN staff. The man, whose claim for UNHCR assistance to return to Afghanistan had been rejected because he had already received aid, was treated at a UNHCR clinic and was discharged after examination in a hospital. Disturbances followed a tightening of controls at the Islamabad Voluntary Repatriation Center to weed out refugee "recyclers"- people who have received UNHCR assistance to return to Afghanistan and then come back to Pakistan to seek further payments. UNHCR provides refugees with a travel grant to help cover the costs of transportation back to Afghanistan. The amount varies with the distance traveled and is paid on arrival at the destination inside Afghanistan. More than a fifth of those seeking travel assistance have been rejected as bogus.

Kandahar governor starts operations to capture Taleban and Al-Qa'idah (Iranian radio Voice of the Islamic Republic)

Khaled Pashtun, the spokesman for the Kandahar governor, Gul Agha Sherzai, has announced that his forces started operations in this province to hunt down the remnants of Taleban and Al-Qa'idah. These operations began following the circulation of various reports about unidentified people launching attacks on US forces in eastern and southern Afghanistan. These attacks caused serious concern and evoked feelings of insecurity among US commanders and troops in Afghanistan. Over the past few months, US commanders used local Afghan forces, especially in ground operations in different parts of Afghanistan.

August 7

Gunmen attack Afghan army post in Kabul, 15 killed (Associated Press / AP)

Gunmen assaulted a hilltop Afghan army post, touching off a running, three-hour gunbattle that killed 16 people on Kabul's southern outskirts. The firefight came as U.S. forces reported killing four men in a car in eastern Afghanistan [on August 5]. That incident was in the same area of Kunar province where Americans killed two men, and Afghan leaders said the U.S. military operation had made local people edgy and angry. The battle began about 7 a.m. when guerrillas armed with AK-47 assault rifles rushed an army post on a hill in the Bagram-i District. The army commander for Kabul, Bismullah Khan, stated that his soldiers chased the attackers as they retreated to a nearby mountain, then surrounded and killed them. His deputy, Najmuddin Khan, said the guerrillas took shelter in an excavation at the foot of the mountain slope and refused to surrender. He told government television that 12 guerrillas and three soldiers died. In addition, a wounded civilian, apparently caught in the cross fire, died en route to a hospital.

AP report on the same news on August 8: It was reported that 13 guerrillas who were killed on August 7 were detainees in National Security Department's Third Directorate detention center in Kabul. According to a statement by the Afghan Foreign Minister, 13 detainees cut through the bars of a window at the detention center and escaped around 2 a.m. After the nightly curfew was lifted at 3:30 a.m., they apparently walked to the south and around 6 a.m. were approached by soldiers from a nearby army post. The men opened fire and killed the two soldiers and wounded another. Soldiers at an adjacent army post - on a hill in the Bagram-i district - then fired on the attackers, who fled into a nearby village, where they took hostages but also met armed resistance from some villagers. At some point, the men headed for a nearby mountain. It was not clear how long they held hostages, but none was harmed during what military officials said was a three-hour running gunbattle. Journalists later visiting the scene could see, from bloodstains and other evidence, that the men were finally trapped against the wall of an excavation at the foot of the mountain slope, and killed there.

Military operation launched in Urozgan Province (Iranian Islamic Republic News Agency / IRNA)

A massive military operation for Taleban supreme commander Mola Mohammad Omar and his associates has been launched in the southern Afghan province of Urozgan after he was spotted in the area, governor of the province has said. Urozgan Governor Jan Mohammad said that his forces have information that Mola Omar has been seen in the area and Afghan troops, in collaboration with US-led coalition forces, were searching for him and his supporters. He did not disclose the name of the place. Jan said another search operation for 15 Taleban has been started in another area of the province where the Afghan intelligence sources have reported their presence.

Women's organization set up in Herat (Afghan newspaper *Etefaq-e Islam*)

The women's section of the Islamic Solidarity Council of the Afghanistan People started work in Herat. In this connection, Basira Baher Rohani explained the goals and quality of this *shura* [council]: "The rights and status of women have been diminished because of the appearance of social adversities and the unfavourable political situation of the country. Fortunately now that our country is going the way of freedom and

national convergence under the light of peace and security, we want to join hands for the reconstruction of the country on the basis of Islamic and national duties. Therefore, we decided on the women's shura as a social base. The affairs of this shura, which has administrative, cultural, service, social and hygiene commissions, and, by invitation and arrangement, literacy learning sections, are administered by its members, who are educated and professional women. This is the first stage of our work, as well as an evaluation of the life of Herat's women."

August 10

Afghan government vows to crush Zadran (Reuters)

The Afghan government vowed to use military force to crush renegade commander Padshah Khan Zadran. "We want him alive or dead," an intelligence official said of Zadran, who last week called on his supporters and fellow ethnic Pashtuns to join him in toppling the government of President Hamid Karzai. "The operation will be a test case for the government and we are serious about it, because if we don't crush this rebellion, others will follow suit," the official stated. The official said the operation would be conducted with local forces loyal to the central government. No government troops would be dispatched from Kabul, nor would the U.S. military in Afghanistan be involved. Local officials from Khost province said Zadran had set up several checkpoints staffed by armed men along the highway that links Gardez with Khost. Zadran has been on the wanted list since the rocket attack on Gardez, but he freely attended the Loya Jirga.

Pashtun demonstration in Paktia (AIP)

A demonstration is under way in Ouzai (Zadran) District in Paktia Province. According to details a number of elders and youth of "greater Paktia" [Khost, Paktia and Paktika Afghan provinces], launched a demonstration against the government in Ouzai District, Paktia Province. A local tribal leader, Ghazi Nawaz Tani, said: "The tribes of greater Paktia have gathered in the district to demand their rights from the government." The demonstrators were demanding: "1. Greater Paktia should be given full representation in the government; 2. The governors of Khost and Gardez should be transferred and Padshah Khan Zadran should be appointed; 3. The murderers of Haji Abdol Qadir should be arrested." These kind of demonstrations have been held in Khost [capital of Khost] and Sayd Karam [District, 20 km to the east of the capital of Paktia, Gardez].

Fighting between government forces and Zadran in Khost (Gulf News)

The situation in the troubled eastern Afghan provinces took a bloody turn with the blowing up of a military vehicle and violent demonstrations by supporters of the renegade Padshah Khan Zadran in Khost. Janat Khan Taniwal, spokesman of the defiant Padshah Khan Zadran, claimed that four supporters of the controversial Khost governor, Abdul Hakeem Taniwal, were killed in a shootout with the armed supporters of Zadran in the evening.

August 11

Iran forces Afghan refugees to return (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL *Iran Report*).

2.4 million Afghans have been registered in Iran and another 200,000-250,000 live there without permits. Iran and UNHCR signed an agreement setting 11 August as the deadline for unregistered and undocumented refugees to obtain exit permits, but that deadline was extended to 27 August owing to what an Interior Ministry statement termed "the deep interest shown by the Afghan refugees for repatriation." Mashhad radio on 10 August went on to report that "the disciplinary forces will find any illegal Afghan refugees and send them back to Afghanistan" after the deadline. An Interior Ministry official said that some 157,000 Afghans have gone back to their country since April. He added that this is the "best time" for them to leave because they could take all their property and up to \$1,000 worth of Iranian goods. Assadollahi also said these returnees will receive a travel grant upon arrival at their final destinations.

On 11 August, UNHCR's Kabul spokeswoman, Maki Shinohara, stated that Iranian authorities are forcing the Afghan refugees to leave. She said that 10,000 Afghans returned in the first week of August, whereas an average of 6,500 a week returned in July. Shinohara went on to say that the Iranian authorities refused to register Afghan children for school and told the refugees that if they do not return to Afghanistan they no longer will be eligible for UN assistance.

An interview by the Interior Ministry's Ahmad Husseini on 29 July supports the claims of UNHCR. In Husseini's words, "All Afghan refugees must leave Iran." The first phase of the repatriation program will deal with illegal refugees, he said. In the second phase, Afghans with residence permits who refuse to leave will be subject to "limitations." "As one of these limitations, we will increase the cost of living for Afghans, because we no longer view them as refugees, and their qualifications do not meet the conditions mentioned in the Geneva Convention. Thus, all Afghans who refuse to return to their country will be deprived of all subsidies granted to refugees. To have a job in Iran, these persons will have to obtain a work permit, and pay tax. Since the Iranian Constitution recognizes free education only for Iranian citizens, Afghans who remain in Iran will have to pay the cost of their children's education. They will not even be able to use subsidies relating to transportation, health, and other services." [Concerning Iranian women who married Afghan men], he said, "We warned Iranian families that wanted to marry their daughters to foreign citizens to be careful.... The law of Afghanistan imposes the husband's nationality on the wife.... The children of these women will also be regarded as Afghan nationals. We are giving passports to these ladies and their children to leave the country." Husseini added, "Again, I announce that Iranian citizens must avoid marrying foreigners, especially Afghan nationals."

Demonstrators in Kabul demand Culture Minister's dismissal (AIP)

At around 10 o'clock, a demonstration took place against the Information and Culture Minister, Sayd Makhdum Rahin. Approximately 200 demonstrators took part. The demonstrators said they were demonstrating because Rahin had dismissed two high-ranking officials from the ministry, Sultan Mohammad and Abdol Hafez Mansur [former head of Afghan radio and TV, dismissed in July]. The minister also removed the pictures of Ahmad Shah Masud. Abdol Hafez Mansur, the head of the radio and television, had been dismissed from his post, the Minister saying there was no place

for him in the ministry. Rahin was a member of the Northern Alliance [United Front]. During the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, Rahin was a high-ranking official in the party of Nejat-e Melli [National Liberation Front].

Reuters report on the same news: [Mansur] banned images of women singing or dancing from Kabul TV, favouring videos of Masud and his statements. Fifty three officials from the ministry protested against Mansur's sacking in an open letter to Karzai in July and demanded Makhdam's removal. Organisers said the minister had begun to purge those officials in revenge.

August 12

Two Afghans wounded as bomb explodes in music-video shop (Reuters)

Two people were wounded in a bomb explosion on at a shop selling audio and video cassettes in Khost. The explosion reportedly happened in the city's main market and both of those wounded were hit by flying objects from the shop.

August 13

Seven Afghan civilians injured in missile attack on Asadabad, Kunar (AIP)

Seven people were injured as a result of a missile attack on the provincial capital of Kunar Province. A military officer in Kunar Province stated that unknown people fired three missiles at the provincial capital which landed at Karamar village near the town in the evening.

Five killed in grenade attack in Jalalabad (AIP)

As a result of a grenade attack 25 km from Jalalabad the head of a family and his four children have been killed and two others injured. It was reported that the incident happened at night near Farm No 2 as unknown people attacked Ajam Khan's house. The security head of Jalalabad, Ajab Shah, stated that "This was not a political event." He added: "Ajam Khan owed somebody about 110,000 Pakistani rupees, equivalent to 1,800 US dollars. They had been holding a *jerga* [council - discussions to settle the matter] for some days. However, the factual grounds are not known so far and the investigations are going on." It must be said that if in the course of the *jerga* one of the sides embarks upon an attack on the other side prior to the *jerga* making its final decision, this will be regarded as a violation of the *jerga* principles. For this reason it can be said that the factual grounds of the incident are not completely clear.

UNHCR office ransacked in Ghazni (AP)

Three gunmen raided the compound of the U.N. refugee agency in the eastern Afghan city of Ghazni, stealing telecommunications equipment and looting a safe. No one was hurt when the robbers, armed with assault rifles, climbed over a fence about 8 p.m., locked the staff of seven Afghans and one foreigner in a bathroom, and ransacked the office.

August 15

Unidentified gunmen kill parents of Afghan man working for US forces (AIP)

Unidentified people have killed the parents of an Afghan man working with the American forces. According to reports, Abdol Karim and his wife were killed [at the night of August 14-15] by unidentified people in Azak Khel village, 10 km southwest

of Gardez city. The sources added that there had been no reports of any feud involving the two, but one of their sons is working with American forces as combatant. Further details are not available yet.

Afghan asylum seekers leave Pakistan for new Afghan camp (AFP)

Nearly 500 Afghan refugees who had been stranded for six months at the border with Pakistan were moved to a new camp in southern Afghanistan, UNHCR said in a statement. The refugees were the first batch of nearly 26,000 Afghans who have been languishing in the so called "waiting area" just inside Pakistan near the southwestern border town of Chaman since February. The families, totaling 466 individuals, agreed to be relocated in the newly established Zarey Dasht camp, 30 kilometers from Kandahar. The families - ethnic Pashtuns - were from the northern provinces of Faryab and Jawzjan and southern Helmand.

After heavy fighting between (Tajik) Atta and (Uzbek) Dostum forces, UN brokers truce (Reuters)

UN stated it had brokered a ceasefire between two rival Afghan commanders after eight soldiers from the two factions were killed in a clash in the north of the country [on August 10-11]. The soldiers were killed in fighting between the faction of Uzbek commander General Abdur Rashid Dostum and that of rival Tajik commander Ustad Atta in Goosfandi district of Sari Pul province. A U.N. team accompanied by the local security commission consisting of the three main factions in the area - Dostum, Ustad Atta and the Shi'ite group of Hezb-i-Wadhat - had negotiated a truce and had now retrieved the bodies. The truce took effect on [August 14] and was being respected, [according to UN]. UN said both rival factions had accepted the demilitarisation of Goosfandi bazaar, where the clash happened, and had allowed Wahdat men from a neighbouring area to take control of the dusty town. "Regarding the city of Mazar...as of this morning right now things are calm, but as you know the potential for trouble is always there," Silva said, adding that U.N had witnessed repeated small flare ups.

Afghan commander gunned down at son's wedding (Reuters and Chinese news agency Xinhua)

A top commander loyal to powerful Uzbek commander General Abdur Rashid Dostum was murdered by unidentified gunmen at his son's wedding near Mazar-i-Sharif. Ghulam Sakhi Bashi, deputy head of Dostum's 70th division, was shot during the wedding ceremony in Charbolak, about 30 km to the west of Mazar. "He had no personal enemies and we don't know why these gunmen killed him," Bashi's son said. However, many residents say the killing could have been linked to a continuing feud between supporters of Dostum and those of Tajik commander Ustad Atta for control of the north. They said Ghulam had been considering changing sides and joining Atta, who has been gradually expanding his influence in the area and now largely controls Mazar. Bashi was loyal to Dostum until 1998, when he joined the Taliban. When the Taliban fell, he rejoined Dostum.

Afghanistan revives religious police (Reuters)

The interim government in Afghanistan has revived a department similar to that of the religious police of the ousted Taliban regime. Deputy Chief Justice Fazl Ahmad Manawi stated that the Accountability Department was tasked with ensuring that Afghan Muslims "refrained from crimes such as drinking alcohol, fornication and

sodomy [homosexuality]”. Manawi said the department would be headed by a well-known former Mujahideen figure, Mohammad Mustafa, who has a degree in religious affairs, and would function under the orders of the Supreme Court. "Letters have been dispatched to all districts and provinces stating that this department works on the basis of a mandate which is to invite people for prayer and other religious rituals and to ban them from unlawful acts," Manawi said. Manawi stressed that offenders would face “gentler punishments” than under the Taliban, which stoned adulterers to death, lashed those who drank alcohol, chopped off the hands of thieves and executed murderers. The new punishments would depend on the crime, but include fines, imprisonment and lashings. Manawi said the Supreme Court would have the final say in the administering of punishments, which would not be carried out in public. Officials of the Accountability Department recently confiscated U.S. army rations containing pork on sale in some shops in Kabul and outside a key American base at Bagram. The Accountability Department has a staff of nearly 300, including 50 women who would visit schools to make sure that they observed Islamic codes.

August 17

Afghan Culture Ministry adopts new press regulations (Afghan radio Radio Afghanistan)

The Ministry of Information and Culture has adopted regulations for the high council of the ministry in charge of cultural and publication affairs. The aim of the regulations is “to create a constructive cultural and publication atmosphere, to promote the national culture and to secure the freedom of press”. Following the adoption of the regulations, the high council for cultural and publication affairs was set up within the Ministry of Information and Culture to coordinate cultural and publication activities. The council will operate in compliance with the regulations. It will also present its analyses and studies to the leadership of the ministry. The regulations have been drawn up in three chapters and 12 articles. They include general and sundry instructions for the related tasks.

Paktia tribal elders declare loyalty to government (Voice of the Islamic Republic)

The heads of tribal elders and representatives of Paktia Province have declared their loyalty to Hamed Karzai's government at a meeting that was recently held in Gardez.

August 18

Eight die in tribal shoot-out in Paktia province (Pakistani newspaper *The News*)

At least eight Afghans were killed and three others injured seriously, when two rival sub-tribes of Paktia Province started indiscriminate firing against each other. Two rival Mangal sub-tribes of Jani Khel District, about 35 kilometres from Kurram Agency, revolted against each other by opening fire that claimed eight lives from both the sides, besides injuring three others. It was reported that Khay Khel and Mian Khel tribes have been fighting over the ownership of a nearby mountain for quite some time. An Afghan truck driver carrying sophisticated weapons for Mian Khel tribe came under missile attack, as a result his vehicle blew up killing him instantly. Several armed men of Mian Khel tribe managed to arrest 30 people of their rival tribe but later released them on the intervention of local tribal jerga. The tribal jerga

comprising notables of the area managed cease-fire between the two groups and promised to get the issue resolved peacefully.

Afghans free assassination suspects (AP)

Afghan authorities, at the urging of international investigators, have released suspects held in connection with assassination of Vice President Abdul Qadir [on July 6]. An investigation conducted by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) "found no evidence linking detainees arrested with regard to the assassination ... to the crime," the ISAF statement said. It said the Afghan transitional government continued to hold an unspecified number of detainees, apparently security personnel, accused of negligence in the case. The killing last January of the aviation and tourism minister, Abdul Rahman, also remains unsolved. The ISAF statement said its investigation of the Qadir killing, conducted at Karzai's request, had been concluded and a report was submitted to the government on [August 17]. It did not identify a perpetrator, but did find critical deficiencies in the personal security system surrounding government leaders, ISAF said.

August 19

Dostum, Red Cross clean up Afghan prison (Reuters)

Afghan commander Abdul Rashid Dostum, helped by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has eased the misery of captives at Shiberghan jail who have languished there since the fall of the Taliban last year. The prison had been housing more than 1,200 allegedly former Taliban and al Qaeda fighters. On a recent visit, a Reuters team saw Afghan and Pakistani inmates crammed in the jail 20 to a cell, many still sleeping on bare stone floors and more than a dozen suffering from tuberculosis in a special ward. But there was none of the severe malnutrition that shocked visiting EU ambassador Klaus-Peter Klaiber in May into comparing conditions with the infamous Nazi death camp of Auschwitz. [Later,] prisoners were transported to the jail inside containers. General Jorabeg Muradi admits 90 to 100 died of injuries and suffocation on the journey, but independent sources say the actual number of dead could have been twice that. In Shiberghan officials admit they have no plans to try any captives, and although the government in Kabul talks of further releases, there is some reluctance to let many more go. "We have some reports that some of those released (from jails around the country) are active once more against the Islamic Transitional Government," Amrullah Salili, spokesman for National Directorate of Security, said.

August 23

Pashtun families on Kandahar's outskirts left out in the cold (AP)

Some 200-300 Pashtun families are now living in a bombed-out compound of former shops on the outskirts of Kandahar. Because they don't meet the international legal definition of 'refugees', they cannot receive help from UNHCR and other foreign aid groups. [It is estimated that] some 6,000 Pashtun families have moved into the province after being displaced by violence.

August 24

Blast closes only girls' school in Ghazni (Reuters)

A bomb attack blamed on remnants of the former Taliban regime has closed the only girl's school in the town of Ghazni. Nobody was hurt in the blast, which the residents said happened about a week ago, but a few classrooms of the Jaan Maliks school were badly damaged. It was reported that, hours after the explosion, leaflets had appeared in the town warning women that they would be killed if the school was reopened. [According to witness reports,] "So now the school is shut as women students and lecturers are too frightened to open it".

Jamaat-al-Dawat member arrested in Kunar (Reuters).

US forces have arrested five Afghans in the eastern province of Kunar bordering Pakistan. Among the arrested was Haji Rohullah - a member of the Loya Jirga or tribal council - and two military commanders of the local administration. It was reported that Rohullah belonged to Jamaat-al-Dawat, a group alleged to have close links with Arab militants.

August 25

Garbuz tribal leader arrested in Khost (AIP)

American soldiers have arrested a tribal leader and his three sons in [the eastern] Khost [Province]. Shahbaz Khan Garbuz, the leader of Garbuz tribe, and his three sons were arrested in Shykhmir area, 25 km southwest of Khost. Official sources in Khost have also confirmed the report. But, there is not further details available on the arrest. Shahbaz Khan Garbuz is a prominent leader of the Garbuz tribe and considered to be an influential figure in the area.

Northern Afghan rival groups vow to settle disputes after UN, EU mediation (Voice of the Islamic Republic)

Rival Afghan groups in the north of Afghanistan which have been engaged in clashes over the last week have promised to end their conflicts. UN spokesman David Singh said the commanders of disputed groups assured the security commission of Mazar-e Sharif and the delegation dispatched from the national security council of Afghanistan that they would end their confrontations. The clashes, which took place almost 18 km west of the city of Mazar-e Sharif between supporters of Gen. Abdorrashid Dostum and Gen. Atta Mohammad, a local commander [of Military Corps No 7], resulted in the deaths of five people from the two sides. The EU special envoy for Afghanistan said at a meeting with Dostum, Atta and other local authorities that if the factional fighting and rivalries continue and security is lacking in the north of Afghanistan, the EU will suspend its investment and reconstruction assistance.

Girl loses hand in Kabul bomb blast (Reuters & AP)

A small bomb exploded in a drainage ditch in front of a U.N. guesthouse, injuring two Afghan civilians. A second explosion between two abandoned buildings later that night near Kabul's Intercontinental Hotel caused no injuries. No arrests have been reported in connection with the recent bombings, though Afghan police did report discovering a bomb-making lab [on August 24].

14-year-old girl lost a hand and suffered other injuries when the bomb went off in the north of the city. Locals said the device was shaped like a child's toy. Police stated that they suspected the bomb was planted in the apartment.

Herat governor says foreign women in Afghanistan should observe dress code (Afghan Herat TV)

[Herat Governor] Ismail Khan met the female employees of foreign organizations at the Foreign Affairs Department's guest house. During the visit, Mohammadollah Afzali, head of Foreign Affairs Department in Herat, expressed the aim of the visit in a speech. Then, Amir of Southwest Area Ismail Khan placed emphasis on observing the Islamic dress code and keeping appearance according to Islamic and Afghan customs.

August 28

Iranian police arrest Afghan refugees after repatriation deadline (Reuters)

Police in the Iranian capital said they would start to round up Afghan refugees on August 28 after a deadline for them to report for repatriation passed. Iran had set an August 27 deadline for more than two million Afghan refugees to report themselves to the authorities to be repatriated. "Police will round up Afghans who illegally work in Tehran and vicinities," the official Hamid Ahadi told. More than a third of Afghan refugees in Iran live in the sprawling, over-populated capital. Tehran authorities have in the past months been trying to identify them, as in many other parts of the country.

Jalalabad airport and eastern part of Gardez comes under rocket attack (Voice of the Islamic Republic)

Jalalabad airport came under rocket attack in the morning. At least three rockets were fired. Two rockets landed 200-300 metres away from the airport and the third landed in Khoshgband village. There have been no reports yet on casualties.

A rocket hit the eastern part of Gardez [capital of Paktia], between the US forces base and Gardez city, but it was not clear whether the aim of the rocket attack was the US base or city of Gardez.

On the other hand, a rocket landed near the Darunta dam, 10 km to the west of Jalalabad, and it was not clear whether the target of the rocket attack was the Darunta dam or the military units based nearby. The residents of the area say this is the first time a rocket lands so close to the dam.

August 29

Herat governor criticizes Afghans returning from abroad (Voice of Islamic Republic).

The governor of western Afghanistan's Herat Province has criticized some Afghans returning from abroad "who know a few words of English and wear a tie" for "calling one of our best mojaheds a 'commander' and themselves enlightened and reformers". He said, "Where were those who call our mojahed 'commander' during the suffering of Afghanistan and what did they who now spread such ideas among our people and who want to destroy the principles of Islam and the jihad of our people do for this country?" Khan also criticized the central government for sending three Afghan women to Japan to take part in taekwondo competitions. He said: "It is a shame and

far from Afghanistan's tradition to send women to participate in some worldwide game. Such things destroy the principals of our 23 years of holy war". He said he was not against sports for men and women but they should be played under Islamic structures. Khan said that young people had to be taught to defend their homeland and fight their countries "enemies and aggressors" and highlighted the role of religious authorities in training and preaching the importance of jihad and martyrdom.

August 31

Afghan court backs TV, radio restrictions in Kabul (Reuters)

The Supreme Court of Afghanistan backed a decision by state-run media to ban women from singing on the radio and prevent Indian films from being aired in the capital. "We have no opposition to the watching of films, but we totally oppose the idea of half-naked scenes or romantic films being broadcast and women's songs being aired," Fazl Ahmad Manawi, deputy head of the Supreme Court, stated. The ban on Indian films and women's songs was ordered this week by Engineer Ishaq, the head of Kabul TV and Radio. Manawi also said state television and radio stations in other parts of the country needed to follow Kabul TV and Radio in banning certain programmes. He said religious scholars who form the consultative body of the Supreme Court should be consulted about media programming throughout the country, including in cities like Kandahar in the south and Mazar-i-Sharif in the north. Media in both cities have aired programmes deemed "liberal" by Manawi.

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