

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

### **June 1**

#### **Afghans told to close schools in Hayatabad. (Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*).**

The town council-III of Hayatabad (Pakistan) has verbally ordered Afghan refugees to close their education institutions and stop other commercial activities in residential areas of Hayatabad township in a week time. Around 12,000 refugee children are enrolled in private schools run by Afghan nationals.

### **June 2**

#### **Afghans threatened for expressing views on constitution. (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network / IRIN).**

The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and the United Nations expressed concern over a reported rise in the number of threats and incidences of harassment against people in the provinces expressing their political views on the country's new constitution. "We have received reports of increasing threats, physical aggression and even arbitrary detentions," Nader Naderi, an AIHR Commissioner, said. According to the AIHRC, some factions and armed groups in the provinces have been threatening citizens who have publicly expressed their political opinions and/or have criticised the stance or behaviour of government representatives, official institutions or individuals known to be affiliated to powerful political groups.

#### **Three civilians killed in bomb blast in Kandahar Province after major combat with Taleban. (Afghan newspaper *Erada*).**

Three civilians have been killed in a bomb explosion in Panjwai District of Kandahar Province. The explosion rocked a bus. The authorities in Kandahar have not yet said anything about the cause of the incident and have not arrested anyone in this connection.

The explosion took place three days after the fighting between government forces and the remnants of the Taleban in the border city of Spin Boldak. According to government authorities in Kandahar, 40 Taleban and six government soldiers were killed during the fighting. Reports state that the Kandahar authorities are holding talks with local commanders to open a joint front against the remnants of the Taleban.

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These forces are said to be tribal militias who are not considered government soldiers, but it is expected that Kandahar officials will provide them with some incentives.

**Three dead in Afghan fighting in Spin Boldak. (British Broadcasting Corporation / BBC).**

Two Afghan soldiers and a civilian interpreter have been killed in south-eastern Afghanistan in a clash between rival factions loyal to the government. The fighting broke out in the Karar Gah area near the town of Spin Boldak. An Afghan police official said the fighting lasted several hours and only ended when US troops intervened. The civilian was working for the US forces. The clashes were between forces loyal to the district commander, Gud Fida Mohammad, and the commander controlling Spin Boldak, Abdul Razzaq.

**Afghan politician escapes attempt on life. (Iranian radio *Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).**

The house of Azizollah Lodin, an Afghan political and social personality from Herat has been attacked. A hand grenade was hurled at the house of Azizollah Lodin, slightly injuring his driver, smashing the windows and partly damaging the sitting room of his house.

**June 4**

**Over 100 women civil servants sacked. (IRIN).**

112 women were sacked by the Women's Affairs Ministry. They were dismissed following a government re-evaluation of the administrative structure of some ministries, according to Women's Affairs Ministry officials.

**Afghan news agency Hindokosh report on the same news on June 11:** Ms Tajwar Kakar, the deputy minister for administrative affairs of the Women's Affairs Ministry, said the cutbacks in the structure of the Ministry was totally unfair. Ms Kakar said that, before the cutback in the structure, forms were distributed to identify ethnic origins.

**June 5**

**School set on fire in Wardag Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).**

A school has been set on fire by unknown people in Wardag Province. An official of Wardag Province said that a girls' school, which was recently reconstructed by UNICEF but was not operating, was set on fire by unidentified people. This is the third school to be set on fire in Wardag Province and twelfth in southern, southeastern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan.

**Afghan police release 25 women arrested on "moral corruption" charges in Mazar. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh).**

Mazar-i Sharif police raided a number of houses of the people in the city on June 3, beating and punching women and arrested 25 of them. A police source said the women had been accused of moral corruption. It was reported that some of the women

were released later and the detainees have been forced to promise to leave the city at the earliest.

### **June 7**

#### **Afghan military sets up extra checkpoints in Khost Province. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh).**

The military have set up new security forces in Khost Province. Mr Abdol Ghafar Taniwal, the commander of the frontier forces in Khost Province said that hundreds of military personnel have been deployed to control border highways in addition to setting up new checkpoints in order to control the entrance and activities of armed opposition. He added that Khost border was technically closed at the moment. Khost authorities have issued a statement previously for foreigners, instructing them to register their names and the number plates of their vehicles at the relevant offices.

### **June 11**

#### **Nine Afghans killed in sectarian attack by Hazaras in Uruzgan province. (Reuters).**

At least nine Sunni Muslims have been killed and six wounded by followers of the Shi'ite Muslim Hazaras in the central Afghan province of Uruzgan. Jan Mohammad Khan said the victims, all Pashtuns, were ambushed while traveling through a pass to the north of Terin Kot, the provincial capital of Uruzgan. "Apart from the nine dead, six other people have been wounded in the incident," Khan said.

#### **Two killed in fresh clash in Balkh Province. (Reuters).**

At least two civilians were killed and another wounded in fresh fighting between forces loyal to rival factions in Northern Afghanistan. Two people died in shelling between forces from the Jamiat-e-Islami party of Ustad Atta Mohammad and those loyal to Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum in Sholgara district, south of Mazar-i-Sharif, they said. Officials from both factions confirmed the clash but declined to discuss it in any detail. They said a team representing both groups was on its way to Sholgara to persuade two commanders to halt the fighting, which continued through the night.

### **June 15**

#### **Unidentified people set fire to girls' school in Kandahar Province. (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran).**

A girls' school has been set on fire in Arghandab District of Kandahar Province and 500 Holy Korans also caught fire in the incident. Up to 500 girls used to study at the school.

**June 16**

**Iran, Afghanistan, UNHCR sign new Afghan repatriation program. (Iranian Islamic Republic News Agency / IRNA).**

The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan and the UNHCR signed in Tehran a joint program on repatriation of Afghan refugees. The joint agreement signed between Afghan Deputy Minister of Repatriation and Returnees' Affairs, Mohammad Naeem Ghiaci, Iranian Advisor to interior Ministry and Director General of the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs and UNHCR Representative in Iran Philippe Lavanchy. The joint program is a continuation of agreement of 2002 between the three parties to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees in Iran. Over four hundred thousand refugees have chosen to go back to Afghanistan in the past twelve months. The new joint program will be in force until March 2005, and UNCHR, Iran and Afghanistan aim to help repatriate half a million Afghans in the first half of the program (ie. before the end of March 2004). The document emphasizes the voluntary nature of the repatriation and grants UNHCR free access to refugees both in Iran and upon their return in Afghanistan. UNHCR will continue to provide refugees with medical assistance and transportation from Voluntary Repatriation Centres in Iran across the border, as well as financial help for onward travel within Afghanistan. UNHCR teams in Afghanistan run several programs to help with reintegration, for example, supplying returnees with shelter-building kits, working tools, and WFP food aid.

**Afghan official survives assassination attempt. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).**

The vehicle of an official from Khost Province has been hit by a remote controlled bomb. The deputy head of Khost Province's Hajj and Endowment survived the assassination attempt but his vehicle was damaged. The bomb was planted on a road outside Mazari town of Khost Province.

**June 17**

**UN warns of further suicide attacks in Kabul. (Agence France Presse / AFP).**

The United Nations issued a warning of further suicide bombings in the Afghan capital following a deadly attack on German peacekeeping troops. Possible targets include high-ranking Afghan government officials, the US ambassador and top commanders from the US military or the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), it said. Interior Minister Ali Ahmad Jalali also warned that terrorists were being trained to carry out further suicide attacks against foreign soldiers in Afghanistan following the car bombing which killed four German ISAF peacekeepers on June 7.

**Six killed in Afghan tribal clash over land. (AFP).**

At least six people were killed and 12 others injured in a dispute over land between two Afghan tribes. A dispute over pasture in the mountains of Khost province between members of the Niazi and Piraan tribes turned violent, resulting in the deaths, it said, without giving further details of when the clash occurred. Disputes over land

are common in Afghanistan as refugees return to find others have taken over their farms and pastures.

**Afghan cable TV stations closed down in Kandahar. (Afghan newspaper *Tolu-e Afghan*).**

A meeting has been held of TV network officials and the *Ariana TV* station in Kandahar at the Information and Culture Department of Kandahar. They discussed the TV broadcasting programmes of cable TV networks at the meeting. Abdol Majid Babi, the head of the Information and Culture Department of Kandahar, spoke about the present responsibilities of the cable TV networks and gave instructions to them. At the meeting the following TV channels were asked not to broadcast any more: *Third, Zien, Z English, ZM, GM, MM* and *MM2*.

**Humanitarian NGOs warn of a security crisis. (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL *Afghanistan Report*).**

Nearly 80 humanitarian, human rights, and conflict-prevention groups released a statement on June 17 entitled "Afghanistan: A Call for Security" in which they urged the United Nations and NATO to expand the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) mandate to locations and transportation routes beyond Kabul, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) reported. The report urges NATO, which is due to assume the command of the ISAF in August 2003, to provide support for a comprehensive program of "disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of militia forces" that are not under the control of the Afghan Transitional Administration.

**June 18**

**Afghan newspaper shut down, two journalists arrested. (US radio *Voice of America* / VOA).**

Afghanistan has shut down a local newspaper on charges it ran articles blaspheming Islam. According to the Afghan Information Ministry, stories in the weekly publication *Aftab* questioned Islam and the Koran thus violating the country's press laws. Copies of the paper have been confiscated and its editor arrested.

**VOA report on the same news on June 19:** The United Nations and Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission have expressed concern about the arrests of two Afghan journalists for publishing newspaper articles authorities say blasphemed Islam. The journalists, chief editor of the weekly publication *Aftab*, Sayed Mahdawi, and his deputy Ali Riza Payam, were arrested on orders from the Attorney General's office.

**Afghan newspaper *Erada* report on the same news on June 24:** Minister of Information and Culture, changing the stance of the government authorities towards the detained officials of *Aftab* weekly, said that Mir Hosayn Mahdawi, editor in chief, and Ali Reza Payman, secretary in chief of this publication, detained last week, are longer detainees. They are under police protection to prevent possible revenge.

**Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL *Afghanistan Report* on the same news:** Afghanistan's Chief Justice Fazl Hadi Shinwari said on June 24 that the Supreme Court "cannot accept anyone's demands" and that the two will be tried

according with the rules of the *Shari'ah* (Islamic jurisprudence). Shinwari said that the Afghan judiciary is "free and independent" and will act as such, adding that the *Dar al-Ifta'*, a religious body which issues edicts, will issue a fatwa concerning the case of *Aftab* and would present it to the lower courts of Kabul Province. He added that in Afghanistan no anti-Islamic publication would be tolerated.

**One killed and four injured in fighting in Herat Province. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh).**

Fighting has broken out in Shindand District of Herat Province once again. It was reported that forces under the command of Herat governor Esmail Khan attacked the forces of commander Amanollah Zarkohi in Shindand District of Herat Province. Esmail Khan's forces retreated after fighting. During their retreat, Esmail Khan's forces planted mines. One of the commanders under Amanollah was killed by land mines, and four of his fighters were injured.

**June 22**

**Three injured in attack on civilian bus in Kapisa Province. (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran).**

Some unidentified armed men have attacked a civilian bus in Kapisa Province. A security official from the province said that the bus was attacked by unidentified armed men as it was on its way from Kapisa. A total of three people were seriously injured due to the attack. He added that the region's security personnel succeeded in capturing two culprits. Describing the attack as a personal dispute, the security official said that the process of disarmament and collection of arms from irresponsible and unofficial figures should be considerably stepped up, otherwise the lives of locals will be in danger in every part and region of the province.

**June 23**

**Three die as commanders clash in Helmand Province. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh).**

Clash between two regional commanders in Helmand Province leaves three dead. In a clash between two regional commanders named Ezatollah and Modir Samad in Aynak village, west of Lashkargah city, provincial capital of Helmand Province, three fighters were killed and four were injured. The factors behind the clash are not yet clear, but eight people have been arrested in this connection.

**June 24**

**Afghan Taleban leader reported as setting up Resistance Council. (Pakistani newspaper *The News*).**

Afghan Taleban leader Mola Mohammad Omar has set up a leadership council to organize resistance to the US-led coalition. The 10 men identified by Omar as members of the *Rahbari Shura* [Leadership Council] included former Taleban military commanders. Most are veterans of the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviet

occupation troops during the 1980s while a few became known subsequently while fighting the Northern Alliance and other anti-Taleban groups. Except Jalaluddin Haqqani, who belongs to Khost province, and Sayforrahman Mansur, from adjacent Paktia, the remaining eight members of the Leadership Council hail from Kandahar, Urozgan, Helmand and other southwestern provinces where the Taleban emerged in the autumn of 1994. The Leadership Council includes Mola Dadollah, the one-legged military commander who refused to surrender when several thousand trapped Taleban fighters gave themselves up to the Northern Alliance troops in Konduz and managed to escape to Kandahar just before the fall of the Taleban regime in December 2001. Former Taleban army chief Akhtar Mohammad Osmani and his namesake Akhtar Mohammad Mansur, who commanded the Kandahar airbase during the Taleban rule, have also been appointed members of the leadership council. Former Taleban Defence Minister Mola Obaydollah, Kandahar's ex-security chief Hafez Abdol Majid and former Nimroz Province governor Mola Mohammad Rasul were also included in the leadership council. So were Mola Beradar, a confidant of Mola Omar and former Herat Province governor, and Mola Abdorrazaq Nafez, who served as the Taleban corps commander in northern Afghanistan. The omission of former Taleban Interior Minister and senior military commander Mola Abdorrazaq Akhond from the leadership council was intriguing.

**Major tribes continue to clash leaving one dead in Paktia Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).**

Fierce fighting which flared up between two major tribes in Paktia province on June 22 continued. Zazai and Moqber, which can be described as some of the major tribes in the southeastern Afghan regions, are clashing over land property. The clashes that erupted in the Dand area of Patan District have left one dead and three others have been injured, some regional authorities said. But regional sources have reported more casualties inflicted by the clashes. Confirming the report, Gen Khiyal Baz, the commander of Military Corps No 25 of the region, said that some people from the Moqber tribe had carried out an attack on areas which were under the control of the Zazai tribe in Dand area of Patan District. Moqber tribe also moved into some houses belonging to the Zazai tribe and want to bring the region under their authority. The attacks resulted in the eruption of clashes between the tribes. He said that the Moqber tribe had also targeted the administration compound of Patan District and caused some damage to the building.

**June 27**

**Three security guards injured in grenade attack on cinema in Helmand Province. (*Afghan news agency Hindokosh*).**

Three security guards, assigned to maintain the security of a cinema in Lashkargah city, capital of Helmand Province, were injured when some unidentified people threw a hand grenade at the audience at the end of the film at 22:00 hours.

**June 28**

**Ethnic intolerance, language problem reasons for Afghan recruits quitting training. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh).**

A group of young recruits sent from southern provinces to Kabul for military training in the Afghan national army have left the army training bases and returned to their provinces. A spokesman for the Kandahar governor, Khalid Pashton, said: "A large number of soldiers sent from Kandahar province and some adjacent provinces to the Kabul garrison for military training have returned to Kandahar and its adjacent provinces because of linguistic problems and inability to adapt to the conditions in Kabul." He said those soldiers who were sent from Pashto-speaking areas in southern Afghanistan to Kabul a few months ago could not understand military lessons which were taught in the Dari language. Kandahar governor's spokesman said: "Another reason for the return of soldiers from Kabul to their provinces was that they were offended by some officers and commanders during military training and were faced with ethnic intolerance."

**June 29**

**UNHCR relocates Afghan refugees from Pakistan camp. (Chinese news agency Xinhua).**

UNHCR is relocating Afghan refugees from a makeshift camp just inside the Pakistan border, while those refusing to leave would be considered as illegal migrants. The voluntary relocation of Afghans stuck at the Chaman camp, near the southern Afghan border town of Spin Boldak, will begin on June 30 to move over 10,000 refugees in some 2,400 families to a camp in the Afghan side, Maki Shinohara of UNHCR said. Another 8,000 refugees in 1,700 families have requested to be relocated to Mohammad Kheil, a refugee camp in Pakistan. Currently there are some 18,700 Afghans staying at the Chaman camp which Pakistan has decided to close. "Those who still choose to remain at Chaman will be considered as illegal migrants by the Pakistani authorities and will no longer be eligible for assistance," she added. According to UNHCR, the spontaneous settlement of refugees at the border area has been a security concern for all parties since late 2001 when the ruling Taliban was ousted in Afghanistan after a US-led military strike. Some leaders and holdout fighters of the Taliban have reportedly crossed the border to seek shelter in Pakistan. As the Pakistani government agreed to relocate refugees at Chaman camp inside Pakistan, the refugees have been given the option either to return home, relocate to Zahare Dasht camp inside Afghanistan or move to Mohammad Kheil camp in Pakistan.

**Clashes erupt between north Afghan factions in Samangan province. (Reuters).**

A U.N. spokesman said Sunday clashes between an ethnic Tajik faction and an ethnic Uzbek faction had erupted in three villages in Samangan province on June 26 and 27. "Although it's now reported that the fighting has stopped and that both sides have pulled back to their respective positions, there are conflicting versions from both factions to the causes," U.N. spokesman Manoel de Almeida e Silva said. He had no information about casualties. A team of officials from the factions accompanied by



U.N. representatives were heading to the region from the key northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif to try to resolve the dispute, he said.

**June 30**

**Ten injured in Afghan mosque bomb blast. (AFP).**

Ten people were injured when a bomb exploded at a mosque in the main southern Afghan city of Kandahar during evening prayers. Three of the injured were in serious condition, said Khalid Pashtun, the spokesman for Kandahar provincial governor. Pashtun said the explosion was caused by a time bomb hidden in one of the flower pots in the Abdul Rav Akhundada mosque in the centre of Kandahar. Mullah Abdullah Fayaz Akhundada, whose father the mosque is named after, was among those injured. The cleric is a close friend of the governor and head of the Kandahar mullah's. He has escaped previous attempts on his life and has received several letters warning him to stop working for the government. Pashtun said the mullah was targeted because he was close to Agha.

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