



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Afghanistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 12 April 2010**

### **Information on the calendar used by the Taliban in Afghanistan.**

In *Dates and Meanings of Religious and other Multi-Ethnic Festivals 2002-2005* published in 2001, it states:

“The Muslim calendar is based on the lunar year and consists of twelve months alternating 30 and 29 days each...Although the Christian Era may be in official use, people in Muslim countries tend to use the Muslim Era for non-official purposes” (Dr Shrikala Warriar and Dr John G. Walshe (2001) *Dates and Meanings of Religious and other Multi-Ethnic Festivals 2002-2005*,p.17).

The same publication commenting on the Baha’i calendar states:

“The calendar year consists of nineteen months...” (*Ibid*,p.21).

Published in 1999 *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* states:

“The Muslim calendar is lunar, with twelve months...” (John Bowker (1999) *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*,p.187).

A report published in July 2009 by the *UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* states:

“The present report contains the months and years according to the solar calendar used in Afghanistan. The Afghan New Year began on 1 Hamal, which is the equivalent of 21 March in the western calendar. For example, 1 Hamal 1386 is 21 March 2007” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (9 July 2009) *Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights : 2nd to 4th periodic reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant : Afghanistan*,p.8).

In April 2007 the *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit* notes:

“Three calendar systems are used in Afghanistan:

- Hejrah-e Shamsi (solar Islamic) calendar, Afghanistan’s official calendar, established in the constitution and in use officially since 1957 (month names differ from the Iranian or Persian forms).  
March 21 2007 = 1 Hamal 1386.
- Hejrah-e Qamari (lunar Islamic) calendar, used for religious events and holidays.
- Gregorian calendar = Miladi (solar Christian),

used in international relations” (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (April 2007) *Afghanistan Research Newsletter No. 13*,p.9).

A *BBC News* story from February 2002 states:

“The leader of the Afghan interim government, Hamid Karzai, has issued a decree replacing the lunar calendar with the traditional Afghan solar calendar. The solar calendar was used in Afghanistan until 1999 when it was changed by the Taliban authorities who wanted the country to adopt the system used in Saudi Arabia” (BBC News (5 February 2002) *Afghanistan re-adopts solar calendar*).

No further information on these issues could be found among sources available to the RDC.

## References

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (April 2007) *Afghanistan Research Newsletter No. 13*  
[http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_view&gid=489](http://www.areu.org.af/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=489)  
Accessed 12 April 2010

BBC News (5 February 2002) *Afghanistan re-adopts solar calendar*  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/1803017.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1803017.stm)  
Accessed 12 April 2010

John Bowker (1999) *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*  
Library book  
Accessed Monday 12 April 2010

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (9 July 2009),  
*Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights : 2nd to 4th periodic reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant : Afghanistan*  
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4a8eba0c0.pdf>  
Accessed Monday 12 April 2010

Dr Shrikala Warriar and Dr John G. Walshe (2001) *Dates and Meanings of Religious and other Multi-Ethnic Festivals 2002-2005*  
Library book  
Accessed Monday 12 April 2010

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

## **Sources Consulted**

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission  
Afghanistan Information Management Services  
Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit  
Amnesty International  
BBC News  
BBC Monitoring  
British and Irish Agencies Group  
Electronic Immigration Network  
Encyclopedia Britannica  
Europa World Regional surveys of the world  
European Country of Origin Information Network  
Freedom House  
Google  
Human Rights Watch  
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada  
International Crisis Group  
IRIN News  
Lexis Nexis  
Minority Rights Group International  
Norwegian Refugee Council Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
Online Newspapers  
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library  
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database  
Reliefweb  
United Kingdom Home Office  
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan  
Office of the UN High Commission on Human Rights Treaty Body Database  
UNHCR Refworld  
United States Department of State