



## **Afghanistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 9 and 10 July 2009**

### **State protection in Afghanistan**

Page 1 of an *ICG* report from December 2008 states:

“Police reform in Afghanistan is receiving more attention and resources than ever before, but such increased efforts are still yet to be matched by significant improvements in police effectiveness and public confidence. Too much emphasis has continued to be placed on using the police to fight the insurgency rather than crime. Corruption and political appointments are derailing attempts to professionalise the force” (*ICG*, (18 December 2008), *Policing in Afghanistan: Still Searching for a Strategy*).

Section 1d of the *US Department of State* report issued in February 2009 covering events of 2008 states:

“The Afghan National Police (ANP), under the Ministry of Interior (MOI), has primary responsibility for internal order. The NDS has responsibility for investigating cases of national security and also functions as an intelligence agency. In some areas powerful individuals, some of whom reportedly were linked to the insurgency, maintained considerable power as a result of the government's failure to assert control. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization remained in control of the UN-sanctioned International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which worked closely with the national security forces” (*US Department of State*, (25 February 2009), *2008 Human Rights Report: Afghanistan*).

Page 8 of a paper published by *Action Aid et al* in April 2009 states:

“During 2008 significant efforts were made by pro-government forces, especially international military forces (IMF), to reduce civilian casualties. However, the absolute number of civilian deaths caused by pro-government forces rose by 31% to 828, which is generating widespread resentment and undermining support for the wider international presence in Afghanistan” (*Action Aid et al*, (3 April 2009), *Caught in the Conflict, Civilians and the international security strategy in Afghanistan*).

The following is reported on page 2 of a document by the *UNHCR* of May 2009:

“Afghanistan is engulfed in an armed conflict in which unacceptably high numbers of civilians are killed every day. An estimated 2,118 civilians were killed as a result of armed conflict in 2008, nearly 40 per cent more than were recorded in 2007. Not all of these deaths are unavoidable. Civilians face daily insecurity,

and their most everyday tasks bring the risk of death. They are assassinated by the Taliban, or shot near checkpoints and convoys by Afghan or international soldiers. They are blown up in reckless Taliban suicide attacks carried out in public places, or killed in poorly planned or disproportionate airstrikes by international forces. Or they are the victims of false tips and killed in house raids by international intelligence services for which no Government or military command takes responsibility” (UNHCR, (6 May 2009), *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Philip Alston : addendum : mission to Afghanistan*).

Page 24 adds the following:

“In most parts of the country, the police are the face of the Government. In many districts where they are the only government officials seen by the people, the perceived legitimacy of Government depends almost entirely on them. Legitimacy will follow if they maintain law and order for all, but not if they extort, intimidate, and kill. All too often, the police do not truly represent the interests or diversity of the community. They are drawn dominantly from the members of one tribe or the followers of one commander.<sup>40</sup> For ordinary Afghans, this means that police function not as enforcers of law and order, but as promoters of the interests of a specific tribe or commander” (ibid).

Page 4 of an ICG report from June 2009 points out the following:

“The failure in wider institutional reform includes Afghanistan’s security sector – despite receiving by far the largest share of international funding. While the official number of Afghan National Police (ANP) is over 75,000<sup>27</sup> against an agreed ceiling of 82,000,<sup>28</sup> on-the-ground estimates vary from 35,000 to 55,000, with low quality.<sup>29</sup> Police actions have failed to gain citizens’ trust and have even actively undermined support for the administration because of the abuse of authority. Part of the problem lies in the police’s morale-sapping and inappropriate use as ill-trained, ill-equipped fighters on the counter-insurgency frontlines” (ICG, (24 June 2009), *Afghanistan’s Election Challenges*).

Citing another source, page 43 of a report from the *UK Home Office* in June 2009 states:

“The police in Afghanistan have never had an effective national enforcement capacity and have only been able to fully represent the authority of central government within the main cities. Their effectiveness in rural areas (over 90 per cent of the country) has depended entirely on co-operation from local leaders, including religious figures...The Afghan National Police (ANP) force is yet to undergo the reforms required to perform its core mission successfully. Development has been hindered by a lack of federal institution building, corruption, absence of sufficient trainers and a lack of sustained effort by the international community. “The ANP does not function as a united, professional and disciplined law enforcement entity and is unable to preserve law and order across the majority of the country” (UK Home Office, (26 June 2009), *Country of Origin Information Report – Afghanistan*).

## References

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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.

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