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Afghanistan - Information on corruption within the police force

The 2008 *US Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Afghanistan*, under the heading 'Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life' states:

"In May the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, and arbitrary executions visited the country and reported on many cases in which police killed civilians with impunity" (US Department of State (25 February 2009) *2008 Human Rights Report: Afghanistan*)

Under the heading 'Role of the Police and Security Apparatus', the same report states:

"Official impunity remained pervasive. Illegal border checkpoints, some reportedly manned by tribal leaders and low-level members of insurgent groups, extorted bribes. Human rights groups and detainees reported local police extorted bribes from civilians in exchange for release from prison or to avoid arrest." (ibid)

It also states:

"The international community worked with the government to develop training programs and internal investigation mechanisms to curb security force corruption and abuses. Over the last 18 months, more than 25,000 ANP members received training in the constitution, police values and ethics, professional development, preventing domestic violence, and fundamental standards of human rights in addition to core policing skills. Under the Focused District Development (FDD) program, ANP were trained in policing skills including human rights at the central training center and regional training centers for eight-week periods. Nevertheless, human rights problems persisted" (ibid)

Under the heading 'Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons', the report continues:

"Taxi, truck, and bus drivers reported security forces and armed militants operated illegal checkpoints and extorted money and goods. The number of such checkpoints increased at night, especially in the border provinces. Residents reported having to pay bribes to ANP and border police officials at checkpoints and the Khyber pass border crossing between Jalalabad and Pakistan." (ibid)

An *International Crisis Group* report, under the heading 'Policing in Afghanistan: Still Searching for a Strategy' subheading 'Policy Framework', states:

"Under the Afghan constitution, criminal investigations are more of a judicial than police function: "[D]iscovery of crimes is the duty of the police, and investigation and prosecution are conducted by the Attorney General's Office in accordance with provisions of the law". However, there has been little progress in institutionalising police ties with the judicial sector, and building confidence between the police and the attorney general's office, necessary for the police to fulfil its law enforcement role. Referring to bribe-taking, a human rights worker described how such mistrust actually fuels corruption: "Police think they will take the money because otherwise they assume the prosecutor will take it and they will get nothing....If a prosecutor gets a detainee they do the same". (International Crisis Group (18 December 2008) *Policing in Afghanistan: Still Searching for a Strategy*, p.8)

Under the heading 'Accountability and Oversight', this report continues:

"The interior ministry's internal affairs section has been somewhat strengthened in 2008, with new sections in the six regional commands and plans to expand further to the provincial level. The head of the unit speaks of hundreds of investigations into police personnel on file. However where action has been taken it has tended to be aimed at the lower ranks, not high-level officials, or delayed for political reasons. "Those who are arrested for corruption are the traffic police, or those who take 50 Afghanis [about \$1], not those who take millions and stay as commanders", said a senior ministry official. A border police commander who did lose his position reportedly had 123.5kg of opium found in his official vehicle but was not prosecuted."(ibid)

The 2009 *Freedom House Freedom in the World* report for Afghanistan, states:

"The Afghan National Army continued to grow in 2008, with strong donor support. Existing soldiers are reportedly well trained and have participated ably in a variety of counterterrorism operations. In contrast, the National Police are plagued by inadequate training, illiteracy, corruption, involvement in drug trafficking, and high levels of desertion. The intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security, lacks transparency and stands accused of serious human rights violations" (Freedom House (16 July 2009) *Freedom in the World - Afghanistan (2009)*)

The *Human Rights Watch 2009 World Report for Afghanistan*, under the heading 'Governance and Impunity' states:

"The Afghan government continues to lose public legitimacy because of widespread corruption, failure to improve living standards, and lack of progress in establishing the rule of law even in areas under its control. Afghans frequently cite police corruption as a problem, with internationally funded police reform efforts showing limited impact. The UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, Philip Alston, visited Afghanistan in May

2008 and drew attention to the impunity police generally enjoy after they have been accused of killing civilians.”(Human Rights Watch (14 January 2009) *World Report 2009 – Afghanistan*)

References:

Freedom House (16 July 2009) *Freedom in the World - Afghanistan (2009)*
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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

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International
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Freedom House
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Human Rights Watch
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