



1. Please provide a demography of Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, especially the Tajik population, and whether they have any particular profile.

No specific information was found in the sources consulted regarding the ethnic demography of Kabul province or Kabul city. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in December 2010 that no population census has been conducted in Afghanistan since the 1970s.¹ Available information, however, indicates that Kabul is ethnically diverse and has a large Tajik population.²

The population of Kabul city is estimated to be 4 to 5 million.³ A March 2011 article by the *Asian Wall Street Journal* and published on The Tehran Times website states that “Kabul is predominantly a Pashtun city, though with substantial Tajik and Hazara representation.”⁴

A report of March 2009 by the Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU), an Afghan not-for-profit research think-tank, states that “Kabul city is ethnically varied, with large populations of all major ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The broader province however is dominated by Pashtun and Tajik groups.”⁵

A 2007 provincial overview of Kabul by the US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Program for Culture & Conflict Studies states that Kabul province is comprised of various ethnic groups including Tajik, Hazara, Pashtun, Kuchi, Tatar, Hindus, Sikhs and Qizilbash. The report provides the following information on the location of the various ethnic groups within Kabul province:

- Tajiks are located throughout most of the province.
- Pashtuns are located throughout the districts of Kabul province.
- Hazara are located in pockets throughout Kabul province.

¹ United Nations High Commission for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan*, 17 December, p.29 - Attachment 1.

² ‘Afghanistan's complex ethnic patchwork’ 2011, Tehran Times website, 10 March, source: *The Asian Wall Street Journal* - Attachment 2; ‘Kabul’ 2007, US Naval Postgraduate School website, Program for Culture & Conflict Studies http://www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/Docs/Executive%20Summaries/Kabul_Executive_Summary.pdf - Accessed 25 May 2011 - Attachment 3

³ United Kingdom: Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2010, ‘Country information: Afghanistan’, 5 May - Attachment 4; Brookings 2010, *Beyond the Blanket: Towards a more effective protection for internally displaced persons in Southern Afghanistan*, Brookings Website, May, p.14 http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2010/05_idp_protection_afghanistan.aspx - Accessed 25 May 2011 - Attachment 5.

⁴ ‘Afghanistan's complex ethnic patchwork’ 2011, Tehran Times website, 10 March, source: *The Asian Wall Street Journal* - Attachment 2

⁵ Cooperation for Peace and Unity 2009, *Conflict analysis: Farza and Kalakan districts, Kabul province*, March, p.5 http://www.cpau.org.af/Research/Docs_our_publications/Kabul%20Conflict%20Analysis%20Mar%2009%20Final.pdf - Accessed 7 September 2010 – Attachment 6.

- Kuchi in Kabul are located primarily in the north-west.
- The Qizilbash are located in the capital and the surrounding districts.
- Tartar are located in the north-west portion of Kabul province.
- A small number of Hindus are located in the districts surrounding the capital.⁶

2. Please provide a demography of Mazar-e-Sharif, especially the Tajik population, and whether they have any particular profile.

Country Advice Request AFG38453, dated 15 March 2011 provides demographic information on Mazar-e-Sharif city. Information contained in the request indicates that Mazar-e- Sharif is the capital of Balkh province and has an approximate population of 250,000. The population of Mazar-e- Sharif city is ethnically diverse but is reported to be mostly comprised of Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras.⁷ According to an April 2011 report published by *The International News*, a Pakistan news source, Mazar-e-Sharif only has a small number Pashtuns.⁸ According to the Lonely Planet many Pashtuns fled Mazar-e- Sharif due to reprisals following the collapse of the Taliban government in 2001.⁹ Tajiks comprise the largest ethnic group in Balkh province. The current governor of Balkh province, Ustad Atta Mohammed Noor, is also of Tajik ethnicity.¹⁰

3. Is there any updated information on whether the Taliban are targeting Tajiks in Kabul?

No reports were found in relation to Taliban attacks on Tajiks in Kabul. A search was conducted of reports published during the period of 2010 and 2011.

4. Is there any updated information on whether the Taliban are targeting Tajiks in Mazar-e-Sharif?

No reports were found in relation to Taliban attacks on Tajiks in Mazar-e-Sharif. A search was conducted of reports published during the period of 2010 and 2011. Reports indicate, however, that during the past year there has been an increase in Taliban activity in the north

⁶ 'Kabul' 2007, US Naval Postgraduate School website, Program for Culture & Conflict Studies http://www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/Docs/Executive%20Summaries/Kabul_Executive_Summary.pdf - Accessed 25 May 2011 - Attachment 3

⁷ RRT Country Advice Service 2011, *Country Advice AFG38453*, 17 November - Attachment 7; US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2010 – Afghanistan*, 17 November, Section 1 - Attachment 8

⁸ Yusufzai, R. 2011, 'Security situation deteriorates further', *The International News*, 4 April <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=39752&Cat=7&dt=4/4/2011> - Accessed 30 May 2011 - Attachment 9.

⁹ Lonely Planet 2008, 'Mazar-e Sharif & Northeastern Afghanistan', Lonely Planet website, 19 June http://www.lonelyplanet.com/shop_pickandmix/previews/afghanistan-1-mazar-e-sharif-and-neast-preview.pdf – Accessed 24 March 2011 - Attachment 10

¹⁰ 'Balkh Report' 2010, Sicuro Group website, 28 January <http://sicurospecialistmedia.com/destinationspecificreportgallery/Balkh%20Security%20Report.pdf> - Accessed 30 May 2011 - Attachment 11; 'Balkh' 2010, US Naval Postgraduate School website, Program for Culture & Conflict Studies, 26 May http://www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/Balkh/Balkh_Exec_Sum.pdf - Accessed 30 May 2011 - Attachment 12; Bhandari, S. 2011, 'Ethnic tensions threaten stability of north Afghan town', *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 11 March - Attachment 13; Regional Rural Economic Regeneration Strategies 2006, 'District Profile – Balkh', Afghanistan Investment Support Agency <http://www.aisa.org.af/files/publications/brochures/ProvincialProfiles/Balkh.pdf> – Accessed 24 March 2011 - Attachment 14

of Afghanistan. This has reportedly resulted in ethnic tension and the re-arming of Tajik and other militia groups aligned to government officials and warlords.¹¹

On 21 April 2011, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that over the past year there has been a 'flare up' in the Taliban insurgency in the north of Afghanistan. According to the report private Tajik and Uzbek militias have formed in response to this increase in Taliban activity. The report states that government officials in Balkh province and northern Afghanistan are expanding their private militias in order to broaden their sphere influence and to keep the Taliban at bay. The report also indicates that the mistreatment of the Pashtun population by these private militia groups is resulting in local support for the Taliban.¹²

An article published by *The New York Review of Books*, dated 16 December 2010, also reports on the re-arming of government affiliated Tajik and other militia groups in response to a rise of the Taliban in northern Afghanistan. The article is written by Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani based journalist and author of *The Taliban*. The article states that:

Atta Muhammad Noor, a Tajik general who once fought the Taliban and is now the governor of Balkh province bordering Uzbekistan. He and his fellow northern warlords are rearming their militias in preparation for what they fear will be a long war with the Taliban.

The fear is justified because the Taliban have already arrived in the north, setting up bases, appealing to local populations, attacking NATO and Afghan forces, and infiltrating militants into Central Asia. For the first time, say US officials, there is evidence of the Taliban winning support from not just northern Pashtuns but even Tajiks and Uzbeks.¹³

An article dated 11 March 2011 published by *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, a German news agency reports on the increase in ethnic tension and violence in Balkh province. The report, however, cites Baryallai Jalalzai, an editor of a local Pashtun magazine, who states that the Taliban is "hardly an issue" in Balkh province. According to the editor tribal leaders, who engage in violence for money and power, are blaming the Taliban for the violence.¹⁴ The following are some extracts from the report:

Mazar-e Sharif has known its share of ethnic violence. Largely spared by the civil war of the 1990s, the capital of Balkh province fell in 1997 to the Taliban, who massacred its Hazara minority.

After the Taliban fled the city ahead of the US invasion in 2001, **the province was largely peaceful until last year, when attacks suddenly jumped 107 per cent to 182 in 2010, according to the Afghan non-profit Safety Organization.**

¹¹ Abi-Habib, M. 2011 'Ethnic Militias Fuel Tensions in Northern Afghanistan', *Wall Street Journal*, 21 April <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704530204576232053375098340.html#printMode> - Accessed 31 May 2011 - Attachment 16; Rashid, A. 2011. 'The Way Out of Afghanistan', *The New York Review of Books* website, 13 January <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jan/13/way-out-afghanistan/?pagination=false> - Accessed 2 June 2011 - Attachment 17; Bhandari, S. 2011 'Ethnic tensions threaten stability of north Afghan town', *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 11 March - Attachment 13.

¹² Abi-Habib, M. 2011 'Ethnic Militias Fuel Tensions in Northern Afghanistan', *Wall Street Journal*, 21 April <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704530204576232053375098340.html#printMode> - Accessed 31 May 2011 - Attachment 16

¹³ Rashid, A. 2011. 'The Way Out of Afghanistan', *The New York Review of Books* website, 13 January <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jan/13/way-out-afghanistan/?pagination=false> - Accessed 2 June 2011 - Attachment 17

¹⁴ Bhandari, S. 2011 'Ethnic tensions threaten stability of north Afghan town', *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 11 March - Attachment 13.

Much of the recent violence is power-play along ethnic lines of allegiance, local journalist Baryallai Jalalzai says, as tribal leaders, elders, ex-mujahedin commanders and warlords jostle for money and power.

A total of 70 tribal leaders have been killed since 2001, and 30 in 2010 alone, according to the Pashtun Solidarity Council, a local advocacy group.

So far this year, five local tribal leaders have been reportedly killed in different districts, and others have survived attempts on their lives.

The resurgence in violence has raised concerns among the population.

Jalalzai, 22, an editor of a local Pashtun-language magazine, says the murders of local leaders and elders are a serious threat to peace.

‘The Taliban is hardly an issue here,’ he says. ‘The tribal leaders fight with each other for their own profit.’

And when they kill someone, the blame goes to Taliban, the young editor said. ‘It threatens any chance for long-term peace.’

Ethnic tensions have increased since Pashtuns were effectively excluded from political positions in the north, as Balkh elected only one Pashtun among its 11 members of parliament for the lower house.¹⁵

Country Advice AFG38365, dated 1 March 2011 provides brief information on the current position of the Taliban in Mazar-e-Sharif. Information contained in the response indicates that until recently Mazar-e-Sharif was considered to be relatively secure and stable. On 1 April 2011, however, UN staffers and security guards were killed during violent protests in Mazar-e-Sharif. Current or former Taliban members, or other insurgents, were suspected of leading the violence.¹⁶

Country Advice AFG38453, dated 30 March 2011, also provides some information on Taliban activity in Balkh province. Information provided in the response indicates that there is a Taliban presence in some districts of Balkh province.¹⁷

5. Is there any information on the position of Tajiks (particularly wealthy Tajiks) in Kabul and their access to State protection if needed?

No information was found in the sources consulted regarding the current position of Tajiks, including wealthy Tajiks, in Kabul. Similarly, no reports were found in relation to state protection for Tajiks in Kabul.

Attachments

1. United Nations High Commission for Refugees 2010, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan*, 17 December.
2. ‘Afghanistan's complex ethnic patchwork’ 2011, Tehran Times website, 10 March, source: *The Asian Wall Street Journal*. (CISNET Afghanistan CX262457)
3. ‘Kabul’ 2007, US Naval Postgraduate School website, Program for Culture & Conflict Studies

¹⁵ Bhandari, S. 2011 ‘Ethnic tensions threaten stability of north Afghan town’, *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 11 March - Attachment 13

¹⁶ RRT Country Advice Service 2011, *Country Advice AFG38365*, 1 March - Attachment 19

¹⁷ RRT Country Advice Service 2011, *Country Advice AFG38453*, 15 March - Attachment 7

- http://www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/Docs/Executive%20Summaries/Kabul_Executive_Summary.pdf - Accessed 25 May 2011.
4. United Kingdom: Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2010, 'Country information: Afghanistan', 5 May. (CISNET Afghanistan CX248382)
 5. Brookings 2010, *Beyond the Blanket: Towards a more effective protection for internally displaced persons in Southern Afghanistan*, Brookings Website, May
http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2010/05_idp_protection_afghanistan.aspx - Accessed 25 May 2011.
 6. Cooperation for Peace and Unity 2009, *Conflict analysis: Farza and Kalakan districts, Kabul province*, March
http://www.cpau.org.af/Research/Docs_our_publications/Kabul%20Conflict%20Analysis%20Mar%2009%20Final.pdf - Accessed 7 September 2010.
 7. RRT Country Advice Service 2011, *Country Advice AFG38453*, 17 November.
 8. US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2010 – Afghanistan*, 17 November.
 9. Yusufzai, R. 2011, 'Security situation deteriorates further', *The International News*, 4 April
<http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=39752&Cat=7&dt=4/4/2011> - Accessed 30 May 2011.
 10. Lonely Planet 2008, 'Mazar-e Sharif & Northeastern Afghanistan', Lonely Planet website, 19 June
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/shop_pickandmix/previews/afghanistan-1-mazar-e-sharif-and-neast-preview.pdf – Accessed 24 March 2011.
 11. 'Balkh Report' 2010, Sicuro Group website, 28 January
<http://sicurospecialistmedia.com/destinationspecificreportgallery/Balkh%20Security%20Report.pdf> - Accessed 30 May 2011.
 12. 'Balkh' 2010, US Naval Postgraduate School website, Program for Culture & Conflict Studies, 26 May
http://www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/Balkh/Balkh_Exec_Sum.pdf - Accessed 30 May 2011.
 13. Bhandari, S. 2011, 'Ethnic tensions threaten stability of north Afghan town', *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 11 March. (CISNET Afghanistan CX262762)
 14. Regional Rural Economic Regeneration Strategies 2006, 'District Profile – Balkh', Afghanistan Investment Support Agency
<http://www.aisa.org.af/files/publications/brochures/ProvincialProfiles/Balkh.pdf> – Accessed 24 March 2011.
 15. Deleted.
 16. Abi-Habib, M. 2011 'Ethnic Militias Fuel Tensions in Northern Afghanistan', *Wall Street Journal*, 21 April
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704530204576232053375098340.html#printMode> - Accessed 31 May 2011.
 17. Rashid, A. 2011. 'The Way Out of Afghanistan', The New York Review of Books website, 13 January
<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jan/13/way-out-afghanistan/?pagination=false> - Accessed 2 June 2011.
 18. RRT Country Advice Service 2011, *Country Advice AFG38365*, 1 March.
 19. RRT Country Advice Service 2011, *Country Advice AFG38453*, 15 March.