

Chronology of Events in Afghanistan, May 2003*

May 1

Human Rights Office set up under Afghan Interior Ministry. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh)

The Office of Human Rights Enforcement was inaugurated at the Interior Ministry in the presence of the interior minister Ali Ahmad Jalali, the Information and Culture Minister Makhdum Rahin and Ms Sima Samar, the head of the Human Rights Commission. The office has been assigned to defend due legal and civil interests in society and enforce governance with the help of its security departments.

Primary school burnt down in Nangarhar Province. (Radio Afghanistan)

It was reported that a primary school was set ablaze. Unidentified people set on fire the school located in Shenki village of Chaparhar District in Nangarhar Province. It is said that a number of books and other equipment were destroyed by the fire at the school.

Illegal arrests of foreigners in Azerbaijan . (World Markets Research Centre / WMRC Daily Analysis).

A lawyer campaigning for immigrants' rights in Azerbaijan said that the 'illegal' arrests of foreign Muslims could worsen relations with Muslim countries in Azerbaijan's vicinity. Since May 2002, according to lawyer Alovzat Aliyev, 140 Afghans, 42 Iraqis and 17 Iranians have been arrested and several more expelled from the country. Some people have been arrested for months without charges, says Aliyev.

May 2

Helmand governor says 60 Taliban arrested. (Reuters)

Afghan government forces arrested 60 Taliban rebels following a rocket attack on a major dam in the southwest of the country, a provincial governor said. The governor of the province of Helmand, Sher Mohammad Akhundzada, said that three rockets had been fired in the night of May 1 at Kajakai dam in the north of the province, but had missed their target. He said that they launched a mopping up operation in the morning, and arrested 60 Taliban, among them 10 senior officials. Akhundzada said government forces conducted house to house searches in the area and that operations were continuing.

* *Disclaimer: Reports contained in this document are selected from publicly available resources and edited by country experts. The information provided here is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country of origin surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim. Further information may be obtained from BO Ankara*

Afghan local commander goes over to government side. (Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency)

A well-known commander has shifted to the government's camp in Laghman. The security commander and teacher Mohammad Zaman Mamozai, from Mehtarlam, the capital of Laghman Province, said that, as a result of high-level contacts and the good offices of the national leaders, a famous *jihadi* commander, Dai Gol, has shifted to government's camp. He added that this well known commander from the valley of Leeshang had severed relations with the government authorities in 2002, but now he was prepared to restore his relations with the government. Dai Gol is a prominent local commander who emerged during the anti-Soviet war. He was the commander of the Jamiat-e Eslami movement at that time.

May 3

Attack on deminers in Afghanistan leaves one dead. (UN News Service)

One anti-landmine staffer has been killed and another seriously injured after their car was attacked in Afghanistan. Unknown assailants shot at a vehicle belonging to the Afghan Development Association (ADA), a non-governmental organization, said David Singh, a spokesman for the UNAMA. The incident took place in Wardak Province on the main Kabul to Kandahar road, which has since been closed pending a security assessment. "The driver, an Afghan national was killed instantly and one of the two passengers - both national staff - was seriously injured," Mr. Singh said. "The uninjured passenger traveled by foot to a nearby village for help."

May 4

International Security Assistance Force extend patrols to areas outside the city of Kabul. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh)

International Security Assistance Force has extended its patrols to some areas in Kabul Province. Thomas Lobbering, the press spokesman of the International Security Assistance Force, said that patrols are extended to areas such as Charasiab District in the south, Paghman District in the west and Bagram District in north which in some cases are situated 40 km from Kabul city.

Five killed in Afghan tribal clash. (Reuters)

At least five people were killed and eight others wounded in a clash between members of two tribes in the province of Khost, the region's governor said. Hakim Taniwal said the clash in Piran village between Niazi [alternatively, Kochi] and Piran tribes was over an old land dispute and the warring sides stopped fighting only after the intervention of local authorities. The five killed and the wounded belong to Niazi tribe. Taniwal said the two tribes had used assault rifles and grenades in the clash that lasted for one hour.

Some Afghan refugees allowed to stay in Pakistan until 2004. (AIP)

A senior UNHCR official confirmed that Afghan refugees in the Kacha Ghari refugee camp near Peshawar in Pakistan have a right to stay in the camp till 27 March 2004. It

was reported that the elders of the Afghan refugees made a written promise that they would leave the camp by the end of March 2004. There are about 10,000 families living in the camp.

May 5

Afghan military training schools expel students. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh)

The Defence Ministry has recently ordered the students of the Military University, Aviation University, Technical Academy and Military School to start their studies in civil schools and other institutions in their appropriate subjects. Lt-Gen Joma Naser, head of the education department at the Ministry of Defence, said that a certain number has been approved and confirmed for the formation of the national army and this decision was taken due to superfluous numbers in the personnel of the army.

May 6

Anti-American protest held in Kabul. (Reuters)

About 300 Afghans chanted anti-American and anti-British slogans in Kabul in the first such protest since U.S.-led forces toppled the Taliban in late 2001. The protesters, who included government employees and university students complained of growing insecurity, slow post-war reconstruction and delay in payment of state salaries by Hamid Karzai's U.S.-backed government. Some called for the withdrawal of U.S.-led coalition forces from Afghanistan and said the time had come for Afghans to fight the "American invasion". The protest was organised by the "Scientific Centre" headed by Sediq Afghan, a prominent Afghan philosopher known for outspoken criticisms of the communist regime of the 1980s, the Mujahideen governments that replaced it and also the Taliban. He vowed to continue peaceful demonstrations until "the demands of people of Kabul" were met. He said these included better security, improvements in the economy and progress in post-war reconstruction.

Afghanistan concerned over reported refugee arrests in Pakistan. (Agence France-Presse / AFP)

Afghanistan expressed concern over the reported arrests of a large number of Afghan refugees and citizens in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. The Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs said official and media reports from Pakistan indicated that a large number of Afghan refugees and citizens had been arrested over the past two days by security forces and police in North West Frontier Province, particularly in the capital Peshawar. However, government officials in Peshawar denied any large-scale arrest of Afghans in recent days. "We have no official orders to arrest or round up Afghan refugees and those detained over the past few days were involved in crimes like theft, robbery and car-lifting," senior provincial government official, Nasirul Mulk, said. "No Afghan refugee has been arrested just because he is a refugee," he said.

Afghan Khost Province security chief survives assassination attempt. (Afghanistan Television)

The security commander of Khost Province survived an assassination attempt. The security commander of Khost, Gen Alayar, was going to Yaqubi District of that province to perform his official duties. On the way his car ran over a remote-controlled mine. The commander's four bodyguards were injured in the mine explosion, but Gen Alayar was not hurt.

May 7

Religious leader assassinated in Afghanistan. (AFP)

A Muslim leader from the province of Oruzgan in central Afghanistan has been assassinated, the governor of the province said. Jan Mohammad said the man was killed by unidentified assailants. Hadji Abibullah, the principal mullah of a mosque in the Deh Raoud district, was killed while he was going to the mosque for prayer from the village of Kalacha.

Three killed and two injured in clashes in northern Sar-e Pol province. (Radio Afghanistan)

Armed men from the Wahdat and Harakat [two ethnic Shi'i groups] clashed in Balkhab District of Sar-e Pol Province on May 6. Three people were killed and two others injured in the clashes. The clash occurred between two regional commanders, namely Chaman Ali belonging to the Wahdat-e Eslami Party and Sultan Mohammad belonging to the Harakat-e Eslami Party. The clash lasted until May 7 morning. Women are said to have been injured in the clash.

May 8

Refugee family attacked in their way to Herat. (Iranian radio Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran)

An Afghan refugee family of five has been attacked by muggers on the border road from Iran to Herat. Ghulam Hassan, 25, the only male member of the family, managed to escape the armed attack and get to Kabul. According to him, he along with his mother and three sisters were attacked by muggers on the road leading to Herat, and the assailants killed his mother. The armed muggers took away all their belongings and 1.8m Iranian currency in cash. Ghulam Hassan, who survived the incident, expressed his concerns over the fate of his sisters, and called international security forces to help find them.

May 10

Student demonstration in Kabul. (Radio Afghanistan)

Some students of higher military institutes staged a demonstration in Kabul. It was reported that the demonstrators wanted the authorities to clarify their careers. In the recent past the department of education and training of the Ministry of Defence in a

press release asked the students of higher military institutes to attend specified zones, keeping in view their original residential areas, to continue their education in the institutes of higher education of the country. Those students who should have been introduced to Kabul University or other institutes of higher education claim that the authorities of higher education are asking them to submit their educational documents, which is an administrative problem, and it should be solved by the two ministries. The military students chanted slogans in the city's streets and demonstrated in the Malek Asghar Square. No clashes took place in the demonstration and the police authorities implemented their physical security without interference.

Afghans launch anti-Taliban protest after president gives speech saying all Taliban not enemies. (Associated Press / AP)

Shouting "Death to the Taliban," about 500 Afghans gathered in Kabul to protest against a series of speeches by President Hamid Karzai, who said that not all former Taliban were enemies. The protests came as 64 Taliban prisoners were released from a jail in Herat, said Gen. Gulam Mohammed Massum, a commander loyal to powerful Herat Governor Ismail Khan. Massum said the releases, ordered by Khan, were a "goodwill gesture" aimed at increasing national unity. The prisoners had been held for six months to one year, Massum said, adding that others were still being held because they were considered dangerous. Twice last month, Karzai gave speeches arguing that "ordinary" Afghans once affiliated with the Taliban should be able to live safely in Afghanistan without being persecuted. According to some demonstrators, the protest was organized by loyalists of slain guerrilla leader Ahmed Shah Massood. Drivers, shopkeepers and businessmen joined the protest. Kabul Police Chief Basir Salangi said the hour-long demonstration was peaceful. Human rights groups have accused security forces and commanders of trying to discredit their opponents by falsely naming them Taliban.

May 11

Khad officers arrested. (Pakistan Press International Information Services)

A former Chief of Khad (Afghan Secret Agency) was arrested by the authorities for links with Taliban. Raz Muhammad had served as Chief of Khad in different districts including Spin Boldak. He was arrested and taken to Kandahar airport for investigation. His arrest was made on suspicion of links with Taliban. However a close associate of Raz Muhammad said that he had no links with Taliban. He had differences with some government officials which led to his arrest.

May 13

Afghan military official shot dead. (AFP)

A senior military official in the province of Nangarhar was shot dead when unidentified gunmen ambushed his vehicle. Commander Abdullah, who was the military chief of Khogyani district, was killed along with his driver around 30 kilometres south of the provincial capital Jalalabad, said provincial security chief Ajab Shah. Shah said the exact circumstances surrounding the killing remained

unclear, but he suggested the murder may have been an act of personal vengeance rather than a politically-motivated assassination.

May 15

One dead in clashes between two rival Afghan commanders in Mazar-i Sharif. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)

Two commanders, one loyal to General Abdorrashid Dostum, the leader of Jonbesh-e Melli Eslami, and the other to Ustad Atta Mohammad, the representative of Hezb-e Jamiat-e Eslami in the northern zone of Afghanistan, have clashed with each other, as a result of which one person was killed and another was injured. Local sources say that the clashes took place between forces loyal to Rajab Boy, a commander of Jonbesh-e Melli Eslami, and Nazar, the head of a police ward who is loyal to Hezb-e Jamiat-e Eslami. A high-ranking local commander has gone missing following clashes between opposing groups in the north of Afghanistan. People linked to Jamiat-e Eslami accused Jonbesh-e Melli's armed forces of kidnapping people in the city, and opened fire on them in order to prevent such deeds. Jonbesh-e Melli's officials denied the accusation and said that their people went to the city of Mazar-e Sharif for shopping only to come under unexpected attack. Forces belonging to Jonbesh-e Melli say that their local commander is missing, and that they believe that he has been either kidnapped or killed by people linked to Jamiat-e Eslami. But Jamiat-e Eslami's forces say that the local commander escaped.

Afghan factional fighting kills four in the province of Sar-i-Pul. (Reuters)

Rival forces loyal to two Afghan factions have clashed in the restive northern parts of Afghanistan killing at least five people, officials of the two sides said. An official for the Jamiat-e-Islami party of Ustad Atta Mohammad said two of Atta's followers and two members of Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum's group were killed in the Gosfandi area province of Sar-i-Pul. Armed loyalists of both sides also fought for several hours in Daraye Souf region in the neighbouring province of Samangan, but did not have any details. Officials of both factions accuse each other of starting the latest round of fighting.

May 17

Eruption of tribal clashes leaves 11 dead in Paktika Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)

A total of 11 people have died and been injured due to an eruption of tribal clashes in southeastern Afghanistan. The clashes flared up between the locals of the Totakhel tribe, located in the Sayd Karam District of Paktika Province and the people of Akhtar Mohammad. In these clashes, five people from the Totakhel tribe died and four others were injured, and two of Akhtar Mohammad's men were also seriously injured. No further reports are in hand about the reason for the clashes, but some other reports are indicating that these clashes took place due to personal disputes between the tribes and nomads of Sayd Karam District. Akhtar Mohammad and his sons, who are

warlords from southeastern Afghanistan, are loyal to and support a discontented Afghan warlord Pacha Khan Zadran.

May 19

Cable TV back on in Afghan capital despite high court ban. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh).

Cable television programmes have started in Kabul after a four months gap after the head of the Supreme Court Mowlawi Fazl Hadi Shinwari banned it. It was reported that the BBC, CNN and Al-Jazeera television networks broadcast their programmes. The Deputy Justice Minister for administrative affairs Mohammad Ashraf Rasuli has said that they have not yet succeeded in forming an appropriate framework for cable television programmes.

May 20

Afghan governors agree to pay revenues to central government. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).

The Afghan central government and the governors of 12 Afghan provinces have reached an agreement about custom duty income, the composition of the national army and steps for the prevention of conflicts between rival commanders in the Afghan provinces at a meeting. An Afghan government source stated that the meeting had reached agreement that 7,000 Afghan troops would be deployed in Kabul, 6,500 troops in Kandahar, 5,500 in Herat, 5,500 in Mazar-i Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh Province and the rest of the troops would be deployed in other provinces of Afghanistan. The central government guarantees to pay salaries to the deployed troops. The number of the Afghan national army has been forecast at 70,000. The governor of western Herat Province Esmail Khan; the governor of southern Kandahar Province Gol Agha Sherzai; the governor of eastern Nangarhar Province Haji Din Mohammad; special representative of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, deputy defence minister and general operational commander of the northern zone, Gen Abdorrashid Dostum; the first deputy operational commander of the northern zone and the commander of the Military Corps No 7; Alhaj Gen Ustad Atta Mohammad; a number of governors; officials; the minister of defence, Mohammad Qasem Fahim, and Zalmay Khalilzad, the special envoy of the US president for Afghanistan, were also present at the meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Afghan president, Hamed Karzai.

It was decided at the meeting that the border provinces will hand over their custom duties income, which is 400m dollars per year, to the central government and the central government will allocate budget for the provinces. The meeting also decided that the Afghan traders could pay custom duties in any part of the country and they would face no hurdles in the border provinces. Mr Karzai demanded that the governors of the provinces take immediate measures in this regard.

Rival commanders arrested, imprisoned in Mazar-i Sharif. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).

Two local commanders, Amin Zarb Ali and Hasibullah Qoraishi, have been detained in the city of Mazar-i Sharif. They were responsible for the bloody clashes which took place recently during which two people were killed and five others were wounded on both sides. The commander of Balkh Province's police force, Mohammad Essa Eftekhari, said that it was the first time that two local commanders who had clashed with one another had been questioned and imprisoned in the city of Mazar-i Sharif.

Radio Afghanistan report of the same news on May 22: The Afghan Interior Minister Ali Ahmad Jalali says that two rival military commanders, whose personnel became involved in clashes in Mazar-i Sharif city recently, would be put on trial. He said that the two detained commanders would be transferred to Kabul. Police in Mazar-i Sharif disclosed that those commanders belong to Jamiat-e Eslami and Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami.

May 21

Two police officers killed in renewed clashes in Mazar-i Sharif. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).

Several people were killed or injured in fighting that erupted between local commanders in the city of Mazar-i Sharif. Armed forces linked to Jonbesh-e Melli Eslami and Jamiat-e Eslami clashed with each other in the Karta-e Zerahat area, southeast of Mazar-i Sharif, in the morning, during which two policemen were killed.

Hundreds of Uzbek Afghans head home from Pakistan. (UNHCR)

A first group of hundreds of ethnic Uzbek Afghan refugees have returned home from Pakistan's Latifabad camp after they approached the UN refugee agency about repatriation concerns and received security assurances from authorities in southern Afghanistan. Many of the returnees were headed to their home areas in Balkh, Sar-i-Pul and Kabul provinces, a trip lasting two to three days due to the rugged conditions along the Silk Route.

May 22

General Abdul Rashid Dostum moved to Kabul. (Reuters).

An adviser to Karzai said General Abdul Rashid Dostum would no longer serve as Deputy Defence Minister in northern Afghanistan but move to Kabul as a military and security adviser. Zalmay Hewadmal, the presidential adviser on cultural affairs, said that Dostum had accepted the order.

May 23

Girls' school set on fire in Laghman Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).

A girl's school was set on fire by unidentified people in the Dost Shah [possibly Dawlat Shah] area in Laghman Province.

May 24

Iran to scrap Afghan refugees' permanent residence permits as of 23 September 2003. (Iranian Islamic Republic News Agency / IRNA).

Iran will withdraw from 23 September permanent residence for Afghan refugees as part of the Islamic Republic's plans to gradually repatriate all Afghans, the head of aliens affairs department in Khorasan Province, Mohammad Olama, said. He said Afghan refugees in the Khorasan Province, which accounts for 10 per cent of total Afghans in Iran, were required to submit their cards to the alien affairs office by that date. "Those refugees who do not hand their cards over will be considered as illegal immigrants despite holding the cards," Olama added. Afghan refugees, found to have difficulties in returning home, will be given cards for temporary residence, the official said.

May 26

Afghan university students demonstrate in Kabul. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).

Students from the medical department of Kabul University staged demonstrations in protest at shortcomings and difficulties in Afghanistan. The students, chanting slogans like, "Allaho Akbar", "death to colonialism, "death to traitors" and "international assistance is a mere lie", have called for their difficulties to be addressed and educational requirements to be met. Security personnel prevented the demonstrators from coming out of Kabul University, shooting into the air.

Two Afghan employees of German NGO injured in bomb explosion. (AFP).

Two Afghan employees of German Agro-Action (*Deutsche Welthungerhilfe*) were seriously injured when their vehicle went over an explosive booby trap in eastern Afghanistan. An explosive device made from three anti-tank mines was remotely triggered when the vehicle drove along a secondary road in Nangarhar province. The two Afghans were seriously injured but their lives were not in danger.

Afghan troops patrol Kandahar as Kabul appoints deputy police chief. (AFP).

Troops took over security in Kandahar as the provincial governor objected to Kabul's appointment of a new deputy police chief for Kandahar. Commander Khan Mohammad said that former head of security Haji Ustad Nazer Jan had been replaced on the orders of the Interior Ministry. Mohammad said governor Gul Agha disagreed with the appointment and had travelled to Kabul for talks with the Interior Minister to suggest a different candidate. Governor Agha had put the army in charge of security until the dispute was resolved. Kandahar police, some of whom were Jan supporters,

had been told to stay in their stations and not go out on patrol. Soldiers were seen patrolling the streets of Kandahar and the city bazaar. Jan had acted as deputy to governor Agha in the pre-Taliban mujahedin government. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Agha appointed him to the senior police post. Jan was a former warlord and Agha's comrade-in-arms against the Taliban, but was not generally liked by the people of Kandahar who regarded him as uneducated and not suited to the post.

May 27

Iraqis, Afghans in Iran stripped of refugee status. (AFP).

Iran has decided to strip hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and Afghans in the country of their refugee status, an official said, with about 200,000 Iraqis set to begin returning home by the beginning of June. Ahmad Hosseini, the Interior Ministry's director of refugee affairs, said that Afghans and Iraqis who sought refuge in the Islamic Republic would now be classed as migrants in the wake of the conflicts in their home countries. "Therefore the Iranian government has the right to expel them," he warned. Regarding the return of Afghans still in Iran -- estimated to number up to two million -- Hosseini said the repatriation operation would likely take until March 2005.

May 29

Afghan cleric killed in explosion at mosque in Badakhshan Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).

Mawlawi Qari Abdorrahim Namiq, one of Badakhshan's clerics and the *imam* of Friday prayer in Teshkan town, was killed by a powerful explosion at the town's mosque. The bomb was planted inside the mosque by unknown people.

Ministry sends police to maintain security in Mazar-i Sharif. (*Radio Afghanistan*).

Afghan Interior Ministry sent a number of police to Mazar-i Sharif City from central Kabul to oust armed people from that city and maintain security, after clashes between rival armed forces took place in Mazar-i Sharif City, resulting in the death and injuries of innocent civilians. It was reported that demilitarization in Mazar-i Sharif City and the establishment of check posts, under the supervision of a commission comprising different factions, is in progress in coordination with UNAMA.

Afghan leader issues decree on recruiting volunteers for National Army. (*Afghan news agency Bakhtar*).

Decree of the head of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan Hamed Karzai stipulated the following points are approved in order to supply and equip volunteer soldiers of the National Army as endorsed in Decree No (175), dated 24/9/91 [15 December 2002]:

"1. The new criteria, composed of five chapters, for recruiting volunteer youngsters into the National Army must be implemented from the date it is issued, and Order No

(162) dated 4 May 2002 and several other orders contradicting this order are declared null and void

“2. The governors must provide due facilities for provincial commissioners and must evacuate commission compounds in order to implement and accelerate the above-mentioned process.

“3. The Defence Ministry must launch a huge public awareness campaign with the cooperation of the respected Ministry of Information and Culture and utilizing the resources available in the ministry.”

Afghan Women's Ministry dismisses 170 female staff. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).

The Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs has dismissed 117 female staff members of this ministry since May 22. Habiba Sorabi, the Afghan Minister for Women's Affairs said that the dismissal of this number of staff in this ministry has been made in accordance with the government policy on cutting back the number of government employees. These women, most of them with no bread earners, gathered in front of the ministry in protest at their dismissal and called for their return to work.

May 31

Disabled Afghans stage protest rally in capital. (AIP).

A number of Afghan disabled people staged a protest rally in Kabul, urging the government to give them their rights. The group of the disabled, who were in their wheelchairs, were chanting slogans in front of the Afghan Ministry for Martyrs and the Disabled, and blocked the main road for about 10-15 minutes. They also asked the government for some land for building their houses. A number of local policemen also appeared at the scene to provide security and control the protest rally staged by the disabled, but the protest rally ended peacefully.

Afghan journalist says he was stopped from covering event in Herat. (Afghan news agency Herat News Centre).

The head of the Herat TV station has prevented a journalism student from participating in a ceremony which was held to celebrate Teacher's Day. Abdol Sataf Matin, who holds an official card of the Young Journalism Association of Herat University and was assigned to make a report and take pictures, was not permitted to participate in the ceremony, as a result of which he was obliged to leave the planning department camp where the ceremony was held.

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Revised April 2004*