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Migration Review Tribunal • Refugee Review Tribunal

Background Paper

Afghanistan: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups 2001-2013

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Introduction

In November 2001, the Taliban government of Afghanistan was overthrown by the Northern Alliance forces¹ with massive US air support. An interim administration, headed by Hamid Karzai was installed, and a democratic system instituted, which has conducted two presidential and two parliamentary elections since 2004. The government has been challenged since 2002 by the resurgent Taliban, as well as a number of other insurgent groups, who have attempted to overthrow the government and expel the international forces which protect it.

Section 1 of this paper provides information on the parties that have emerged since 2001 to take part in the elections. Many of these parties grew out of pre-2001 parties, which are described in a companion RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*. This section is divided into three parts, dealing with the major parties, the Shia/Hazara parties and lastly with some recent inter-party coalitions.

Section 2 of this paper looks at the five major insurgent groups which are opposing the current government. Some of these groups also have their origins in the pre-2001 struggles.

¹ For information on the Northern Alliance before 2001, see Sec.2.5 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

Map of current Afghan provinces



Glossary

Hanafi	One of four schools of Sunni law interpretation, named after its founder Abu Hanifah. The most widespread and most liberal school. Dominant among Afghanistan's <i>Sunni</i> population.
Harakat	Movement
Hazarajat	A mountainous area in Central Afghanistan where the Hazara people predominate. It includes all of Bamian and Dai Kundi provinces, as well as western Wardak, northwestern Ghazni, eastern Ghor, southern Sar-e Pul and southern Samangan.
Hezb (Hizb)	Party
Ittefaq	Alliance, confederation
Jabha	Front
Jam'iat	Society
Jihad	Islamic holy war
Jihadi	One engaged in holy war; sometimes equivalent to mujahiddin
Jirga	Council of elders convened on an ad hoc basis to address problems
Jombesh	Movement
Kanun	Organisation
Khan	Village leader or landlord
Kuchi	Nomadic pastoralists; usually Pashtun
Loya Jirga	Great (National) Council. A loya jirga is a mass meeting for the discussion of major events such as choosing a new king, adopting a constitution, or discussing important national political or emergency matters.
Madrassa	Religious school
Mahaz	Front
Majmu'a	Association
Malik	Village representative, landlord; may be appointed by the community, and liaises in a quasi-official capacity between community or government; may also fulfill an executive role

Mir	Traditional title of nobility or tribal chief
Mujahideen	Fighters in a holy war (Jihad), Afghan resistance fighters in the Communist era (1978-1992) adopted this designation, as they were fighting a jihad against a non-Muslim (Communist/'infidel') enemy.
Mullah	Village-level religious leader
Nohzat	Movement, also <i>Nahzat</i> etc
Qawm	Group of primary loyalty, which basis could be extended family, clan, village, ethnic groups or profession.
Sayyed	Sayyeds (Sayids) are descendants of the Prophet Mohammad; there are both Shi'a and Sunni Sayyeds. They are greatly respected in Muslim societies, particularly Shi'a Muslim communities, and have also historically been held in an elevated position among Hazaras. (see AFG41585 for further information)
Sazman	Organisation
Sharia	Islamic law – based on the Koran and the <i>Sunnah</i> (sayings and practices of the Prophet) (also spelt <i>Shari'a</i>)
Shi'a	(also <i>Shia</i> , <i>Shi'ite</i> , <i>Shi'ism</i>) The smaller of the two major sects of Islam. About 18% of Afghans are Shias, including almost all Hazaras. The largest part are 'Twelvers', while there is also a branch of 'Seveners', also called Isma'ili
Shura	Consultative assembly, council
Sunni	The larger of the two major sects of Islam. About 80% of Afghans are Sunnis. Sunnism is divided into four schools of law: <i>Hanafi</i> , <i>Maliki</i> , <i>Shafi</i> and <i>Hanbali</i> . Most Afghans Sunnis are of the <i>Hanafi</i> school.
Taliban	Literally 'Religious students', now an Islamic insurgent organisation.
Tanzim	Organisation. The term <i>tanzim</i> is used by most Afghans for the Sunni Mujahideen parties that fought the Communist regime and Soviets between 1978 and 1992. Western sources nowadays sometimes label them 'jihadi groups'. The most famous <i>tanzim</i> were those of the Peshawar Seven
Tehrik	Movement
Wolesi Jirga	National Assembly

SPELLING OF AFGHAN WORDS. There is considerable variation in the spelling of Afghan words and names, particularly in the vowels: for example, *Kuchi* is also spelt *Koochi*, *Kutchi* or *Kochi*.

1 Parties participating in elections since 2001

After the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, a new constitution was approved in January 2004 which provided for a Western-style democracy with a strong central government headed by a popularly elected president (limited to two five-year terms) and a National Assembly (*Wolesi Jirga*). Presidential elections have been held in 2004 and 2009, both won by Hamid Karzai and *Wolesi Jirga* elections held in 2005 and 2010.

The new 2004 constitution provided for freedom of association, with political parties being authorised, if they had no military or paramilitary structures and their platforms were not 'contrary to the principles of Islam.' Parties based on ethnicity, language, religious sects, or regions were also prohibited. More than 80 parties have been registered. However, party influence remained minimal, particularly in the *Wolesi Jirga*, where all candidates in the 2005 and 2010 elections ran as independents.

The parties which have been formed since 2001 represent the three traditional political currents of Afghan politics – Islamism, Socialism and the ethnic nationalism – plus the new theme of democracy. The old *tanzim* and armed factions have tried to reshape themselves as political parties, and there have also been splits and attempts at alliance-building at the same time. Often, new parties have been launched without any hint of programmatic differences and as 'vanity projects' by leaders who were simply not the 'number one' in their old parties.² Approximately 26 parties were represented in the 2005 parliament with *Jamiat*, *Tanzim-e-Dawat*, *Naween*, *Mutahed Milli* and *Jombesh* having the most members.

A recent report gives a table of parties' approximate support bases by region³

North	South	East	West	Central
<i>Jamiat</i>	<i>Hezb-e Islami</i>	<i>Dawat Islami</i>	<i>Afghan Millat</i>	<i>Wahdat Islami</i>
<i>Wahdat Mardum</i>	<i>Afghan Millat</i>	<i>Hezb-e Islami</i>	<i>Jamiat</i>	<i>Wahdat Mardum</i>
<i>Harakat</i>		<i>Afghan Millat</i>	<i>Wahdat Mardum</i>	<i>Harakat</i>
<i>Jombesh</i>			<i>Dawat Islami</i>	
<i>Kangara</i>				
<i>Hezb-e Islami</i>				

President Karzai has made it publicly clear many times that he deeply dislikes political parties. In an October 2003 BBC interview he said that: 'Afghanistan was destroyed, tormented, put through lots of suffering because of the bickering, because of the in-fighting, because of the political agendas of the parties that were not national. Afghanistan needs to have a day off on that.'⁴ He continued stating: 'I don't know if I will lead a political party, but definitely a movement amongst the people'. He repeated this in his opening speech at the

² Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper, p.17

<http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9674_2.pdf> Accessed 11 December 2012

³ National Democratic Institute 2011, *Political Parties in Afghanistan: A Review of the State of Political Parties After the 2009 and 2010 Elections*, June, p.17 <<http://www.ndi.org/files/Afghanistan-political-parties-july-2011.pdf>> Accessed 14 January 2013

⁴ 'Have Your Say: President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan' 2003, *BBC Online*, 1 October <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/3139680.stm> Accessed 15 January 2013

Constitutional *Loya Jirga* when he called ‘parties and armed groups’ in general ‘weak’ and with ‘no big following’. Prior to the parliamentary elections, he urged Afghans twice to vote for candidates that do not belong to political parties and established a link between the ‘independence’ and the ‘honesty’ of candidates. Although President Hamid Karzai has not formed his own party, many of his supporters in the National Assembly (parliament) belong to a moderate faction of [*Hizb-e-Islami*](#), that is committed to working within the political system.⁵

⁵ Katzman, K 2012, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance*, US Congressional Research Service paper, November, p.5 <<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21922.pdf>> - < >

1.1 Major Sunni parties

This section has information on the main multi-ethnic and Sunni parties, in an approximate order of significance – see [Sec.1.2 below](#) for information on Hazara and Shia based parties.

Jamiat-e Islami Afghanistan (Salahuddin Rabbani)

Other names: Islamic Afghan Society (*Jamaat-i-Islami Afghanistan*).

Leaders: Burhanuddin Rabbani (Killed 2011);
Salahuddin Rabbani (son – since 2011)

History: The *Jamiat-e-Islami* is one of the longest standing political organizations in Afghanistan and draws most of its support from Tajiks in the north. It was long the most effective mujahidden force, based in northern Afghanistan, and it engaged in heavy combat with Soviet forces throughout the 1980s, including sporadic invasions of Soviet Tajikistan. The *Jamiat* was the main political party in the Northern Alliance which eventually defeated the Taliban, and occupied Kabul in November 2001.



Burhanuddin Rabbani, whose government had maintained the recognition of many countries throughout the Taliban regime, returned to Kabul in mid-November 2001 to resume the exercise of presidential authority. He reportedly hoped that the subsequent Bonn Conference would appoint him as president of the proposed new interim administration, and he only reluctantly accepted the appointment of Hamid Karzai after holding up the conference for several days in apparent protest at being sidelined. Any remaining short-term political aspirations on Rabbani's part were also put on hold at the *Loya Jirga* in July 2002, where Rabbani endorsed Karzai's election as president of the new transitional government. Mohammad Qasim Fahim, the chief *Jamiat* commander, however, was named vice president and minister of defense, establishing himself as one of the administration's dominant figures.

Rabbani supported Karzai in the 2004 presidential election even though Fahim was dropped from the Karzai ticket. Rabbani was elected to the *Wolesi Jirga* in 2005 and briefly campaigned for election as the speaker of that body before deferring to Yunus Qanuni. In 2007 Rabbani helped form the [United National Front \(UNF\)](#), a loose coalition of opposition groups. The new grouping, primarily representing non-Pushtun northerners, was immediately perceived as the dominant political force in the *Wolesi Jirga*. It strongly supported a proposed national amnesty bill, not surprisingly considering the number of warlords and others with major roles in past conflicts involved in its formation.

Declaring that military defeat of the Taliban was impossible, Rabbani invited the Taliban and other antigovernment forces to lay down their arms and join the UNF in pursuit of national unity. Although the UNF remained formally supportive of President Karzai in early 2008, it subsequently instigated a legislative confrontation with the administration.

On 20 September 2011, Burhanuddin Rabbani was assassinated by a suicide bomber entering his home in Kabul, and his son Salahuddin Rabbani was chosen in April 2012 to lead the party.

Since 2010, many Jamiat members have joined the new [National Coalition of Afghanistan \(NCA\)](#), led by ex-Jamiat members Dr Abdullah Abdullah and Yunus Qanuni. Ruttig notes that the parallel existence of the two alliances shows that there is a deep rift within the *Jamiat-e Islami* camp ‘putting question marks behind its future’.⁶

For information on the *Jamiat-e-Islami* before 2001, see Sec.2.2 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

Related parties and coalitions formed by ex-Jamiat members:

- [Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Newin \(Qanuni\)](#)
- [Nahzat-e Melli Afghanistan \(Ahmad Wali Massoud\)](#)
- [National Understanding Front of Afghanistan \(NUF\)](#)
- [National United Front of Afghanistan \(UNF\)](#)
- [National Coalition of Afghanistan \(NCA\)](#)

Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Newin (Qanuni)

Other Names: New Afghanistan Party (*Hizb-i-Afghanistan-i-Nawin*).

Leader: Mohammad Yunus QANUNI (2004 presidential candidate).

History: This new party was formed by ex-Jamiat member Mohammad Yunus Qanuni prior to his 2004 presidential campaign. Ruttig reports that the ‘the New Afghanistan Party ... temporarily left Jamiat to put a new generation of leaders into the limelight but later returned to Jamiat’s ranks in 2005’.⁷ However the party is still registered and included in lists of Afghan parties.⁸



Qanuni and the party were among the core components at the formation of a number of anti-Karzai coalitions: [National Understanding Front of Afghanistan \(NUF\)](#), [National United Front of Afghanistan \(UNF\)](#) and [National Coalition of Afghanistan \(NCA\)](#).

Qanuni, an ethnic Tajik, was considered the most formidable political rival to President Karzai. Nonetheless, Qanuni worked with Karzai in the effort to secure confirmations of the president’s proposed cabinet. In 2010 Qanuni endorsed Karzai’s effort to reach out to moderate Taliban in order to end the ongoing conflict. Qanuni declined to seek reelection as speaker in 2011.

⁶ Ruttig, Thomas 2012, ‘National Coalition vs National Front: Two opposition alliances put Jamiat in a dilemma’, Afghan Analysts Network, 4 January <<http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=2418>> Accessed 4 March 2013

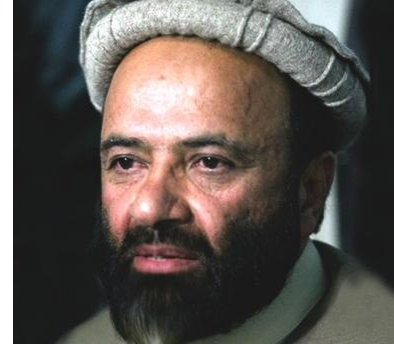
⁷ Ruttig, Thomas 2012, ‘Ambiguity Reiterated: The 20-parties ‘Democracy Charter’, Afghan Analysts Network, 26 September <<http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=3011>> Accessed 4 March 2013

⁸ Afghanistan Ministry of Justice (undated), ‘Licensed Political Parties’ <<http://moj.gov.af/en/page/1699>> Accessed 4 March 2013

Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan (HIA) (Arghandiwal)

Leaders: Abdul Hadi ARGHANDIWAL; (possibly also Gulbuddin Hekmatyar)

While some [Hezb-e-Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) members joined the insurgency after 2001, others formed a political party called *Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan* (HIA), which participates in the country's new political system and currently supports Karzai's government. In the 2004 Presidential elections, these former commanders numbering around 150, declared support for Hamid Karzai. The group is registered with the Afghan Ministry of Justice and has opened offices in Kabul and other major cities. Under Afghanistan's new law on political parties, no party can have any affiliation with armed groups. HIA claims to have surrendered all their weapons to the government and have no ties with the Gulbuddin led insurgents.



The HIA is led by Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, Hekmatyar's former finance minister, who was appointed to the key position of minister of economy after the 2010 elections. Mullah Saifullaz, a member of the party's executive council, claimed the party contributed a million votes to Karzai's re-election in 2009, a claim that is impossible to verify. The HIA has renounced violence and claims to have no ties with Hekmatyar. Saifullaz claims the HIA have had no relations with Hekmatyar for over ten years, and that the HIA opposes corruption, narcotics production and fighting between different ethnic and religious groups. Saifullaz further said: 'Hezb-e-Islami can unite all these ethnic groups because we represent all the people. 'We believe that no conflict can be solved through fighting, so we would suggest negotiations between the Taliban, Hekmatyar and the government. That would be the best way to solve the conflict.'⁹ Despite these denials, there are widespread suspicions that some HIA members still have links with Hekmatyar and HIG. Hekmatyar's son-in-law Ghairat Baheer, who was released from prison in 2008, is a member of the party.

HIA claims control of 30 to 40 percent of government offices. According to Hekmatyar's former Deputy Qazi Muhammad Amin Waqad: 'The party has two to three [Cabinet] ministers, five governors, a deputy minister and many other high ranking officials.'¹⁰ The party claims tens of thousands of supporters across Afghanistan. Party member Humayun Jarir in December 2008 said an inter-Afghan conference would soon be held in an Islamic country for reconciliation between all Afghan factions. He said representatives from Hekmatyar's party and the Taliban were invited and would attend the conference. In the June 4, 2009 interview Hekmatyar disassociated his group from his former commanders who are currently politically active in Kabul under the HIA banner. HIA had to struggle initially to get registered as a party at all because it took so long to distance itself from the insurgent wing of the party, but has since become the most influential political party in the government, both on the national and the provincial level.¹¹

⁹ IHS Jane's 2011, *Afghanistan: An IHS Jane's Special Report*, 7 October, p.34

¹⁰ Institute for the Study of War 2009, 'Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin (HIG)'

<<http://www.understandingwar.org/hizb-i-islami-gulbuddin-hig>> Accessed 9 November 2012

¹¹ Ruttig, Thomas 2012, 'Ambiguity Reiterated: The 20-parties 'Democracy Charter'', Afghan Analysts Network, 26 September <<http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=3011>> Accessed 4 March 2013

Related Parties: *Hezb-e Islami* (Hekmatyar) (pre-2001)¹²; [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\) \(post 2001\)](#)

Jombesh-e Melli Islami (Dostum)

Other Names: National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, *Jumbesh-I Melli*, *Jombesh-e Melli Islami-ye Afghanistan*, *Junbesh-i Milliye Islami*

Years of Operation: 1992-present

Leader: General Abdul Rashid DOSTUM

Based in: Northern Afghanistan particularly Jowzjan, Faryab, and Sar-i Pul provinces but also Balkh and Mazar-i Sharif.

Supported by: Uzbeks and Turkomans

Current information: *Jombesh* is a political party active since 1992. It represents Uzbeks and Turkomans of northern Afghanistan and is led by longtime militia leader General Dostum. Since the fall of the Taliban, it has been oscillating between the government and the opposition camps.



While its internal mechanisms, like that of the *tanzim*, are still dominated by its leader General Abdurashid Dostum, as Antonio Giustozzi says, it is ‘not just a loose coalition of military commanders, but also included political parties and groups’.¹³ Among them are former leftists (from PDPA, *Groh-e Kar*, SAZA activists and even former Maoists) to whom *Jombesh*’s secular outlook appealed after the collapse of the PDPA/*Hezb-e Watan* regime in 1992, Uzbek and Turkic nationalists as well as Islamists, who prevented *Jombesh* from developing a clear political and ideological identity.

It also did not have a clear ethnic identity, until the time of the two *Loya Jirgas* in 2002 and 2003, when, according to Giustozzi, the *Jombesh* leadership increasingly started to focus on ethnic issues. But while ‘public statements about the Turkic character of *Jombesh* were never issued, it became common practice for the national and local leaders of *Jombesh* to present themselves in public and private discussions as the defenders of the rights of the Uzbek and Turkmen in Afghanistan’.¹⁴ This and the perceived under-representation of Uzbeks on the central governmental level again strengthened Dostum’s position – which had been considerably undermined in 2002 – as the ‘only defender of Uzbek (or Turkic) interests’, ‘‘useful’, if not loved’, as Giustozzi puts it.

¹² For information on this party before 2001, see Sec.2.1 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

¹³ Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan’s Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper, p.26
<http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9674_2.pdf>

¹⁴ Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan’s Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper, p.26
<http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9674_2.pdf>

Meanwhile, with the merger of *Hezb-e Mobarezin-e Melli-ye Demokrat-e Solh-e Afghanistan*, or ‘Party of National Democratic Peace Fighters of Afghanistan’, a party with a limited number of followers among Eastern Pashtuns led by Zhan Padshah Shinwari, with *Jombesh* in June 2005, it acquired the chance to present itself as moving towards becoming an all-Afghan party. At the same time, several unsuccessful attempts at internal democratisation of *Jombesh* led to the alienation of many of its second-ranking leaders.

After Dostum was appointed to the symbolic post of Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces in the Presidential Office in March 2005, he announced that he would step down as party head ‘in a couple of months’ and his deputy Seyyed Nurullah was made ‘caretaker’ leader. The urge for change increased when *Jombesh* was hit by a scandal in June 2006 involving the beating-up of one of its parliamentarians after he reportedly suggested that Dostum step aside and allow for a *Jombesh* remake as a modern political organisation. This seems to have galvanised the modernizers’ faction to prepare carefully for internal changes at a long planned third *Jombesh* congress, without pushing Dostum into outright opposition.

The leading bodies of the party have not been convened for about two years. With the military and pro-Dostum wing reinforced by a small but vocal Islamist group of former *Hezbis*, and the reformers almost equally strong, *Jombesh*’s future remains in the balance. Meanwhile, its continuing conflict with Gen. Abdulmalik’s *Hezb-e Azadi-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘Afghanistan Freedom Party’, continues in some Northern areas and has triggered some of the most violent inter-factional fighting that post-Taliban Afghanistan has witnessed. Abdulmalik’s *Hezb-e Azadi* is accused of being used by *Jam’iat* as an instrument to undermine Dostum’s constituency. Statements by Interior Minister Zarar Ahmad Moqbel in mid-August 2006 such as ‘[t]hese parties have military wings, so they must be dissolve[d]’ are seen in the same light, as they represent a selective approach to the disarmament of party militias.¹⁵

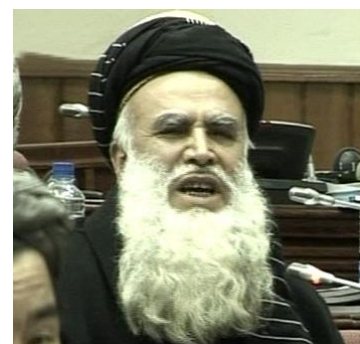
For information on this party before 2001, see Sec.2.3 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

Dawat-i Islami (Sayyaf)

Other names: *Tanzim-e Da’wat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘Organisation for the Islamic Call of Afghanistan’; *Ittihad-i-Islami* (Islamic Unity), Islamic Union of Afghanistan (IUA),

Leader: Abdul Rasul SAYYAF

Dawat-i Islami is a fundamentalist and anti-Shia party which is heavily influenced by radical Islamist beliefs of its leader Abdul-Rassul Sayyaf. The party grew out of the pre-2001 Sayyaf party *Ittihad-i-Islami* (Islamic Unity), which was heavily financed by the Wahabi sect of Saudi Arabia. Sayyaf has been allied to *Jamiat* since 1992. Sayyaf’s forces massacred minority Hazara and Shiites during the civil war.



¹⁵ Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan’s Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper, p.28
<http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9674_2.pdf>

Since 2004 *Dawat* has maintained pro-government stance.¹⁶ The party endorsed President Karzai in the 2004 presidential campaign. Subsequently, Sayaf, described as an ‘archconservative,’ was elected to the *Wolesi Jirga* in 2005 and was only narrowly defeated for the speaker’s position. He supported Karzai in the 2009 presidential balloting. In November 2009, Sayyaf survived an assassination attempt that killed 16 people.

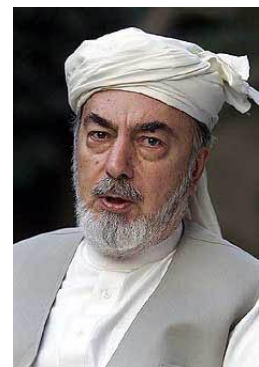
For information on the pre-2001 Sayyaf party *Ittihad-i-Islami* before 2001, see Sec.2.1 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

Mahaz-e Melli Islami Afghanistan (Gailani)

Other Names: National-Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA)

Leader: Pir Sayed Ahmad GAILANI.

This is a pre-2001 party which fought against the Soviets in the 1980s. Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, is the spiritual leader of the Sufi Muslims, and served in the Rabbani cabinet from 1992 to 1996. He and his supporters relocated to Cyprus following the Taliban takeover. They subsequently served as the core component of the Cyprus Group at the 2001 Bonn Conference, where the Front continued to display a proroyalist orientation. Gailani was elected chair of a prominent faction in the *Meshrano Jirga* in 2007. In the 2009 presidential balloting, Gailani supported former finance minister Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, who placed fourth in the first round of balloting. The party has a militant background and is in general rated Pashtun and pro-Karzai.



For information on the *Mahaz-e Melli* before 2001, see Sec.2.1 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

Mutahed-e Milli (Ulumi)

Other names: *Hezb-e Mutahed-e Melli Afghanistan* ()

Leader: Nur-ul-Haq Ulumi (Noor ul Haq Oloomi)

This is a new party led by an ex-PDPA (Communist) turned new democrat. It gained 8 seats in the 2005 election but this was reduced to one in 2009. The party joined the new anti-Karzai coalition [National Coalition of Afghanistan \(NCA\)](#), as well as the [Cooperation Council of Political Parties and Coalitions of Afghanistan](#).



¹⁶ National Democratic Institute 2011, *Political Parties in Afghanistan: A Review of the State of Political Parties After the 2009 and 2010 Elections*, June, p.31 <<http://www.ndi.org/files/Afghanistan-political-parties-july-2011.pdf>> Accessed 14 January 2013

Nahzat-e Melli Afghanistan (Ahmad Wali Massoud)

Other Names: National Movement of Afghanistan (*Hezb-e Nahzat-i Milli-i Afghanistan*), *Nohzat-e Melli*

Leaders: Ahmad Wali MASSOUD (Party Leader), Ahmad Zia MASSOUD (Former Vice President of the Republic).

This is a new party formed by former [Jamiat](#) members. Primarily supported by Tajiks, *Nahzat* was launched by Ahmad Wali Masoud following the death of his brother, Ahmed Shah Massoud, the famous *Jamiat* military leader. *Jamiat* factionalised in 2004 when *Nahzat* member Yunos Qanuni ran against Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential campaign, while another Masoud brother, Ahmad Zia Masoud, was one of Karzai's vice presidential running mates. Karzai replaced Masoud as his running mate prior to the 2009 presidential elections. This party may no longer be in existence as the two leaders have joined the anti-Karzai coalitions, [National United Front of Afghanistan](#) and [National Coalition of Afghanistan](#), along with other ex-Northern Alliance figures.



Afghan Millat (Anwar al-Haq Ahadi)

Other name: Afghan Nation

Leader: Anwar al-Haq AHADI (President).

Afghan Millat is a Pashtun nationalist party led by Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady. Established during the reign of King Zahir Shah in support of Pushtun nationalism, this grouping (also referenced as the Social Democratic Party of Afghanistan) reportedly factionalised in the early 2000s. One faction, which supported Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential campaign, is led by Anwar al-Haq Ahadi, who was named minister of finance in the December 2004 cabinet and subsequently appointed minister of commerce and industry following Karzai's reelection in 2009.



Hezb-e Islami-ye Motahed (Wahidullah Sabawun)

Other names: *Hizb-e Mutahed Islami Afghanistan* (United Islamic Party of Afghanistan)

Leader: Wahidullah SABAWOON

Wahidullah Sabawoon is an Islamic fundamentalist who was originally [Hezb-e-Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#)'s military director and general director of intelligence. He broke with Hekmatyar in 1996 and became the [Northern Alliance](#)'s finance minister. He, like Northern Alliance leader Rabbani, was pushed aside at the UN conference in Bonn in December 2001 that installed Karzai. In 2003 Karzai appointed Wahidullah Sabawoon, as presidential adviser, to have him under control. In May 2009 Sabawoon was nominated head of a commission to find a viable solution to the problem of access to grazing lands and land ownership disputes to prevent future clashes between Kuchi nomads and settlers. Sabaqoon is alleged to be the son-in-law of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Waheedullah Sabawoon was among



eight people wounded in a blast in Jalalabad, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, in 2010.

Rawand-e Sabz (Amrullah Saleh)

Other Names: *Rawand-e Sabz-e Afghanistan* (The Green Trend), *Basej-e Milli* (National Movement)

Leader: Amrullah SALEH

Amrullah Saleh is an Afghan politician who last served as head of the Afghan intelligence service National Directorate of Security. In 1997, in his mid-20s, he was appointed by anti-Taliban leader Ahmad Shah Massoud to lead the United Front's (Northern Alliance¹⁷) liaison office inside the Afghan Embassy in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) handling contacts to international non-governmental (humanitarian) organisations and intelligence agencies. After the fall of the Taliban regime, Saleh was appointed by President Hamid Karzai in early 2004 to lead the National Directorate of Security. Due to political differences with Karzai, Saleh resigned his position in 2010.



Hezb-e Kongra-i Milli-i Afghanistan (Pedram)

Other name: National Congress Party of Afghanistan)

Leaders: Abdul Latif PEDRAM, Nasir OJABER.

This party was launched in April 2004 in support of the presidential candidacy of moderate Abdul Latif Pedram, who finished fifth in the October poll with 1.37 percent of the vote. Pedram, a former journalist and professor, proposed the establishment of a federal system.



Hezb-e-Jamhori Afghanistan (Barahawi)

Other Names: Afghanistan Republic Party; *Hizb-i-Jumhori*. This is a different party from *Hezb-e Jamhori Khwahaan-e Afghanistan* led by Sayed Abdulqayoom Sajadi/ Sebghatullah Sanjar (who [died 2012](#))

Leaders: Mohammad Karim BARAHAWI (Brahui) (some sources say Engineer Habib (Rahman) is the leader, but there is no other information on this person)

This is a new pro-Karzai party, formed in 2006 or 2007, which gained 9 seats in the 2010 Wolesi Jirga election. Jumhori was established as a multi-ethnic, democratic-based party. The party claims to have recruited several members of the Wolesi Jirga, although this is difficult to substantiate, with only one MP being clearly identified. Jumhori is typical of the newer, democratic-based parties – advocating reforms based on the rule of law, establishing democratic structures within the party. The party leader, Karim Barahawi, is currently the Minister of Refugees in President Karzai's government. Barahawi was a mujahedin commander in the fight against the Soviets, and later against the Taliban. He



¹⁷ For information on Massoud and the Northern Alliance before 2001, see Sec.2.5 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

is a former Governor of Nimroz (serving two terms, before and after the Taliban reign). Barahawi became party leader after the death of founding leader Zabihullah Ismati.

Nohzat-e Hambastagi-ye Melli (Sayed Eshaq Gailani)

Other Names: National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan (*Nahzat-i Hambastagi-i Milli Afghanistan*).

Leader: Ishaq GAILANI

This party is led by Ishaq Gailani (son of [Pir Gailani](#)), who was a candidate for president in 2004 prior to withdrawing in support of Hamid Karzai. Gailani also supported Karzai in the 2009 balloting.



Other Parties

Other recently launched parties include:

- **Afghanistan Independence Party** (*Hezb-e Istiqlal-i Afghanistan*), led by Ghulam Faruq NEJRABI, who won 0.3 percent of the vote in the 2004 presidential poll on a platform that rejected all 'direct or indirect influence' on the part of 'foreigners,' including aid organisations;
- **Democracy and Progress Movement of Afghanistan** (*Nahzat-i Faragir-i Democracy wa Taraqi-i Afghanistan*), led by Mohammad BUZGAR;
- **Freedom Party** (*Hezb-e Azadi*), led by Gen. Abdul MALEK, a former leader of the National Front. This Uzbek party is led by a former [Jombesh](#) leader.
- **Islamic Justice Party of Afghanistan** (*Hezb-e Adalat-i Islami-i Afghanistan*), which, under the leadership of Mohammad Kabir MARZBAN, also supported President Karzai in the 2004 campaign;
- **National Awareness and Deliverance Movement of Afghanistan** (*Hezb-e Nahzet-i Bedari Milli Falah-i Afghanistan*), launched in late 2007 by a group of national legislators and government officials under the leadership of Mohammad Yasin HABIB;
- **National Freedom Seekers Party** (*Hezb-e Azadi Khwahan-i Maihan*), led by Abdul Hadi DABIR, an independent presidential candidate in 2004;
- **National Movement for Peace** (*Jumbish-i Milli-i Solk*), led by Shahnawaz TANAY, a former defense minister in the Communist regime;
- **National Need**, formed in February 2008 to focus on women's rights under the leadership of legislator Fatima NAZARI;
- **National Party** (*Hezb-e Milli*), led by Abdul Rashid ARYAN, a former member of the PDPA and member of the cabinet during Communist rule;
- **National Unity Movement** (*Tabrik-i Wahdat-i Milli*), led by Mahmud GHAZI and Homayun Shah ASEFI;
- **Republican Party** (*Hezb-e Jamhuri Khwahan*), led by Sebghatullah SANJAR, who supported Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential election; and
- **Youth Solidarity Party of Afghanistan** (*Hezb-e Hambastagi-i Milli-i Jawanan-i Afghanistan*), which, under the leadership of Mohammed Jamil KARZAI, supported President Karzai in the 2004 election.

Other minor opposition parties or groupings included:

- **Afghanistan Ethnic Unity Party** (*Hezb-e Wahdat-i Aqwam-i Afghanistan*), led by Nasrullah BARAKZAI;

- **Afghanistan National Independence Party** (*Hezb-e -Istiqlal-i-Milli Afghanistan*), led by Taj Mohammad WARDAK;
- **Afghanistan Islamic Peace and Brotherhood Party** (*Hezb-e -Sulh wa Ukhwat-i-Islami Afghanistan*), led by Qadir Imami GHORI;
- a faction of the **Islamic Revolutionary Movement Party** (*Hezb-e -Harakat-i-Inqilah-i-Islami*), led by Ahmad NABI;
- **New Islamic Party of Afghanistan** (*Hezb-e -Islami-i-Afghanistan Jawan*), led by the journalist Sayed Jawad HUSSEINI.

1.2 Hazara & Shia parties

Introduction

The formation of *Hezb-e Wahdat* in 1989 represented an important step in the political development of Afghanistan's Hazaras. It unified all the political groups of a community that has historically been notoriously fragmented and divided. During the period of the civil war in the early 1990s, it emerged as one of the major actors in Kabul and some other parts of the country. Political Islamism was the ideology of most of its key leaders but it gradually tilted towards its Hazara ethnic support base and became the key vehicle of the community's political demands and aspirations. Its ideological background and ethnic support base has continuously shaped its character and political agenda. Through the Anti-Soviet *jihad* and the civil war, *Wahdat* accumulated significant political capital among Afghanistan's Hazaras, which could have been spent in the establishment of long-lasting political institutions in Afghanistan. By 2009, however, *Wahdat* was so fragmented and divided that the political weight it carried in the country bore little resemblance to what it had once been. It had fragmented into at least four competing organisations, each claiming ownership of the name and legacy of *Wahdat*.

This section looks at the new factions of *Hezb-e Wahdat* as well as the other Shia parties which descend from *Harakat- i Islami*.¹⁸

Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami (Khalili)

Leader: Abdol Karim KHALILI

The *Hezb-e Wahdat (Khalili)* is the main successor party to the pre-2001 *Hezb-e Wahdat*.¹⁹ Its leader Karim Khalili is a native of the Behsud district of Wardak province. Like most of Hazara *Mujahideen* leaders he was educated at religious *madrasahs*. Khalili claims credit for having served as immediate successor to Mazari and having revived the party after its virtual collapse in Kabul. For a period of three years, Khalili presided over a renewed Hazara political mobilisation and military and political power of the party in Bamyan. He established his control over nearly the entire Hazarjat region. Under his leadership the party regained its political and military relevance as one of the major anti-Taliban organisations.



In September 2004, Khalili's *Wahdat-e Islami* organised its Constituent Assembly in Kabul in which five hundred people participated. The assembly approved a new constitution for the

¹⁸ This introduction relies mostly on Ibrahimi, Niamatullah 2009, *The Dissipation of Political Capital Among Afghanistan's Hazaras: 2001-2009*, Crisis States Research Centre, June <<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/wp/wpSeries2/WP512.pdf>> and Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper <http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9674_2.pdf> Accessed 11 December 2012

¹⁹ For information on this party before 2001, see Sec.2.4 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

party, and reconfirmed Khalili as its leader (he was the only candidate) by a unanimous vote. Sarwar Danish, then Minister of Justice, and Habibah Wahaj, a female lecturer at Kabul University, were elected as first and second deputies respectively. A central council of 99 members was also elected. The new constitution of the party also provides for establishment of provincial, district and village structures for the party. But in reality, after the presidential elections of 2004, the enthusiasm for institutionalising the party evaporated. Even in Kabul, there were little signs of party activities. A participant of the Constituents Assembly claimed that the council never convened and functioned as an entity within the party after it was formed.

In contrast to [Mohaqeq](#), Khalili consistently worked with the Karzai government. In his role as the second vice-president, he was the highest ranking Hazara official. In such a position he has been able to support a network of allies, influence government appointments in the Hazarajat and distribute limited economic and political patronage. On the other hand, he never had access to sufficient resources to address the demands of the wider strata of the Hazara population, who remained sceptical of the governments in Kabul. Although the overall situation had significantly improved for the Hazaras following the collapse of the Taliban regime, widespread dissatisfaction among the community over the distribution of aid and economic development projects was easy to detect and Khalili was blamed for that. Under such circumstances, Mohaqeq's populism appealed to the Hazaras' sense of unfair treatment, gaining him the image of the only leader speaking out on behalf of his community.

Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Mardom (Mohaqeq)

Other names: Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan (*Hizb-i-Wahdat-i-Islami Mardom-i-Afghanistan*).

Leader: Mohammad MOHAQEQ.

A primarily Shiite offshoot of the [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Khalili\)](#), this organisation is led by Mohammad Mohaqeq, a former member of the Karzai administration who left the government in 2004 in a dispute of unclear origin with President Karzai. Mohaqeq, an ethnic Hazara, finished third (as an independent) in the 2004 presidential election, with 11.7 percent of the vote. He was elected to the *Wolesi Jirga* in 2005. Mohaqeq and the party opposed Karzai's efforts at reconciliation with the Taliban moderates.



The party is the vehicle of the chief challenger to Khalili's claim to political leadership among the Hazaras, Muhammad Mohaqeq. Mohaqeq rose to prominence during the years of *jihad* in his native Balkh province. He became the provincial leader of *Nasr*, the most powerful Hazara organisation there. After the dominant figure of *Nasr* in the north, Mazari, moved to Bamyan and later Kabul and engaged in politics at the higher level, Mohaqeq succeeded him in the leadership of the northern region. It was under him that the party briefly dominated the politics of the region, including by playing a central role in the defence of Mazar-e Sharif against Taliban incursions in the late 1990s.

By declaring his candidacy in the presidential elections, Mohaqeq challenged Khalili's leadership of *Hezb-e Wahdat* as well as of the Hazaras. As the only Hazara presidential contender, Mohaqeq mobilised a large section of the Hazara populace behind his candidacy. Hazara support for his candidacy was more an attempt to send a strong message to the government and assert the ethnic group's role at the national level than the result of direct support for him as an individual candidate or for his party platform. As a result, Mohaqeq claimed a strong majority of Hazara votes in the election and ranked third among the candidates in terms of the percentage of all votes.

However, Mohaqeq's erratic political alignments prevented him from consolidating his leadership. From 2001 to 2004 he managed to be part of the cabinet, and was close to Karzai until 2004 before joining the opposition National Understanding Front, the coalition of opposition groups spearheaded by Yonus Qanuni. During the election of the parliamentary speaker in 2005 he switched back to the government camp. Although he failed to obtain the post of deputy speaker of the parliament, through his alliance with the pro-Karzai camp he managed to secure sufficient support for his candidate for the position of Minister of Transport.

Mohaqeq reached the top of his popularity among Hazaras during his presidential election campaign. During this brief period, his faction of *Hezb-e Wahdat* attracted a dramatic level of support among Hazara intellectuals as well as the general population. Like most Hazaras he aimed to use the electoral platform as a way of asserting the Hazaras as the third largest ethnic group and an important political force in the country. Crucially for this analysis, Mohaqeq repeatedly said that he would invest on the momentum built by his candidacy to create a truly institutionalised political party.

However, once the elections were over, Mohaqeq's interest in institutionalising a political party also declined. He even stopped supporting *Entekhab*, the weekly published during his campaign. His educated supporters became disillusioned and left his office. He switched back to his own personal style of leadership, largely centred on his maverick style and political opportunism. By shedding whatever organised following had gathered around him, he gained the ability to take political decisions and form alliances according to the needs of the moment, without the hindrance of a political party to be carried with him. He was only consulting with a limited number of aides and friends. Whatever the short-term gains of this style of leadership, it impacted negatively on his longterm standing among his supporters.

In a surprising move, he entered into an alliance with Abdur Rasul Sayaf to secure his support for the post of deputy speaker of the parliament, in exchange for his support for Sayyaf's candidacy to the post of speaker of the parliament. Because of the bloody conflicts between *Hezb-e Wahdat* and Sayaf's forces during the civil war in Kabul (1993-95), this move strongly compromised his credibility. Typically, the decision was taken within a small circle of aides. To justify his decision he alleged that he and his allies were under tremendous pressures by the government. For instance, he asserted that his Hazara supporters were being ousted from government positions and pressured in various forms in his native stronghold in Balkh province by Governor Atta Muhammad, one of Mohaqeq's long-standing rivals. He justified the move as a step to reduce this mounting pressure. It was not lost on the many Hazaras, however, that he had contested the top political post in the country and rallied most Hazara voters in order to gain leverage for his own political manoeuvres.

Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Millat (Erfani)

Leader: Qurban Ali ERFANI (Urfani, Irfani)

Led by Qurban Ali Erfani, an instrumental figure in the establishment of the party and first deputy leader under Karim Khalili, this party was the fourth split emerging from [Hezb-e Wahdat](#). A native of Yakawlang district of Bamyan and one of the founders of *Nasr* and *Hezbe Wahdat*, Erfani has always been at the centre of Hazara politics. His party was registered at the Ministry of Justice in March 2005. However, despite being regarded as a key founder and veteran of *Hezb-e Wahdat*, he has demonstrated little political weight as an autonomous political player.



Hezb-e Wahdat Milli Islami (Akbari)

Other Names: National Islamic Party of Afghanistan (*Hizb-i-Milli-Islami-i-Afghanistan*),

Leaders: Ustad Mohammad AKBARI
and Rohullah LOUDIN;

Muhammad Akbari split from [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) in 1994 to form the *Hezb-e Wahdat* (Akbari).²⁰ He was the main Shiite figure to surrender to the Taliban and cooperate with them in maintaining control of the Hazarajat. The alignment with the Taliban placed him in a disadvantageous position after the regime collapsed in late 2001. Not surprisingly, the government in Kabul was dominated by the anti-Taliban resistance organisations that worked with the US-led coalition to overthrow the Taliban and capture Kabul. As a result he and his organisation were left outside the government. However, his alignment with the Taliban and the role he played in at least reducing and preventing large scale atrocities in his native Bamyan improved his standing in the province. This helped him secure a seat in the National Assembly in the 2005 parliamentary elections. But his party also suffered another split. Mustafa Kazimi, a key figure who was his minister of commerce in the interim and transitional administration, formed his own party, [Eqtedar-e Milli](#). As a result, Akbari has only been playing a marginal role in the politics



²⁰ For information on *Hezb-e Wahdat* (Akbari) before 2001, see Sec.2.4 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*

Hezb-e Eqtedar-e Melli (Kazemi)

Other names: Eqtedar-e Milli (Kazemi); **National Islamic Empowerment Party** (*Hizb-i Iqtedar-i-Milli-Islami*).

Leaders: Ahmad Shah AHMADZAY, Mustapha KAZEMI (assassinated 2007)

The formation of this party was reported in early 2006 under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Ahmadzay and Mustafa Kazimi, a key figure who was [Akbari's](#) Minister of Commerce in the interim and transitional administrations.



Harakat-i Islami-i Afghanistan (Mohseni)

Other names: Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, *Hizb-i-Harakat-i-Islami-i-Afghanistan*

Leaders: Ayatollah Muhammad Asef MUHSINI (MOHSENI) (to 2005); Mohammad Ali JAWID (since 2005)

This party, now led by Mohammad Ali Jawid, is the descendent of the Mujahideen era organisation *Harakat-i Islami*,²¹ led by Asef Mohseni, which was a Shia (though not exclusively Hazara) group that stayed outside the *Hezb-e Wahdat*. Members of *Harakat* represented the Shiites in the Interim Administration of 2002 as well as the Transitional Administration in 2002-2003. *Harakat* split into two factions, with Mohseni's wing keeping the traditional name and representing its clerical wing, while Seyyed Hossein Anwari's wing, called [Harakat-e Islami-ye Mardom-e Afghanistan](#) representing its military – and more secular – component. In February 2005, Mohseni stepped down as party leader and handed over to Hojjatolislam Seyyed Muhammad Ali Jawed, a minister in Karzai's first cabinet formed in late 2001 in Bonn.



Harakat-i Islami-i Mardon (Anwari)

Other names: People's Islamic Movement of Afghanistan

Leader: Sayyid Husain ANWARI, the Minister of Agriculture in the transitional government

This party, led by Hosayn Anwari, is a faction of the Mujahideen era organisation *Harakat-i Islami* which was a Shia (though not exclusively Hazara) group that stayed outside the *Hezb-e Wahdat*.²² Seyyed Hossein Anwari's wing, called *Harakat-e Islami-ye Mardom-e Afghanistan*, or 'People's Islamic Movement of Afghanistan', represents the military – and more secular – component of *Harakat-i Islami*.



²¹ For information on *Harakat-i Islami* before 2001, see Sec.2.4 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*

²² For information on *Harakat-i Islami* before 2001, see Sec.2.4 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*

1.3 Coalitions

National Understanding Front of Afghanistan (NUF)

Also called: *Jabha-ye Tafahom-e Melli-ye Afghanistan*

Formed: 2005

Leader: Yunus Qanuni ([*Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Newin*](#)) (Tajik)

Yunus Qanuni, who was runner-up in the 2004 presidential election, tried to set up an alliance of the defeated presidential candidates, which evolved in April 2005 into the 12-member opposition alliance, *Jabha-ye Tafahom-e Melli-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘National Understanding Front of Afghanistan’. The leaders of the NUF announced that their first goal was to achieve parliamentary power in the National Assembly balloting scheduled for September 2005. They accused the Karzai administration of having failed to combat corruption in government, indicated opposition to the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan, and called for the adoption of a proportional voting system in the assembly. However, some observers described the Front as comprising ‘incongruous factions’ that might lack sustained cohesion.²³

It was estimated the candidates aligned with the NUF gained 60–80 seats in the balloting for the *Wolesi Jirga* in 2005, thereby securing the front’s position as the main opposition to the Karzai administration. Qanuni was subsequently elected as speaker of the *Wolesi Jirga*, after which he announced his resignation as chair of the NUF. The NUF is reportedly defunct with most of its member parties now supporting the [United National Front \(UNF\)](#), led by Rabbani of the [Jamaat-i-Islami](#).

The NUF comprised of 11 parties:

- *Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Newin*, or New Afghanistan Party, led by Qanooni;
- *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Mardom-e Afghanistan*, or ‘People’s Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan, (Mohaqqeq);
- *Hezb-e Iqtidar-e Islami-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘Islamic Rule Party of Afghanistan’ (Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai),
- *Harakat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan* (Seyyed Muhammad Ali Jawed),
- *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Melli wa Islami-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘National and Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan’ (Muhammad Akbari),
- *Hezb-e Istiqlal-e Melli-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘National Independence Party of Afghanistan’ (Taj Muhammad Wardak),
- *Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami wa Melli-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘Islamic and National Revolution Movement of Afghanistan’ (Ahmad Nabi Muhammadi),
- *Sazman-e Islami-ye Afghanistane Jawan*, or ‘Islamic Organisation ‘Young Afghanistan’ (Seyyed Jawad Hossaini),
- *Hezb-e E’tedal-e Melli wa Islami-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘National and Islamic Moderate Party of Afghanistan’ (Qarabeg Izadyar),
- *Hezb-e Solh wa Wahdat-e Melli-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘Peace and National Unity Party of Afghanistan’ (Abdul Qadeer Emami Ghorii),

- *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Melli-ye Aqwam-e Afghanistan*, or ‘National Unity Party of Afghanistan’s Tribes’ (Nasrullah Barakzai),
- Mir Mahfouz Neda’i and Latif Pedram, leader of *Hezb-e Kangara-ye Melli*, left after only two weeks.
- *Jombesh-e Hambastagi-ye Melli-ye Afghanistan*, or ‘National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan’, (Eng. Ahmad) joined the NUF in May 2005

National United Front of Afghanistan (UNF)

Also called: *Jabhe-ye-Motahed-e-Milli*

Formed: 2006

The United National Front (UNF) is a coalition of various political parties in Afghanistan. The group was a broad coalition of former and current strongmen, commanders from the anti-Soviet resistance, ex-Communist leaders, and various social and ethnic groups. Many of its members were formerly part of the similarly named United Islamic Front (Northern Alliance). This alliance contains many of the same members as the [National Coalition of Afghanistan](#), formed by Dr Abdullah Abdullah in 2011. But the parallel existence of the two alliances shows that there is a deep rift within the *Jamiat-e Islami* camp putting question marks behind its future.²⁴

Leaders

The Front included the following key members:

- Former President, Burhanuddin Rabbani ([Jamiat-i Islami](#)) (Tajik)
- Speaker of the Lower House, Yunus Qanuni ([Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Newin](#)) (Tajik)
- Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Abdullah Abdullah ([Jamiat-i Islami](#)) (Tajik/Pashtun)
- Minister for Energy and Water, Ismail Khan ([Jamiat-i Islami](#)) (Tajik)
- Communist-era Minister, (Sayed) Mohammad Gulabzoy (Pashtun)
- Military aide to President Hamid Karzai, Abdul Rashid Dostum ([Jombesh](#))
- Former Commerce Minister, Sayed Mustafa Kazimi ([Hezb-e Eqtedar-e Melli](#)) (Hazara)
- Ahmad Zia Masoud, brother of famous Ahmad Shah Massoud ([Nahzat-e Melli](#)) (Tajik)

History: The UNF brought together Mujahideen, former Communists, members of the royal family, and other diverse elements in pursuit of national unity, reconstruction, and establishment of a federal system under which governors and provincial councils would be directly elected and the national government would operate on a parliamentary rather than a presidential system. Members of the UNF reportedly included *Wolesi Jirga* speaker Qanuni, first vice president of the republic, Ahmad Zia Masoud, Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum (leader of the National Front [below] and a top military adviser to President Karzai), Mustapha Kazemi (a leader of the National Islamic Empowerment Party), representatives of the National Congress Party of Afghanistan, Mustapha Zahir (grandson of the former king), several cabinet members, and a number of legislators. The new grouping, primarily

²⁴ Ruttig, Thomas 2012, ‘National Coalition vs National Front: Two opposition alliances put Jamiat in a dilemma’, Afghan Analysts Network, 4 January <<http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=2418>> Accessed 4 March 2013

representing non-Pushtun northerners, was immediately perceived as the dominant political force in the *Wolesi Jirga*. It strongly supported a proposed national amnesty bill, not surprisingly considering the number of warlords and others with major roles in past conflicts involved in its formation. Saying that military defeat of the Taliban was impossible, Rabbani invited the Taliban and other antigovernment forces to lay down their arms and join the UNF in pursuit of national unity. Although the UNF remained formally supportive of President Karzai in early 2008, it subsequently instigated a legislative confrontation with the administration.

By early 2009 the UNF was considered likely to present the most significant challenge to Karzai in the presidential polling scheduled for August. In April Vice President Masoud announced that he would not be a candidate. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, became the UNF nominee. Meanwhile, President Karzai selected Fahim as a running mate. Fahim was subsequently elected first Vice President of Afghanistan. Abdullah placed second in the balloting, and he then withdrew before a scheduled runoff, citing concerns over electoral fraud. After withdrawing, Abdullah called on his supporters to remain peaceful and was generally credited with helping prevent violence during the election crisis. Nonetheless, following the 2010 elections, the UNF emerged as the main opposition party to the Karzai regime.

National Coalition of Afghanistan (NCA)

Other Names: *Etelaq-e Melli-ye Afghanistan* Previously the Hope and Change alliance

Formed 2011

Leaders: Dr Abdullah Abdullah and Yunus Qanooni

History: After the 2009 Afghan Presidential Elections, Abdullah created the Coalition for Change and Hope (CCH). The CCH became the leading democratic opposition movement against the government of Hamid Karzai. In November 2011, the name was changed to National Coalition of Afghanistan (NCA). In 2012 the coalition included:

Major figures associated with the coalition include

- Speaker of the Lower House, Yunus Qanuni ([*Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Newin*](#)) (Tajik)
- Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Abdullah Abdullah ([*Jamiat-i Islami*](#)) (Tajik/Pashtun)
- Ahmad Wali Masoud, brother of famous Ahmad Shah Massoud ([*Nahzat-e Melli*](#)) (Tajik)
- Former Communist MP Nur-ul Haq Ulumi, the leader of *Mutahed-e Melli* party (Pashtun)
- Dr. Muhammad Ebrahim Moshfeq, early on in the past-Taleban time a deputy governor of Khost (and known for his Northern Alliance links)
- Dr. Hayatullah Popalzai from Kandahar. (Pashtun)
- Abbas Karimi, who was justice minister during the interim government and recently Afghan Ambassador to Kuwait (Uzbek)
- Humayun Shah Asefi (a former presidential candidate and leader of the monarchist party with ties to the family of former king Zahir Shah),
- Eng. Muhammad Asim, a former Baghlan MP ([*Jamiat-i Islami*](#)) (Tajik)
- Qurban Ali Erfani, the head of one of the many *Hezb-e Wahdat* splinter groups ([*Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami Millat Afghanistan*](#));

- Mohammad Mohaqiq and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, Check <http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=2418>

Cooperation Council of Political Parties and Coalitions of Afghanistan

Formed 2012

In September 2012, most of Afghanistan's major political parties established a 'Cooperation Council of Political Parties and Coalitions of Afghanistan' and published a joint 'Democracy Charter'. The Cooperation Council demanded that all upcoming elections be held according to the constitution and political parties, as an 'embodiment of democracy', should have a stronger role in decision-making.²⁵

These included:

- *Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan* (led by Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, minister of economy);
- *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami Afghanistan* (Abdul Karim Khalili),
- National Coalition of Afghanistan (Dr. Abdullah Abdullah),
- *Mahaz-e Melli Islami Afghanistan* (Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani),
- *Nohzat-e Hambastagi-ye Melli* (Sayed Eshaq Gailani),
- *Jamiat-e Islami Afghanistan* (Salahuddin Rabbani, chairman of the High Peace Council),
- National Front of Afghanistan (Ahmad Zia Massud),
- *Jombesh-e Melli Islami Afghanistan* (Abdul Rashid Dostum),
- *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Mardom-e Afghanistan* (Muhammad Mohaqqueq),
- *Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Newin* (Muhammad Yunos Qanuni),
- *Hezb-e Eqtedar-e Melli Afghanistan* (Sayed Ali Kazemi),
- *Hezb-e Islami-ye Motahed-e Afghanistan* (Wahidullah Sabawun),
- *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Millat-e Afghanistan* (Qurban Ali Erfani, [not registered](#)),
- *Nohzat-e Melli Afghanistan* (Ahmad Wali Massud),
- *Rawand-e Sabz* (Amrullah Saleh).
- *Hezb-e Mutahed-e Melli Afghanistan* (Nur-ul-Haq Ulumi)
- *Afghan Millat* (Anwar-ul-Haq Ahadi, minister of commerce and industries)
- *Hezb-e Harakat-e Melli Afghanistan* (Muhammad Naseri) *De Haqiqat Gund* (Shah Wali Tarinzoi).

Those who did not sign include the National Salvation Front led by former interim president Sebghatullah Mujaddedi, Sayyaf's *Dawat-e Islami*, its breakaway group *Hezb-e Eqtedar-e Islami* (led by Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai), *Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami* (which largely dissolved into the Taliban movement in the 1990s, but was re-established and registered as a party after 2001 and is led by Musa Hotak) and the second largest Shia tanzim, *Harakat-e Islami*, now split into various factions.

²⁵ Ruttig, Thomas 2012, 'Ambiguity Reiterated: The 20-parties 'Democracy Charter'', Afghan Analysts Network, 26 September <<http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=3011>> Accessed 4 March 2013

2 Opposition Armed Groups since 2001

The current Afghan insurgency is composed of a syndicate of semi-autonomous groups, including the [Taliban](#), the [Haqqani Network](#), and [Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin](#). The insurgency is also supported by various transnational terrorist groups such as [Al-Qaeda](#) and the [Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan](#), as well as Pakistan-based militant groups such as *Tehrik-i Taliban* Pakistan and the Commander Nazir Group. The primary actor within the insurgency is the Taliban, led by the Senior Shura (or ‘Council’, a term with religious connotations) in Quetta, Pakistan, and the spiritual leader Mullah Omar. Overall, these groups maintain functional and symbolic relationships in pursuit of overlapping interests.²⁶

Below is information on groups which have opposed the current government militarily since 2001.

Taliban (Quetta Shura) (post 2001)

Leader: Mullah Mohammed OMAR

Deputies:

- Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar (best known under his *nom de guerre* Mullah Berader Akhund) (arrested in Pakistan 2010);
- Mullah Ghulam Rasoul (better known as Mullah Abdul Zakir) (since 2010)
- Maluvi Abdul Kabir, a senior Taliban leader from Nangarhar and close confidant of Mullah Mohammad Omar, is head of the *Peshawar Shura* and acts as a liaison to the Taliban-affiliated [Haqqani Network](#).



The Taliban movement emerged as a military force in 1994 and became the government of most of Afghanistan after they conquered Kabul and southern Afghanistan in 1996.²⁷ On 7 October 2001 the US launched an invasion of Afghanistan that toppled the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in November. The Taliban leadership escaped across the border into Pakistan and, following a period of re-organisation, re-emerged as an insurgent force with the objective of restoring the Islamic Emirate. While initially offering only low-level opposition to the new government of President Hamid Karzai, since 2006 there has been a significant escalation in Taliban operations, with the group carrying out an intensifying asymmetric insurgency. The key elements of this insurgency have been the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and small-arms ambushes to target security forces in rural areas, alongside the use of suicide and mass casualty attacks in urban areas, in an attempt to cause insecurity and undermine the rule of the Afghan government. The Taliban currently represents a grave threat to the Afghan government throughout significant areas of the country, and manifests a continuing ability to seriously disrupt international security and stabilisation efforts. While

²⁶ ‘Taliban’ 2012, *GlobalSecurity.org*, 7 November
<<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/taleban.htm>>

²⁷ For information on the Taliban before 2001, see Sec.2.1 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

most observers agree that the group will be unable to overthrow the government as long as International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) personnel remain in the country, there is equally little prospect that it will itself be defeated in the near term. As such – in the context of anticipated future draw-downs of ISAF forces – the Taliban poses a severe threat to the future of the Afghan government in the mid to long term.

The Taliban ostensibly has two main objectives: firstly, the removal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan; and secondly, the restoration of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan through the overthrow of the current government. In short, the Taliban seek a return to the *status quo* that existed prior to the US-led invasion in October 2001. This was emphasised during the declaration of the group's spring offensive, Operation al-Fatah, in May 2010 when they stated: 'The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan again emphasises ... the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of all invading forces from Afghanistan.'²⁸ The group's leadership claims to have no expansionist ambitions beyond Afghanistan's borders, and no interest in conducting operations against western countries. However, as long as the Taliban remains closely associated with *Al-Qaeda*, such claims will continue to be treated with scepticism by western governments.

Organisation of the Taliban: The question of just who the Taliban *is* continues to baffle analysts and pundits alike. Some experts interpret the movement as a loose network of militants based along tribal lineage, some describe the Taliban as a Pakistani-created and funded proxy army, while others suggest the Taliban are an umbrella organisation of various militant networks, marginalised tribes and clans, criminal gangs, some of whom pledge allegiance to the core element of the former Taliban government, Mullah Mohammad Omar and the so-called *Quetta Shura*. An organisational description of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan is presented below.

Quetta Shura Taliban (QST): The remnants of the former Taliban government manifested itself as the *Quetta Shura* in 2002, named after the Pakistani city where Mullah Omar sought refuge following his ouster from Afghanistan. Initially, the movement consisted of a ten man *Rabhari Shura* (Leadership Council) consisting of eight old guard Taliban military commanders from southern Afghanistan and one from Paktika and another from Paktia. In March 2003, Mullah Omar expanded the *Rabhari Shura* to include a total of 33 commanders and later, in October 2006, announced the creation of the *majlis al-shura* (consultative council) consisting of 13 members and some additional 'advisers.'

Since that time, the *Quetta Shura* has become far more complex. As the Taliban began to spread its influence and gain *de facto* control of some rural areas in southern Afghanistan, the *Quetta Shura* began assigning shadow government positions to various areas and regions with heavy Taliban support. The *Quetta Shura* ballooned in size, likely because of its effort to manage and bring some organisational efficiency to what was and essentially is a franchise of tribal and communal networks with loose ideological and physical relations. According to several documents published by the Taliban between April 2008 and May 2009, the Taliban has created additional councils to perform specific tasks; these are managed under the Supreme Leadership of Mullah Omar. The Taliban outlined the structure of its organisation in an official statement in 2008. While some view the manifesto as nothing more than an

²⁸ IHS Jane's 2011, *Afghanistan: An IHS Jane's Special Report*, 7 October, p.47

attempt by the Taliban to portray itself as a unified organisation capable of running the state, it nevertheless outlines the nine councils that make up the *Quetta Shura* Taliban: the Military Commander's Council, Ulema Council, Military Council, Financial Council, Political Council, Cultural Council, Invitation (Recruitment) Council, Training and Education Council, and the Council of Affairs of the Prisoner's and Martyr's Families. The latter two are thought to exist in theory only.

The Taliban organisation is centered on its Supreme Leadership head, Mullah Mohammad Omar, and his military and political deputy Mullah Abdul Ghani, best known under his *nom de guerre* Mullah Berader Akhund, and a series of military councils, which in turn help facilitate the functioning of the Taliban's four regional zones. Mullah Berader, the Taliban's most competent and respected military commander, was captured in Karachi in February 2010. The Taliban's operational command over daily events is now led by a seasoned field commander from Helmand province: Mullah Ghulam Rasoul, better known as Mullah Abdul Zakir; and his deputy, Mullah Abdul Rauf Alizai. Maluvi Abdul Kabir, a senior Taliban leader from Nangarhar and close confidant of Mullah Mohammad Omar, is head of the Peshawar Shura and acts as a liaison to the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network.

Areas of Operation: The Taliban's areas of operation are broken down as follows:

- The *Quetta Shura* is responsible for insurgent activities in Kandahar, Uruzgan, Farah, Zabul, Nimroz and parts of Helmand.
- The *Peshawar Shura*, led by Maluvi Abdul Kabir, is thought to influence operations in Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar, Nuristan, Logar, Kabul, Wardak, and possibly areas in the northeast.
- The *Miram Shah Shura* is run out of North Waziristan and its military head is Siraj 'Khalifa' Haqqani; its area of responsibility includes Paktia, Paktika, Khost, parts of Nangarhar, Logar, Wardak, Ghazni and Kabul. (This is the [Haqqani Network](#))
- The *Girdi Jungle Shura*, named after the large refugee camp located in Pakistani Baluchistan, is responsible for activities in Helmand province.

Although the Taliban may have distinct networks operating throughout the country – for example, the Haqqani Network, which enjoys a great deal of tactical autonomy – it is clear most of these groups share many political and ideological objectives.

The Taliban's heartland is in southern and eastern Afghanistan, in the predominantly ethnic Pashtun regions along the border with Pakistan, and the group's traditional stronghold has been Kandahar province. In the period 2002-2003, the Taliban confined its operations against ISAF forces to these southern and eastern provinces. However in 2005-2006 the Taliban began to expand its operations throughout the country, and by 2009 at least 80 per cent of Afghanistan was subject to significant operational activity by the Taliban or its allies, with a further 17 per cent subject to substantial activity.

Shadow Government: Whereas after 2001 the Taliban were forced to reorganise as an insurgent or guerrilla movement without much of a 'liberated zone' as a seat of a parallel government, more recently, the Taliban have succeeded in gaining influence or control over large parts of Afghanistan's territory, operating in all 34 provinces. On parts of this territory, the Taliban have established a parallel administration, with provincial and district governors, judges, police, intelligence commanders and even a system of taxation. According to NATO

sources, Taliban provincial governors exist in 33 of 34 provinces (possibly because they do not recognise the new 34th province). Even if much of these structures do not exist permanently on the ground outside the Southern region and many functionaries are temporary absentees in their designated areas (and many have been killed of late), they constitute a 'shadow' or parallel government. This 'government' is embodied in the Leadership Council. Its different committees and councils, for military, cultural, financial and political affairs, etc., resemble rump ministries and copy the pre-2001 Taliban government (and the current one in Kabul) but as a scaled-down version.

Furthermore, the systematic use of the name and insignia of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan on official correspondence, 'night letters' and online publications shows that the Taliban consider themselves a state-like entity and the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan – even more so after the faulty 2009 presidential polls. They demand that journalists and aid organisations obtain permits to enter areas controlled by them, issue statements and correspond with foreign states and international organisations, pledging 'good and positive relations with all neighbours based on mutual respect' and 'constructive interactions for a permanent stability and economic development in the region'. By this, the Taliban claim the continuity of their emirate that, in their eyes, has been unlawfully removed by a foreign intervention and replaced by a 'puppet administration'.

Continuity: The Taliban movement has shown more continuity than discontinuity between the pre- and post-2001 phases in the major aspects that characterise such armed insurgent movements: the organisational structure including the composition of its leadership, ideology, political aims and programme. Most significantly, the movement still adheres to its undisputed and single most important leader, Mulla Muhammad Omar. The Taliban Leadership Council continues to be mainly Kandahari and stems from the pre-2001 time. The presence of non-Kandahari Taliban leaders in this council is more symbolic than significant. The influence of newly recruited, younger-generation Taliban foot soldiers on strategic decision-making is still minimal, although Mulla Omar's two new deputies (after the arrest of Mulla Baradar) indicate that now both the old and the new generations are represented on this level.

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Haqqani Network

Other names: *Miram Shah Shura*

Leader: Sirajuddin (Siraj) ‘Khalifa’ HAQQANI is the current leader in 2013.

Jalaluddin HAQQANI, father of Siraj, who was the previous leader of the network, was a famous commander who fought against the Soviets with *Hezb-e Islami* (Khales).²⁹ Siraj’s brother Mohammad Haqqani killed by a drone and another brother Naisruddin Haqqani was arrested in Pakistan in 2010.

Active since: 1979.

Base of operation: Based in North Waziristan in Pakistan, the group is strong in Loya Paktia (Paktika, Paktia, and Khowst) in southeast Afghanistan.

Supported by: Members of the Zadran tribe of ethnic Pashtuns.

Summary: The group of fighters led by veteran Mujahideen leader Jalaluddin Haqqani, and his son Sirajuddin, is commonly referred to as the Haqqani Network. The Haqqani Network allied with the Taliban following the Taliban’s capture of Kabul in 1996, and currently fights alongside the Taliban for the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. While the group is notionally led by the ageing Jalaluddin, it is assessed that the group’s operations are likely led by his son Sirajuddin. The Haqqani Network is operationally active in the provinces of Paktika, Paktia, and Khowst. The group essentially operates as an autonomous entity, although attacks carried out by the group are claimed in the Taliban’s name. The Haqqani Network is alleged by Afghan and coalition officials to have carried out a number of significant urban operations, such as an assault on government buildings in Kabul in January 2010. The Haqqani Network represents a significant local threat to the Afghan government in its area of operations.

Group Formation : The Haqqani Network is not a strictly delineated operational entity but instead refers to the group of fighters loyal to, and under the command of, veteran Mujahideen leader Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin. The group is essentially founded on a tribal basis, as opposed to a religious or political basis, and primarily consists of members of the Zadran tribe of ethnic Pashtuns. Although its foundations lie in Afghanistan, the group is reported to have established a shadow government in Miranshah in North Waziristan in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where it allegedly operates courts, tax offices, several *madrassas* (religious schools), and organises a network of front companies throughout Pakistan involved in selling vehicles, property, lumber, and minerals. Jalaluddin first emerged as a member of the *Hezb-e Islami* faction led by Mohammed Yunus Khalis during the anti-Soviet insurgency in 1979-89. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Jalaluddin led a group of fighters in the civil war against the government of President Mohammed Najibullah. Jalaluddin joined forces with the Taliban in 1996 following the Taliban’s capture of Kabul, when he swore fealty to Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar and assumed a senior position in the group’s leadership hierarchy.

²⁹ For information on the *Hezb-e Islami* (Khales) before 2001, see Sec.2.1 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

High profile attacks: A series of complex assaults against Afghan government and economic institutions in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Khost City have been attributed to the Haqqani Network and its ‘Kabul Strike Group’— a shadowy guerrilla front that plans and conducts sophisticated attacks usually including a commando style raid with suicide-bombers against urban targets in Kabul City. A brazen day-light attack which involved gunmen and suicide bombers dressed as border police against Jalalabad’s main bank on 19 February 2011 killed least 42 people and wounded more than 70 making it one of the most deadly attacks attributed to the Haqqani Network.

Past attacks attributed to the Haqqani Network include the multi-pronged assault on two Afghan ministries and a prison headquarters in the Kabul that left 19 people dead and more than 50 wounded, the 11-man commando-style suicide bombing raid against several government facilities in Khost City, and the 4 July 2009 assault against a remote U.S. outpost in Paktika’s Zerok district that killed two U.S. soldiers and injured four others. On 21 July 2009 suicide bombers armed with rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles attacked government installations and a U.S. base in the cities of Gardez and Jalalabad. However, one of the most brazen attacks attributed to the Haqqani Network occurred in Kabul on 4 October 2009 when terrorists dressed in police uniforms assassinated the security guard protecting the UN’s Bahktar guest house and stormed the facility, eventually detonating several suicide vests and killing at least six foreign UN personnel and six others.

Areas of operation: The Haqqanis have historically operated within Afghanistan in Khost, Paktia and Paktika Provinces (collectively known as Loya Paktia or Greater Paktia). The Haqqani Network now has important logistical support bases less than fifty miles from Kabul. Since 2008, the Haqqani Network has expanded its safe havens and operating areas into Logar and Wardak Provinces, the provinces immediately south of Kabul. The Haqqani Network has also established itself in smaller numbers east of Kabul in Nangarhar, Kapisa, and Laghman Provinces, from which it can threaten key lines of communication between the capital and outlying provinces.

The Haqqani Network had not exerted much influence in Ghazni in the past, even though the insurgency is strong in that province – the Taliban has been the dominant group in the area since 1995. The Haqqani Network nevertheless uses Ghazni as a transit and support zone, and has moved foreign fighters into and through Ghazni since 2008. Foreign fighters, including Punjabis, Arabs, Chechens, and Uzbeks, have been reported to be moving through the area facilitated by the Haqqani Network.

The Haqqani Network has expanded its operational reach into the northern provinces of Baghlan, Kunduz, and Takhar through a partnership with the [*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan \(IMU\)*](#). The Haqqanis are able to capitalize on Uzbek disenfranchisement in the north while simultaneously infiltrating the isolated Pashtun communities in that area. The Haqqanis and the IMU also use their northern bases to assassinate political and security officials linked with powerful northern figures, particularly ethnic Tajiks affiliated with the *Jamiat-e Islami* Party.

Current Assessment: According to J. Dressler:

The Haqqanis are currently Afghanistan’s most capable and potent insurgent group, and they continue to maintain close operational and strategic ties with [*Al-Qaeda*](#) and their affiliates. Unlike the Quetta Shura Taliban in southern Afghanistan, the counterinsurgency campaign

has not weakened the Haqqanis' military capabilities significantly. Few of the 'surge' resources were deployed to their strongholds in Eastern Afghanistan. The Haqqani Network has increased its operational reach and jihadist credentials over the past several years. The Haqqani Network has expanded its reach toward the Quetta Shura Taliban's historical strongholds in southern Afghanistan, the areas surrounding Kabul, as well as the Afghan north. The Haqqanis maintain considerable sanctuary and support nodes inside Pakistan's tribal areas. From their safehavens in North Waziristan and Kurram Agencies in Pakistan, the Haqqanis project men and materiel to resource their terrorist campaign in Afghanistan's southeastern provinces of Khost, Paktika and Paktia onwards to the provinces surrounding Kabul. The Haqqani Network is the primary proxy force backed by elements of Pakistan's security establishment. Pakistan's support for the Haqqani Network has increased, through both facilitating additional sanctuary and providing strategic and operational guidance.³⁰

Unlike many Taliban members, who when not fighting work as farmers or do not work at all, a significant proportion of Haqqani fighters double as *madrassa* students. Many of them attend *madrassas* in North Waziristan, especially those built or funded by Jalaluddin's network. This may contribute to the more radicalised, ideological orientation of some Haqqani fighters relative to the Quetta Shura.

Alliances: The Haqqani Network essentially operates as an autonomous wing of the [Taliban](#) in eastern Afghanistan, and has close ideological and operation links to the group. Jalaluddin Haqqani was franchised into the Taliban in 1996 as the Taliban neared his stronghold of Paktia. Since then, Jalaluddin Haqqani (and later Siraj Haqqani) has pledged *bayat* (allegiance) to Mullah Mohammad Omar, becoming the Minister of Tribal and Border Affairs, the Governor of Paktia and eventually the Taliban's overall military commander. Despite rumours of a rift in 2008, in April 2010 Sirajuddin confirmed that there was a strong ongoing relationship between the Haqqani Network and the Taliban.

The Haqqani Network also has an ongoing relationship with [Al-Qaeda](#) and foreign fighters in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The group's relationship with *Al-Qaeda* stretches back to the formative early days of *Al-Qaeda* in training camps in Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet insurgency, during which time Jalaluddin allegedly supervised the establishing of the camps. The relationship strengthened in the aftermath of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, when *Al-Qaeda* leader Osama bin Laden fled across the border into Pakistan and was allegedly sheltered by Jalaluddin in North Waziristan. Since then the areas under Jalaluddin's control in North Waziristan have become a refuge for an increasingly diverse range of *Al-Qaeda* and foreign fighters – including Central Asian, North Caucasian, Arab, and Uighur militants – frequently using the territory as a staging ground for cross-border attacks.

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³⁰ Dressler, J. 2012, *The Haqqani Network: A Strategic Threat*, Institute for the Study of War, March, p.8
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Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar) (HIG) (post 2001)

Alternate Names: *Hezb-e Islami* Gulbaddin (HIG), HIIH, *Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan*, *Hizb-i Islami*

Years of Operation: 1975 to present

Leaders: Gulbuddin HEKMATYAR (Hikmatyar)

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is an important and unique figure in recent Afghan history, having adopted an oppositional role to all regimes since 1978 and refusing to join any government, including the Taliban.³¹ HIG re-emerged in Afghanistan following the US-led invasion in October 2001, and has carried out attacks on Afghan and coalition forces, primarily in the eastern provinces of Kunar and Nuristan. HIG seeks the imposition of *Sharia* (Islamic law) throughout Afghanistan and maintains a pragmatic alliance with the Taliban in opposition to the Afghan government and the presence of coalition forces in Afghanistan. However, this alliance has been put under significant pressure following heavy inter-factional fighting with the Taliban in northern Afghanistan in early 2010. Since then HIG has held a series of preliminary peace talks with the Afghan government. However, there has been no agreement with the government to date, and the group remains a significant local threat to the Karzai administration.

Hekmatyar and his faction of *Hezb-e-Islami* have reassumed the significant role they played during the 1980s in the insurgency against the Afghan government and its foreign allies. While *Hezb-e-Islami* Gulbuddin no longer benefits from the extensive support it had in the 1980s, it can exploit its old support network in Afghanistan and is more open to co-operation with other insurgents. Known for forming and breaking alliances to suit his own interests, Hekmatyar may see another chance to take power as coalition forces withdraw.

Unlike the Taliban, HIG does not have websites and spokesmen who regularly claim responsibility for attacks, making it difficult to assess the scale of its operations. However, ISAF coalition statements have announced the death or capture of HIG commanders and facilitators in most of Afghanistan's eastern provinces and some in the north.

³¹ For information on the *Hezb-e-Islami* before 2001, see Sec.2.1 of RRT Background Paper *Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 1978-2001*.

HIG aims to remove foreign forces from Afghanistan, overthrow the government led by President Hamid Karzai, and establish a rigidly conservative Islamic regime in Afghanistan under *sharia*. According to Hekmatyar, it is the group's intention to '[wage] jihad against the current US and British-led crusade. God willing, this jihad will continue until all occupation forces are driven out of every corner of the country and an Islamic system is established in Afghanistan in accordance with the people's wishes.'³² However, while HIG's objectives appear to be consistent with those of the Taliban, Hekmatyar is more politically-focused than the Taliban and uses religion to underline and support his political objectives. As such, beyond HIG's immediate objectives as already underlined, Hekmatyar's ambitions likely extend to his return to a senior government position and a prominent position for HIG within the Afghan political system.

Area of Operation: HIG operates primarily in eastern Afghanistan – in the provinces of Kunar and Nuristan – along the border with Pakistan. As well as maintaining base areas in Afghanistan, HIG also utilises Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa (formerly the NWFP) as a staging area for logistics, fundraising, and recruitment efforts. Such activities have crystallised around Afghan refugee camps in the region and particularly in the camps at Shamshatoo and Jalozei (until its closure in 2008) near the city of Peshawar. HIG is also reported to operate on a small scale in many other provinces, including Laghman, Kapisa, the outskirts of Kabul, Wardak, Ghazni, Paktia, Baghis and other northern provinces.

Alliances and Rivalries HIG has a history of conflict with other Mujahideen groups, particularly in the immediate post-Soviet era when Hekmatyar waged a campaign against the forces of Rabbani's *Jamiat-i-Islami* – led by Ahmad Shah Massoud – and Abdul Rashid Dostum's *Jombesh-i-Milli*. The co-option of these two groups into an alliance with the Karzai administration means that ostensibly they remain in opposition to HIG, although in reality the groups have little contact. Similarly, Hekmatyar was opposed to the Taliban during the group's ascendance in the mid-1990s and the groups fought a number of territorial clashes. Ultimately, the Taliban's success in gaining control over much of the country led to the expulsion of HIG and the flight of Hekmatyar to Iran in 1996.

However, alliances and rivalries in Afghanistan between Islamist parties are often defined by personal motivations for power, and shift according to opportunist calculations and perception of shared enemies. HIG's relationship with the Taliban has been put under significant pressure following heavy inter-factional fighting between the two groups in northeast Afghanistan in early 2010. Sixty militants – 40 HIG and 20 Taliban – were killed in a clash in Baghlan in early March, while a local Taliban commander was killed by HIG militants in Wardak in June.

Hekmatyar's willingness to act expediently in order to achieve his political objectives means that HIG can be expected to ally itself with any group it considers a convenient supporter. In the past its alliances have been brief, and it is considered that no other group, however vehemently opposed to the present Afghan government and/or the presence of foreign troops, would be willing to trust HIG to any meaningful extent.

Threat Assessment HIG poses a significant local threat to Afghan security forces and coalition military personnel. The motivations of Hekmatyar and his desire to wage an

³² IHS Jane's 2011, *Afghanistan: An IHS Jane's Special Report*, 7 October, p.61

insurgency in eastern Afghanistan against the presence of foreign troops in the country and the Karzai administration are not in doubt. He has a history of ruthless campaigns to achieve his goals, and he has been able to muster significant forces to further his ambitions.

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Al-Qaeda (The Base)

Leaders: Ayman al-ZAWAHIRI, Osama bin LADEN (killed 2011)

Al-Qaeda is a global terrorist organisation, founded by Osama bin Laden, Abu Ubayda al-Banshiri, and Muhammad Atif in 1988, with the purpose of cleansing of the Muslim countries from corrupt and secular rulers, and fighting against the powers that threaten Muslim states and the holy places of Islam. Specifically, this meant achieving the withdrawal of United States troops from Saudi Arabia and winning independence for the Palestinian people. *Al-Qaeda* allied itself with Islamist forces in most parts of the Islamic world. It espouses a *Hanbali* interpretation of Islam, whose major protagonist is the 14th-century jurist Ibn Taymiyya.

The organisation established its headquarters in Khartoum, Sudan, in 1992, and, in response to American threats, moved to Afghanistan in May 1996. *Al-Qaeda* set up training camps in bases, established partly with American support in the war against the Communist government, and subsequently provided considerable military assistance to the Taliban regime.³³ Young Muslims from many parts of the Islamic world were trained in Afghanistan for military action in Kashmir, Chechnya, Bosnia, and other regions of conflict.

The U.S. government holds *Al-Qaeda* responsible for numerous attacks, including the 7 August 1998 bombings of its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the suicide attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September 2001 which resulted in war and the destruction of the *Al-Qaeda* network in Afghanistan. When the Taliban were driven out of Afghanistan in November-December 2001, *Al-Qaeda* fighters went with them to safety in Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda and foreign fighters – including Central Asian, North Caucasian, Arab, and Uighur militants – still frequently stage cross-border attacks into Afghanistan with the cooperation of members of the Haqqani network. The Haqqani network has fostered this closeness by maintaining its open fronts and by providing protection and a base from which *Al-Qaeda* and others could conduct attacks inside Afghanistan and plan acts of international terrorism.

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Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) are an *Al-Qaeda* -affiliated group that also cooperate with the [Haqqani Network](#) to attack the Afghanistan government in Northern Afghanistan. IMU and the Haqqanis are able to capitalise on Uzbek disenfranchisement in the north while simultaneously infiltrating the isolated Pashtun communities in that area. The Haqqanis and the IMU also use their northern bases to assassinate political and security officials linked with powerful northern figures, particularly ethnic Tajiks affiliated with the [Jamiat-e Islami Party](#). These assassinations are meant to undermine *Jamiat* and the northern leadership generally, which has been a historical rival to the Pashtuns as well as to Pakistan.

The IMU has evolved from its roots as an Islamist opposition group in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, and its current iteration hardly resembles the original organisation. It was founded in Uzbekistan, but fled to Afghanistan in 1997 with scores of Islamist exiles from both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The IMU contingent began an ongoing guerilla campaign against the Uzbek government from sanctuaries in northern Afghanistan. During this period, IMU set up training camps in Afghanistan and developed close ties with *Al-Qaeda*'s senior leadership. Though they were ostensibly aimed at overthrowing the Uzbek government and establishing a Sharia-based state, the majority of the IMU's activities concentrated on controlling the northern drug trade. The U.S. invasion in 2001, however, dislodged the group from northern Afghanistan, and the organisation was forced into a second exile in Pakistan. Through alliances with local militant and tribal leaders, the IMU contingent found sanctuary in South Waziristan and established ties with the Haqqani Network.

From 2008 on, the IMU shifted its strategic focus and its recruitment patterns from Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states to the Afghan North, largely focusing on weapons trafficking and narcotics smuggling. Pakistan and Afghanistan—rather than Central Asia became the priority for the organisation. In addition to its shifting strategic focus, the actual composition of the organisation has changed. 'The composition of IMU fighters has become so 'indigenised' in Afghanistan and Pakistan that the IMU is 'Uzbek' in name only,' according to journalist J.Z. Adams.³⁴ While it was once composed of Tajik and Uzbek

³⁴ Dressler, J. 2012, *The Haqqani Network: A Strategic Threat*, Institute for the Study of War, March, p.37
<http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Haqqani_StrategicThreatweb_29MAR_0.pdf> Accessed 10 January 2013

nationals who immigrated with Yoldash to Waziristan, the group recruits heavily from northern Afghanistan.

In a summary of its operations in 2011, the IMU did not mention Uzbekistan and instead stated that the group had carried out ‘jihad operations’ in a list of Afghan provinces: Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, Samangan, Badakhshan, Faryab, Sar-e-Pol, Kabul, Zabul, Ghazni, Panjshir, and Kapisa. According to the statement, the IMU carried out *fidai* (suicide) operations in Panjshir and Kunduz. This shift towards attacks in the North paralleled the organisation’s growing reliance on the Haqqani Network for sanctuary and support in Pakistan’s tribal areas. Whether the relationship is purely transactional or guided by a shared ideological approach, the Haqqani Network and the IMU have entered into a cooperative arrangement. The Haqqani Network provides sanctuary and training for the IMU cadre in North Waziristan and facilitates independent IMU attacks in northern Afghanistan. In exchange, the IMU provides foot soldiers for Haqqani organised attacks, such as the May 2010 attack on Bagram Airbase and the October 2011 attack on the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team, and acts as a proxy force in the North. The IMU is a combat multiplier among the northern insurgent groups and provides the Haqqani Network the ability to access areas without significant Pashtun pockets. The ability to recruit and generate antigovernment sentiment among disaffected ethnic Uzbeks is key.

Source:

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