



Afghanistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 5 October 2011.

Information on relations between Hizb e Islami and Taliban insurgents?

A report from the *International Crisis Groups* states:

“2. The Taliban and Hizb-e Islami

Relations between the Taliban and Hizb-e Islami have been tenuous. As mentioned, the Taliban had gained the upper hand against Hizb-e Islami during the civil war, resulting in the latter's Pakistani backers switching their support to the Taliban. In 2002, Hekmatyar announced an alliance between his faction and the Taliban. Yet, despite substantial cooperation between Hizb-e Islami and Taliban fighters at the local level – particularly in the greater Kabul area, the longstanding mistrust between the two sides continues to shape the relationship. The first signs of a serious split emerged in 2006.¹⁷⁷ According to a former Taliban official, fissures became even more pronounced around 2007, after Mullah Omar rejected Hekmatyar's proposal that Hizb-e Islami commanders be allowed to conduct operations independent of the Quetta Shura's oversight.¹⁷⁸ Hekmatyar publicly distanced his faction from the Taliban, and soon after there were reports of sporadic skirmishes in the north and centre of Afghanistan.¹⁷⁹ Hizb-e Islami has generally sought to cooperate with the Taliban in areas where its commanders feel they have limited or diminishing control such as Ghazni and the Pashtun-dominated areas of southern Kapisa. However, in areas where Hizb-e Islami believes it has the advantage, such as Wardak province, there have been fierce and frequent clashes with the Taliban in recent years. Competition for control over access points, particularly to the stretch of the Kabul-Kandahar highway that runs through Wardak, is a major factor. In Wardak's Nirkh district, for example, the Taliban and Hizb-e Islami have battled for the monopoly on the lucrative tax on the bulk transport of local produce from the district.¹⁸⁰ Similarly in Logar, there is violent competition to control territory near the Aynak Copper mine, with its hundreds of foreign workers and other resources.¹⁸¹ This suggests that financial gain, as opposed to ideological differences, is increasingly a primary driver of the violence between the two insurgent groups” (International Crisis Group (27 June 2011) *Afghanistan: "The Insurgency in Afghanistan's Heartland"*)

Regarding the situation in Northern Afghanistan a report from the *Afghanistan Analysts Network* states

“When it comes to fighting on the ground, the picture in the north is very heterogeneous: While in Kunduz and Takhar strong Taleban and a weak Hezb-e Islami are cooperating, a comparatively stronger Hezb-e Islami in Badakhshan tolerates and supports the few Taleban there. In Baghlan however, an increasingly tense coexistence erupted in open fighting in several villages in the north of the province in early March 2010, leading to around 60 casualties (approximately 25 Taleban and 35 Hezb fighters) as well as the total military defeat of Hezb in the province. Numerous sources have mentioned various reasons (see the ‘Baghlan’ section below), but beyond the growing competition between the two groups⁹⁷ in an environment with an extremely weak ISAF presence, the main reason for the Taleban to fight their former allies is distrust over Hezb's relations with the

government." (Afghanistan Analysts Network (5 May 2011) *Afghanistan: "The Insurgents of the Afghan North - The rise of the Taleban, the self-abandonment of the Afghan government and the effects of ISAF's 'capture-and-kill campaign'"*)

A *BBC News* report states:

"Mr Hekmatayar is a highly controversial figure: his group has battled Nato and Afghan forces in Afghanistan's east and north for years, while the Taliban have led the insurgency in the south.

Earlier this month, officials said that at least 60 militants were killed in fighting between the Taliban and Hezb-e-Islami in Baghlan province in northern Afghanistan.

Reports said they had clashed over control of local villages and taxes.

The two groups have previously been allied in their opposition to Afghanistan's central government and the presence of foreign forces.

Along with the Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami has been blamed for much of the insurgent violence in Afghanistan.

Mr Hekmatyar was one of the main recipients of US military aid during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, but was later vilified for his part in the fighting among mujahideen factions which killed more than 25,000 civilians in the early 1990s.

He was designated a terrorist by the United States in 2003 for supporting al-Qaeda." (BBC News (22 March 2011) *Afghanistan: "Afghan Hezb-e-Islami militants hold peace talks in Kabul"*)

References

Afghanistan Analysts Network (5 May 2011) *Afghanistan: "The Insurgents of the Afghan North - The rise of the Taleban, the self-abandonment of the Afghan government and the effects of ISAF's 'capture-and-kill campaign'"*
<http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/AAN-2011-Northern-Insurgents.pdf>
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BBC News (22 March 2011) *Afghanistan: "Afghan Hezb-e-Islami militants hold peace talks in Kabul"*
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8579380.stm>
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International Crisis Group (27 June 2011) *Afghanistan: "The Insurgency in Afghanistan's Heartland"*
<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/207%20The%20Insurgency%20in%20Afghanistans%20Heartland.pdf>
(Accessed 4 October 2011)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints.

This response is not and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

Afghanistan Analysts Network
Amnesty International
Combating Terrorism Center
Congressional Research Service
European Country of Origin Information Network
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Institute for War & Peace Reporting
International Crisis Group
Lexis Nexis
Norwegian Country of Origin Information
Online newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre Library
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
The Telegraph
UK Court of Appeal
UNHCR Refworld
United States Department of State