

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT 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.

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RESPONSE

1. In Afghanistan generally, what is the situation for people of Hazara ethnicity?

Current sources suggest that the situation for Hazaras in Afghanistan has improved although discrimination still persists and the Central Highlands, an area predominately inhabited by Hazaras, is under-developed.

The Danish Immigration Service conducted a fact-finding mission to Kabul from 20 March to 2 April 2004. The subsequent report provides the following information on the Central Highlands.

The UNAMA [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan] explained that it is a problem to gain access to regions in the Central Highland due to lack of infrastructure. The source found that there are still problematic areas in the Central Highland, and mentioned that in these parts of Afghanistan the central government has very little influence.

The SCA [Swedish Committee for Afghanistan] also mentioned that the Central Highland is an area of difficult access due to the poorly developed infrastructure – and found that the Central Highland in general is an underdeveloped area, but with no serious security problems. There are many NGOs who would like to work in the area, and quite a number of development projects are being implemented (Danish Immigration Service 2004, *The political conditions, the security and human rights situation in Afghanistan – Report on fact-finding mission to Kabul, Afghanistan 20 March-2 April 2004*, November, p.15 – Attachment 1).

High profile Hazara, Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, competed in the 2004 Presidential Election in Afghanistan. According to the 2004 Afghan Elections Project website Mohaqiq came in third place winning 11.7% of the vote ('Results by Votes' 2004, Afghan Elections Project website, 3 November – Attachment 2).

On 10 November 2004 Ahmed Rashid, in a video conference on Afghanistan for the RRT, provided the following information on the situation of Hazaras in Afghanistan after the Presidential Election. Ahmed Rashid notes that "3 years down the road you've got major projects going on all over the country, and you haven't had anything done in Hazarajat."

SYDNEY/MELBOURNE: From what you've said, it is clear that the Pashtun majority has voted for the Karzai government. What I wonder is this. What implication does that have for the Hazaras at this point in time?

MR RASHID: Well, I think that's very important. The danger is with.... right after the constitution was passed in December you had a kind of wave of Pashtun chauvinism really being expressed very strongly, and it's subsided. The danger is that if this new Cabinet of Karzai's is going to be heavily Pashtun dominated, especially bringing in what I would call ardent Pashtun nationalists, including some of the Pashtun expats who have come back from the United States and Europe, it is going to upset the Hazaras very much. Certainly the Vice President, a candidate for Karzai, Karim Khalili, has not demonstrated any political support. The Hazaras voted overwhelmingly for the opposition candidate, Mohammed Mohaqaq. Which means that you have to bring in some representatives of Mohaqaq Mahakik and a convincing representative – it's no good bringing in some expat Hazara from New York or Australia or somewhere, and saying well he represents Hazaras. What you are going to need is to bridge the gap between having competent and technical and clean guys in the Cabinet who belong to the minorities, but who also have some tribal, political, regional clout. Somebody who can say genuinely that I represent so many Hazaras of so many clans and tribes. So it's going to be a difficult period. The other big factor is that reconstruction has not taken place in the Hazara areas. You had very limited involvement by the international community, and this is really – excuse the French – but this is really pissing off the Hazaras enormously. They are really fed up – 3 years down the road you've got major projects going on all over the country, and you haven't had anything done in Hazarajat. There has been some progress – I mean the Americans have now promised to build the road to Bamyan from Kabul, the Indians are promising a power station in Bamyan, etc., and there are promises by the world banks for mini dams to create water, irrigation and power, in parts of the Hazarajat. But the fact is that so far you have not really had any kind of investment there. So that's another factor which has ignored Hazaras enormously.

A couple of other points, there has been a huge return of Hazaras, but unfortunately they are returning mostly to the cities which is creating an enormous urban problem, and they are taking very menial jobs – many of them are not going home simply because there is nothing for them back home because of the lack of investment. The second factor is that it's not just the Pashtuns they're scared of, they're equally scared of Uzbek, Tajik power in their areas, although that I think will diminish given the ... withdrawal and the demobilisation, especially of the Tajik militias – the Pancheris. Ultimately, I mean why I think they voted for Mahakik Mohaqaq – it was a vote of protest – that nothing has been done for us, and we support Karzai – he's a reasonable guy, but he has not focused sufficiently on us, the Hazaras, and that's why we are registering our vote of protest and going for Mahakik Mohaqaq.

SYDNEY/MELBOURNE: I wonder if you could give us an update on Hazaras in Kabul.

MR RASHID: There are huge numbers of Hazaras in Kabul. I mean much of it of course is the traditional population, but there's a huge influx of refugees from Iran and people coming back from Quetta, Pakistan also. Unfortunately in Kabul – they are the ones with the least money, the ones who are having to take the menial jobs – in a sense there is a fear that they will go back to this kind of second class status that they had in Afghanistan before 1979, where they were treated as cheap labour, taking the menial jobs, becoming servants for people in houses, etc., rather than having the ability where they can open shops, do trading, get other kinds of jobs, etc., etc. So it's not a good situation because when you're coming back as a refugee from Iran or wherever, you have this little package from UNHCR which brings you wherever you're going, but doesn't give you anything to start a new life there. I mean what is needed very drastically is some kind of micro credit scheme which of course is being looked at by the World Bank and by others, but I think it's particularly needed for the Hazaras. And don't forget that the Hazaras coming back now are extremely well educated – they're much better educated than other elements who are coming back from – other ethnic groups the Pashtuns, some amongst the Tajiks – Hazaras who have been living in Iran for 20 years are used to a different kind of lifestyle – their women and their boys are all very well educated – and then you're asking them to take on labouring jobs, become taxi drivers, etc., etc., and this is breeding resentment (Rashid, Ahmed 2004, *Transcription of Video Conference between RRT Melbourne, RRT Sydney and Ahmed Rashid in Pakistan on Wednesday 10 November 2004*, 10 November – Attachment 3).

Sabawoon Online provides a list of the 27 members of the new Afghan Cabinet sourced from *Afghanistan Television*, the *BBC* and *Associated Press*. Of the 27 members, five are Hazara: Minister of Transport Enayatollah Qasemi, Minister of Public Works Sohrab Ali Safari, Minister of Justice Sarwar Danesh, Minister of Higher Education Sayed Amir Shah Hasanyar and Minister of Martyrs and Disabled Sediqa Balkhi ('A list of the 27 members of the new Afghan Cabinet' 2004, *Sabawoon Online*, source: *Afghanistan Television, BBC & Associated Press*, 23 December – Attachment 4).

According to the most recent US Department of State *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* "there was continued social discrimination against Hazaras." The report also notes that Hazaras "found difficulty in returning to the country."

The Shi'a religious affiliation of the Hazaras was historically a significant factor leading to their repression, and there was continued social discrimination against Hazaras.

...Hazaras also found difficulty in returning to the country. In December, a local leader from Karukh district in Herat blocked the return of approximately 200 Hazara refugees from Iran (US Department of State 2005, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2004 – Afghanistan*, 28 February, Section 2(c) & 2(d) – Attachment 5).

A report by *Radio Afghanistan* on 11 January 2005 details problems in Hazara regions with Afghan President Karzai promising “positive changes”.

Hamed Karzai, president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, received representatives of the Hazara Council at the Presidential Palace today.

At the meeting, Haji Solaiman Yari and Abdol Wahed Rahimi, speaking on behalf of the others, talked about education, issues concerning public health, rebuilding of roads, electricity supply, security, and raised a number of problems of the Hazara [ethnic group] regions. They expressed their pleasure about the fact that the new government accelerated the disarmament programme throughout the country, thus enabling the people to nominate their representatives for the parliamentary elections without fear.

Afterwards, the president said: I am confident that the new cabinet will bring about positive changes in different areas, roads will be built and the lack of electricity will be resolved ('Afghan President promises positive changes for Hazara group' 2005, *BBC Monitoring*, source: *Radio Afghanistan*, 11 January – Attachment 6).

On 13 April 2005 Dr Jonathan Goodhand, in a video conference on Afghanistan for the RRT, provided the following information on the situation of Hazaras in Afghanistan.

First of all, I think it is important to situate Hazaras, socially and politically within the Afghan society.

They are the third largest ethnic group after the Pashtuns and the Tajiks. They are Shias, so they are from a minority, they are minority numerically and they are a minority in terms of religious affiliation and in many ways, they are politically and socio-economically marginalised. They have historically occupied, if you like, a subaltern position in Afghan society. Now the war changed a lot of those things quite dramatically.

It brought a new political assertiveness amongst the Hazara population and certainly Hazaras were very prominent in the Jihad in the anti-communist fighting the 1980s and they coalesced politically around Hizbi Wahdat by the end of that period; and certainly they have come out in the post Taliban context as in many ways in a strengthened position politically in terms of the constitution reflecting minority concerns and having some representation in the cabinet. They certainly have a position at the table.

Now there are concerns that the gains made during the war years are going to be undermined as Pashtuns re-assert their traditional dominance. Also another thing that needs to be remembered is the history of enmity that was produced as a result of massacres and counter massacres during the war years. In particular, two incidents stand out. In Kabul in 1993, when the Hazaras – there was a massacre in Kabul at the hands of Jamiat-e Islami and Ittehad-e Islami and then subsequently by the Taliban in Hazarajat (in 2001) in retaliation for the Taliban defeat in Mazar-e Sharif (in 1998), which probably many of you will know about.

Although the Hazaras have probably advanced their position politically they are still seen in many ways a marginal group, as for example they are under represented in the armed forces and the police, and also in Hazara areas of Kabul there has been limited reconstruction and city planning compared to other areas [Researcher emphasis added] (Goodhand, Dr Jonathan 2005, *Transcription of Video Conference between RRT Melbourne, RRT Sydney and Dr Jonathan Goodhand on 13 April 2005*, 13 April – Attachment 7).

An International Crisis Group report dated 2 June 2005 provides information on political parties in Afghanistan. There are two main Hazara parties, the *Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami* (Party of Islamic Unity) led by Khalili and the *Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami Mardum Afghanistan* (Party of Islamic Unity of the People of Afghanistan) led by Mohaqeq. The *Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami Mardum Afghanistan* is also a member of the National Understanding Front (NUF).

Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami (Party of Islamic Unity). The rump faction of the party led by Vice President Karim Khalili maintains a larger and more powerful network of former commanders than its competitor led by Mohaqeq but appears to have comparatively little infrastructure or public support. It did badly in the elections to the Constitutional Loya Jirga, when Khalili was criticised by Hazara delegates for soft-peddling the issues of language and parliamentary powers. He has yet to regain lost ground with his Hazara base.

Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami Mardum Afghanistan (Party of Islamic Unity of the People of Afghanistan). Led by Mohammad Mohaqeq, this faction of the Wahdat has gained support, evident in its chief's credible performance in the presidential elections. It appears to have shifted its identity from primarily Shia to Hazara nationalism. Avowedly anti-Karzai and fearful of "re-Pashtunisation" of the government – which plays on historical Hazara concerns about political and economic marginalisation – the party has gained support from many Hazara intellectuals. However, Mohaqeq will have to give up his personalised style of decisionmaking and build up his party's local infrastructure in Hazara-populated areas if it is to perform credibly.

...**National Understanding Front (NUF).** On 1 April 2005, the leader of the Hizb-e Afghanistan-e Nawin (New Afghanistan Party), Younus Qanooni, and a group of mainly Islamist parties announced formation of a new coalition, the National Understanding Front (NUF), comprised of eleven re-branded mujahidin groups and personalities, including three former presidential candidates. Qanooni told Crisis Group it would be post-Bonn Afghanistan's first cohesive reformist political opposition and said it "aims to amend the constitution to allow for directly elected mayors and provincial governors and will seek to create an independent judiciary".

Although the NUF's leadership is multi-ethnic and includes Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai, a Pashtun, Qanooni, a Tajik and Mohammad Mohaqeq, a Shia Hazara many of its parties share common perceptions that Afghanistan, under Karzai, will again become a Pashtun-dominated state. This is likely to shape their platform during the parliamentary elections and their policies in parliament. The Karzai administration is taking the challenge posed by this first broad opposition coalition seriously (International Crisis Group 2005, *Political Parties in Afghanistan*, 2 June, pp.8-11 – Attachment 8).

According to an International Crisis Group report dated 21 July 2005 Khalili and Mohaqeq "appear to be putting their differences aside in an attempt to unify the Hazara vote" in the upcoming Parliamentary elections.

The Hizb-e Wahdat-e Islami leader, Vice President Karim Khalili, and Mohaqeq, notwithstanding his NUF [National Understanding Front] ties, appear to be putting their differences aside in an attempt to unify the Hazara vote. According to an official from that community, "there are not any differences between Mr Khalili and Mr Mohaqeq now. There were only small problems last year that were easily solved. The Hazaras will work together for this election" (International Crisis Group 2005, *Afghanistan Elections: Endgame or New Beginning*, 21 July, p.16 – Attachment 9).

The report also notes that the allocation of seats in Bamyan, home to the Hazara minority, is a “source of much discontent”.

In Bamiyan (four seats) and Balkh (eleven), homes to the Hazara and Uzbek minorities respectively, the allocations are a source of much discontent, for ethnic reasons and resentment of Kabul’s domination.

...Similarly, in the Central Highlands, an area dominated by the Hazara minority, an international worker said local feeling was running high at the allocation of four seats to Bamyan and four to the neighbouring province of Dai Kundi. “It is particularly insensitive to give the Kuchis ten seats. It looks ungenerous for the Hazara regions to get eight. This is not a good idea” (International Crisis Group 2005, *Afghanistan Elections: Endgame or New Beginning*, 21 July, p.8 – Attachment 9).

No other current reports on the situation of Hazaras in Afghanistan was found amongst the sources consulted.

2. In Afghanistan generally, what is the situation for people of Shia religion?

The most recent US Department of State *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* provides the following information on freedom of religion and the treatment of Shias in Afghanistan.

The new Constitution proclaims that Islam is the “religion of the state,” but provides that non-Muslim citizens are free to perform their rituals within the limits determined by laws for public decency and public peace; however, there was some harassment of foreign missionaries and others. The Constitution also declares that no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam. The new Constitution does not grant preferential status to the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence associated with the Sunnis, and makes no reference to Shari’a law. The Government continued a policy of religious tolerance during the year; however, custom and law required all citizens to profess a religious affiliation.

Historically, the minority Shi’a community faced discrimination from the majority Sunni population.

...The Shi’a religious affiliation of the Hazaras was historically a significant factor leading to their repression, and there was continued social discrimination against Hazaras (US Department of State 2005, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2004 – Afghanistan*, 28 February, Section 2(c) – Attachment 5).

The most recent US Department of State *International Religious Freedom Report* provides the following information on freedom of religion and the treatment of Shias in Afghanistan:

In November 2003, TISA [Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan] released the draft Constitution, which was vigorously debated at the CLJ [Constitutional Loya Jirga] in December 2003 and ratified on January 4. The new Constitution renames the country as the “Islamic Republic of Afghanistan” and proclaims that the “religion of the state of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is the sacred religion of Islam.” It also states that, “followers of other religions are free to exercise their faith and perform their religious rites within the limits of the provisions of law.”

TISA regulations and the new Constitution provide for freedom of religion, and TISA generally respected this right in practice.

Relations between the different branches of Islam in the country have been difficult. Historically, the minority Shi'a faced discrimination from the majority Sunni population. Some conservative elements advocated that a new constitution should favor the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence associated with the Sunnis over the Jafari school used by the Shi'as. In family disputes, courts relied on a civil code that is based on the Sunni Hanafi school, regardless of whether the parties involved were Shi'a or Sunni; the civil code also applies to non-Muslims. The Shari'a Faculty of Kabul University followed the Hanafi school of jurisprudence. Conservative elements also called for the primacy of Shari'a law in the country's legal system. However, the new Constitution does not grant preferential status to the Hanafi school, nor does it make specific reference to Shari'a law. The Constitution also grants that Shi'a law will be applied to cases dealing with personal matters involving Shi'as; there is no separate law applying to non-Muslims.

...The new Constitution requires that the President and vice-President of Afghanistan be Muslims, and does not distinguish in this respect between Sunnis and Shi'as. This is not explicitly stated in the case of government ministers, but the oath required of ministers does suggest adherence to the Muslim faith. There is no religious requirement for Members of Parliament in the new Constitution.

Sporadic violations of religious freedom by some officials occurred.

...In January 2003, the Governor of Helmand confiscated approximately 200 Hazara-owned shops in Lashkar Gah and distributed them to other town residents. The Governor also blocked the Hazara/Shi'a community from building a mosque in Lashkar Gah. While the Human Rights Commission and the UN had reached an agreement in February 2003 with the Governor to compensate Hazara shopkeepers with land elsewhere in Lashkar Gah, the Governor had only partly honored this agreement by the end of period covered by this report.

...The Government has stressed reconciliation and cooperation among all citizens. Although the Government primarily is concerned with ethnic reconciliation, it also has expressed concern about religious tolerance. The TISA responded positively to all international approaches on human rights, including religious freedom. The Government emphasized ethnic and intra-faith reconciliation indirectly through the creation and empowerment of the Judicial, Constitutional, and Human Rights Commissions, comprised of members of different ethnic and Muslim religious (Sunni and Shi'a) groups.

...During the period covered by this report, the TISA included Hazara and other Shi'a figures, including Vice-President Khalili, Minister for Women's Affairs Habiba Sorabi, Human Rights Commission Chair Dr. Sima Samar, Minister of Planning Ramazan Bashardost (until March 7 the Minister of Planning was Mohammad Mohaqqeq, who is also a Hazara Shi'a), Minister of Commerce Mustafa Kazemi, Minister of Agriculture Hussein Anwari, and Minister of Transportation Mohammad Jawed.

...Relations between the different branches of Islam in the country have been difficult. Historically, the minority Shi'a faced discrimination from the majority Sunni population. Most Shi'a Muslims are members of the Hazara ethnic group, which traditionally has been segregated from the rest of society for a combination of political, ethnic, and religious reasons. Throughout the country's history, there have been many examples of conflicts between the Hazaras and other citizens. These conflicts often have had economic and political roots but also have acquired religious dimensions. The treatment of Shi'a varied from locality to locality. However, the active persecution of the country's Shi'a minority, including Ismailis, under the Taliban regime has ended, and, although some discrimination continues at the local level, Shi'a generally are free to participate fully in public life.

Before the October 2001 collapse of the Taliban, repression by the Taliban of the Hazara ethnic group, which is predominantly Shi'a Muslim, was particularly severe. Although the conflict between the Hazaras and the Taliban was political and military as well as religious, the religious affiliation of the Hazaras was a significant factor leading to their repression. In practice the rigid policies adopted both by the Taliban and by certain opposition groups affected adversely adherents of other branches of Islam and other religions.

On March 1, a riot that began when 2 individuals were seen mocking a Shi'a procession in Kabul to commemorate the Battle of Karbala led to 2 deaths and over 30 injuries. This was the only reported incident surrounding Shi'a religious celebrations during the reporting period (US Department of State 2004, *International Religious Freedom Report 2004 – Afghanistan*, 15 September – Attachment 10).

3. Please supply background to the Wahdat party and the splits within it, particularly the Khalili and Akbari factions.

Wikipedia provides the following information on the Wahdat party.

Hizb-e-Wahdat is a political party in Afghanistan (also referred to as the Wahdat, *Unity*), informally representing the Hazara people of the region. Largest Shiah group mainly consists of Hazara people and fought against Pashtun and Tajik people, including Nahzat.

The ideological leader of this party was the Ustad Abdul Ali Mazari, who was taken captive during a negotiation by the Taliban, and was tortured to death by them.

The Wahdat party was forced into war by Mujahideen government of Afghanistan in the early 1990s. After the instalment of a new government in Afghanistan, following the post-September 11th battles defeating the Taliban, the Wahdat has become an important player again in the government.

The Wahdat party split into the two factions, from which it formed, during the reign of the Taliban. The Akbari/Seppar faction sided with the Taliban. The Akbari faction is currently fighting for control of various districts in the Oruzgan, Bamiyan and Ghazni provinces. The second faction of the party is known as the Khalili/Nasr faction and is headed by the Hazara vice president Abdul Karim Khalili and Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq. This faction is in opposition to the Akbari faction and is fighting them for control of various provinces. The Khalili faction currently has more power and support of the government.

Together, they comprise the main part of the current government – ie they have government of the Central Government, especially in North and Central area of Afghanistan. ie Hazarajat, Kabul and Mazarsharif (Wikipedia 2005, 'Hizb-e-Wahdat', 11 July <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hizb-e-Wahdat> – Accessed 4 August 2005 – Attachment 11).

The *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* provides the following information on the Wahdat party.

HIZB-I WAHDAT. A coalition of Hazara parties founded in 1990 in an effort to unite six Shi'a groups, including the Sazman-i Nasr, Harakat-i Islami, Pasdaran-i Jihad-i Islami, Jabha-i Mutahid-i Inqilab-i Islami, Sazman-i Nuhzad-i Islami and Sazman-i Niru-i Islami. It was led by Abdul Ali Mazari and centered in the area of Bamian and Wardak. It forged alliance with Gulbuddin Hakmatyar's Hizb-i Islami in August 1993 and controlled parts of Kabul west of the Daulaman road and south of Sarak-i Sewwum-i Aqrab, as well as parts of Kabul University and all of the Kabul Polytechnic compound. Mazari prevailed in a power struggle with Ustad Muhammad Akbari, who was head of the Wahdat's policial committee. (Akbari

was forced to flee and joined the forces of Burhanuddin Rabbani.) In January 1995 Hizb-i Wahdat was fighting for turf with the Shi'a Harakat-i Islami of Ayatollah Muhsini. When Hekmatyar's forces were driven from Kabul in February 1995, Jam'iat-i Islami captured the territory of the weakened Wahdat, and Mazari joined, or surrendered, to the Taliban. He was killed while in Captivity on March 13, 1995. He was succeeded by Abdul Karim Khalili, who allied himself with Burhanuddin Rabbani and Abdul Rashid Dostum, but eventually joined the Taliban. After the United States intervention in winter 2001, Khalili re-established control over the Hazarajat, whereas his deputy, Muhammad Muhaqeq, shares control of Northern Afghanistan with General Dostum and Ustad Muhammad Ata.

...**HIZB-I WAHDAT, ORGANIZATION OF.** Essentially a Hazara party, it is headed by Abdul Karim Khalili and organized into a seven-member Supreme Supervisory Council (*shura-i 'ali nuzrat*), and a six-member Central Committee (*shura-i markazi*), which is subdivided into political, military, cultural, intelligence, medical services, financial, public services, judiciary, public relations, archaeology and heritage, and a women's committee. The Supreme Supervisory Council includes the religious scholars, the chairman Ayatollah Sadiqqi Parwani, Ayatollah Qurabn Ali Muhammad Muhaqeq, and Ayatollah Salihi Mudaris; two intellectuals, Sayyid Abbas Hakimi and Sayyid Ghulam Husain Musawi; and two technocrats, Sayyid Amin Sajjadi and Dr. Sultani. The 80-member Central Committee includes 10 women. It was headed by the secretary general, Abdul Karim Khalili, a vice president of the transitional government of President Hamid Karzai and Qurabn Ali Muhaqeq as planning minister (Adamec, Ludwig W. 2003, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* (3rd Edition), Scarecrow Press, Maryland, pp.169-170 – Attachment 12).

A report by the Netherlands delegation of the Council of the European Union dated 26 April 2001 provides the following background information on the Wahdat party.

Hezb-i-Wahdat, or the "Unity Party", is a coalition of Shiite resistance movements which recruits its members among the ethnic group of Shiite Hazaras. ...After the Soviet troops had withdrawn from Afghanistan in February 1989, the Hazara parties were amalgamated under pressure from Iran to form Hezb-i-Wahdat in July 1989. Iran considered it necessary to form a Shiite counterweight to the Sunni Mujaheddin fighters in Afghanistan.

Hezb-i-Wahdat was composed of the following eight groups:

Sazman-i-Nasr/Organisation of Victory (radical)
Pasdaran-i-Jihad-i-Islami/Guards of the Islamic Holy War
Daawat-i-Ittehad-i-Islami
Nazhat-i-Islami
Sazman-i-Nayro-i-Islami
Jabha-i-Mutahed-i-Inqelabi-i-Islami
Shura-i-Ittfaq/Council of the Union (ultraconservative)
Sazman-i-Mujahidin-i-Mustazafin/Organisation of Warriors of the Dispossessed

Of the eight movements which combined to produce Hezb-i-Wahdat, Sazman-i-Nasr was the largest and most influential. Almost all Hezb-i-Wahdat's political and military leaders had previously belonged to Sazman-i-Nasr. Abdul Ali Mazari, Abdul Karim Khalili and Haji Mohammed Mohaqiq were some of these prominent members. "Ustad" Mohammed Akbari, the founder of Pasdaran-i-Jihad-i-Islami, was another prominent member of Hezb-i-Wahdat. In addition, many ethnic Hazaras from the political Shiite movements *Harakat-i-Islami* (led by Ayatollah Asef Mohseni) and *Hezbollah* joined Hezb-i-Wahdat in 1989. *Harakat-i-Islami* and *Hezbollah* never formed part of Hezb-i-Wahdat. They continued to operate independently of it.

Hezb-i-Wahdat has its home base in the town of Bamiyan in Bamiyan province. On 18 July 1989 a party agreement entitled *Meesaq-i-Wahdat* (Unity Convention) and consisting of twenty articles was concluded in Bamiyan. The new party emphasised the Hazara identity above Islamic solidarity. Furthermore, the party's main aim was to forge a unity between all warring Shiite troops and install an Islamic government based on the rules of the Koran and the Sunna. At a conference in 1991, Mazari was elected secretary-general of the party. Mohaqiq has been the Hezb-i-Wahdat's supreme military commander since 1992, when Hezb-I-Wahdat started to take part in the Afghan civil war as one of the warring parties (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2001, *Hezb-i-Wahdat: Human Rights Violations (1992-1999)*, Report Number 7951/01 from the Netherlands Delegation to the Council of the European Union, 26 April. pp.5-7 – Attachment 13).

The *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* provides the following information on Ustad Muhammad Akbari and Abdul Karim Khalili.

AKBARI, USTAD MUHAMMAD. A Qizilbash¹ with the title Hujjat a-Islam. He was head of the Shi'a Hizb-i Wahdat (Unity Party) political committee who lost in a power struggle with Abdul Ali Mazari and joined Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jam'iat-i Islami. Faced with the superior power of the Taliban, Akbari surrendered in November 1998 and made his peace with the new rulers until their demise in 2001. He subsequently negotiated for a return to the Abdul Karim Khalili faction of the party.

...**KHALILI, ABDUL KARIM.** Vice president in the transitional government. He succeeded Abdul Ali Mazari as head of the Shi'a Hizb-i Wahdat that controls the Hazarajat. He evicted his rivals Ustad Muhammad Akbari and Muhammad Asef Muhsini from Bamian in October 1995. Khalili was allied with Abdur Rashid Dostum against the government of President Burhnauddin Rabbani, but joined the latter for fight the Taliban movement. He was forced to flee to Iran in November 1998 and in November 2000 he submitted to the Taliban. He took advantage of the United States war against the Taliban and reestablished his control over much of the Hazarajat (Adamec, Ludwig W. 2003, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* (3rd Edition), Scarecrow Press, Maryland, pp.25-26 & 217 – Attachment 12).

A report by the Netherlands delegation of the Council of the European Union dated 26 April 2001 provides the following history of the Wahdat party as it relates to the split into the Akbari and Khalili faction.

After the fall of the Communist regime of Najibullah in April 1992, the situation in Afghanistan became very violent and lawless. Mujaheddin factions took power throughout Afghanistan. In an effort to restore unity, an interim government headed by Prime Minister Mojaddedi was formed at the end of April 1992. A consultative assembly subsequently elected as president Burhanuddin Rabbani, who took office on 28 June 1992. Hezb-i-Wahdat joined this interim government

¹ Meaning "red heads" (T.), a people named after the color of pleats in their turbans. They were one of seven Turkic tribes who revered the Safavid ruler Ismail (r.1499-1524) as both a spiritual and temporal ruler. The Persian ruler Nadir Shah Afshar stationed a read guard (*chandawol*) of Qizilbash troops at Kabul on a campaign to India. They are Shi'a and were quartered in an area called Chandawol today. Estimated at about 30,000, they no longer speak their original Turkic dialect and live mainly in Heart, Kabul, and Kandahar. As an ethnic and religious minority, the Qizilbash have tended to be politically inactive to avoid discrimination, but have held prominent positions in government services and commerce. They held military positions until the 1960s, the end of Amir Dost Muhammad's reign (one of his wives was a Qizilbash) (Adamec, Ludwig W. 2003, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* (3rd Edition), Scarecrow Press, Maryland, pp.317-318 – Attachment 12).

Since Rabbani's nomination as president was not recognised jointly by all parties, the civil war flared up again in the summer of 1992.

...The government of Rabbani's "*Islamic State of Afghanistan*" became involved in a bitter struggle with, among others, Hezb-i-Wahdat, *Hezb-i-Islami* (led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) and *Ittehad-i-Islami* (under Sayyaf), supported by the fighters of the *Shura-e-Nazar* (led by Ahmad Shah Massoud) and the men of *Junbish-i-Melli wa Islami* (under Abdul Rashid Dostam).

...Since May 1994 ustad Mohammed Akbari has been increasingly open in denouncing the policy of Secretary-General Mazari. The differences were due primarily to a personal power struggle within Hezb-i-Wahdat. Akbari stood as a candidate for chairmanship of the party. He also stated that Mazari was pursuing a racist policy and attempting to create discord within the Shiite community because Hezb-i-Wahdat appealed only to Shiite Hazaras and was somewhat hostile towards other ethnic and religious groups. According to Akbari, this attitude was leading to an increase in ethnic and religious violence. The fact that Akbari's view was hotly disputed by Mazari elevated an already existing personal conflict to a political level.

In September 1994 Hezb-i-Wahdat split into two rival factions. Akbari sided with Rabbani and entered into an alliance with the Jamiat-i-Islami and the Harakat-i-Islami. Mazari's faction, on the other hand, formed an alliance with the Hezb-i-Islami, whereupon there were two Hezb-i-Wahdat parties active in Afghanistan. Akbari's faction was numerically insignificant and had little influence in the civil war. Mazari's group remained the principal Hezb-i-Wahdat faction in the areas where the Hazaras lived. However, the coalition to which Akbari belonged in the 1994-1995 period engaged in bitter fighting with Mazari's Hezb-i-Wahdat faction. This fighting claimed many civilian casualties.

On Mazari's instructions, a Hezb-i-Wahdat delegation travelled to Kandahar in February 1995 to negotiate with the Taliban on the conclusion of a ceasefire. During these negotiations it was agreed that Hezb-i-Wahdat would afford the Taliban troops free access to West Kabul and that together they would join battle with Shura-e-Nazar's troops led by Massoud. In accordance with the above agreement, the Taliban troops entered West Kabul at the beginning of March 1995. Contrary to the agreement, however, the Taliban began to disarm the Hezb-i-Wahdat troops. In the end, the Taliban proved unable to fight the Jamiat-i-Islami troops in Kabul. In mid-March 1995 West Kabul fell to Rabbani's government troops and Hezb-i-Wahdat was driven from Kabul, with Mazari and a number of his closest confidants being abducted by Taliban troops. They met their deaths under suspicious circumstances when they were being transported by helicopter to Kandahar. The party chose Khalili as Mazari's successor.

After the Taliban succeeded in taking Kabul in September 1996, Khalili formed an alliance with General Dostam and commander Massoud on 10 October 1996.

...Akbari's largely uninfluential Hezb-i-Wahdat faction severed its links with the Jamiat-i-Islami and Harakat-i-Islami in August 1998 following the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif. Akbari sought refuge initially in Bamiyan, before joining the Taliban in November 1998. His Hazara militia is now incorporated in the Taliban and as such is responsible for maintaining order in Hazarajat

On 13 September 1998 Bamiyan, the home base of Khalili's Hezb-i-Wahdat, fell to the Taliban. Hezb-i-Wahdat fighters recaptured the city on 21 April 1999. The battle was accompanied by arson attacks, arrests and executions. Partly on account of disunity within the UIFSA, the Taliban succeeded in retaking Bamiyan on 9 May 1999

The areas in Afghanistan in which the Hazaras have traditionally lived (the provinces of Bamiyan, Uruzgan, Ghazni, Ghor, the southern part of Balkh province and the capital, Kabul) are now almost entirely in the hands of the Taliban. Hezb-i-Wahdat (Khalili) still holds sway in some areas, namely the north of the province of Uruzgan, the extreme south of Balkh, in Balkhab and Sangchark in the province of Jowzjan, Dar-i-Suf in the province of Samangan and La'al and Lah-i-Saijungle in the province of Ghor. Khalili allegedly fled to Iran in May 1999, where he is subsequently reported to have stayed. Since then, real power within Hezb-i-Wahdat has lain with Mohaqiq and his personal assistant, Irphani (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2001, *Hezb-i-Wahdat: Human Rights Violations (1992-1999)*, Report Number 7951/01 from the Netherlands Delegation to the Council of the European Union, 26 April. pp.10-14 – Attachment 13).

According to footnote 55 of an International Crisis Group report dated 2 June 2005 Akbari is currently leading the *Hizbe Wahdat Milli-e Islami Afghanistan* (Party of the National and Islamic Unity of Afghanistan) which is part of the NUF (International Crisis Group 2005, *Political Parties in Afghanistan*, 2 June, p.11 – Attachment 8).

4. With regard to Yakawlang District of Bamiyan Province, can you indicate on a map where this is?

Please note that Yakawlang is also known as Yakawalang, Yakaolang and Yakaowlang. Please note that Bamiyan is also known as Bamiyan and Bamian. Please find three maps attached:

- Afghanistan District Map (HIC (UN) 2002, 'Afghanistan UNHCR District Map', May – Attachment 14);
- Bamiyan Province Map (UNDP/ProMIS 2000, 'Afghanistan Minor Civil Divisions Provinces & Districts Map', April – Attachment 15); and
- Yakawlang District Map (AIMS 2004, 'Yakawlang District Bamiyan Province Afghanistan Map', January <http://www.aims.org.af/maps/district/bamyan/yakawalang.pdf> – Accessed 2 August 2005 – Attachment 16).

According to UNHCR Yakawlang District Profile, the ethnic composition of Yakawlang is 59% Hazara, 41% Sadat², and a small number of Tajik population” (UNHCR 2002, *District Profile Yakawlang*, 18 September – Attachment 17). According to UNHCR advice dated 22 March 2004 Yakawlang is “largely inhabited by Hazara, and other ethnically and religiously similar group such as Khazelboch³ and Sayeed” (UNHCR 2004, 'Compilation of COI on Afghanistan Relevant in the Context of Refugee Status Determination in Australia', 22 March – Attachment 18).

² *Sayyid* (pl. *sadat*) means “prince, lord, chief,” or “mister” in Arabic, and is applied as a title for the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. In Afghanistan the name is also applied to healers and holy men. Communities of *sayyids* exist in Kunar Province and the Hazarajat, where they constitute a hereditary clergy (Adamec, Ludwig W 2003, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* (3rd Edition), Scarecrow Press, Maryland, p.339 – Attachment). “Ethnic Sadat...are Shi'a” (UNHCR 2002, *District Profile Yakawlang*, 18 September – Attachment 17). Also known as *Sayeed*.

³ This is more than likely another spelling of Qizilbash.

5. What is the situation in Yakawlang, Bamyan for supporters of the Khalili faction of the Wahdat party?

Yakawlang

According to UNHCR advice dated 22 March 2004 Yakawlang “remained affiliated with the Hezb-e-Wahdat (Khalili)” (UNHCR 2004, ‘Compilation of COI on Afghanistan Relevant in the Context of Refugee Status Determination in Australia’, 22 March – Attachment 18).

No other information was found amongst the sources consulted.

Bamyan

According to an UNHCR Return Information Update dated 1 September 2003 the “Hezbi Wahdat, led by Mr. Khalili, is the main political party” in Bamyan province (UNHCR 2003, *Return Information Update 15 August – 1 September 2003*, 1 September, Issue 40 – Attachment 19).

According to Wikipedia the “Akbari faction is currently fighting for control of various districts in...Bamiyan” and the Khalili faction “is fighting them for control of various provinces.”

The Akbari faction is currently fighting for control of various districts in the Oruzgan, Bamiyan and Ghazni provinces. The second faction of the party is known as the Khalili/Nasr faction and is headed by the Hazara vice president Abdul Karim Khalili and Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq. This faction is in opposition to the Akbari faction and is fighting them for control of various provinces (Wikipedia 2005, ‘Hizb-e-Wahdat’, 11 July <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hizb-e-Wahdat> – Accessed 4 August 2005 – Attachment 11).

According to a Netherlands Institute of International Relations report dated April 2005 the main security threat in Bamyan was local factional fighting rather than anti-coalition forces (Rubin, Barnett R., et al 2005, *Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond*, April, Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations – Attachment 20).

The Danish Immigration Service conducted a fact-finding mission to Kabul from 20 March to 2 April 2004. The subsequent report provides the following information on the Wahdat party in Bamyan.

The UNHCR explained, that two factions of the Hazara party, Hezb-e Wahdat, control the southern part of the central areas. There are clashes between the two factions, led by Karim Khalili and Mohammad Aqbari respectively. The conflicts are concerned with political control and money originating from toll and tax collection and with women, which in this connection is considered as an economic resource.

The southern part of Bamian Province and the northern districts and provinces of Uruzgan and Ghazni are controlled by Aqbari. Khalili controls the northern parts of Bamian Province together with Bamian city. There are constantly tensions between the two factions of Hezb-e Wahdat. In some districts this has resulted in open conflicts and smaller groups of the population have been internally displaced. Additionally, the source mentioned that the government hardly is represented in these districts and that approximately 300,000 returned refugees from Iran stay in these areas (Danish Immigration Service 2004, *The political*

conditions, the security and human rights situation in Afghanistan – Report on fact-finding mission to Kabul, Afghanistan 20 March-2 April 2004, November, p.15 – Attachment 1).

6. What is the general security situation and control there by the government now, and is it an area marked by Taliban and Tajik activities?

7. Are there independent assessments available to indicate whether the security situation at present is improving, stable or deteriorating?

8. What is the situation there for Hazaras?

9. What is the situation there for Shia?

Yakawlang

According to an Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit report dated February 2004 Ahmad Omid is the Governor of Yakawlang (Wily, Liz Alden 2004, *Land Relations in Bamyan Province: Findings from a 15 Village Case Study*, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, February, Appendix A – Attachment 21). No information on Ahmad Omid's political affiliation was found amongst the sources consulted. No information to indicate whether Ahmad Omid is still Governor was found amongst the sources consulted.

According to UNHCR advice dated 22 March 2004 “2003 ushered in relative political stability in...Yakawlang” (UNHCR 2004, ‘Compilation of COI on Afghanistan Relevant in the Context of Refugee Status Determination in Australia’, 22 March – Attachment 18).

According to an UNHCR Return Information Update dated 1 October 2004 “on 12 September 2004, fighting broke out between two clans and lasted for two days in Yakawlang II District of Bamyan Province. One person was killed and two wounded” (UNHCR 2004, *Return Information Update 15-30 September 2004*, 1 October, Issue 66 – Attachment 22).

The Danish Immigration Service conducted a fact-finding mission to Kabul from 20 March to 2 April 2004. The subsequent report provides the following information on relations between Tajiks and Hazaras in Yakawlang.

Previously there have been conflicts between Tadjiks and Hazaras, not only in Bamian district but also in the districts of Shiber and Yakaowlang. These conflicts no longer exist. The Tadjiks, who earlier had to flee from the region due to conflicts with the Hazaras have now returned and live in peace with the Hazaras. Moreover, the Tadjiks have been able to reclaim their houses (Danish Immigration Service 2004, *The political conditions, the security and human rights situation in Afghanistan – Report on fact-finding mission to Kabul, Afghanistan 20 March-2 April 2004*, November, p.15 – Attachment 1).

No other information other information on the current security situation in Yakawlang was found amongst the sources consulted.

Bamyan

According to an article dated 16 April 2005 by the Institute for War & Peace Reporting, Mrs Habiba Sorabi was appointed Governor of Bamyan in March 2005.

Karzai appointed her as governor of Bamian last month.

Several factors may be working in her favour as governor here. As an ethnic Hazara, she will run a province where this group is in the majority. Hazaras are generally regarded as more tolerant of women than most other ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

In addition, she has the support of influential Hazaras such as Ghulam Hasan Naseri, a member of the political committee of Hezb-e-Wahdat – the dominant party in this region – who called her appointment a step forward for Afghan democracy.

Still, Sorabi, who is married and has three children, acknowledged that her job might remain dangerous until security is restored to Afghanistan. Protest demonstrations followed her appointment to succeed local leader Mohammad Rahim Aliyar (Muhseni, Suheila 2005, 'Female Governor Sets out Agenda', Institute for War & Peace Reporting's *Afghan Recovery Report*, No. 168, 16 April – Attachment 23).

The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Bamyan is run by New Zealand. According to information posted on the New Zealand Government website the PRT is made up of 120 Defence Force personnel who will remain in Bamyan until September 2006. Two police officers are also in Bamyan until the end of 2005 to assist the training of Afghan police officers.

What sorts of tasks is the NZ PRT undertaking?

New Zealand took over command of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan (about 200 km north west of Kabul) in September 2003. The New Zealand-led PRT in Bamyan has four liaison teams, one for each of the four regions within the Bamyan province.

The PRT liaison teams patrol in and around Bamyan town and aim to visit every community in the province on a regular basis. This is a confidence-building measure to help enhance security in the province. The PRT provided a reassuring security presence during the Presidential elections last October. The result was a particularly high voter turnout, including of women, in Bamyan. It is important to continue this support in the lead-up to the crucial parliamentary and provincial elections.

The PRT has supported a number of development projects, funded by NZAID, the UK Department for International Development (DfID) and USAID. This has included provision of essential equipment such as radios and vehicles for Bamyan police, reconstruction and furnishings for the Bamyan University, and assistance with furniture and equipment for local government departments. NZAID's assistance to the PRT includes support for security sector reform and infrastructure projects such as Bailey bridge construction to improve access to the highlands region ('New Zealand Deployments to Afghanistan Questions and Answers' (undated), New Zealand Government website <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/Documents/Files/Afghanistan%20extension%20Q%20and%20A.pdf> – Accessed 3 August – Attachment 24).

The Danish Immigration Service conducted a fact-finding mission to Kabul from 20 March to 2 April 2004. The subsequent report provides the following information on the security situation in Bamyan.

Nevertheless, the UNHCR was of the opinion that Bamian district and the city of Bamian, which are controlled by Khalili, are among the safest places in Afghanistan. In this area as already mentioned, the New Zealand PRT has had an influence on the security situation.

...The UNAMA was of the opinion that in the rural districts, it is the person with most weapons who has the last say, and not the courts, which is due to the weaknesses in the court

system. Even the local councils of elders, the Shuras, are weakened by many years of war and now depend on the warlords. The UNAMA brought up that in Herat, Ismail Khan has considerable influence on the legal system. Should the court wish to free a person from prison, this only happens if Ismail Khan agrees. The UNAMA also mentioned the city, Mazar-e-Sharif, where it would be difficult for an independent law system to function. According to the organization it is the same case in the province of Bamian where different warlords are fighting against one another and no real government operating (Danish Immigration Service 2004, *The political conditions, the security and human rights situation in Afghanistan – Report on fact-finding mission to Kabul, Afghanistan 20 March-2 April 2004*, November, pp.15 & 34 – Attachment 1).

According to Jean Lausberg, UN Field Security Coordination Officer, “Bamyan and the Central Highland were generally calm” during the period 21 to 27 June 2004.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Bamyan and the Central Highland were generally calm during the reporting period. Land dispute between Kuchies and Hasaras continues.

Bamyan Province:

- Kidnappings: During the week, UN security received reports about kidnapping in the Bamyan area. In some cases the Hazaras have accused the Pashtoon staff members of NGOs to be involved in these incidents (UN Field Security Coordination Officer 2004, ‘Afghanistan Country Security Report for the Period of 21 to 27 June 2004’, 27 June – Attachment 25).

An article dated 26 July 2004 in *The Globe and Mail* reports that Bamyan “has become the safest, most egalitarian place in Afghanistan.”

It is an idyllic image of what the rest of Afghanistan could be: University students play volleyball against the backdrop of the destroyed Bamyan Buddhas, while groups of chattering young girls walk to school through fields of wheat.

Taliban fighters are hiding in caves just 60 kilometres to the south, launching attacks against U.S.-led coalition forces, election workers and the aid community, but the central province of Bamyan has become the safest, most egalitarian place in Afghanistan.

The province is home to the Hazaras, a persecuted ethnic-minority group that has refused to allow the violence destabilizing the rest of the country to ruin their first opportunity to participate in presidential elections, set for October.

“Our history has been dark, and in the past 100 years we have been sold as slaves or killed because of who we are,” said Mohammed Mohaqiq, the first Hazara presidential candidate. “After centuries, we have the right to vote, and we will not be left out.”

...The United Nations, organizing the elections, has not received one threat from the ousted Taliban in Bamyan, although the former regime has vowed to disrupt the vote across the country.

...The North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s presence in Bamyan consists of a so-called Provincial Reconstruction Team run by New Zealand, which has won plaudits for its work with local police and residents. Group Captain Gavin Howse attributes the PRT’s success to the friendly and relaxed approach of his troops.

“We wear baseball caps, not armoured helmets, we don’t have dark sunglasses and weapons are behind us, not at the ready. It’s a style,” he said, in a veiled reference to U.S. soldiers, who have a reputation for aggressive behaviour.

Soldiers spend dedicated time in the remote districts establishing close ties to the villages. The approach seems to have worked: The worst incident for the New Zealand troops was a threat the PRT received two months ago that a road they use would be mined, but a resident tipped them off and the suspects were arrested, Capt. Howse said. “The elders came to us and apologized for their village.”

Although Taliban and al-Qaeda supporters live among the Pashtun tribes along Bamyan’s southern border, they do not have enough support from within the Hazara population to carry out attacks, Capt. Howse said.

...Schoolteacher Sher Aga, 22, said he will not allow the Taliban to prevent him from taking part in the elections.

“They killed a lot of our youth, burned our houses, destroyed the Buddhas and even released sheep and cattle into our fields to destroy our crops. Now it’s a good opportunity for us to elect someone to serve the country. I want someone who will fix our Buddhas, roads and schools. . . . I have a voter card, so now I have the power” (Ghafour, Hamida 2004, ‘Afghan province stretches in freedom; With the ousting of the Taliban, the Hazara people embrace democracy’, *The Globe and Mail*, 26 July – Attachment 26).

According to Azizullah, a police officer and reported by *The Chicago Tribune* on 29 August 2004 Bamyan has the “best security in Afghanistan.”

Although Hazarajat is still one of Afghanistan’s poorest and most underdeveloped areas, it has several unique factors in its favor. One is security. Unlike many other regions, there are no armed feuds between rival militia bosses and no attacks by revived Taliban forces to deter foreign aid projects and disrupt preparations for the presidential elections, scheduled for Oct. 9.

“Extremist and anti-government elements are not at all welcome here,” said Peter Maxwell, the senior United Nations official in Bamian. “This has a very beneficial effect on all sorts of activities. People are eager to rebuild their lives, they support the government and they have no time for the kinds of extremism found in other areas.”

...Last month, the first cell phone relay station was installed, creating a quantum leap in communications between Bamian and the outside world. Meanwhile, the reopening of the university in March has lured 36 young instructors back from Iran, where many educated Hazaras fled years ago, as well as 165 students to its first-semester courses in teaching and agronomy.

“This university will change everything,” said Jafferi Hussain, 28, the campus administrator, sitting in his empty office in the new, bright yellow, two-story classroom building. “We want educated people to come back from abroad, though we don’t have enough facilities for them yet” (Constable, Pamela 2004, ‘Ethnic minority emerges from ruins of Taliban rule’, *Chicago Tribune*, 29 August – Attachment 27).

An article dated 8 October 2004 in *The Asia Times* reports that Bamyan “is a success story in Afghanistan.”

Bamiyan, a predominantly Shi’ite Hazara town, reached after an excruciating eight-hour, 180-kilometer ride west from Kabul through dramatic mountain passes, is a success story in

Afghanistan. Probably the safest place for internationals to work in the country, it slumbers under the shadows of mountain ranges pocketed with caves, some still inhabited. A French humanitarian organization tried to resettle the cave dwellers into homes, but the project failed when they refused to abandon their way of life.

...United Nations officials in Bamiyan live a relaxed life, free from the ubiquitous security concerns that govern the lives of their counterparts elsewhere in the country. Their security reports grant Bamiyan only “NTR”, or nothing to report (Rosen, Nir 2004, ‘Afghanistan: Ballots and Bullets – Part 3: Safe haven in Bamiyan’, *Asia Times*, 8 October – Attachment 28).

An article dated 10 April 2005 in *The Chicago Tribune* reports that Bamyan “has been relatively peaceful, except for security problems with drug traffickers.”

The town of Bamiyan is nothing but dusty, bumpy roads, small beige homes and sleepy stores. Fields are plowed by cattle dragging large pieces of wood. Farmers travel on the backs of burros. Much of Bamiyan looks as if the 19th Century never arrived, let alone the 21st.

“Anything that people need to live, the people of Bamiyan do not have,” said Abdulkhalegh Zaligh, the deputy governor. “We don’t have roads. We don’t have schools. We don’t have electricity. We don’t have doctors. We don’t have engineers” (Barker, Kim 2005, ‘Barrier is broken in Afghan province; Habiba Sorabi, the nation’s 1st female governor, confronts varying expectations in Bamiyan region’, 10 April – Attachment 29).

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US Department of State <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>

United Nations (UN)

United Nations Homepage <http://www.un.org/>

UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.ch/>

Non-Government Organisations

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org/>

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

International Crisis Group <http://www.crisisweb.org/>

Relief Web <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf>

International News & Politics

Afghan Online Press <http://www.aopnews.com/>

Institute for War & Peace Reporting http://www.iwpr.net/home_index_new.html

Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

Region Specific Links

Afghanistan Information Management Service <http://www.aims.org.af/>

Search Engines

Google <http://www.google.com.au/>

UNHCR

REFWORLD

UNHCR Refugee Information Online

Databases:

Public	<i>FACTIVA</i>	Reuters Business Briefing
DIMIA	<i>BACIS</i>	Country Information
	<i>REFINFO</i>	IRBDC Research Responses (Canada)
RRT	<i>ISYS</i>	RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</i> .
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