



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Afghanistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Friday 16 & Monday 19 June 2017**

### **Information on Nangarhar province including: Government system; government treatment of ISIS members; conflict between ISIS and Taliban**

A publication issued in January 2017 by *Landinfo* points out that:

“After Daesh first gained foothold in Afghanistan around the turn of 2014/2015, Nangarhar province, with few exceptions, has been both the home and the area of operation for the movement. The core areas have been the southeastern districts, with headquarters in Achin district. Daesh announced an expansion to Khorasan...in January 2015” (*Landinfo* (30 January 2017) *Report: Afghanistan: The security situation in Nangarhar province*, p.8).

This report also states that:

“An article in the *New York Times*...quoted a provincial council representative in September 2016. Without specifying which, he claimed that only six of the 22 districts in the province were safe. He estimated that Daesh presented a threat in five districts. This coincides with information from an international source...who claims that 17 districts were contested in July. As *Landinfo* understands «contested», authorities are present in the district centres, but face resistance at large or in parts of the territory outside the centres. According to the source, the five remaining districts – Durbaba, Kama, Behsud, Jalalabad, Kuz Kunar and Dara-e-Nur – are largely government controlled” (*ibid*, pp.6-7).

This report also points out that:

“The conflict dynamic in Nangarhar differs from other parts of the country, mainly due to the presence of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant - Khorosan Province (ISKP - KP)/Daesh. This causes the conflict to be fought on three fronts: Afghan security forces (ANSF) against Daesh, ANSF against other rebel groups – mainly the Taliban, and the Taliban and local militia against Daesh” (*ibid*, p.6).

In March 2017 *Voice of America* states that:

“Jalalabad hosts a U.S. military base and is the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, where Taliban insurgents are active and Islamic State militants also operate in several of its southern districts” (*Voice of America* (13 March 2017) *Deadly Roadside Bomb Blast Hits Kabul*).

*BBC News* in April 2017 points out that:

“Nangarhar province borders Pakistan and has a reputation for being a centre of IS militancy” (*BBC News* (8 April 2017) *IS in Afghanistan: US special forces soldier is killed*).

A report issued in April 2017 by the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* states that:

“The 10-day "Operation Hamza" was launched on April 10, 2017, by Afghan Special Forces, in cooperation with foreign troops, to fully eliminate the insurgency led by Daesh terrorists and other insurgent groups, including Taliban, in Kot and Achin Districts of Nangarhar Province. Earlier, in another operation codenamed "Operation Shaheen-25" launched on February 10, 2017, to suppress the growing Daesh dominance in the Nangarhar Province, at least 150 loyalists of the group were killed or wounded over ten days” (South Asia Terrorism Portal (17 April 2017) *Daesh: Diminishing Potential*).

This report also notes that:

“IS-K found initial and substantial support among disaffected Taliban and TTP cadres, establishing dominance in the Nangarhar Province, as well as a significant presence in Kunduz and Helmand, in Afghanistan. Wilting under the heat of operations by the Taliban, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), private tribal militias and US Air support, IS-K was squeezed out of four of the Province's seven Districts, retaining a weakened presence in Achin, Nazyan and Deh Bala, and pushing into the neighbouring Kunar District under pressure” (ibid).

A report released in April 2017 by *BBC News* states:

“US officials believe about 700 fighters occupy the Nangarhar and neighbouring Kunar province. But Afghan officials estimate that there are closer to 1,500 militants” (BBC News (27 April 2017) *Two Americans killed in IS Afghan raid*).

A document issued in May 2017 by *BBC News* commenting on the Islamic State in Afghanistan, notes that its:

“...main strongholds are in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar and Kunar” (BBC News (8 May 2017) *Afghanistan IS head killed in raid - US and Afghan officials*).

The article also states that:

“The head of so-called Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan, Abdul Hasib, has been killed in a military raid, US and Afghan officials have said. He died 10 days ago in an joint special forces operation in eastern Nangarhar province, the US military said” (ibid).

*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* in May 2017 notes that:

“...Islamic State (IS) and the Taliban are active in Nangarhar Province...” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (19 May 2017) *Five Police Killed By Colleague In Eastern Afghanistan, Official Says*).

*Voice of America* in May 2017 notes that:

“Nangarhar is where Islamic State militants stormed the provincial headquarters of the state-run Ration Television of Afghanistan, or RTA, earlier this week” (Voice of America (19 May 2017) *Roadside Bombs Kill 11 Civilians in Afghanistan*).

In May 2017 the *United Nations Security Council* states commenting on ISIS that:

“...the group has a significant presence only in three districts of Nangarhar Province along the border with Pakistan” (United Nations Security Council (31 May 2017) *Fifth*

*report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat [S/2017/467], p.7).*

A document issued in June 2017 by the *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* notes that:

“Clashes continued in Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan provinces during the past week with sporadic displacement reported” (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (3 June 2017) *Afghanistan Weekly Field Report | 28 May to 3 June 2017*).

*Voice of America* in June 2017 points out that:

“Based in southern parts of eastern Nangarhar province, IS's self-styled Khorasan Province branch (ISIS-K) emerged in early 2015 in the mountainous areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Last year, it had a presence in at least 12 Nangarhar districts. IS and the Taliban have engaged in frequent clashes in Nangarhar and some areas in northern Jozjan province, where IS is attempting to establish a footprint” (Voice of America (9 June 2017) *Afghan Locals, Taliban Drive Islamic State From Tora Bora Region*).

A report released in June 2017 by the *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* points out that:

“Clashes between NSAGs in Pachieragam District, Nangarhar, reportedly forced some 7,000 people from their homes in four villages” (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (10 June 2017) *Afghanistan Weekly Field Report | Week of 4 to 10 June 2017*).

In June 2017 the *Agence France Presse* notes:

“...eastern Nangarhar province, a stronghold of Islamic State militants...” (Agence France Presse (10 June 2017) *Afghan commando kills two US soldiers: official*).

The *New York Times* in June 2017 states that:

“The Islamic State and the Taliban have been competing savagely for dominance in the areas they control, but the more extreme Islamic State fighters have dominated Achin District as well as some other areas in southern parts of Nangarhar Province” (New York Times (14 June 2017) *ISIS Captures Tora Bora, Once Bin Laden's Afghan Fortress*).

In June 2014 an article published by the *Guardian* notes that:

“Islamic State fighters have captured some territory around Tora Bora, the former stronghold of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province, officials said on Wednesday. The push and capture of the giant cave complex that once housed the late al-Qaida chief would be a major victory for the Islamic State group in its increasingly deadly rivalry with the Afghan Taliban. The caves had until now been under Taliban control” (Guardian (14 June 2017) *Isis captures territory around former Bin Laden stronghold in Afghanistan*).

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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.

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