



## **Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 17 January 2018**

### **Information on the current security situation for civilians in Kabul.**

A report from Al Jazeera states:

“At least three civilians have been killed in a suicide attack on a convoy of foreign forces in the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul, police officials told Al Jazeera. One NATO soldier was killed and six personnel - including five soldiers and an interpreter - were wounded in the attack, the coalition said. ‘The patrol was conducting a partnered mission with the Afghan National Army when a personnel-borne IED (improvised explosive device) detonated in Qarabagh district in Kabul province,’ NATO-led Resolute Support said in a statement. The wounded are being treated at a US military hospital at Bagram airbase, the statement added. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.” (Al Jazeera (3 August 2017) *Casualties reported in attack on convoy in Kabul*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

“A suicide bomb and gun attack claimed by the Islamic State group on a Shiite mosque in Kabul killed 20 people and wounded scores more Friday, officials said, the latest assault to highlight deteriorating security in Afghanistan. Gunshots and explosions could be heard during the attack that lasted around four hours and witnesses reported seeing worshippers smash windows to escape. The mosque, in a residential area in the north of the city, was believed to have been packed with dozens of men, women and children when the assailants struck during Friday prayers. ‘We have 20 killed and more than 50 wounded,’ Mohammad Ismail Kawoosi, a health ministry official, told AFP, without specifying how many were civilians. Heavily armed security forces stormed the building and rescued more than 100 worshippers, according to the interior ministry, which had initially put the death toll at 12, including 10 civilians and two security force personnel. It had also put the number of wounded at more than 40 civilians and seven security forces.” (Agence France Presse (25 August 2017) *20 killed in IS suicide bomb, gun attack on Kabul Shiite mosque*)

An article from the Washington Post states:

“A Taliban suicide bomber struck at a bank not far from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, killing five people Tuesday as government employees lined up to withdraw salaries ahead of a religious holiday. Meanwhile, there were conflicting reports on deaths from an airstrike that sought to target a Taliban command post outside Herat in western Afghanistan. Provincial officials said civilians were killed, but the Afghan Defense Ministry said Taliban militants were hit. In the blast at Nawe Kabul bank, the Taliban said the suicide bomber targeted security forces waiting to withdraw cash ahead of Eid al-

Adha, one of the holiest celebrations on the Islamic calendar. A police official said that the bomber was shot as he attempted to make his way inside the bank but that he managed to detonate his explosives. The Interior Ministry said eight people were wounded in addition to the fatalities.” (Washington Post (30 August 2017) *Taliban bomber kills five at Kabul bank*)

An article from the online edition of the Wall Street Journal states:

“Just days before Afghanistan's Shiite Muslims mark the most important event on their sect's religious calendar, a man wearing an explosives vest blew himself up near a crowded Shiite mosque in central Kabul on Friday, killing at least six people and wounding 14 others, Afghan authorities said. The Taliban, which has been waging a 16-year insurgency against the central government and its foreign supporters, denied responsibility for the bombing, which occurred in the run-up to the commemoration of Ashura on Sunday. Islamic State, another militant Sunni fundamentalist group operating in Afghanistan, didn't comment on the attack. The carnage could have been worse. A spokesman for Afghanistan's Interior Ministry, Najib Danish, said the attacker was headed for the crowds flooding from the Hussainia mosque in Kabul's Qala Fatullah neighborhood at the end of Friday prayers when he was stopped at a checkpoint 200 yards away. Blocked from reaching his destination, he triggered his vest, Mr. Danish said.” (Wall Street Journal Online (29 September 2017) *Suicide Bomber Kills at Least Six Near Shiite Mosque in Afghanistan: Attack in Kabul comes days before Shiite Muslims gather to commemorate holy day of Ashura*)

A New York Times article states:

“A suicide bomber detonated explosives in a Shiite mosque in Kabul on Friday as worshipers were gathering for evening prayer, killing at least 32 people in the latest in a series of attacks against Shiite Muslims in Afghanistan. Precise casualty figures were not immediately clear, as bodies and the injured were loaded into police vehicles and ambulances and taken to hospitals. Basir Mujahid, a spokesman for the police in Kabul, said that in addition to the 32 killed, 41 others were wounded. They were taken to hospitals immediately after the explosion, and Ismail Kawoosi, a spokesman for the Ministry of Health, said he feared the toll would rise. Witnesses said the number of the dead could be as many as 50, since the mosque, Imam Zaman, located on the west side of the city, had been full of worshipers.” (New York Times (21 October 2017) *Suicide Bombing Attack*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

“A suicide bomber believed to be as young as 12 struck Kabul's heavily fortified diplomatic quarter on Tuesday and killed at least five people, showing that militants can still hit the heart of the city despite tighter security. It was the first attack targeting the Afghan capital's 'Green Zone' since a massive truck bomb ripped through the area on May 31, killing or wounding hundreds, and prompting authorities to strengthen protection. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for Tuesday's attack, which follows a spate of suicide assaults by Taliban and IS insurgents on security installations and mosques in recent weeks.” (Agence France Presse (31 October 2017) *Suicide bomber attacks Kabul's diplomatic zone, five dead: officials*)

See also Agence France Presse report which states:

“Gunmen disguised as policemen stormed a television station in Kabul on Tuesday, killing one person and wounding two dozen others in the latest deadly attack targeting Afghan journalists. The assault, claimed by the Islamic State group, lasted about three hours before Afghan special forces overpowered the attackers, who were armed with guns and grenades, and freed staff trapped inside the building.” (Agence France Presse (7 November 2017) *Gunmen storm Kabul TV station in deadly attack*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

“A suicide attacker blew himself up outside a wedding hall in Kabul killing at least nine people, officials said Thursday, in an apparent attempt to strike a political gathering under way inside. The Taliban was quick to deny responsibility for the attack, the latest to hit the war-weary Afghan capital where insurgents have been stepping up assaults in a show of deadly force. Supporters of Atta Mohammad Noor, the powerful governor of the northern province of Balkh and a vocal critic of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, had been holding an event inside the hall at the time of the blast. Noor was not at the event, one of his aides told AFP. The bomber tried to enter the building but was stopped at the security checkpoint where he detonated his device, Kabul police spokesman Abdul Basir Mujahid told AFP. ‘A number of our police personnel are among the casualties,’ Mujahid added. Interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish said seven policemen and two civilians had been killed. ‘The bomber detonated himself after he was identified by the police at the entrance gate,’ Danish said. Another nine were wounded including seven police and two civilians, he added.” (Agence France Presse (16 November 2017) *Nine dead in suicide attack outside Kabul wedding hall*)

An Agence France Presse report on a suicide bombing in December 2017 states:

“A suicide attacker on foot blew himself up near a compound belonging to the Afghan intelligence agency in Kabul on Monday, killing six civilians, officials said. The attacker struck at a time when workers were arriving at their offices. It comes a week after militants stormed a National Directorate of Security (NDS) training centre in the Afghan capital. Interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish told AFP six civilians in a car were killed when the attacker detonated himself. ‘Six people were martyred and three others were wounded,’ Danish said. ‘They were hit when they were passing the area in their Toyota sedan vehicle. We still do not know the target of the attack but it happened on the main road.’ The health ministry confirmed the death toll but put the number of wounded at one. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the latest attack in Kabul which in recent months has become one of the deadliest places in the war-torn country for civilians.” (Agence France Presse (25 December 2017) *Six dead in suicide attack near Afghan spy agency: officials*)

An article from UK newspaper the Daily Mail states:

“At least 41 people died yesterday and another 84 were wounded in a bomb attack that devastated a Shia Muslim cultural centre in Kabul, the Afghan capital. Islamic State claimed responsibility, with the IS-linked Aamaq news agency saying three bombs were used in the assault as well as one suicide

bomber. The bomber blew himself up inside the centre, where scores of people had gathered to mark the anniversary of the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. Witnesses reported that as they fled, other explosions occurred outside the two-storey building, which also houses the pro-Iranian Afghan Voice news agency. It may also have been a target.” (Daily Mail (29 December 2017) *41 Killed In Islamic State Suicide Bombing*)

An article from the New York Times states:

“A suicide bomber working for the Islamic State attacked a market where shopkeepers were protesting against the police in Kabul late on Thursday, killing at least 20 people and wounding more than two dozen others, officials said. Nasrat Rahimi, a deputy spokesman for the Interior Ministry, said that civilians and members of the security forces were among the casualties, which he put at 20 dead and 30 wounded. Other security officials said that most of the victims were members of the country’s police force.” (New York Times (5 January 2018) *ISIS Suicide Bomber Kills 20, Including Members of Police Force, at Afghan Market*)

A press release from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan states:

“The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) today releases its preliminary findings in to the suicide attack in Kabul on 4 January that killed 13 civilians and injured an additional 19. The attack, claimed by Islamic State, took place in the evening when the bomber detonated his body-borne improvised explosive device after the arrival of anti-riot police at a violent disturbance between security officials and shopkeepers that had been ongoing for several hours in the east of the capital. Twelve of the 13 slain were police officials, performing legitimate law enforcement functions of helping to restore order and safety for civilians during a violent incident. UNAMA reminds all parties that Afghan National Police personnel are regarded as civilians unless they are directly participating in hostilities. The officers killed in the attack were not engaged in the armed conflict. Civilians may never be the object of an attack at any time or in any place.” (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (7 January 2018) *UNAMA preliminary findings on latest Kabul attack*)

A Voice of America news report, in a paragraph headed “IS attacks on the rise”, states:

“The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for a number of deadly attacks in different parts of Afghanistan in recent months, including the capital of Kabul, sparking fears among Afghans that the terror group might be gaining strength. Last week, a suicide bomber struck a convoy of the Afghan security forces in Kabul, killing at least 15 people, including security forces. The bomber detonated his explosives shortly after security forces arrived at the scene of a demonstration to control angry protesters. IS claimed responsibility for the attack. Last month, IS claimed responsibility for a suicide attack inside a Shiite cultural center in Kabul, which killed at least 40 people and wounded more than 90 others.” (Voice of America (10 January 2018) *IS Leaflets Threaten Residents in Restive Afghan Province*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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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