



**Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 6 February 2018**

**Any recent media reports regarding Daesh activity including distribution of leaflets in Nangahar in particular - end 2017/early 2018 and forced recruitment.**

A Voice of America news report states:

“Fresh fighting between the Islamic State (IS) terror group and Taliban insurgents has displaced hundreds of people in an eastern Afghan province. More than 200 families fled their homes in the Khogyani district of eastern Nangarhar province as the two warring parties engaged in fierce fighting, local officials said. Ahmad Ali Hazrat, head of the Nangarhar provincial council, told Radio Liberty the clashes took place in areas under the influence of Taliban. He added that many locals fled their homes to avoid being caught in the crossfire between the militant groups. Some villagers, who view IS as an outside force, have supported Taliban militants to battle the IS fighters in the district and counter the terror group’s frequent attacks on their villages.” (Voice of America (26 November 2017) *Clashes Between IS, Taliban Displace Hundreds in Eastern Afghanistan*)

This report also states:

“Since its emergence in early 2015 in the southern districts of Nangarhar, the Islamic State group in Afghanistan, also known as IS-Khorasan, has engaged in frequent clashes with Taliban fighters for control of districts and villages in the province. Besides battling with Taliban militants, IS fighters have repeatedly targeted local villages in Nangarhar. The group has destroyed homes, torched markets and barred children from attending school in areas under its control.” (ibid)

An article from the Sydney Morning Herald states:

“Islamic State beheaded 15 of its own fighters in Afghanistan’s eastern province of Nangarhar, officials said. Attaullah Khogyani, the provincial governor’s spokesman, said the 15 IS fighters were executed after a bout of infighting in the group, which has become notorious for its brutality. The killings occurred in the Surkh Ab bazaar of Achin district. The Taliban and IS have frequently fought each other in Nangarhar and both have been targeted by sustained US air strikes. Nangarhar, on the porous border with Pakistan, has become a stronghold for IS, one of the country’s most dangerous groups since it appeared locally around the start of 2015.” (Sydney Morning Herald (24 November 2017) *Islamic State beheads its own fighters in Afghanistan*)

A report from the independent Afghan news agency Pajhwok Afghan News states:

“Border policeman was killed and three others wounded during a clash, while four Daesh or Islamic State militants have been killed in eastern Nangarhar province, an official said on Wednesday. Police spokesman Hazrat Hussain Mashriqiwal told Pajhwok Afghan News the clash erupted when militants ambushed security forces in Batikot district on Tuesday night.” (Pajhwok Afghan News (22 November 2017) *Border policeman among 5 killed in Nangarhar clashes*)

See also Pajhwok Afghan News report which states:

“Twenty-five Daesh -- or so-called Islamic State (IS) -- fighters have been killed in a drone strike in the Achin district of eastern Nangarhar province, an official said on Wednesday. Police spokesman Hazrat Hussain Mashraqiwal told Pajhwok Afghan News the drone strike targeted a Daesh ' hideout in the Momand Dara area of the district on Tuesday. He said at least 25 IS fighters including key members of the insurgent group were killed in the raid. He did not provide details about the the key members of the rebel group killed.” (Pajhwok Afghan News (6 December 2017) *Drone strike leaves 25 Daesh rebels dead in Nangarhar*)

A report from the Afghan news channel TOLO News states:

“At least 11 Daesh insurgents were killed during Afghan security forces operations in eastern Nangarhar province, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said in a statement on Monday. Two other insurgents, including a Pakistani national, were arrested. The operations were launched in Shinwar, Deh Bala, Achin, Khoghyani and Surkh Rod districts of the province. ‘Some weapons, explosives and a motorbike were also destroyed during the operation,’ the MoD said in the statement. The statement did not provide further details or mentioned casualties in the security forces during the operation.” (TOLO News (1 January 2018) *11 Daesh Insurgents Killed in Nangarhar: MoD*)

A January 2018 Pajhwok Afghan News report states:

“At least 17 Daesh or so called Islamic State (IS) insurgents have been killed during operations in two districts of eastern Nangarhar province, officials said Sunday. A statement from the governor’s house received by Pajhwok Afghan News, said a foreign forces airstrike targeted Daesh militants in Angor Kala area of Haska Mina district late on Saturday. The source said 14 Daesh rebels were killed in the incident. Three more rebels of the group were killed in a similar incident in Pekha area of Achin district.” (Pajhwok Afghan News (14 January 2018) *17 Daesh insurgents killed in Nangarhar*)

A Jane's Country Risk Daily Report states:

“On 24 January, six people were killed and 27 were wounded in an attack against non-governmental organisation (NGO) Save the Children’s offices in Jalalabad, Nangarhar. A suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) was detonated outside the office and the building was also targeted using rocket-propelled grenades. The Islamic State’s news agency Amaq claimed responsibility, pointing to the involvement of the group’s Afghanistan-based faction Wilayat Khorasan and also promising to continue targeting UK and Swedish foreign aid groups in eastern Afghanistan.” (Jane's Country Risk Daily Report (1 February 2018) *Islamic State attack underlines growing threat*)

*to NGOs in Afghanistan's Nangarhar, Zabul, Kunar, Jowzjan, and Badakhshan provinces)*

An article from the London-based newspaper The New Arab states:

“Nangarhar, which is a historically rebellious region of Afghanistan, has a complicated and shadowy power broking system that includes warlords, strongmen, gangsters, local government and businessmen as well as the Taliban. These parties are in constant conflict and negotiation, and not much gets done without all parties being included. Adding fuel to the fire is the involvement of neighbouring Pakistan, Iran, India and China, along with Saudi Arabia, Russia and of course the United States. Each country backs their own set of characters in this theatre where there are few heroes and many villains. In recent years, the development and wanton violence of an Islamic State group branch in Afghanistan [ISKP], has turned an already hostile environment into a living nightmare for people throughout Nangarhar.” (The New Arab (25 January 2018) *In Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, violence is committed by all sides*)

This article also states:

“Those who later presented themselves as ISKP first convinced locals in Achin district that they wanted to help liberate them from ‘the oppression of the Taliban.’ This led to the recruitment of locals who joined ISKP in pushing out the local Taliban command. They succeeded in this effort, but ushered in new level of brutality that the locals had never witnessed before.” (ibid)

A report from the Jamestown Foundation, in a paragraph headed “Recruitment Drive”, states:

“The rise and consolidation of ISK-P in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been aided by intra-Taliban rivalry triggered by the death of Taliban leader Mullah Omar. Recruitment has been aided elsewhere by the Deobandi seminaries, which have for decades propagated sectarian ideals in the tribal regions. Further, ISK-P—like its parent organization in Syria and Iraq—has gone beyond these more traditional support structures, using social media to attract more educated and tech-savvy city dwellers.” (Jamestown Foundation (26 January 2018) *Islamic State Gains Ground in Afghanistan as Its Caliphate Crumbles Elsewhere*, Terrorism Monitor Volume: 16 Issue: 2)

Reports of Islamic State (Daesh) distributing leaflets in Nangarhar province were not found among sources available to the Refugee Documentation Centre. A report from Pajhwok Afghan News refers to Daesh militants distributing leaflets in Logar province as follows:

“Daesh militants have been dropping propaganda leaflets on streets and near homes in central Logar province to encourage the youth into joining the group. Ahmad Javed, who lives in Sar Sang area of the provincial capital, Pul-i-Alam, told Pajhwok Afghan News the propaganda leaflets had been dropped many times at night during the past week. ‘They drop the leaflets on roads and throw into people’s homes. In the leaflets, the youth are urged to join the group,’ he said. Similarly, a tribal elder in Shah Mazar area of Barak-i-Barak district, Haji Gulab, said the same leaflets were found in their area.” (Pajhwok Afghan News (12 March 2017) *Leaflets call on Logar youth to join Daesh*)

See also Voice of America news report referring to leaflets distributed by Islamic State in Ghazni province which states:

“Armed men claiming to be Islamic State members have threatened residents of central Ghazni province, Afghanistan, to cease their support for the Taliban and join IS, according to a provincial official. Khan Elham, chief of the Qara Bagh district of Ghazni province, told VOA that IS members hand-delivered and posted leaflets, warning residents not to support the Taliban. ‘The night letters [leaflets] ask people to remove their sons from the ranks of the Taliban and instead send them to join IS,’ Elham said. He added that IS threatened residents with severe punishment if they disobeyed.” (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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