



Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 21 February 2018

Information on any risk to the lives of members of the Democratic Party of Afghanistan in particular by the Taliban

The nearest match to the Democratic Party of Afghanistan found among sources available to the Refugee Documentation Centre is the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which was the party in power from 1978 to 1992.

A report from the Afghanistan Analysts Network refers to this party as follows:

“A large number of people – ‘thousands’, according to a BBC report – gathered in a Kabul hotel on 28 July 2017 for the fourth ‘consultative gathering for a legal relaunch of Hezb-e Watan’ (Homeland Party). Hezb-e Watan is not just any political party in Afghanistan. It is the reincarnation of the Soviet-backed Hezb-e Dimokratik-e Khalq-e Afghanistan (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, PDPA) that ruled the country after a coup in 1978 and under the Soviet occupation (1979-89) until 1992, albeit, since 1990, under its new name Hezb-e Watan.

The party was banned and dissolved by the mujahedin government in 1992. Several attempts to officially revive it after 2001 have been rejected by the Ministry of Justice (under which all parties have to register).” (Afghanistan Analysts Network (21 August 2017) *The Ghost of Najibullah: Hezb-e Watan announces (another) relaunch*)

A report published by the European Asylum Support Office, in a section titled “Societal treatment and attitudes towards blasphemy, atheists or secularists”, states:

“Other sources noted the point that historically, between 1978 and 1992, the communist government of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) pushed significantly for secular values and reforms across Afghanistan and aligned itself with the ‘atheistic’ Soviet Union. The PDPA government's programme was imposed with ‘widespread repression’ and led to the murder and torture of thousands of people. Neamat Nojumi commented during his review of this report that former members and leaders of the PDPA are currently living freely in Afghanistan and are serving in most organs of the government, and have been elected to office. For example, some former members of the PDPA, such as Vice-President Abdul Rashid Dostum, still form part of the current government.” (European Asylum Support Office (December 2017) *Afghanistan: Individuals targeted under societal and legal norms*, p.28)

A report from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a section titled “(Ex-)communists” (paragraph 3.5.9), states:

“Many former members of the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and ex-employees of the former intelligence services KhAD and WAD currently work for the Afghan government. For example, they hold positions as provincial governors, senior positions in the army or police, or are mayors. Former PDPA members have formed several new parties. As far as is known, ex-communists and their family members have nothing to fear from the government.

As a general category, former and current communists cannot therefore be said to have anything to fear in Afghanistan. Whether there is anything to fear in Afghanistan is an individual matter; this is also true of former employees of the Khad/WAD.” (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (November 2016) *Country of Origin Report on Afghanistan*, pp.86-87)

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.

References:

Afghanistan Analysts Network (21 August 2017) *The Ghost of Najibullah: Hezb-e Watan announces (another) relaunch*
<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-ghost-of-najibullah-hezb-e-watan-announces-another-relaunch/>
(Accessed 20 February 2018)

European Asylum Support Office (December 2017) *Afghanistan: Individuals targeted under societal and legal norms*
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Sources Consulted:

Afghanistan Analysts Network
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European Country of Origin Information Network
Google
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
UNHCR Refworld