



## **Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 8 March 2018**

### **Information on targeting of individuals working for the government / security forces by ISIS and the Taliban.**

A report published by the European Asylum Support Office, in a section titled “Targeted individuals” (paragraph 1.2.2.1: “Targeting of government officials”), states:

“According to author and journalist Abubakar Siddique, the targeting of government officials depends on several aspects, such as where a person worked or works, where a person is from, and what level or position a person has. Persons working for the ministries in the forefront of the fight against the Taliban, such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Interior, or the Ministry of Justice, are a priority. According to Siddique: ‘the Taliban have shown remarkable skill at targeting them and killing them’.” (European Asylum Support Office (December 2017) *Afghanistan: Individuals targeted by armed actors in the conflict*, p.31)

A report published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, in a section titled “People associated with the government or international community” (paragraph 3.19), states:

“Insurgent and terrorist groups, particularly the Taliban, have openly targeted Afghans of all ethnicities working for, supporting or associated with the government and/or the international community. This includes, but is not limited to, government employees, judges and prosecutors, judicial workers, police, and Afghan and international security force personnel. Such people are often subject to intimidation, threats, abduction and targeted killings. These attacks occur throughout Afghanistan, but are particularly prevalent in Kabul.” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia) (18 September 2017) *DFAT Country Information Report: Afghanistan*, p.16)

In paragraph 3.23 this report states:

“DFAT assesses that people working for, supporting or associated with the government and/or the international community (or perceived to be doing so) face a high risk of violence perpetrated by anti-government elements, particularly the Taliban. While ethnicity and religion are unlikely to be primary motivations for attacks on government workers, in some cases these issues may be contributing factors. Given the methods of attack used are highly indiscriminate in nature, this risk applies whether or not the person is the specific target of the attack or is a lower level employee of the organisation in question.” (ibid, p.17)

A report from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, in a section titled “Conflict-Related Abduction of Civilians”, states:

“As in 2016, Anti-Government Elements continued to target off-duty and former Afghan National Police officers, civilian Government workers, family members of civilian Government workers and Afghan national security forces, civilians believed to be government spies as well as civilians perceived to oppose Anti-Government Element values.” (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (July 2017) *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict - Midyear Report 2017*, p.43)

See also section of this report titled “Attacks Deliberately Targeting Civilians” which states:

“UNAMA is extremely concerned by the continued pattern of attacks targeting civilian Government workers, particularly by Taliban. During the first six months of 2017 alone, the mission documented 49 incidents or attacks targeting this category of civilians that resulted in 154 civilian casualties (49 deaths and 105 injured) – a 20 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2016 – and eight attacks targeting judges, judicial staff, or prosecutors, that caused 82 civilian casualties (31 deaths and 51 injured). Taliban publically claimed responsibility for 21 of these attacks and incidents, responsible for 49 civilian casualties (17 deaths and 32 injured), while UNAMA attributed responsibility to Taliban for an additional 24 incidents or attacks that caused 41 civilian casualties (14 deaths and 27 injured). Taliban attacks targeting these categories of civilians took place across Afghanistan, with recorded incidents in 22 of 34 of Afghanistan’s provinces. Taliban openly acknowledged targeting district or provincial governors with respect to at least seven incidents. Based on previous Taliban public statements openly designating the judiciary ‘legitimate military targets’ and calling on ‘workers’ of the ‘Kabul administration’ to take advantage of an amnesty and ‘safeguard their li[v]es’, UNAMA notes that these killings appear to be perpetrated in furtherance of a larger policy targeting civilian Government workers and judicial and prosecution staff.” (ibid, p.45)

A report from Reuters states:

“A Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up near the Afghan defense ministry in Kabul on Saturday, causing heavy casualties just hours after an attack in the eastern province of Kunar killed 13 people and put prospects for new peace talks in doubt. The attack in Kabul killed 15 people and wounded 33, most of them defense ministry staff leaving their offices, according to ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri.” (Reuters (27 February 2016) *Dozens killed, wounded in Afghanistan suicide attacks*)

An article from UK newspaper The Guardian states:

“The Taliban have killed at least 38 people and wounded dozens more in a suicide bomb attack against a bus carrying government employees in the Afghan capital, Kabul, according to officials.

The attack happened in the western part of the city during rush hour, and mainly killed employees of the Afghan ministry of mines and petroleum, according to Kabul police.

The Taliban, in a statement taking responsibility for the attack, claimed to have targeted a bus carrying personnel working for the government intelligence agency. However, the Afghan government said their intelligence staff never travelled in minibuses.” (The Guardian (24 July 2017) *Afghanistan: dozens dead in Kabul bombing targeting government workers*)

A Voice of America news report refers to this incident as follows:

“A Taliban suicide car bombing has killed at least 35 people and injured dozens more in the Afghan capital, Kabul.

An Interior Ministry spokesman, Najib Danish, while confirming the casualties, explained that a bomber rammed his explosives-laden vehicle into a minibus packed with civilian government workers in a western part of the city.

The blast took place while the bus was passing through a crowded marketplace, inflicting casualties on shopkeepers and passers-by, eyewitnesses told reporters. Hospital officials expected the death toll to rise.

A Kabul police spokesman told VOA the victims were mostly employees of the mining and petroleum industry.” (Voice of America News (24 July 2017) *Taliban Suicide Bomber Kills 35 in Afghan Capital*)

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:**

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