



Afghanistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 11 July 2018

Information on the current security situation

A report issued in January 2018 by the *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect* notes that:

“The UN's 2017 strategic review reclassified Afghanistan from a post-conflict situation to an active conflict” (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (15 January 2018) *Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Monitor, January 2018, Issue 37 [Afghanistan excerpt]*).

A report issued in February 2018 by the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan* notes that:

“Civilians continued to suffer the effects of armed conflict in Afghanistan throughout 2017” (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (15 February 2018) *Afghanistan, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Annual Report 2017*, p.1).

This report also states that:

“Civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks countrywide increased by 17 per cent compared to 2016 – as a result, 2017 recorded the highest number of civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks in a single year in Afghanistan since the mission began systematic documentation of civilian casualties in 2009” (ibid, pp.1-2).

The *United Nations Security Council* in February 2018 notes that:

“By the end of 2017, the United Nations had recorded 23,744 security-related incidents. This was the highest number ever recorded...” (United Nations Security Council (27 February 2018) *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General (February 2018)*, p.5).

A report issued by the *International Crisis Group* in February 2018 states:

“The recent Taliban strikes take place amid a wider escalation of the war. The uptick in attacks is not the first such increase over the past few years. Nonetheless, Afghanistan is suffering more intense violence now than during any other winter – winters usually see a lull in fighting – since 2001” (International Crisis Group (7 February 2018) *The Cost of Escalating Violence in Afghanistan*, p.2).

A report issued in March 2018 by the *Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights* states that:

“Afghanistan was involved in a non-international armed conflict (NIAC) in 2017, in which the armed forces of the Government of Afghanistan are fighting against the Taliban. This conflict meets the threshold for the application of the 1977 Addi-tional

Protocol II" (Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (22 March 2018) *The War Report: Armed Conflicts in 2017*, p.49).

A report issued in April 2018 by the *Institut für Strategie-Politik- Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftsberatung* notes that:

"The growing number of attacks indicates a deteriorating security situation, deepening political crisis and power contestations" (Institut für Strategie-Politik- Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftsberatung (April 2018) *Afghanistan: Battle of Narratives, Power Contestations and Cycles of Violence*, p.1).

A document issued in April 2018 by the *Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission* notes that:

"...civilian casualties in Afghanistan have continued throughout the year 1396, as well as serious damages have been inflicted on the lives, health and civilian assets" (Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (April 2018) *Summary of the Report on Civilian Casualties in Armed Conflict in 1396*, p.3).

In April 2018 *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan* states that the:

"...number of civilians killed and injured by armed conflict in the first quarter of 2018 remained at the same high level recorded in 2017" (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (12 April 2018) *Quarterly Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 1 January to 31 March 2018*, p.1).

In April 2018 a report issued by the *United States Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction* states that:

"...the overall level of civilian casualties remained unchanged, but the number of high-casualty events in urban areas increased" (United States Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (30 April 2018) *Thirty-Ninth Quarterly Report to the United States Congress (April 2018)*, p.77).

The *Guardian* in May 2018 states that as:

"...civilian casualties rise, and with no sign that recent American and Nato reinforcements are making a difference, an already dire security situation is growing more complex" (Guardian (1 May 2018) *The US and Afghanistan: can't win the war, can't stop it, can't leave*).

A document issued in May 2018 by the *United States Institute of Peace* notes that:

The high-profile attacks of 2018 had close parallels in 2016 and 2017, and recent UN data suggests that violent casualties nationwide are occurring at almost exactly the same rate as a year ago" (United States Institute of Peace (3 May 2018) *ISIS Seeks to Threaten Afghan Democracy with Latest Assault*).

A document issued in May 2018 by the *Centre for Strategic & International Studies* points out that:

"Although the overall security situation has stabilized somewhat since the end of 2009, violence during the current reporting period is still double that for the same

period in 2008-2009” (Centre for Strategic & International Studies (7 May 2018) *Afghanistan: Conflict Metrics 2000-2018*, p.11).

In May 2018 *Human Rights Watch* states in a report that:

“Fighting between Afghan government and insurgent forces has intensified since 2016, causing increasingly higher numbers of civilian casualties” (Human Rights Watch (8 May 2018) “*No Safe Place*”, *Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Afghanistan*, p.7).

In May 2018 the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan* states in a report that:

“Since voter registration for the upcoming parliamentary elections began on 14 April, UNAMA has verified 23 election-related security incidents resulting in 271 civilian casualties (86 deaths and 185 injured), the majority of whom were women and children...and the abduction of 26 Civilians” (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (10 May 2018) *Protection Of Civilians In Armed Conflict: Election-Related Attacks and Abuses during the Initial Voter Registration Period*, p.1).

A document issued in May 2018 by the *European Asylum Support Office* notes that:

“In 2017, UNAMA recorded 10 453 civilian casualties (3 438 deaths and 7 015 injured) this marks a 9 % decrease compared to 2016 (11 434 civilian casualties, with 3 510 deaths and 7 924 injured). This was the first decline since 2012: compared with 2016, the number of civilian fatalities declined by 2 %, all while the number of injured persons fell by 11 %. UNAMA reported 28 291 deaths and 52 366 injured in total for the period 1 January 2009 - 31 December 2017. Antigovernment groupings accounted for 65 % of all civilian casualties in 2017; the main reasons were IEDs, ahead of suicide attacks and complex attacks...In the first quarter of 2018, UNAMA documented 2 258 civilian casualties (763 deaths and 1 495 injured). These represent a similar level to that of the first quarter of 2017 (2 255) and 2016 (2 268)...” (European Asylum Support Office (30 May 2018) *Afghanistan, Security Situation – Update*, p.22).

A document issued in May 2018 by *Reuters* notes that:

“The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan played down a spate of recent Taliban attacks on Wednesday, saying violence levels were still lower than average as some insurgents talked peace - a situation he described as “talking and fighting.”” (Reuters (30 May 2018) *Taliban 'talking and fighting,' says U.S. commander in Afghanistan*).

In May 2018 *BBC News* states that

“It is estimated that about 15 million people - half the population - are living in areas that are either controlled by the Taliban or where the Taliban are openly present and regularly mount attacks” (BBC News (31 May 2018) *Taliban officials 'in talks with Afghan government', US says*).

In June 2018 the *European Asylum Support Office* states in a report that:

“The ongoing armed conflict in Afghanistan has created a situation in which targeted violence and human rights abuses towards specific groups of people frequently

occur” (European Asylum Support Office (June 2018) *Country Guidance: Afghanistan*, p.13).

In June 2018 the *United Nations Security Council* states in a report that:

“The highly unstable security situation continued to dominate political, humanitarian and development conditions in Afghanistan during the reporting period” (United Nations Security Council (6 June 2018) *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General (June 2018)*, p.5).

A report issued in June 2018 by *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* states that:

“Afghan forces were ordered to resume operations against Taliban fighters after President Ashraf Ghani announced an official end to the government's unilateral cease-fire” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (30 June 2018) *Afghan President Announces End Of Cease-Fire With Taliban*).

A document issued in July 2018 by *Reuters* notes that the:

“...current situation is in a stalemate in which Afghan civilians are paying a heavy toll, the Taliban are expanding in rural areas but are unable to capture major urban centers and the capability of Afghan security forces remains in doubt” (Reuters (10 July 2018) *Exclusive: After discouraging year, U.S. officials expect review of Afghan strategy*).

In July 2018 *Reuters* notes the:

“...instability in much of Afghanistan...” (Reuters (11 July 2018) *Ten killed in attack in Afghan city of Jalalabad; assault over*).

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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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