



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Afghanistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Friday 24 & Monday 27 July 2015

Information on current political unrest and security situation

A report issued in June 2015 by the *International Crisis Group* points out that:

“Security challenges in Afghanistan are increasing as international forces withdraw...Insurgent attacks in the first quarter of 2015 surpassed all records for the same period since 2001...and Taliban started to credibly threaten major cities for the first time since 2006...” (International Crisis Group (4 June 2015) *The Future of the Afghan Local Police*, p.1).

A report released in June 2015 by the *United Nations Security Council* states that:

“The security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated, as anti –Government elements continued to test the capability and resolve of the Afghan National Security Forces across the country” (United Nations Security Council (10 June 2015) *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security: report of the Secretary General*, p.4).

In June 2015 a report released by the *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* points out that:

“Kabul's delay in announcing a date for a long-overdue parliamentary election is damaging public confidence in the democratic process “ (Institute for War and Peace Reporting (12 June 2015) *Afghans Angry at Election Delay*).

This document also notes that:

“Last year's protracted, two-round presidential election was marred by claims of fraud. A total nationwide recount delayed a result until - following mediation by US Secretary of State John Kerry - Mohammad Ashraf Ghani was finally inaugurated on September 29” (ibid).

In June 2015 *Human Rights Watch* states:

“Civilians have suffered high numbers of casualties during recent fighting between Afghan security forces and the Taliban insurgency. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) statistics indicate that the use of mortars and shelling has become the Afghan conflict's leading cause of civilian deaths. During the first four months of 2015 alone, UNAMA documented 266 civilian casualties - 62 deaths and 204 injured - from mortars and rockets, a 43 percent increase from the same period last year. UNAMA data indicate that "anti-government elements" were responsible for 73 percent of all civilian casualties from January to April 2015” (Human Rights Watch (29 June 2015) *Afghanistan: Generals Put Civilians at Risk*).

In July 2015 *The Guardian* states:

“Nine months after he relinquished power in Kabul, Hamid Karzai is a lingering, but formidable presence on the political scene, and his influence and interventions are increasingly seen as a threat to Afghanistan’s political stability” (The Guardian (12 July 2015) *Hamid Karzai seen as increasing threat to Afghanistan's political stability*).

Commenting on a recent attack, a document issued in July 2015 by the *United Nations News Service* points out that

“...100 civilians injured or killed in the past two days...” (United Nations News Service (14 July 2015) *100 civilians injured or killed in the past two days*).

In July 2015 a paper issued by the *Internal Monitoring Displacement Centre* states:

“During 2014 and the first six months of 2015, at a time when most international troops were withdrawing from Afghanistan, internal displacement has been on the rise. It has been driven by an increase in violence by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and counterinsurgency operations by national and, to a lesser extent, the remaining international security forces. Operations have increasingly involved the use of mortars, rockets and grenades in populated areas” (Internal Monitoring Displacement Centre (16 July 2015) *Afghanistan: New and long-term IDPs risk becoming neglected as conflict intensifies*, p.1).

This report also notes:

“Following disputed presidential elections in April 2014, Ashraf Ghani was formally declared the winner in September. His opponent, Abdullah Abdullah, was appointed to the newly created role of chief executive, and they agreed to form a government of national unity. Parliamentary confirmation of most of their nominations for cabinet posts was only completed in April 2015, however, and on 22 June a suicide attack on parliament interrupted voting on the nominee for defence minister...Parliament rejected a second candidate for the post in July...Parliamentary elections scheduled for late April or early May were postponed until 2016, and a new date is still to be set...” (ibid, p.4).

Reuters in July 2015 points out that:

“Violence has increased sharply this year in most parts of Afghanistan, after U.S.-led forces formally ended their combat mission at the end of 2014, leaving a small contingent of about 12,000 NATO troops to train Afghan forces” (Reuters (27 July 2015) *Gunmen attack Afghan wedding party, killing 21, wounding eight*).

The *Agence France Presse* in July 2015 states that:

“Almost 1,000 civilians were killed in the conflict during the first four months of this year, a sharp jump from the same period last year, according to the United Nations. President Ashraf Ghani's government has drawn criticism for failing to end growing insurgent attacks, which critics partly blame on political infighting and a protracted delay in appointing a candidate for the crucial post of defence minister” (Agence France Presse (27 July 2015) *Gunfight kills at least 20 at Afghan wedding: officials*).

References

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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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