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Afghanistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 24 February 2014

Profile of Hezb – e – Isalmi including relationship with Taliban

In October 2013 a document published by *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* includes the following description, noting:

...“the Hezb-e-Islami group, an antigovernment movement fighting alongside the Taliban” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (21 October 2013) *Afghan commander joins Taliban*).

Agence France Presse in November 2013 notes:

“Hezb-e-Islami, a Taliban affiliate...” (Agence France Presse (16 November 2013) *Six killed in Kabul ahead of US security pact debate*).

Deutsche Presse-Agentur in a report issued in February 2014 states:

“Hezb-e-Islami is an Islamic militant group fighting the NATO presence in Afghanistan. It is separate from the Taliban movement” (Deutsche Presse-Agentur (10 February 2014) *Insurgent group claims Kabul attack on NATO convoy*).

Dow Jones Factiva in February 2014 notes:

“Hezb-e-Islami, founded by anti-U.S. warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, is aligned with the Taliban in an insurgency against the Afghan central government. But a legal wing of the group also operates in Afghanistan, and one of the 11 presidential candidates, Qutbuddin Hilal, is a Hezb-e-Islami member” (Dow Jones Factiva (10 February 2014) *Hezb-I-Islami Insurgent Group Claims Kabul Attack – Spokesman*).

A report issued in December 2013 by the *United Nations General Assembly* notes:

“Both the Taliban and the armed faction of Hezb-e Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, have publicly called upon Afghans not to participate in elections, and there have been reports of threatening leaflets in some parts of eastern Afghanistan” (United Nations General Assembly (6 December 2013) *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security : report of the Secretary-General, p.3*).

A report published in September 2013 by the *United Nations General Assembly*, includes the following description noting the:

“...Pashtun Hezb-e Islami (Afghanistan)...” (United Nations General Assembly (6 September 2013) *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security : Report of the Secretary-General, p.4*).

A report issued in October 2013 by the *Afghanistan Analysts Network* notes that there are

“...at least four factions...of Hezb-e Islami...” (Afghanistan Analysts Network (24 October 2013) *Pluralistic within Limits, but Not Democratic: Afghanistan’s political landscape before the 2014 elections*).

The *Wall Street Journal* in February 2014 states:

“The Afghan militant group Hezb-e-Islami carried out a car-bomb suicide attack in Kabul on Monday, killing two contractors for the U.S.-led military coalition and wounding several Afghan civilians. While most recent attacks in the Afghan capital have been the work of the Taliban, Hezb-e-Islami—a separate group led by warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar —claimed responsibility for this one. High-profile attacks by the group are rare in Kabul, where many Hezb-e-Islami members serve in senior positions in the Afghan government. But a militant wing of the organization still pursues attacks against foreign forces” (Wall Street Journal (10 February 2014) *Kabul Car Bombing Claimed by Hezb-I-Islami Group*).

In February 2014 a document published by the *Afghanistan Analysts Network* notes that the Hezb-e-Islami are the:

“...second-largest insurgent group in Afghanistan...” (Afghanistan Analysts Network (19 February 2014) *Bomb and Ballot: The many strands and tactics of Hezb-e Islami*).

This report also states that the:

“HIG, in the 1980s, was arguably the strongest mujahedin party fighting the Soviets (or at least the biggest recipient of Western and Arab financial and military aid). It has since drastically lost influence in the field” (ibid).

A report issued in March 2013 by the *Migration Review Tribunal & Refugee Review Tribunal of Australia* points out that:

“Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is an important and unique figure in recent Afghan history, having adopted an oppositional role to all regimes since 1978 and refusing to join any government, including the Taliban.³¹ HIG re-emerged in Afghanistan following the US-led invasion in October 2001, and has carried out attacks on Afghan and coalition forces, primarily in the eastern provinces of Kunar and Nuristan. HIG seeks the imposition of Sharia (Islamic law) throughout Afghanistan and maintains a pragmatic alliance with the Taliban in opposition to the Afghan government and the presence of coalition forces in Afghanistan. However, this alliance has been put under significant pressure following heavy inter-factional fighting with the Taliban in northern Afghanistan in early 2010” (Migration Review Tribunal & Refugee Review Tribunal of Australia (7 March 2013) *Background Paper Afghanistan: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups 2001-2013*, p.34).

This document also states that:

“While Hezb-e -Islami Gulbuddin no longer benefits from the extensive support it had in the 1980s, it can exploit its old support network in Afghanistan and is more open to co-operation with other insurgents” (Ibid, p.34).

This report also notes:

“HIG operates primarily in eastern Afghanistan – in the provinces of Kunar and Nuristan – along the border with Pakistan” (ibid, p.35).

This document also states:

...“alliances and rivalries in Afghanistan between Islamist parties are often defined by personal motivations for power, and shift according to opportunist calculations and perception of shared enemies. HIG’s relationship with the Taliban has been put under significant pressure following heavy inter-factional fighting between the two groups in northeast Afghanistan in early 2010” (ibid, p.35).

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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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