



Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 4 July 2013

Information on Taliban presence and activities in Takhar Province after the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001; whether they were not present/active between 2002 and 2004; whether they became active again in late 2004/early 2005; whether Mullavi Jawad was appointed by the Taliban as commander in the Takhar province in 2004/2005.

A number of news sources reported on fighting between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in Takhar Province in the period October – November 2001.

A Philadelphia Inquirer article published in October 2001 states:

“Opposition Afghan fighters said yesterday that the Taliban had repositioned some of its top front-line forces away from northern conflict zones to reinforce expected targets of a U.S. attack. Northern Alliance commanders said the Taliban had redeployed about half its ‘foreign’ troops - Pakistanis, Arabs and Chechen Islamic fundamentalist militants - in the last three days away from Takhar province, one of several major fronts in Afghanistan's civil war.”
(Philadelphia Inquirer (7 October 2001) *Taliban realigns forces to meet an attack by the U.S.: Opposition Afghans say they may take advantage of the shift by trying to recapture a key province*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

“There is nothing to distinguish the Taliban and opposition lines as they meet at the gorges of Tangui Farkhar, in Afghanistan's northeastern Takhar province. In the narrow valley of the Takhar river, near Taloquan, capital of Takhar, which the opposition has vowed to recapture, the Afghan enemies have faced each other for several months without engaging in combat. But, as international pressure mounts on the hardline Islamic militia's leaders in Kabul in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the United States, commanders of the opposition, known as the Northern Alliance, believe the stalemate is about to break.” (Agence France Presse (7 October 2001) *Tangui Farkhar's forces ready their arms against the Taliban*)

An article from the New York-based newspaper Newsday states:

“The Afghan opposition claimed its fighters edged closer to the northern crossroads city of Mazar-i-Sharif yesterday with U.S. special forces teams calling in air support. The Taliban denied losing any ground but acknowledged fighting was intense. Seeking to spur a Northern Alliance offensive before winter, the United States sent bombers across northeastern Afghanistan as well, pounding Taliban artillery positions in Takhar province near the border with Tajikistan. Reporters at this village 45 miles north of Kabul could hear the roar of warplanes and the thud of distant explosions after sundown. The attacks in Takhar were aimed at helping the opposition

recapture its former stronghold in the city of Taloqan, which the Taliban took 14 months ago.” (Newsday (8 November 2001) *The War on Terror: Air Raids Aim to Spur Offensive: U.S. sends bombers to aid Alliance efforts*)

An Agence France Presse report on the defeat of the Taliban in November 2001 states:

“Vodka and music -- taboo under the Taliban -- made their return here as residents of this town in northeastern Afghanistan celebrated the downfall of the Islamic fundamentalist militia. But the festivities in Taloqan were tempered by a legacy of fear left behind by the black-turbaned Taliban warriors and worries that they may not all have fled the town. As night fell Tuesday, the streets of Taloqan, capital of Takhar province, were dark and deserted; the Taliban destroyed the town's electricity supply before fleeing advancing Northern Alliance troops over the weekend.” (Agence France Presse (14 November 2001) *Vodka and music as Taloqan celebrates Taliban downfall*)

See also Asian Political News report which states:

“Afghanistan's Northern Alliance has seized the strategically important Takhar Province in the north and the central city of Bamyán, putting further pressure on the ruling Taliban by coming close to controlling the entire north of the country, alliance officials said Sunday.” (Asian Political News (19 November 2001) *Northern Alliance seizes Takhar Province, Bamyán city*)

A New York Times article published in October 2002 refers to the absence of conflict in Takhar Province as follows:

“Life here in this far northeastern corner of Afghanistan is by all accounts and appearances the most peaceful and stable in the country. The four provinces that make up this region -- Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar and Badakshan -- are rarely in the news. In fact, they are in danger of being forgotten, because there has been no recent fighting, ethnic tension or attacks here. The region is well ahead of other areas in disarming after years of warfare, the roads are secure and thousands of refugees have returned to the region and reintegrated without tension, United Nations officials here say. The ethnic Pashtun population, who were largely supporters of the Taliban, have not been the targets of reprisals as have other groups elsewhere in northern Afghanistan. The various ethnic groups here -- Pashtuns, Tajiks, Turkmens and Uzbeks -- have settled back into their old pattern of life.” (New York Times (7 October 2002) *Threats and Responses: Kunduz; Afghans in the Northeast Enjoy a Controlled Calm*)

A UN High Commissioner for Refugees document, in a section titled “Security” (section 4), states:

“Generally the security situation in Kunduz and Takhar has continued to be calm and stable.” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (1 February 2004) *Return Information Update 16 – 31st January 2004*, p.4)

An Agence France Presse report on the killing of 11 Chinese workers in northern Afghanistan in 2004 states:

“The night-time killing was the second murder of foreigners in a week in northern Afghanistan, until now considered free of the bloody insurgency wracking the south and southeast. Hours after the killings a bomb, believed to be planted for UN vehicles, exploded on the main road joining the Kunduz and Takhar provinces. It caused no casualties or damage, provincial military spokesman Jan Agha said.” (Agence France Presse (10 June 2004) *Eleven Chinese construction workers shot dead in north Afghanistan*)

A UN General Assembly Security Council report, in a section titled “Overall security situation” (paragraph 20), states:

“The view of the north as the safest area of the country was seriously undermined by a succession of violent acts. A brutal attack left 10 Chinese construction workers dead in the city of Jilawugir (Baghlan Province) on 10 June; five days later, an attack with improvised explosive devices in the town of Kondozi killed four Afghans, including the driver of a German provincial reconstruction team vehicle that was passing through the area, an improvised explosive device exploded next to a vehicle belonging to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Takhar Province on 10 June; and, throughout the period, a significant number of improvised explosive devices were laid along roads in the north-east.” (UN General Assembly Security Council (12 August 2004) *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security; Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan*, p.7)

A 2006 US Center of Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance document states:

“In another incident, an Afghan provincial lawmaker was gunned down by unidentified assailants in northeastern Takhar province. Attacks by Taliban insurgents in Takhar are rare, and the current killing may have had more to do with inter-tribal rivalries.” (US Center of Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (COEDMHA) (3 April 2006) *US warns of more violence in Afghanistan as NATO expands its presence*)

A BBC News report on this incident states:

“Takhar has seen little Taleban activity but there has been rivalry between a number of former mujahideen commanders.” (BBC News (1 April 2006) *Lawmaker shot dead in Afghanistan*)

An Institute for War & Peace Reporting article published in 2008 states:

“Takhar, in the far north of Afghanistan on the border with Tajikistan, receives little attention from the Kabul government or the foreign military forces in comparison with the violent and volatile southern provinces. While ISAF and the Afghan National Army fight pitched battles against the resurgent Taleban in Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan and other southern provinces, Takhar, like other northern areas, has remained relatively quiet, and has consequently been left to its own devices.” (Institute for War & Peace Reporting (25 February 2008) *Northern Afghanistan: The Enemy Within*)

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.

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