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1970

**1973**

Coup ends monarchical rule—socialist-oriented republican government formed.

**1979**

Mujahedeen form amid conservative unrest in countryside, Soviet Union intervenes.

**1989**

Soviet Union withdraws. More than one million Soviet and Afghan troops killed during decade-long occupation.

**1996**

Taliban seize Kabul, former mujahedeen form Northern Alliance.

**1996**

Osama Bin Laden moves al-Qaeda base to Afghanistan.

**2004**

New constitution promulgated.

**2004**

Presidential election—Hamid Karzai elected.

**2007**

Land Policy passed.

**2009**

Presidential election—Hamid Karzai reelected.

**2011**

Osama Bin Laden killed in Pakistan.

**2015**

Islamic State announces presence in Khorasan province.

**2016**

Peace deal with Hezb-e-Islami.

**1978**

Saur Revolution—as government moves to right, communist PDPA takes power in coup.

**1988**

Geneva Accord paves the way for Soviet withdrawal.

**1992**

Communist government of President Mohammad Najibullah collapses.

**1992**

Peshawar Accord creates mujahedeen-led government under President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

**2001**

U.S. drives Taliban from power.

**2005**

Parliamentary elections.

**2008**

Law on Managing Land Affairs passed.

**2010**

Parliamentary elections.

**2014**

NATO combat mission ends.

**2014**

Presidential election—National Unity Government formed by President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

**2017**

Islamic State affiliate storms Kabul's main military hospital leaving 50 dead and claims responsibility for major suicide bombing near the defense ministry.

2017

# Afghanistan

## At a glance



National civil war  
**High**



Communal/ideological conflict  
**Low with potential to increase**



National political conflict  
**Medium**



Local political and electoral conflict  
**High**



Transnational terrorism  
**High**



Local resource conflict  
**Medium**



Separatism and autonomy  
**Absent**



Urban crime and violence  
**Medium**

*\* Rankings are based on the last 15 years and are relative to other Asian countries.*

## Overview

Due to decades of civil war, Afghanistan is the most fragile and volatile country in the region. The ongoing conflict is fueled by support to Taliban insurgents from Pakistan and poor governance, including entrenched patronage systems, corruption, and weak rule of law. Despite the U.S.-led international intervention since 2001, violence has continued between antigovernment insurgents and the security forces. Since the gradual withdrawal of international combat troops from 2011 onward, the security environment in the country has further deteriorated, with increasing attacks by the Taliban and other insurgent groups. Civilian casualties hit a record high in 2016, with 3,498 dead and 7,920 injured.<sup>1</sup> Transnational terrorist networks also continue to operate. The Islamic State (IS) is building up its presence in the country through its affiliated groups, and claimed responsibility for several large-scale deadly attacks against civilians in Kabul. As IS often targets religious minorities, a new surge of sectarian violence against the Shia community is reported. Security and personal safety continue to be major concerns among Afghan citizens.<sup>2</sup>



#### National civil war

Afghanistan has experienced several phases of civil war in its modern history: the guerrilla war waged against the Soviet-backed Communist government (1978–1992), subsequent fighting among rival mujahedeen factions (1992–1996), and half a decade of Taliban control over the state (1996–2001). The decades of civil war and unrest resulted in the deaths of over half a million<sup>3</sup> to as many as 2 million<sup>4</sup> people between 1978 and 2001 (figure 1). The lack of institutional and structural mechanisms for accommodating ethnic and cultural diversity led to social injustices and suppression of minorities, which further contributed to political instability and conflict. The country's diverse ethnic composition has been politicized by warlords who consolidated their power bases along tribal lines.<sup>5</sup>

A coup in 1973 ended monarchical rule and turned Afghanistan towards socialism and Soviet influence. The new republican government led by Mohammed Daoud Khan started modernization and socialist reforms that alienated Islamic conservatives. President Daoud also promoted Pashtunistan policy<sup>6</sup> and supported Pashtun and Baloch nationalists in their guerilla war against Pakistan. The Pakistani government started a proxy war in Afghanistan by supporting and training young religious militants through its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. Many groups receiving help—for example, the Haqqani network, Hezb-e Islami, and Jamiat-e Islami—played major roles in the war with Afghanistan and afterwards. In 1977, Daoud distanced himself from the Soviet Union and the pro-Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and reengaged with Islamic countries and the United States. The following year, PDPA took power in a coup, known as the Saur Revolution, and implemented radical land and cultural reforms. From April 1978 to the Soviet intervention in December 1979, around 27,000 dissidents were executed.<sup>7</sup> Most were village religious leaders (*mullahs*) and headmen from the countryside opposed to the reforms. Many insurgent groups organized along both tribal and nontribal lines, known as mujahedeen, emerged.

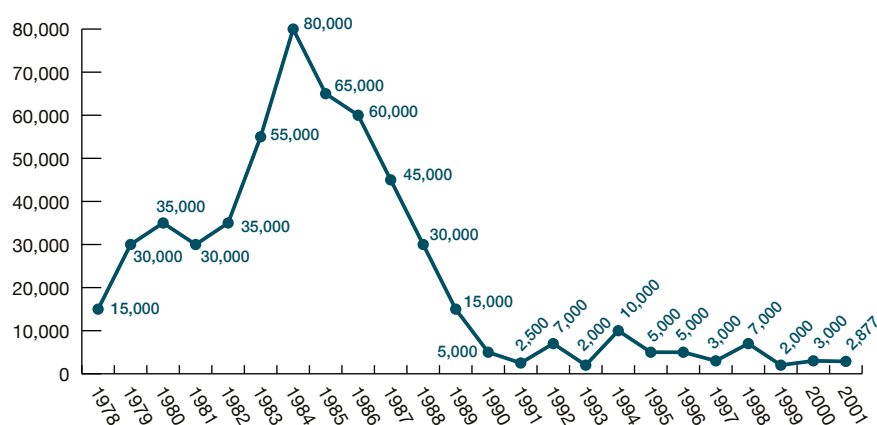
This political unrest, coupled with conflicts within the PDPA, resulted in a coup and several assassinations, prompting the Soviet Union to send troops to Afghanistan to prop up the Communist government. Afghan insurgents opposing the Soviet occupation received support from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the United States, China, and the United Kingdom. Pakistan became a training ground for Afghan and foreign fighters, with ISI recruiting Pakistani fighters, supplying foreign troops, and sending support to the mujahedeen.<sup>8</sup> The guerilla tactics drained the Soviet Union's energy to wage war, and within the first five years much of the country was outside of government or Soviet control. An exit plan for the Soviet Union was implemented after the 1988

**100,000+**  
**killed 2001-2016**

Geneva Accord. By the time of Soviet withdrawal in 1989, more than one million Afghans and Soviet troops had been killed.<sup>9</sup> The Communist government, then under Mohammad Najibullah, collapsed in 1992 when the rebels seized Kabul. The Soviet occupation created conditions for the rise of groups outside formal power structures.<sup>10</sup> By reinforcing political patronage networks and a reactionary political culture, the turbulent 1970s and 1980s set the stage for insecurity, violence, and religious extremism in Afghanistan today.

Following the power-sharing Peshawar Accord in 1992,<sup>11</sup> Burhanuddin Rabbani and his Muslim political party, Jamiat-e Islami, succeeded the interim government and continued waging war with opposing groups, including Hezb-i Islami and the Taliban. During this period, vast areas of Afghanistan were controlled by different armed factions through ethnic, linguistic, or regional cleavages, replacing limited government functions. Support for various warlords from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and the United States accelerated fragmentation. The power vacuum and war-weariness paved the way for the Taliban seizure of Kabul in September 1996, establishing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Many of the Taliban leaders followed a fundamentalist version of Deobandi and Wahhabi revivalist movements, within South Asian Muslim contexts, and a narrow interpretation of Pashtun social and cultural norms such as the strict control of women, the use of Shari'a law, and iconoclasm.<sup>12</sup> Dissidents were publicly beaten or executed.

In 1996, groups opposed to the Taliban formed the National Islamic United Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, commonly known as the Northern Alliance or the United Front, which supported the ousted government, the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA). The president of the ousted government, Burhanuddin Rabbani, served as the leader of the Northern Alliance. However, the real power lay with Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was particularly influential in Panjshir, Parwan, and Takhar areas, and Abdul Rashid Dostum, who controlled Samangan, Balkh, Jowzjan, Faryab, and Baghlan provinces. The alliance received military, financial, and diplomatic assistance from Iran, Russia, and neighboring states. Both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance violated international humanitarian law by killing detainees, aerial bombardment



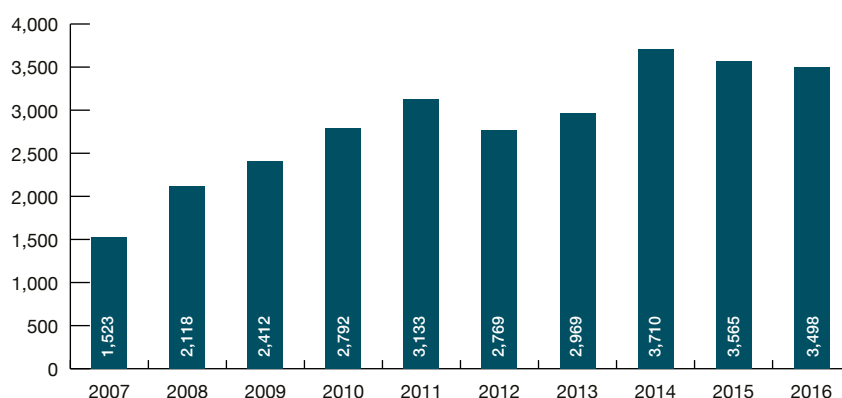
**Figure 1.** Civil war fatalities in Afghanistan (1979–2001)

Source: Lacina and Gleditsch<sup>13</sup>

and shelling, direct attacks on civilians, rape, torture, and persecution on the basis of religion. These violations were widespread and systematic. They continue to fuel ethnic conflict at the national and subnational level.<sup>14</sup>

Following the September 11, 2001, attacks, the U.S. government accused the Taliban of providing a safe haven for the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda. The U.S.-led coalition forces under Operation Enduring Freedom invaded Afghanistan, and drove the Taliban from power by December 2001. The civil war persisted, and the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), with troops mainly from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states, remained until 2014 to assist Afghanistan in rebuilding key government and security institutions and to engage in combat operations. With the NATO combat mission officially over, the number of international troops declined significantly, from 140,000 in 2011 to just 13,000 in 2015.<sup>15</sup> As of March 2017, only 8,450 U.S. troops were still based in Afghanistan, focusing on counterterrorism and training domestic security forces. President Trump's administration is currently reviewing U.S. Afghanistan policy, including the question of whether remaining troops should be withdrawn or augmented. The withdrawal of international combat troops left a fragile security environment. The Taliban and other groups have continued to attack civilians and the security forces. Recent reports by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) indicate that violence is growing, resulting in an increase in civilian casualties caused by Taliban militants and other antigovernment groups (figure 2).<sup>16</sup> It is estimated that over 100,000 people lost their lives between 2001 and 2016.<sup>17</sup>

Many attempts have been made to hold peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghanistan government since 2007. So far, however, these efforts have failed due to the recent political transitions, change in the Taliban's leadership, and geopolitics involving other foreign actors, such as Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States. After failed attempts by the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, which comprises Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and the United States, Russia is taking the lead in organizing regional consultations to promote Afghan peace and reconciliation efforts. Since a trilateral meeting held among China, Pakistan, and Russia in December 2016,



**Figure 2.** Civilian deaths in Afghanistan (2007–2016)

Source: UNAMA

Russia has hosted three more rounds of consultations.<sup>18</sup> However, direct talks with the Taliban have yet to begin. Meanwhile, the Afghanistan government successfully signed a peace agreement with Hezb-e-Islami, the country's second-largest militant group, in September 2016.<sup>19</sup>



### National political conflict

In the midst of the prolonged civil war, Afghanistan has held several democratic elections in the post-Taliban era, including presidential elections in 2004, 2009, and 2014 and parliamentary elections in 2005 and 2010. They were marred by widespread electoral violence, fraud, and corruption. Figures on electoral violence reported by NATO and UNAMA show approximately 300–500 violent incidents have occurred on election days since the 2009 elections.<sup>20</sup>

Afghanistan saw a spike in violence during and after the last presidential election, in 2014. UNAMA documented 242 attacks by antigovernment groups, resulting in 380 civilian casualties (74 killed and 306 injured), during the first six months of 2014.<sup>21</sup> As a result of the violence, Taliban-controlled districts had low turnout.<sup>22</sup> The 2014 presidential elections pitted Ashraf Ghani, who received mainly Pashtun and Uzbek support, against Abdullah Abdullah, who was associated with the Tajik and Hazara groups. Such ethnic rivalries had not featured prominently during the campaign, but emerged after the runoff. Electoral violence rose as ethnic and tribal groups became more clearly identified with particular camps.<sup>23</sup>

Allegations of systemic fraud, including illegal transportation of unused ballots, and conflicts of interest among officials, resulted in political deadlock.<sup>24</sup> According to the European Union, a quarter of total votes cast (approximately 2 million of 8.1 million final-round ballots) came from polling stations with reports of voting irregularities.<sup>25</sup> An international audit to address voter fraud and other irregularities did little to dispel concerns of election rigging. In September 2014, U.S. secretary of state John Kerry brokered an agreement for a National Unity Government, which would be led by Ashraf Ghani as president and Abdullah Abdullah as chief executive officer. The disputed 2014 election highlighted the challenges facing Afghanistan's transition to democracy.<sup>26</sup> The parliamentary elections were scheduled to take place in 2015, but were postponed due to disagreements on electoral reform. As parliament five-year term ended in June 2015, President Ghani extended the term until the next election. The next parliamentary election is currently scheduled for July 2018.



### Transnational terrorism

After decades of war, a governance vacuum and regional instability created conditions conducive to transnational terrorism, especially along the porous Afghan-Pakistani border. Foreign fighters who arrived during the Soviet occupation later joined several Islamic terrorist groups. Afghanistan became a base for international Islamic terrorism activities in the mid-1990s under the Taliban regime. Osama Bin Laden moved al-Qaeda's base of operations from Sudan to Afghanistan in 1996, where he planned the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States and established camps to train fighters to support the Taliban. Since the death of Bin Laden in 2011, al-Qaeda has maintained its presence in Afghanistan.<sup>27</sup> Two of its training facilities in Kandahar were raided by U.S. special operation forces and their Afghan allies in October 2015. Al-Qaeda and Taliban-affiliated groups of foreign origin operating, training, and hiding in Afghanistan include al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Lashkar-i-Janghvi, Harakat ul-Jihad Islami (Movement of Islamic Jihad), and the Haqqani Network.<sup>28</sup> Indian interests in Afghanistan are the main targets of the last four groups, which are allegedly linked with Pakistan's ISI. The Islamic State (IS) also has a military presence in Afghanistan, recruiting new fighters from disaffected Taliban factions such as the TTP, LeT, and IMU.<sup>29</sup>

The 2016 Global Terrorism Index ranked Afghanistan as the country second-most affected by terrorism after Iraq, accounting for 14 percent of the world's terrorist attacks in 2015.<sup>30</sup> In 2016, the country suffered 6,994 civilian casualties from terrorist attacks—2,131 dead and 4,863 injured—a 2 percent increase over the previous year.<sup>31</sup> While the Taliban were responsible for the majority of terrorist attacks in the country, an IS affiliate, the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), carried out multiple deadly attacks that killed 286 civilians in 2016.<sup>32</sup> The ISKP claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in Kabul in July 2016 that killed at least 85 people; more recently, in March 2017, they stormed Kabul's main military hospital, killing 50, and claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing near the defense ministry in April.

## Subnational level



### Separatism and autonomy

While there is no significant separatist movement in Afghanistan, and formal state authority is highly centralized, much of the country is governed in practice by local tribal and ethnic leaders. Due to weak and ineffective governance at the subnational level, the central government relies heavily on traditional mechanisms and local institutions such as *shuras* (standing councils) or *jirgas* (ad hoc councils).<sup>33</sup> Confidence in local institutions such as shuras and community development councils is generally higher than in national institutions.<sup>34</sup> To connect village politics to the central government, the international community adopted a hybrid approach: it built state capacity by integrating informal powers into the government.<sup>35</sup> Warlords thus were offered ministerial posts and received financial support to fight the Taliban.

Limited state capacity and accountability also resulted in a governance vacuum and local fragmentation, which contributed to worsening security.<sup>36</sup> With strong influence, militias, and rich resources, local strongmen have the political and economic means to challenge both the government and insurgents.<sup>37</sup> In some areas, the central government cannot maintain security or provide basic services, strengthening the influence of local warlords at the subnational level.

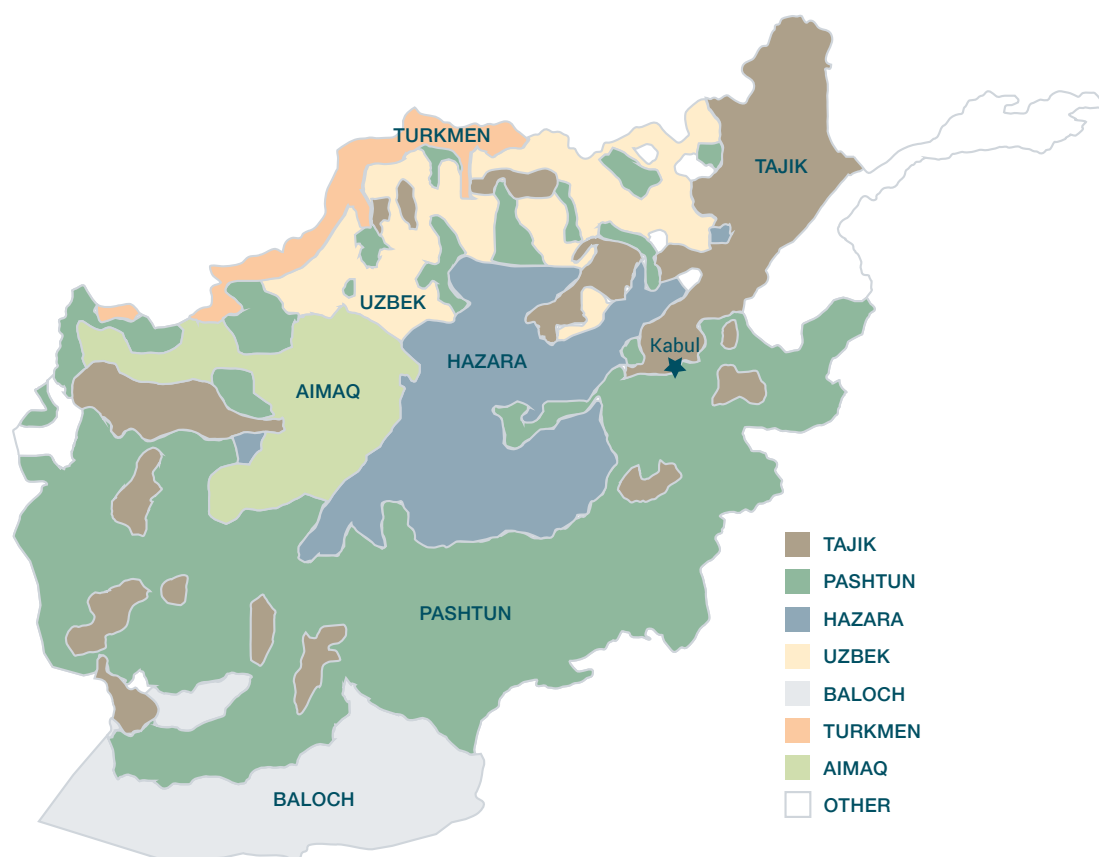


### Large-scale communal and ideological conflicts

Afghanistan has faced growing ethnic and sectarian tensions in recent years, which have contributed to the ongoing conflict and violence. The country has 14 different ethnic groups recognized in the 2004 constitution: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Baloch, Turkmen, Nuristani, Pamiri, Arab, Gujar, Brahui, Qizilbash, Aimaq, and Pashai.<sup>38</sup> Over 99 percent of the population is Muslim, Sunni Muslims comprising 85–90 percent and Shia Muslims making up 10–15 percent.<sup>39</sup> The Shia population includes Ismailis and a majority of ethnic Hazaras. Other religious groups, mainly Hindus, Sikhs, Bahais, and Christians, comprise an estimated 0.3 percent of the population.

Even though the two largest religious groups, Sunni and Shia, have lived in peace since the Taliban regime, a new surge of sectarian violence against the Shia community has been reported, with attacks on the Hazaras in particular. In the second half of 2016, UNAMA recorded five separate attacks against Shia mosques and gatherings, which killed 162 civilians and injured 618 others.<sup>40</sup> One of the worst attacks was during the peaceful protest organized by the Enlightening Movement in Kabul in July 2016, killing at least 85 civilians and injuring over 400 people.<sup>41</sup> Almost all civilian casualties were from the Shia Hazara community. The ISKP claimed responsibility for most of the attacks against Shias, particularly ethnic Hazaras. The group has carried out lethal attacks on religious minorities that have strongholds in Syria and Iraq.<sup>42</sup> The government has recognized inciting ethnic strife as a crime. Many believe that violence along ethnic lines may increase, including within the country's own security forces.<sup>43</sup>





## Local level



### Local political conflict and electoral violence

Local conflict and violence are intertwined with and mirror national political conflict. Local leaders have often resorted to ethnic allegiance and incited violence, just as they did during the civil war. The last provincial council elections were held on the same day as the first round of the presidential election in April 2014. These elections were also marred by attacks from the Taliban and affiliated groups. UNAMA documented 27 civilian deaths and 128 injuries on the day of the elections, including among Independent Election Commission (IEC) staff, women, and children.<sup>44</sup> The majority of civilian casualties resulted from violent clashes and bomb attacks by antigovernment groups targeting IEC convoys, polling stations, candidates, and supporters. The final results from the provincial council elections were released in October 2016, six months after the elections.<sup>45</sup> The adjudication of provincial election complaints was deferred due to the controversy around the presidential runoff election, which consequently postponed the release of the final results.



### Local conflict over resources and community rights

Disputes over natural resources such as land, water, forests, minerals, and opium and cannabis often exacerbate existing political, ethnic, sectarian, and regional divisions in Afghanistan. Widespread poverty and a scarcity of productive land generate intense competition for access to and management of land and natural resources among people and communities, which often leads to intracommunal and intercommunal conflict. For example, disputes over access to pastoral land have been at the heart of interethnic tensions between the Shia Hazaras and the Sunni Kuchis for over a century, tensions that have frequently flared into violence.<sup>46</sup> According to a 2008 Oxfam report, land was a major cause of local disputes, accounting

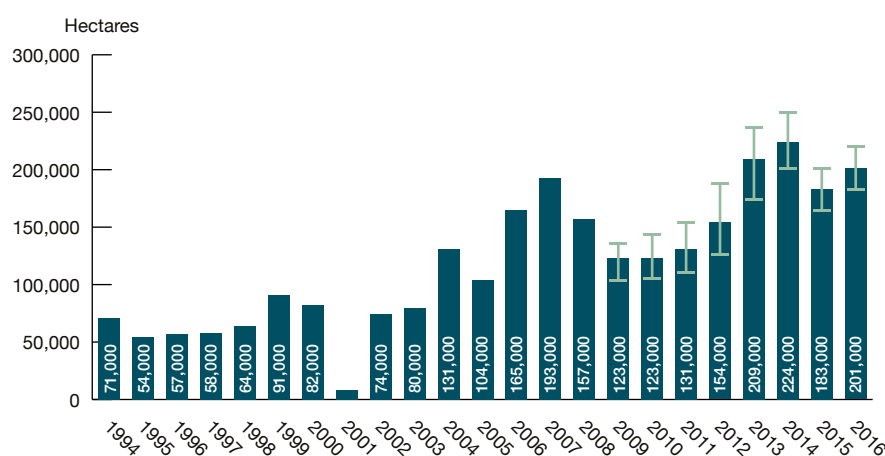
# 70%

## civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks are in Kabul

for nearly 30 percent of all cases.<sup>47</sup> The Asia Foundation's 2016 *Survey of the Afghan People* found that land disputes were the most common type of disputes brought to dispute-resolution institutions by respondents.<sup>48</sup>

Population growth, urbanization, returning refugees/displaced people, and rising property values are among the critical factors driving pervasive land conflicts in the country.<sup>49</sup> The country has a mix of formal and traditional institutions governing the land-tenure system. The government attempted to address land rights by reformatizing land settlement and administration through the 2007 Land Policy and the 2008 Law on Managing Land Affairs, but land governance remained ambiguous, complex, and lacking in transparency.<sup>50</sup> Despite the government's effort to modernize the land-management system, most land ownership and use is still based on informal or customary arrangements that have evolved over time.

Disputes over access to and allocation of water are the second-most commonly cited cause of conflict after land.<sup>51</sup> Land and water issues are intimately related, as agriculture absorbs 95 percent of the water used in the country.<sup>52</sup> Inequitable distribution of water remains a source of great tension between communities that is often an underlying factor in other conflicts labeled as ethnic or sectarian in nature. To generate hydroelectricity and capture more water, the government has proposed 31 major infrastructure projects across the country, including the construction of 15 storage dams.<sup>53</sup> These projects have generated significant tensions among different groups, as well as with neighboring countries such as Iran, India, and Turkmenistan.



**Figure 3.** Opium cultivation in Afghanistan (1994–2016)

Source: UNODC (2016)<sup>54</sup>

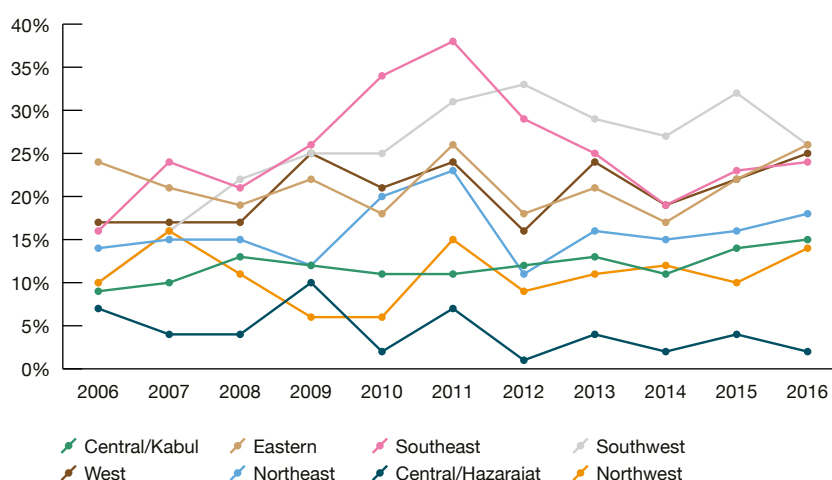
Opium cultivation and trade are closely linked to insurgencies and terrorist activities, contributing to the high level of violence in the country. Afghanistan is the world's largest exporter of opium and a major producer of cannabis. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that Afghanistan's total area under opium poppy cultivation reached a peak of 224,000 hectares in 2014 (figure 3).<sup>55</sup> Potential opium production was estimated at 4,800 tons in 2016, an increase of 43 percent from 3,300 tons in 2015.<sup>56</sup> The Taliban and other insurgent groups earn revenue to support their operations through taxation of poppy farmers, providing protection for the opium trade, and heroin production.<sup>57</sup> With a lack of economic incentives such as markets for other crops, current opium eradication efforts are doomed to failure.<sup>58</sup> The government's eradication efforts have been slow and risky due to poor security in the major opium-growing areas, which are typically insurgent strongholds.



### Urban crime and violence

Kabul, Afghanistan's most populous city with 3.8 million people (2016–2017 estimate),<sup>59</sup> is a high-profile target for large-scale insurgent attacks. Antigovernment groups continue to conduct suicide and complex attacks against civilian and noncivilian targets in densely populated areas. In 2016, UNAMA recorded the second-highest number of civilian casualties (534 deaths and 1,814 injuries), an increase of 34 percent compared to 2015, in the central region that includes Kabul.<sup>60</sup> In particular, 70 percent of all civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks took place in Kabul.<sup>61</sup> According to The Asia Foundation's 2016 survey, the level of crime and violence experienced by respondents in the central region went up by six points between 2006 and 2016.<sup>62</sup>

Homicide, assaults, thefts, kidnapping, and terrorist threats are rampant and deadly nationwide. While no regional crime statistics are available, the overall number of criminal incidents in the country rose from 1,107 in 2009 to 1,795 in 2014, an increase of 62 percent over seven years. However, this may reflect improvements in reporting as much as an actual increase in criminal activity. Data from the Ministry of Interior Affairs indicated that the rate of intentional homicide (excluding battle deaths) increased from 4.0 per 100,000 people in 2009 to 6.5 per 100,000 people in 2012.<sup>63</sup>



**Figure 4.** Level of crime or violence experienced by respondents, by region (2006–2016)

Source: The Asia Foundation

# 90%+

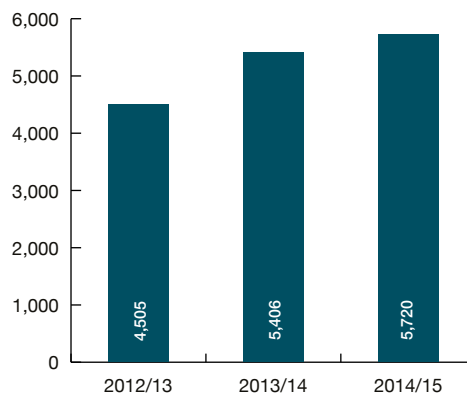
**of women believe husbands  
are justified in using violence  
against their wives**



## Domestic and gender-based violence

The prevalence of violence against women continues to be a serious concern in the country. Physical, psychological, and sexual violence, forced marriage, and social exclusion of women are embedded in traditional norms and practices. The government recorded a total of 5,720 cases of violence against women, registered by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Interior, and Attorney General's Office, between March 2014 and March 2015, an increase of 27 percent over three years (figure 5).<sup>64</sup> In 2014–2015, battery and laceration were the most common forms of violence reported by women (33.6 percent), followed by domestic violence (10.8 percent) and murder (6.5 percent).<sup>65</sup>

Many Afghan women and girls suffer from domestic violence in their lifetime. The 2008 Global Rights survey found that 87 percent of Afghan women reported experiencing at least one form of domestic violence, and over 60 percent experienced multiple forms of violence.<sup>66</sup> The most common form of domestic violence experienced by women was psychological violence (74 percent), followed by forced marriage (59 percent), physical violence (52 percent), and sexual violence (17 percent).<sup>67</sup> While a forced, polygamous, or child marriage is common in the country due to traditional practices, the survey also found that married girls aged 10–14 were particularly vulnerable to all forms of domestic violence. In particular, one in three girls in this age group experienced sexual violence.<sup>68</sup> Another study conducted by the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) revealed that over 90 percent of Afghan women believed a husband was justified in using physical violence against his wife for any reason.<sup>69</sup>



**Figure 5.** Registered cases of violence against women (2012–2015)

Source: Ministry of Women's Affairs<sup>70</sup>

## Notes

- 1 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), *Afghanistan Annual Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 2016* (Kabul: UNAMA, 2017), [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_in\\_armed\\_conflict\\_annual\\_report\\_2016\\_final280317.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/protection_of_civilians_in_armed_conflict_annual_report_2016_final280317.pdf).
- 2 The Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2016: A Survey of the Afghan People* (Kabul: The Asia Foundation, 2017), 106–107, [http://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/2016\\_Survey-of-the-Afghan-People\\_full-survey.Jan2017.pdf](http://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/2016_Survey-of-the-Afghan-People_full-survey.Jan2017.pdf).
- 3 Bethany Lacina and Nils Petter Gleditsch, “Monitoring Trends in Global Combat: A New Dataset of Battle Deaths,” *European Journal of Population* 21 no. 2 (June 2005), <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/54d7/a22138bb7bfc81422c30a5a93d4f8772038e.pdf>. The best estimate was used to calculate the number of deaths; when the best estimate was not available, the lowest estimate was used. The battle deaths dataset is available on the website of the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), <https://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/Battle-Deaths/The-Battle-Deaths-Dataset-version-30/>.
- 4 Larry P. Goodson, *Afghanistan’s Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban* (Washington DC: University of Washington Press, 2001), 93.
- 5 Omar Sadr, “Understanding War in Afghanistan: Politics, Culture and Social History,” *Fair Observer*, October 14, 2014, [http://www.fairobserver.com/region/central\\_south\\_asia/understanding-war-in-afghanistan-politics-culture-and-social-history-65324/](http://www.fairobserver.com/region/central_south_asia/understanding-war-in-afghanistan-politics-culture-and-social-history-65324/).
- 6 The policy aimed to unite the areas where Pashtun people live in Pakistan with Afghanistan. Pashtunistan covers middle parts of Afghanistan and present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, north Baluchistan, and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan.
- 7 Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1990), 115.
- 8 Some fighters later became warlords, leading several armed factions across ethnic and ideological lines, and leaders of terrorist groups operating in and outside Afghanistan. They include Mohammad Omar of the Taliban, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar of Hezb-e Islami, Ahmad Shah Massoud of Jamiat-e Islami, Osama bin Laden of Al Qaeda, and Jalaluddin Haqqani of the Haqqani network.
- 9 “Timeline: Soviet war in Afghanistan,” *BBC News*, February 17, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7883532.stm>.
- 10 Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015), 19, <https://www.fas.org/sfp/crs/row/RS21922.pdf>.
- 11 For more information on the Peshawar Accord, please visit the United Nations Peacemaker website, [http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/AF\\_920424\\_PESHAWAR%20ACCORD.pdf](http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/AF_920424_PESHAWAR%20ACCORD.pdf).
- 12 For more information on South Asian revivalist movements, please see Husain Haqqani, “The Ideologies of South Asian Jihadi Groups,” *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 1 (2005), <https://hudson.org/research/7156-current-trends-in-islamist-ideology-volume-1>.
- 13 Lacina and Gleditsch, “Dataset of Battle Deaths.”
- 14 Human Rights Watch, *Afghanistan Crisis of Impunity: The Role of Pakistan, Russia, and Iran in Fueling the Civil War* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2001), 11, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/afghan2/Afghan0701.pdf>.
- 15 “How many foreign troops are in Afghanistan?” *BBC News*, October 15, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-11371138>.
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