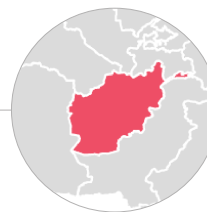


Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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AFGHANISTAN [1/2] MARKED DETERIORATION



Increased conflict between resistance armed groups and the Interim Taliban Authority (ITA) leads to overall security deterioration and displacements, requiring emergency response

RATIONALE

Since the regime change in August 2021, the ITA has progressively consolidated control over the security situation in Afghanistan through intelligence and security operations and the repression of opposition groups (UNSC 23/05/2023; UNICRI 02/05/2023).

Some armed opposition groups against the ITA have shown resistance (ISW 09/03/2022; RFE/RL 27/04/2022; FPRI 21/11/2022; SIGA 07/04/2022; ISW 29/11/2022; UNSC 23/05/2023). Among them, the National Resistance Front (NRF) with Ahmad Massoud at the helm; the Afghanistan Freedom Front, which has the objective of “fighting for the freedom of the country from occupation” and claims a presence in all 34 provinces; and the Afghanistan Liberation Movement, which fights for former security officers that the Taliban have killed. All these groups have been launching a higher number of attacks against the ITA, especially since July 2023, and are expected to further increase the frequency and geographical spread of their attacks in the next six months (VOA 27/04/2022; ACLED accessed 14/09/2023; UNAMA 20/06/2023; FPRI 21/11/2022; Critical Threats 29/11/2022). In the first three months of 2023, the aforementioned groups operated in Badakhshan, Balkh, Helmand, Jowzjan, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Parwan, Samangan, and Takhar provinces.

By September, they had conducted operations in an additional five provinces (Baghlan, Ghazni, Kunduz, Laghman, and Paktika). The number of attacks increased from 23 (January–March) to 57 (June–August). Although the overall military capability of these groups is unclear, the Taliban have consistently signalled taking the threat that they pose seriously by stationing large numbers of troops and military leaders in northern provinces (ORF 10/01/2023).

There has also been a sharp increase in ITA search operations, starting with the northern parts of Kabul (Afghanistan International 01/08/2023; KII 17/08/2023). The ITA found over 100 weapon caches, possibly belonging to the armed resistance groups, between 1 February and 20 May across 30 provinces, indicating that many weapons may remain undetected (UNAMA 20/06/2023). The ITA is also increasingly and rapidly reacting to pro-NRF posts on social media (KII 23/08/2023).

At the same time, the Islamic State – Khorasan Province (IS-KP), often considered the main military threat to the ITA, continues its armed activities (ISW 29/11/2022). Suicide attacks by the IS-KP remain lethal but infrequent, with only 12 attacks recorded from January–September 2023 (UNAMA 27/06/2023; ACLED accessed 14/09/2023).

 Risk level Medium

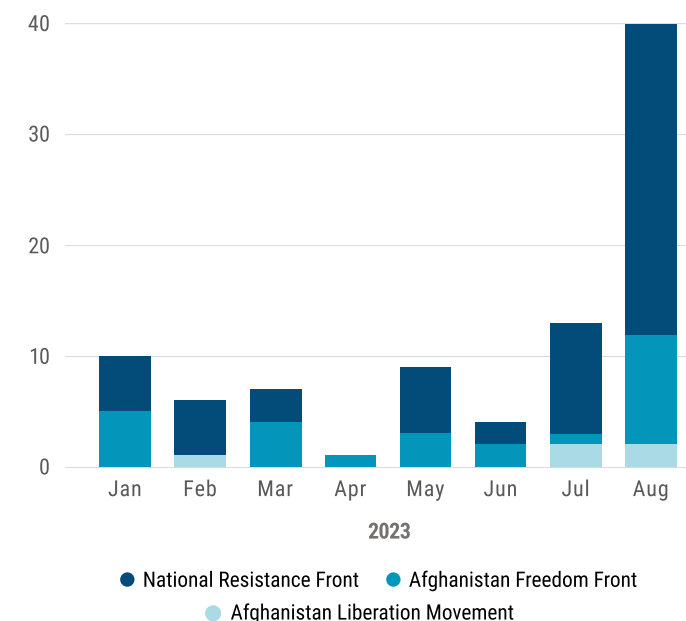
PROBABILITY



IMPACT

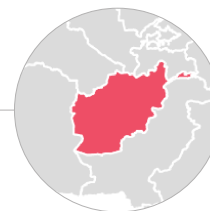


Conflict events by armed resistance groups in 2023



AFGHANISTAN [2/2]

⬇ MARKED DETERIORATION

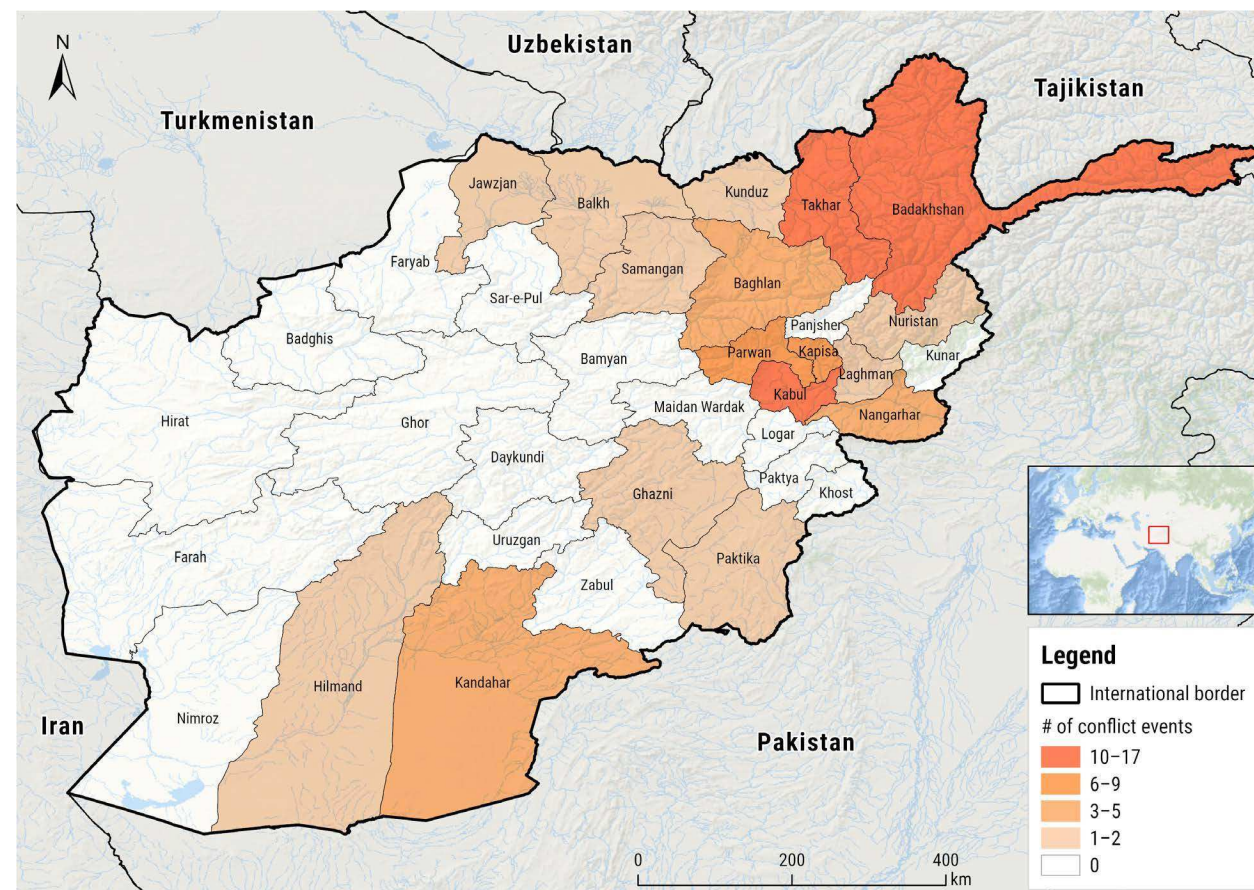


● Risk level | Medium

IMPACT

A further increase in the number and geographic spread of armed attacks by resistance groups targeting the ITA would result in harsh military and security countermeasures by the Taliban, leading to an overall deterioration in the security situation. As the frequency and scale of armed attacks increase, so will civilian casualties and humanitarian access challenges. Increased arrests, detentions, and pre-emptive strikes by the ITA to counter expected opposition attacks will also put certain populations perceived as suspects by the authorities at risk. The Tajiks and the northern population will especially be held and interrogated to see whether they are connected to the resistance groups, particularly the NRF, which the ITA views as strongly linked to Afghanistan's northern region. Insecurity will lead to renewed conflict-induced displacement, increasing the numbers of IDPs (already 3.25 million) and people seeking asylum beyond international borders (already 5.2 million). This will force humanitarian responders to redirect programming towards emergency response (UNHCR 01/07/2023). The rate of refugee return, mainly from Pakistan, will also slow (Macrotrends accessed 10/09/2023; UNHCR 24/07/2023). Consequently, the need for life-saving shelter, essential relief items, community infrastructure, psychosocial support, and humanitarian financial assistance to displaced Afghan populations and host communities will be dominant (UNICEF 01/01/2023).

Increase in the number and geographic spread of attacks by armed resistance groups, January–August 2023



Source: ACAPS using data from ACLED (accessed 28/09/2023)

Note: violent incidents include attacks, armed clashes, abductions and forced disappearances, sexual violence, looting, and property destruction

