

AFGHANISTAN REPORT

Country Information and Policy Unit

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I SCOPE OF DOCUMENTII GEOGRAPHYIII ECONOMYIV HISTORYV STATE STRUCTURESVIA HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUESVIB HUMAN RIGHTS - SPECIFIC GROUPSVIC HUMAN RIGHTS - OTHER ISSUESANNEX A: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTSANNEX B: POLITICAL ORGANISATIONSANNEX C: PROMINENT PEOPLEANNEX D: CABINET MEMBERS/ADVISERS/VICE PRESIDENTS IN TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATIONANNEX E: DEPUTY MINISTERS IN TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATIONANNEX F: LIST OF FORMER TALIBAN MINISTERSREFERENCES TO SOURCE MATERIAL**1. SCOPE OF DOCUMENT**

1.1 This report has been produced by the Country Information and Policy Unit, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information obtained from a wide variety of recognised sources. The document does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.

1.2 The report has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum / human rights determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum / human rights claims made in the United Kingdom.

1.3 The report is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain. These sources have been checked for currency, and as far as can be ascertained, remained relevant and up to date at the time the document was issued.

1.4 It is intended to revise the report on a six-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35

asylum producing countries in the United Kingdom.

2. GEOGRAPHY

General

2.1 The Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan is a land-locked country in Southwest Asia. Its neighbours are Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the north, Iran to the west, China to the northeast, and Pakistan to the east and south.[1] Covering an area of some 251,773 square miles, there are 32 provinces. [1a] The five largest towns are Kabul (the capital), Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad.[1] Population movements across the border and internal displacements make it difficult to obtain reliable population figures.[11b] although a July 2002 estimate of the population was 27,755,775.[23]

Languages

2.2 There are a variety of languages spoken in Afghanistan, the principal two being Pashtu and Dari.[1] These have been the official languages of the country since 1936, using an augmented Arabic script. Pashtu (spoken by the Pashtun ethnic group) is an Indo-European language, and Dari is a dialect of Farsi/Persian (spoken mainly by the Tajiks, Farsis, Hazaras and Aimaq).[11a]

2.3 Some 50% of the population are able to speak Pashtu, which is one of the two official languages taught in schools.[16] Pashtu is spoken by the Pashtuns living in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pashtu speaking area is defined as the south-eastern third of Afghanistan and the area of Pakistan between the Afghan border and the Indus. The language is equally understandable on both sides of the border. It is noted that within Pashtu there are dialectical variations in pronunciation, spelling, grammar and vocabulary. Using the test of pronunciation, the two principal dialects identified are western/Kandahari and eastern/Peshwarin; this division approximates to a division along the border.[15b]

2.4 Dari, which itself contains dialectical variations, is the Afghan variant of Farsi and differs from the national standard dialect of Iran. There are however Farsi dialects within Iran that have much in common with Dari. Dari speakers may not therefore be able to communicate easily in standard Farsi. Because of its literary and commercial importance, Dari generally serves as the means of communication between speakers of different languages rather than Pashtu.[15b] The formal style of Dari is closer to Tehrani Persian (Farsi), and the informal style in some parts of Afghanistan is closer to Tajiki of Tajikistan. Phonological and lexical differences between Iran and Afghanistan cause little difficulty in comprehension.[16]

2.5 Since 1978 a multitude of languages used by ethnic minorities such as the Uzbeks, Turkomans, Baluchis, Nuristanis and Pashai were officially recognized.[11a] Afghan Sikhs retain the use of Punjabi amongst themselves, given their involvement in trade. Dari/Farsi is probably the most important additional language for them.[15b]

See also Sikhs and Hindus: paragraphs 6.45 - 6.54

3. ECONOMY

3.1 The dislocations associated with more than 20 years of fighting together with years of severe drought, have reduced the country's economy to below subsistence level for the majority of the population. Most of the population remain engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. In previous years poppy cultivation was the mainstay of the economy and largely financed the military operations of various provincial authorities. Formal economic activity consists primarily of small to medium size enterprises buying and selling a range of materials and goods transiting the country. [2d]

3.2 On 14 November 1999 the United Nations (UN) imposed sanctions on Afghanistan in response to the Taliban's refusal of the US demand to hand over Islamist fugitive Usama bin Laden, in hiding in Afghanistan.

The sanctions were limited in scope, and officially restricted to the freezing of the Taliban's overseas bank accounts and also the blocking of Afghan Ariana international flights. The sanctions had an adverse affect on aid agencies attempting to bring food and medicine into the country.[18a] In January 2002 the UN Security Council revised the sanctions to target the members of Al Qa'ida and the former Taliban regime permitting Afghanistan's overseas assets to be unfrozen.[25ap]

3.3 In March 2002 the World Bank estimated the cost of rebuilding the Afghan economy over the next ten years at \$15 billion and labelled Afghanistan as one of the poorest and most miserable states in the world. It was estimated that over \$1 billion in aid would be received during the financial year starting 21 March 2002. [25am]

3.4 In late September 2002 President Hamid Karzai began a tour of Arab Gulf states to appeal for more help in rebuilding his country's shattered economy. At the same time a meeting of 60 donor nations in Washington heard that Afghanistan could soon run out of reconstruction funds. US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill told the meeting that Afghanistan needs \$165 million to cover the cost of running the government for the coming six months. [25m]

3.5 In October 2002 the government began introduction of a new currency. [2d] The New Afghani replaced the various currencies previously circulating in the country. A nationwide currency exchange commenced in October 2002. [39g]. This was successfully completed by early January 2003 and it was reported that the new currency was providing an important basis for improving economic stability and implementing financial and economic reforms. [39h] In February 2003, it was reported by the UN that the average wage did not exceed \$2 per day. [68] August 2003 exchange rates indicate that one pound sterling is equal to just under 69 Afghan Afghanis. [58]

3.6 In February 2003, the UN International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) stated that Afghanistan was the world's leading producer of opium poppy in 2002. A UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report in May 2003 indicated that the 2003 opium poppy harvest may be at least as large as that of 2002. [65]

See also Humanitarian Situation paragraphs 6.188 - 6.205

AFGHANISTAN COUNTRY REPORT

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4. HISTORY

Part I

Part II

Part III

4. HISTORY

For detailed history prior to 1992 see Europa source material number [1][1a]

1992 - 1994: Mujahidin Government

4.1 The Islamic State of Afghanistan was proclaimed in April 1992 as successor to the Soviet backed regime of President Mohammad Najibullah, which had been overthrown by opposition mujahidin (holy warriors) following the end of the (1979-89) Soviet military intervention.[54] After the fall of President Najibullah four

main armed groups with different ethnic characteristics and foreign support initially fought for power in Kabul. [11a] Having discarded a UN proposal to form a neutral body, the guerrilla leaders agreed to establish a 51-member interim Islamic Jihad Council, composed of military and religious leaders which was to assume power in Kabul. Sibghat-ullah Mojaddedi was the leader of the small moderate Jebha-i-Nejat-i-Melli (National Liberation Front). He was to chair the Islamic Jihad Council for two months, after which period a ten-member Leadership Council, comprising mujahidin chiefs would be set up for a period of four months, to be presided over by the head of the Jamiat-i-Islami, Burhanuddin Rabbani. Within six months a special council was to meet to designate an interim administration which was to hold power for up to a year pending elections. [1]

4.2 Mojaddedi arrived in Kabul on 28 April 1992 as the President of the new interim administration. The Islamic Jihad Council was not however supported by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (leader of rival guerrilla group, the Pashtun dominated Hizbi-I Islami), whose radical stance differed substantially from Mojaddedi's more tolerant outlook. At the end of the month, Hekmatyar's forces lost control of their last stronghold in the centre of Kabul. Within a few weeks, the Government of the newly proclaimed Islamic State of Afghanistan had won almost universal diplomatic recognition, and by early May 1992 about one-half of the Islamic Jihad Council had arrived in the capital. An acting Council of Ministers was formed, in which Ahmad Shah Masoud (Tajik general and leader of the Jamiat-i Islami guerrilla group) was given the post of Minister of Defence. The premiership was set aside for Ustad Abdol Sabur Farid, a Tajik commander from Hizb-i Islami (Hekmatyar declined to accept the post). [1]

4.3. Despite Mojaddedi's repeated pleas to Hekmatyar and his followers to lay down their arms, Hekmatyar, who was particularly angered by the presence of Uzbek forces under the command of General Abdul Rashid Dostum in the capital, continued to bombard Kabul with artillery and indiscriminate rocket launches from various strongholds around the city. Scores of citizens were killed and wounded. On 28 June 1992 Mojaddedi surrendered power to the Leadership Council, which immediately offered Rabbani the presidency of the country and the simultaneous responsibility of the Interim Council of Ministers for four months.[1] Following the Islamabad Accord of March 1993, Afghanistan was formally ruled by President Rabbani. The post of Prime Minister was given to Hekmatyar. [11a]

4.4 Renewed intense fighting broke out on 1 January 1994, when Prime Minister Hekmatyar formed a new alliance with Uzbek, General Dostum, and attempted to force President Rabbani from office. The fighting over control of territory and political authority in Afghanistan intensified between the Jamiat-i Islami (led by President Rabbani and his commander, Masoud) and the alliance between the northern General Dostum and Hekmatyar (referred to as the Supreme Co-ordination Council, with the backing of the Hizb-i Wahdat). [11a] Dostum's militia reportedly oppressed the civilian population of Kabul, as bitter fighting by the mujahidin factions ensued amongst looting and lawlessness. [25]

Emergence of the Taliban

4.5 United Nations efforts to promote a broad-based government acceptable to the various factions continued. A plan for the transfer of power to a broad-based interim administration was postponed due to the absence of political will amongst the major powers and new political developments. Notably there was the emergence of a new political grouping [11a] in the latter half of 1994 [1], the (mainly Pashtun) Taliban (Taleban). [11a] The Taliban were hitherto unknown - Taliban being the plural of 'Talib', meaning 'seeker of religious knowledge'. They were reportedly young Pashtun graduates, emanating from fundamentalist Islamic schools established by Afghan refugees in Pakistan. [1]

4.6 Kandahar two hundred miles south of Kabul is the home of the Pashtun tribes with their own code of honour, duty and justice. Many had fought against the Russians, and some began to meet regularly in the early 1990s in a village just outside the city. They were devout Muslims and had studied in Pakistan's religious schools. Their homes were being destroyed and looted by rival warlords. They took no action until mid 1994 when a local girl was gang-raped and killed by a local warlord and his men. The Taliban's first decisive move in their rise to power was to kill those responsible. [28]

4.7 The Taliban were appointed by Islamabad to protect a convoy attempting to open up a trade route between Pakistan and Central Asia. The group comprised Afghans trained in religious schools in Pakistan and former mujahidin. The latter proved to be effective bodyguards as they drove away other mujahidin groups who attacked the convoy.[25a] In November 1994 the Taliban captured Kandahar from the mujahidin, and moved north-eastwards. The term of office of President Rabbani came to an end on 28 December 1994 but he remained President, pending the outcome of UN sponsored peace negotiations. [11a]

4.8 The Taliban's popularity initially surprised the warring mujahidin factions. As ethnic Pashtuns themselves, a large part of the Taliban's support came from the Pashtun community who were disillusioned with existing

Tajik and Uzbek leaders. Other Afghans also often welcomed Taliban successes in stamping out corruption, restoring peace and allowing commerce to flourish again. The Taliban's refusal to negotiate with existing warlords who had caused immense destruction and killing also earned them respect. [25a]

February 1995 - June 1996

4.9 On 14 February 1995 the Taliban captured the headquarters of Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami in Charasyab, south of Kabul. They took control of nine of the country's provinces. In early March 1995 the Taliban entered the Karte Seh district in western Kabul and disarmed Hizb-i Wahdat militia who had been in control of the area. The Taliban's presence there brought them face to face with President Rabbani's government forces, and the Taliban were subsequently pushed out of the area to Charasyab, withdrawing further south to Maidan Shahr. Heavy fighting continued between government and Taliban forces over control of the city. [11a]

4.10 On 5 September 1995 the Taliban captured the city of Herat from the forces of the governor, Ismail Khan, who was allied to the government of Rabbani. [11a] In October 1995 the Taliban launched a massive ground and air assault on Kabul, but by early January 1996 had failed to breach the capital's defences. Despite the holding of exploratory negotiations between the Rabbani government and major opposition parties in the first quarter of 1996, the fighting in and around Kabul intensified. The President's attempts at conciliation finally proved successful in late May 1996 in a critical development (the 'Mahipar Agreement'), when he persuaded Hekmatyar to rejoin the Government. [1] As Hekmatyar resumed the post of Prime Minister, fighting in Kabul broke out and the city became a target of indiscriminate bombing. Daily rocket attacks on Kabul peaked in June 1996. [11a]

September 1996 - June 1997

4.11 On 11 September 1996 the Taliban captured Jalalabad, the eastern city bordering Pakistan. They went on to capture Kabul on 27 September 1996. Their first act was to publicly hang former President Najibullah, who since the fall of his government in April 1992 had sought shelter in a UN compound. The capture of Kabul quickly realigned political forces within Afghanistan and the region. The non-Pashtun forces allied again as they did in the North Alliance of 1992. [11a] The country was effectively partitioned between areas controlled by Pashtun and non-Pashtun forces, as the Taliban now controlled all the predominantly Pashtun areas of the country (as well as Herat and Kabul). Meanwhile, non-Pashtun organisations controlled the areas bordering on the central Asian republics. [11a]

4.12 To the north of Kabul, the forces of the ousted government were pushed out of the towns of Charikar and Jebul Siraj, and the front line reached the village of Gulbahar at the mouth of the Panjshir Valley: the stronghold of Commander Masoud. In the week of 14-20 October 1996 the forces of General Dostum joined Commander Masoud's front line and fought their way to Kabul in a counter-attack. As a result the Taliban lost their strategic military airbase at Bagram. A second front line was opened in the north-west, where the Taliban held territory bordering the area controlled by General Dostum. [11a]

4.13 By late October 1996 the anti-Taliban forces had launched a concerted offensive against Kabul in the hope of ousting the Islamic militia. Their leaders were now collectively known as the Supreme Council for the Defence of Afghanistan (SCDA). Their headquarters were situated in General Dostum's stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif. Despite repeated calls for a cease-fire from various foreign governments and the UN, the fighting between the Taliban and the allied opposition continued into January 1997. [1]

4.14 Heavy fighting between Taliban and anti-Taliban alliance forces resulted in thousands fleeing south toward Kabul. [3a] The Taliban pushed further north, capturing three districts in Kapisa province in north-eastern Afghanistan (previously under the control of Commander Masoud's troops), progressing toward the Salang Pass to within 20 kilometres of the Soviet-built tunnel that leads through the Hindu Kush mountain range into provinces held by General Dostum. The opposition reportedly surrendered much of the territory without fighting. [11a]

4.15 On 23 January 1997 the Taliban captured Jebul Siraj and Gulbahar, both former Masoud strongholds. [3a] In the North, residents of Mazar-i-Sharif (the northern Afghan capital controlled by General Dostum) were threatened in January 1997 when the Taliban opened its offensive north of Kabul. Forces loyal to General Dostum destroyed parts of the Salang highway (the Salang tunnel north of Kabul, nearly three kilometres long, is the main route to the northern provinces and beyond to Central Asia), blocking direct access north of Kabul. Dostum's Shia Muslim allies managed to block a Taliban attempt to bypass the crucial road link. [11a]

4.16 In May 1997 the Taliban were reportedly pushed out of Jebul Siraj, a strategic town north of Kabul by

forces of Commander Masoud. In late May the situation swiftly changed as the fragile coalition linking General Dostum with former government forces of President Rabbani, Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islam and the mainly Shia Hizb-i-Wahdat fell apart following the defection on 19 May 1997 of General Dostum's senior commander, Abdul Malik. On 24 May 1997, fighters loyal to Malik captured Mazar-i-Sharif, which became under the full control of ethnic Uzbek fighters who had until a week before been part of the northern alliance opposing the Taliban. Meanwhile the towns of Kunduz, Baghlan and Samangan east of Mazar were announced as under Taliban control. General Dostum fled to Turkey [11a], and General Malik assumed his position as leader of the National Islamic Movement. [1]

4.17 The Taliban's control of the north swiftly ended on 28 May 1997, when they were defeated in Mazar-i-Sharif through an eighteen-hour battle, by Uzbek soldiers who broke the new alliance with the Taliban. Commander Masoud's resistance continued in the north-east as he launched a surprise attack on the Taliban on 25 May 1997 after one of his senior commanders, General Bashir Salangi, defected to the Taliban and gave its troops permission to move up the mountain road. Commander Masoud, who was fighting from north-eastern strongholds in Takhar and Badakhshan provinces, moved reinforcements into the area the same day. [11a]

4.18 The anti-Taliban alliance expanded and strengthened in early June 1997 by the inclusion of forces of Hekmatyar and of the Mahaz-i-Melli-Islami, led by Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani. This new coalition, which superseded the SCDA, was known as the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (UIFSA) [1] (also known as the Northern Alliance [11d] and the United Front [17b]) hereafter referred to as the Northern Alliance. At the beginning of June 1997, the Taliban effectively controlled two-thirds of the country. [11a]

August 1997 - September 1998

4.19 In mid-August 1997 it was reported that the UIFSA had appointed a new government based in Mazar-i-Sharif with Rabbani continuing as President, Abdorrahim Ghafurzai as Prime Minister, Ahmad Shah Masoud as Minister of Defence and General Abdul Malik as Minister of Foreign Affairs. However the former Prime Minister in the anti-Taliban administration, Hekmatyar, refused to recognize the new government. Within a few days of its appointment seven members of the new Government, including Prime Minister Ghafurzai, were killed in an aeroplane crash. In late August 1997 the anti-Taliban opposition alliance appointed Abdulghaffar Rawanfarhadi as the new Prime Minister. [1]

4.20 In September 1997 the main battlefield moved northwards from Kabul when the Taliban launched an offensive in an attempt to recapture Mazar-i-Sharif. Following fierce fighting the Taliban were forced to lift the siege and retreat in early October 1997. Meanwhile, in mid-September 1997 General Dostum was reported to have returned to Mazar-i-Sharif from Turkey, and in the following month the member parties of the UIFSA re-elected him as commander of the forces of the alliance. They also appointed him as Vice-President of the anti-Taliban administration. [11b] In late October 1997 the Taliban unilaterally changed the country's name to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. [1]

4.21 There were reports of a bitter rivalry between General Dostum and General Abdul Malik, with skirmishes between their respective forces. Dostum's battle for supremacy with his rival led him to make overtures to the Taliban, including offers of exchanges of prisoners of war. By late November 1997 General Dostum reassumed leadership of the National Islamic Movement, ousting General Malik. [11b]

4.22 In December 1997 the UN Security Council issued a communiqué expressing its concern at the alleged massacres of civilians and prisoners of war being perpetrated by various factions in Afghanistan. In late 1997 the World Food Programme launched an emergency operation to help those facing starvation in the central region of Hazarajat which had been blockaded by the Taliban since August 1997. In January 1998 the UN was forced to suspend emergency airlifts to Hazarajat when Taliban aircraft bombed the area. [1]

4.23 In February 1998 the political crisis in Afghanistan was overshadowed by a devastating earthquake in the northern province of Takhar, which caused the deaths of more than 4,500 people and left about 30,000 homeless. Poor weather conditions and the continuing fighting hampered the international relief programme. In May 1998 a second severe earthquake hit north eastern Afghanistan killing over 5,000 people. [1]

4.24 In March 1998, reports of factional fighting between rival members of the Northern Alliance highlighted the fragile nature of the anti-Taliban alliance. Following a major diplomatic effort by the US, the Taliban and the Northern Alliance held peace talks in Islamabad. In early May 1998 the talks broke down and fighting resumed north of Kabul. [1]

4.25 Relations between the Taliban and the UN deteriorated in June 1998 when the Taliban decided to close more than 100 private schools and small home-based vocational courses which were educating girls. In July 1998 the Taliban expelled almost all international aid agencies.[1]

4.26 On 1 August 1998 the Taliban captured the headquarters of the ethnic Uzbek leader General Dostum in Sheberghan. Dostum reportedly fled via the Uzbek border to Turkey. The Taliban, reinforced by considerable numbers of extremist volunteers from other Islamic countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Algeria, then recaptured Mazar-i-Sharif in early August 1998.[1]

4.27 On 20 August 1998 the US launched air attacks against alleged terrorist bases in eastern Afghanistan and Sudan, reportedly operated by Usama bin Laden leader of the Al Qa'ida organisation. The attacks were in retaliation for attacks on two US embassies in East Africa earlier in the month. In September 1998 the Taliban suffered a serious setback when Saudi Arabia, one of only three countries to recognise the regime, withdrew its funding and political support and recalled its envoy from Kabul.[1]

4.28 In September 1998 a serious tension developed between Iran and the Taliban over the deaths of nine Iranians who had been killed by the Taliban during the storming of Mazar-i-Sharif. Both Iran and Afghanistan massed troops on the border. It was reported later that some 2,000 to 6,000 Shia Hazara civilians had been massacred by Taliban guerrillas after the recapture of Mazar-i-Sharif.[1] By the end of August 1998 the Taliban controlled about 90% of the country. [5a]

4.29 In mid September 1998 the Taliban captured Bamian, a Shia stronghold, and the last major town outside its control. This effectively restricted anti-Taliban opposition to the Panjshir valley, the stronghold of former defence minister Ahmed Shah Masoud.[1]

4.30 In January 1999 it was reported that the Northern Alliance had established a multi-ethnic Supreme Military Council under the command of Masoud, with the aim of giving fresh impetus to the anti-Taliban movement and co-ordinating manoeuvres against Taliban forces in northern Afghanistan. Despite the holding of UN monitored direct peace talks between the representatives of the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in Turkmenistan in February and March 1999, and in Uzbekistan in July 1999 very little was achieved.[1] The Hazaras regained control of Bamian in April 1999, although it was then recaptured by the Taliban in May 1999, when a number of Shia residents were reportedly killed.[2b]

4.31 In July 1999 following reports that Usama bin Laden was being sheltered in eastern Afghanistan the US imposed financial and economic sanctions on the Taliban regime, a further attempt to persuade it to hand over the militant leader. In early August 1999 the Taliban launched a massive offensive against the Northern Alliance in the Panjshir valley; tens of thousands of mainly Tajik civilians were displaced. Masoud instigated a massive counter attack and the Taliban were forced into a swift retreat towards Kabul.[1]

4.32 Between July and December 1999 a series of Taliban offensives in the north was marked by summary executions, the abduction and disappearance of women, forced labour of detainees, the burning of homes, and the destruction of other property and agricultural assets.[17b]

4.33 In mid November 1999, the UN Security Council imposed an embargo on all Taliban-controlled overseas assets and a ban on the International flights of the national airline, Ariana Afghan Airlines, in response to the Taliban's refusal to hand over Islamist fugitive Usama bin Laden. [1]

January 2000 - December 2000

4.34 During 2000 the Taliban and Northern Alliance suffered internal discord, with defections of senior officials occurring on both sides. Heavy fighting concentrated in the north of Kabul resumed in early March 2000.[1] By April 2000 low rainfall and extremely high temperatures had resulted in crops being burned in the fields. By May 2000 it became apparent that a drought in the country was more widespread than was originally thought. Three to four million people - about a fifth of the population - were severely affected. [25c]

4.35 In May 2000 there was reportedly a massacre by the Taliban near the Robatak pass on the border between Baghlan and Samangan provinces in the north central area. A Human Rights Watch report stated

that all of those killed had been detained for four months, and many had been tortured. Thirty-one bodies were found at the site, twenty-six being identified as Ismaili Hazara civilians from the Baghlan province, although the true figure of the dead may be much higher. There were also reported to be as many as three other gravesites along the same road northwards.[17a] Uzbek prisoners were also amongst those executed in Samangan. [11d]

See also Hazaras paragraphs 6.86 - 6.95

4.36 During peace negotiations between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in March and May 2000 the parties did not reach agreement on a cease fire. In early June there was renewed fighting in northern and central Afghanistan; by the end of July 2000 the Taliban had acquired more territory in northern Afghanistan. [1] In August the UN began distributing food in the north, where people had reportedly been eating plants and roots to survive. A World Food Programme official described the situation as desperate.[25e] The drought began to reduce a significant amount of the population to a marginal level of survival. The situation was particularly bleak in the west of the country, although there were also reports that the water table in the south had fallen significantly. Mullah Omar reportedly issued a statement in response to the drought, saying that it represented a punishment by God for discontent with Taliban rule among the population, and neglect of religious duties. It is believed that this was the first time that the Taliban leader acknowledged that some elements of Afghan society were unhappy with the Taliban. [22a]

4.37 In early September 2000 the Taliban secured the key northern town of Taloqan. This victory represented a serious military and political setback for Masoud and the Northern Alliance. Heavy fighting continued and by the end of 2000 the Taliban controlled over 90% of Afghanistan.[1] Amnesty International reported that during the fighting houses were burned and villagers were killed. It was also reported that the Taliban cut the throat of one man in front of his relatives. There were also unconfirmed reports that Taliban soldiers (some foreign) abducted women and girls from villages in the area.[2b] The town lies 160 miles north of Kabul and is close to the Tajikistan border. It acted as the main supply route to the opposition and therefore represented a significant victory for the Taliban, who after capturing the town previously were unable to hold onto it. International aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres expressed concern at the amount of displaced people in a region already suffering from severe drought and food shortages.[25e]

4.38 Up to 150,000 people reportedly headed for the Tajikistan border to flee the advancing Taliban following their Taloqan offensive. This resulted in a desperate situation according to European aid workers due to lack of food, shelter or medicines. The refugees were closely linked to the Northern Alliance, and therefore feared Taliban reprisals. [25f]

4.39 Amnesty International reported that the Northern Alliance executed six prisoners on 6 December 2000 following their arrest two days previously; signs of torture were also reported. The arrests followed the ambush and shooting of Alliance members. A spokesman insisted that some sort of trial took place, despite their execution only forty hours after their arrest. This action was indicative of a political motive behind the executions. [7i]

See also Judiciary paragraphs 5.25 - 5.37

January 2001 - December 2001

4.40 In January 2001 concern was growing for the safety of around 10,000 displaced persons living in makeshift camps along the Tajikistan border. The refugees living on the banks and islands of the River Pyandi faced food shortages and security problems, and some were reportedly wounded by shellfire. Lack of adequate facilities was also causing dysentery and other illnesses. [25g] UNHCR halted an assistance programme when it became apparent that these people were mixed with armed elements, contravening UNHCR policy. [36a]

4.41 In early January 2001 the Taliban allegedly detained and shot 300, male civilians, mainly Hazaras, living in Yakaolang district of Bamian. Kofi Annan UN Secretary General expressed concern about reports of deliberate killings and human rights violations and demanded a prompt investigation. The Taliban denied the claims and refused foreigners access to the town. In mid-February 2001 the Northern Alliance recaptured Bamian city and uncovered evidence of the alleged massacre. A report by Human Rights Watch confirmed that 170 men had been killed and that serious human rights violations had been committed.[1][17a]

See also Hazaras paragraphs 6.86 to 6.95

4.42 On 7 February 2001 the World Bank Country Director for Pakistan and Afghanistan commented that the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan was one which had all the ingredients of a famine. The UN Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs also began a visit to Kabul, Faizabad and Herat on 12 February 2001 and echoed these observations, stating that one million were at risk of famine. [22b] In the same month there were reports that over 500 people had died in refugee camps in the western city of Herat as a result of extreme cold weather and a lack of shelter and fuel. Herat's population had swelled by 80,000 with refugees pouring in at a rate of over 300 a day. [25i]

4.43 In March 2001, in the face of intense international opposition, the Taliban undertook the destruction of Afghanistan's pre-Islamic cultural heritage including the world's two largest Buddhas in Bamian. [1]

4.44 At the end of March 2001 Russian border guards accused the Taliban of opening fire on the refugees stranded on the Tajikistan border. UNHCR stated that some anti-Taliban fighters were amongst the refugees. Tajikistan continued to refuse to give entry to the 10,000 camped in the border zone. [20c]

4.45 In April 2001 General Dostum returned to Afghanistan after a three-year exile and reportedly met Ahmed Masoud in the Panjshir Valley. Morale amongst anti-Taliban forces was reported to have risen following the return of Dostum, who still had the support of many fighters. [25i]

4.46 In June 2001 the Taliban carried out the aerial bombardment of Yakawlang and after entering the town burnt it to the ground. Most of the town's inhabitants had already left as the fighting had intensified. [29a]

4.47 In August 2001 a key commander in Mazar-i-Sharif withdrew from the Taliban, a loss which threatened to undermine the Taliban's hold on the fiercely independent city. The Commander had given the Taliban one of their most decisive victories in 1998 after defecting from the opposition. Meanwhile Taliban troops found themselves stretched too thinly to make any significant gains, despite motivated reinforcements from Pakistan and Arab countries. [18c]

4.48 In August 2001 eight aid workers and sixteen Afghans working for a German Christian aid organisation were arrested by the Taliban on charges of proselytising Christianity. [1]

See also History paragraph 4.55

4.49 On 9 September 2001 suicide bombers seriously injured anti-Taliban alliance leader Ahmed Shah Masoud. He died six days later. General Mohammed Fahim Khan was appointed as his successor. [1]

4.50 The situation in Afghanistan changed drastically as a result of the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001. Two days later Colin Powell US Secretary of State publicly identified Usama bin Laden and his Al Qa'ida organisation as principally responsible. On the 16 September 2001 the UN imposed diplomatic sanctions and an arms embargo on the Taliban. The US began to form an anti-terrorist coalition with the United Kingdom. Pakistan a supporter of the Taliban reversed its policy and agreed to co-operate with the US led coalition. [1]

See also Al Qa'ida paragraphs 6.225 - 6.228

4.51 Initially the Taliban appealed to the US not to attack Afghanistan and denied complicity with bin Laden. However on 26 September 2001 the Taliban announced that an edict had been sent to bin Laden asking him to leave the country. Through intense diplomatic efforts the US and UK sought to build a broad anti-terrorist coalition to prepare for military action against the Taliban regime. Throughout September US and UK military forces were mobilised and deployed in areas close to Afghanistan. [5b]

4.52 Despite the looming crisis the Taliban and Northern Alliance continued military operations in September 2001. On 12 September 2001 the UN World Food Programme halted shipments of food aid in the face of concerns over the safety of workers involved in the relief effort. The cessation of aid efforts and an increasing concern that US attacks on Afghanistan were imminent caused an increase in the number of displaced people seeking refuge in camps near the Pakistan and Iran borders. Border controls were strictly enforced with Pakistan restricting access to those judged to be in need of assistance. It was estimated that as many as 1.5 million refugees left their homes in the second half of September 2001. [5b]

4.53 On 7 October 2001 the US-led coalition commenced military operations (Operation Enduring Freedom) against Taliban military targets and Al Qa'ida camps in Afghanistan. [5c] In addition to military strikes aircraft released food and medicine parcels to Afghan civilians and leaflets offering protection and a reward in return

for information on the whereabouts of Al Qa'ida leaders. After one week most of the Taliban's air defences had been destroyed and military action was intensified. On 20 October 2001 US ground forces began an assault on Afghanistan.[1]

4.54 During October the US conducted further operations on an almost daily basis. Aid agencies reported significant increases in the numbers of refugees seeking shelter in camps close to Afghanistan's borders. In Afghanistan the Taliban appeared to have scaled down operations against the Northern Alliance, in contrast the Northern Alliance were reported to have stepped up operations in particular launching an attack to seize the high ground surrounding Bagram airbase. [5c]

4.55 In early November attacks against the Taliban in northern Afghanistan escalated and on 9 November 2001 the Northern Alliance captured Mazar-i-Sharif. The Northern Alliance continued to seize almost all of northern Afghanistan. On the night of 12 November 2001 the Taliban fled Kabul and the Northern Alliance entered the capital on 13 November 2001. There were reports of defections of large numbers of Taliban fighters as morale among the Taliban declined. [1] In both Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif it was reported that Northern Alliance forces summarily executed hundreds of foreign Taliban volunteer fighters. In general, captured Afghan Taliban were treated more leniently, although there were reports that they had been subjected to beatings and other reprisals. The eight western aid workers detained by the Taliban in August, accused of proselytising Christianity, were moved out of Kabul 13 November 2001 and subsequently released. [5d]

4.56 On 19 November 2001, Pakistan, the only country to continue to recognise the Taliban (even after announcing its support for the American-led coalition), broke off its relations with the Taliban.[25v] The United Nations sponsored talks on the future of Afghanistan commenced in Bonn, Germany on 27 November 2001. The talks brought together representatives of the four Afghan groups, the Northern Alliance, the Pakistan based Peshawar group, the Iranian backed Cyprus delegation of Afghan refugees and exiles and the Rome group headed by the former king.[5d] After nine days of talks a formal "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions" (The Bonn Agreement) was signed on 5 December 2001.[25x][39b]

4.57 The Bonn Agreement stated that the Interim Authority, the initial governing body would rule for six months from 22 December 2001 and that power would pass to a Transitional Authority on 22 June 2002. [39b] An Interim Administration, to govern Afghanistan, was inaugurated on 22 December 2001. A 30-member cabinet was sworn in under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. The cabinet included representatives from Pashtun, Hazara and Tajik ethnic groups and included two women ministers.[25aa][25ab]

See also Political System paragraphs 5.11- 5.17

4.58 In early December 2001 the Northern Alliance supported by US and UK forces defeated the remaining Taliban troops who had fled to the southern city of Kandahar. Isolated pockets of Taliban continued to engage the Northern Alliance throughout the country, however the fall of Kandahar on 7 December 2001 signalled the end of the Taliban regime's grip on Afghanistan. Mullah Omar and senior Taliban leaders evaded capture. US forces stepped up efforts to locate Usama bin Laden, alleged leader behind the 11 September attacks on the US. He was believed to be at a complex of caves at Tora Bora south-west of Jalalabad. The cave complex had been captured by 20 December 2001 but he was not found.[5e]

January 2002 - December 2002

4.59 A Military Technical Agreement was signed by the Afghan Interim Administration on 4 January 2002 on the deployment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Afghanistan. The agreement tasked the ISAF to work alongside Afghan Security Forces maintaining security in and around Kabul. Britain was lead nation of the ISAF for the initial three months of its mandate.[25ac][39c] The ISAF reached its full operating capacity of 4,500 troops on 18 February 2002.[39e] On 25 January 2002 the Interim Administration leader Hamid Karzai announced names of members of the Special Independent Commission responsible for convening an Emergency Loya Jirga. This would decide on the make up of a Transitional Authority, to govern for 18 months from June 2002.[36e]

4.60 In January 2002 US led forces continued military operations against small pockets of Taliban resistance and focused their efforts on locating former Taliban leaders and Usama bin Laden. Despite these efforts Taliban leader Mullah Omar remained at large and Usama bin Laden also continued to evade capture.[5f] On 10 January 2002 the US commenced flying prisoners captured during the campaign in Afghanistan to a US

prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.[25ad] By 23 January 2002 the camp held some 158 prisoners; transfers were then halted to allow the camp to be expanded.[25ae]

4.61 In February 2002 US forces continued military operations against small pockets of Taliban resistance and continued their efforts to locate troops loyal to Usama bin Laden's Al Qa'ida organisation. Small-scale conflicts between rival regional leaders were reported in regions throughout the country. On 14 February 2002, the Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak was assassinated.[5g]

4.62 On 1 March 2002 US troops launched Operation Anaconda against suspected Taliban and Al Qa'ida forces in the Shah-i-Kot valley in Paktia province. The operation developed into a 17-day conflict, which saw the bloodiest fighting since the arrival of the US troops in October 2001. On 18 March 2002, the UK announced plans to deploy 1,700 troops in Afghanistan to assist in Operation Anaconda.[5h] By 20 April 2002 the full force of 1,700 Royal Marines had arrived in Afghanistan.[25bh]

4.63 On 25 March 2002, an earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale hit the Hindu Kush region of the country. It was reported that as many as 1,800 people were killed and thousands left homeless. The city of Nahrin was hit hardest by the earthquake with 90% of the city's housing destroyed. Violent after shocks continued for several days hampering rescue efforts and causing further damage.[5h] On 31 March 2002 the Special Independent Commission announced and published the procedures for the Emergency Loya Jirga. [40b]

4.64 On 4 April 2002 the Interim Administration claimed to have foiled an attempt to assassinate Hamid Karzai and detained some 300 supporters of the former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Officials said they had seized significant quantities of arms from supporters of Hekmatyar's Shia Hezb-i Islami. A few days later an alleged assassination attempt was made on Mohammad Fahim Khan the Defence Minister and Vice Chairman of the Interim Administration. The alleged assassination attempt followed warnings from the ISAF that groups excluded from the governing process intended to destabilise Kabul and undermine the interim Government.[5i][25ax]

4.65 In April 2002 Human Rights Watch issued a report detailing abuses against ethnic Pashtuns in Northern Afghanistan following the fall of the Taliban.[17e] Also in April 2001 there were reports that mass graves had been found in the Bamiyan area believed to contain the bodies of members of the local Hazara community killed late in 2001 after the fall of the Taliban.[25be]

4.66 US and UK forces continued military operations in April 2002 against small pockets of Taliban resistance and continued to focus their efforts on locating Al Qa'ida troops loyal to Usama bin Laden. On 8 April 2002 the Interim Administration launched a programme to destroy Afghanistan's crop of opium. Farmers were offered payment for destroying opium crops. According to Hamid Karzai farmers who refused to join the programme would be liable to prosecution and would have their land seized.[5i]

4.67 In May 2002 US and UK forces continued military operations within Afghanistan. On 1 May 2002 the UK forces launched a two week offensive named Operation Snipe. On 23 May 2002 the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1413 extending the mandate of the ISAF for an additional six months from 20 June 2002. [5j] On 6 June 2002 Hamid Karzai signed a decree establishing an Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. According to the decree the commission is charged with developing a national plan of action for human rights in Afghanistan.[40m]

4.68 The process of selecting delegates for the Emergency Loya Jirga started in the middle of April 2002 and continued until 6 June 2002. Following the selection of delegates the Loya Jirga took place between 11 and 19 June 2002. In a report to the UN Secretary General dated 11 July 2002 it was noted that despite some imperfections in the nomination and selection of candidates and incidents of intimidation during the Loya Jirga itself, it reached a successful conclusion. Hamid Karzai was elected as the new Head of State and the structures and appointment of the Transitional Authority were approved. The final cabinet of the Transitional Authority was composed of five Vice-Presidents, three Special or National Advisors with Cabinet status and 30 Ministries. The ethnic balance showed Pashtun representation increased slightly to just under 50%, and Tajik representation reduced to below one third. The Administration included three women.[40s]

See also Political System paragraphs 5.8 - 5.17

4.69 The choice of Taj Mohammad Wardak a Pashtun as Interior Minister caused a demonstration by police in Kabul on 20 June 2002. They blocked a road near the Interior Ministry when Mr Wardak arrived for a handover from the former Interior Minister Yunis Qanooni. Hamid Karzai stated that the police had to accept the command of the minister.[25w]

4.70 In June 2002 Hamid Karzai underlined his determination for rule by government and not factional warlords.[25w] Factional clashes continued to be a problem and on 15 June 2002 UN Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi called on prominent warlords General Dostum and General Atta Mohammad to take urgent action to stop lawlessness and intimidation in the north of the country.[25u] Foreign aid workers in the area had also come under attack prompting some to consider withdrawing from the area.[36i] On 20 June 2002 Turkey took over the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force. [5k]

4.71 On 20 June 2002 UK Secretary of State for Defence announced that the UK force of 1,600 troops, deployed in Afghanistan to search for Taliban and Al Qa'ida, would be withdrawn.[5k]

4.72 On 6 July 2002 Afghan Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir was assassinated by unidentified gunmen. The ISAF were asked to assist in the investigation of his death.[25t] Later in July 2002 American bodyguards were employed to reinforce security for Hamid Karzai.[25p] In August 2002 a report by the ISAF of its investigation into the assassination of Qadir indicated that they had failed to identify the killers.[25n] In late July 2002 it was reported that the Afghan authorities had foiled an attempt to blow up a government minister's car. It was alleged a car carrying explosives was intercepted in Kabul. A statement from the General Department of National Security said that the driver was a subject of a foreign country and claimed international terrorists were responsible.[25j]

4.73 In early August 2002 growing concerns about violence involving troops of regional warlords was reported. US troops had engaged in action twice against members of rival warlord factions battling for control in the eastern province of Kunar. In the west near the Iranian border several clashes between Herat Province Governor Ismail Khan and ethnic Pashtun troops were reported. On 7 August 2002 Afghan police reported that at least 15 people were killed in a shoot-out between Afghan police and what were described as foreigners at Binizar near Kabul. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said that there were signs that the 12 gunmen killed were members of Al Qa'ida.[40w]

4.74 On 5 September 2002 an assassination attempt on Hamid Karzai was made in the southern city of Kandahar. Two rounds were fired on the President's vehicle. American soldiers guarding the President fired back at the gunman killing at least three people. Earlier in the day there was a large explosion in Kabul killing at least ten people and injuring dozens. The target of the bomb, reportedly inside a taxi, was unclear. The explosion took place close to the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Spinjar Hotel.[25k]

4.75 In early November 2002 President Karzai sacked an estimated 20 high-ranking officials in the provinces. He said this action was aimed at rooting out corruption. Delegations had been sent out to the provinces to report to Karzai on those suspected of abuse of power. According to an Afghan Government spokesperson the men were sacked for a number of reasons including corruption, allegations of drug trafficking, disobeying the law and abuse of authority.[25h]

4.76 On 12 November 2002 a protest took place in Kabul involving 1,000 university students. The students were protesting against poor living conditions in the campus dormitory. The protest was fired on by police resulting in the deaths of up to four students and the wounding of several dozen. President Karzai met the students and ordered an investigation into the causes of the protest and the killings.[6d] The investigation concluded that the police had been responsible for the use of excessive force and that the miserable living conditions at the students' dormitory, which had apparently triggered the demonstrations, were partly the result of corruption. Several government officials, including some at senior levels were subsequently arrested.[39h]

4.77 On 27 November 2002 the UN Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the ISAF for a period of one year until 20 December 2003.[40j]

4.78 In December 2002 the Governments of Afghanistan and the six neighbouring states signed the Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations. The signatories reaffirmed their commitment to constructive and supportive bilateral relationships based on the principles of territorial integrity, mutual respect, and non-interference in each others affairs. The seven States also expressed their determination to defeat terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking.[39h]

4.79 In December 2002 it was reported that Afghan rebel leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar had warned that a holy

war would be stepped up against international troops based in Afghanistan. The threat was delivered in a message distributed amongst his supporters in Pakistan. The message said "Hizbi-e-Islami (Hekmatyars forces) will fight our jihad until foreign troops are gone from Afghanistan and Afghans have set up an Islamic government." According to the report it is not clear how many fighters now support Hekmatyar.[25s] The whereabouts of Hekmatyar remain unknown, he was expelled from Iran in February 2002 and there have been reports that he returned to Afghanistan.[25ax] [5l]

January 2003 onwards

4.80 In late January 2003 there were reports of renewed fighting between Taliban/Al Qa'ida remnants and US and Afghan troops near the border in Pakistan, showing the continuing threat from Afghans opposed to the presence of US forces. Beside the Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is also opposed to the presence of US troops in Afghanistan and to President Karzai's government. [25ao] In February 2003 it was reported that the expelled Taliban regime had regrouped in Afghanistan and allied itself to Hekmatyar. [5l] However, other reports stated that there was little evidence that Hekmatyar and the Taliban had joined forces. [25ao]

4.81 On 10 February 2003 Turkey handed over leadership of the ISAF to Germany and the Netherlands.[39h] In February 2003 Afghanistan deposited its accession to the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the United Nations. Under ICC provisions the treaty will take force in Afghanistan on 1 May 2003. After that date ICC will have the authority to investigate and prosecute serious war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity committed on Afghan soil. ICC has authority not only over troops committing atrocities but also over commanders who order or incite them, or fail to stop atrocities from occurring. ICC jurisdiction will apply to Afghan government officials and local military and police commanders as well as armed insurgent groups, whether they are connected to the government or not. The ICC will not investigate or prosecute past crimes committed prior to 1 May 2003.[17k]

4.82 On 27 March 2003 an ICRC field delegate was shot by a group of unidentified assailants in the southern province of Kandahar. This was the first killing of an international ICRC field staff member in Afghanistan since 1990. ICRC immediately placed a temporary freeze on all field trips in Afghanistan.[36m] Following the murder a number international agencies suspended work in the southern provinces. A few days later there was a rocket attack on the compound of the multi-national peace-keeping force in Kabul. It was also reported that leaflets had been circulated in some areas of the country threatening both government and aid agency staff.[40ag]

4.83 On 28 March 2003 the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for a further 12 months until 28 March 2004.[40ad] In early April 2003 the Afghan government and the United Nations signed an agreement to launch a programme to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate factional armies and militias. The three-year plan envisages the demobilisation of some 100,000 fighters currently loyal to regional power warlords. The men will be given the opportunity to join the Afghan National Army or given assistance to rejoin civilian life.[40af]

4.84 On 1 April 2003 the US Department of State issued a statement expressing concern over recent security incidents targeted at foreigners in Afghanistan including US forces and workers in NGOs. The statement confirmed that Operation Enduring Freedom continued to search for and neutralise the remnants of Al Qa'ida and the Taliban.[40ae]

4.85 On 16 April 2003 UNHCR expressed concerns about the security situation. Following the murder of an ICRC worker in late March 2003 more than 10 international NGOs have pulled out of Kandahar at least temporarily. Local Afghan officials had also been targeted and as a result large areas of south-eastern Afghanistan remained off limits to aid agency staff because of the dangers. UN activities in eastern Afghanistan and in the north-west have also been affected by ongoing security concerns. [40ah]

4.86 In July 2003, the UNHCR reported that there are still pockets of resistance of Al Qa'ida and Taliban forces and indications that some Taliban forces might be regrouping. Since August 2002 the anti-western commander, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his followers had become notably more active, being linked to sporadic bombings in Kabul city and insecurity in parts of the Eastern, Central and Northern regions. Coalition forces remain active in the Southeast, East, Southern and Central Region and maintain a large military presence in Kandahar province. Combat between coalition forces and resistance groups has occurred in all these areas. [11p]

4.87 The United States has deployed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to Kunduz, Gardez and Bamian to support reconstruction activities and help extend central government authority in those provinces. [11p] In addition, a British PRT started working in late July 2003 in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif. [40ba]

4.88 An ongoing border dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan resulted in the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul being attacked in July 2003 by protesters demonstrating against alleged Pakistani incursions into Afghanistan. The Afghan Interior Minister said that four people had been arrested in connection with the incident. [25bn] An agreement was subsequently reached between Pakistan and Afghanistan, to settle the border dispute along the tribal region dividing the two countries, with the help of the US. [20h]

4.89 In July 2003, the UN in Kabul reported that more than 12,000 people living in 57 villages had been badly affected by serious sandstorms in the Lash Juwayan and Shib Koh districts of western Farah province. The storms, described by the UN as the worst in living memory, had left hundreds of people homeless, destroyed crops and contaminated water supplies. Serious flooding in southern and north-eastern provinces in July left more than 100 people dead and many more missing. [36n]

4.90 In a report issued on July 2003, the UNHCR reiterated concerns about the ongoing security situation [11p] and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan identified the security situation as the main challenge facing the Afghan peace process. [40al] NGOs expressed similar concerns following an attack on the government and US military in northern Afghanistan [40ak]. In August 2003, suspected Taliban fighters killed five Afghan soldiers and an Afghan driver working for an American aid agency, Mercy Corps, in the southern province of Helmand [25bp] and the United Nations suspended road travel in parts of southern Afghanistan following three attacks in one week. UN missions have been told to avoid travel in parts of Kandahar and Helmand provinces and in all of Uruzgan and Zabul. [25bq]

4.91 Further attacks on Afghan and Western government, military and humanitarian targets were reported in August 2003, believed to have been launched by insurgents loyal to the Taliban, its Al Qai'da allies and the leader of Hizb-i-Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. [40av] In September 2003 it was reported that military action taken by the government and coalition forces in the southern and southeastern provinces had resulted in the death of 100 suspected insurgents in two weeks. UN missions to Uruzgan, Zabul and parts of Helmand province as well as all districts near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border remained suspended. In the east, missions to Kunar province and several districts in Nangarhar and Laghman provinces were classified as high-risk areas and/or suspended. [40az]

4.92 In a report dated July 2003, the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council stated that the cultivation, production and trafficking in illegal narcotics threatened not only peace in Afghanistan but also had regional and global consequences. The dependence of Afghan farmers on poppy cultivation complicated the search for a solution. As the law-enforcement capacity of the Government developed it would be better able to control criminal activities but this would take time. [39i]

4.93 In August 2003 an agreement was signed between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Minister of Interior to help establish a new drug interdiction department within the Ministry. Other developments during 2003 to promote effective drug control include the creation of a Counter Narcotics Directorate (CND) and the adoption of a national drugs strategy. Twenty UNODC projects in Afghanistan, worth \$38 million, cover four major areas of drug control: monitoring; prevention - helping to develop the judicial system and law enforcement; demand reduction - providing assistance in addressing the increasing internal drug abuse problem; and alternative development - involving direct assistance to the communities dependent on opium cultivation. [66]

4.94 On 11 August 2003 the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) assumed control of the ISAF from Germany and the Netherlands who had taken control in February 2003. In its first mission beyond the Euro-Atlantic area, NATO has taken over leadership of the force indefinitely removing the need to find a new lead nation every six months. [25bs][63]

AFGHAISTAN COUNTRY REPORT

OCTOBER 2003

Country Information & Policy Unit

5. STATE STRUCTURES

Part I

Part II

Part III

Part IV

Part V

5. STATE STRUCTURES

THE CONSTITUTION

5.1 From 1996 to the immediate period before 22 December 2001 there was no countrywide recognised constitution. In 1999 the Taliban claimed that it was drafting a constitution based on Islamic law but made no further announcements regarding a constitution.[2b] The Bonn Agreement restored the Constitution of 1964 to the extent that its provisions were not inconsistent with those of the Bonn Agreement and with the exception of those provisions relating to the monarchy and the executive and legislative bodies provided for in the Constitution.[39b] In early February 2002 an executive order of the leader of the Interim Administration further announced the partial restoration of the 1964 constitution.[36d]

5.2 The Bonn agreement called for the convening of a Constitutional Loya Jirga within 18 months of the establishment of the Transitional Authority, in order to adopt a new Constitution for Afghanistan.[39b] The Drafting Committee of the constitutional commission was formally inaugurated on 3 November 2002 and has completed a preliminary draft of the constitution. The nine-member committee includes two women judges and legal scholars and jurists drawn from across the major ethnic groups and regions. A larger constitutional commission of some 30 members will begin meetings in March 2003.[39h] On 25 April 2003 Afghanistan launched a nationwide public education and consultation campaign on the new draft constitution. A constitutional commission of 34 members headed by Vice President Nematullah Shahrani and including seven women was formed. The commission will study the draft for a month before travelling out to the provinces and Kabul to inform the public and gather opinions. Commission members will then fine-tune the draft constitution, which should be finalised by 30 August 2003. The draft will then be presented to a constitutional Loya Jirga due to meet from 1 October 2003 to 25 October 2003.[59]

5.3 In July 2003, Afghans from across the country attended a forum in Kabul to offer opinions on the new draft constitution [40am] and Afghan officials finished their consultations on the draft with Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan. [40an] On 3 August 2003, the women's group, Negar, presented the Constitutional Review Commission with a declaration and 100,000 signatures demanding equal rights for women under the country's forthcoming constitution [40ao]

5.4 In September 2003 President Karzai postponed the Constitutional Loya Jirga due to meet in October 2003 by two months to December, following a request from the Constitutional Commission for more time to complete its work. The revised date for the Loya Jirga is still in line with the Bonn agreement. The draft constitution has just been finalised. However, the Commission reported in late August that preparations for the Loya Jirga would take up to four months as the election of 500 members could take some time. Each province of Afghanistan will elect representatives to the Loya Jirga, with seats reserved for women, minorities and representatives of the millions of Afghan refugees still living in Pakistan and Iran. [40aw]

Citizenship and Nationality

5.5 In May 2002 the Afghan Embassy in Islamabad provided information on the types of passports issued to Afghan citizens. Six different types of passports are issued, diplomatic, service, trade, student, Hajj (only valid in connection with a pilgrimage) and ordinary nationality passports. Diplomatic and service passports are only issued in Kabul by the Foreign Ministry, while trade passports, student passports and Hajj passports can be issued by local authorities in Afghanistan. Ordinary nationality passports can be issued at Afghan

representations outside Afghanistan.[8b]

5.6 When applying for an Afghan nationality passport the applicant must visit the passport authorities in person to fill in an application form. Identity documents must be presented, for example an Afghan identity card (tazkara) or a previous passport. The majority of the Afghan population possess ID documents, but if not they can bring a witness to confirm their Afghan identity. When submitting passport applications, applicants are interviewed to check they have a good knowledge of Afghan affairs including geographical conditions. It was confirmed that Afghan passports issued by the former Taliban regime are no longer valid.[8b]

5.7 In a report published by a Swedish fact finding mission in April 2003, UNHCR Afghanistan stated that passports issued by either the Taliban or warlords are invalid. Anyone attempting to make a forged passport will risk 3-6 months imprisonment. The Central Police Department in Kabul issues passports for Kabul residents. Afghans from other areas are issued passports by the Ministry of Interior in Kabul and at the Ministry's offices in other cities eg Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat. The Minister of Interior stated that there are no fixed rules on what is required in order to obtain a passport or an ID card and no specific papers are required to obtain a passport. [61]

Political System

Interim Administration

5.8 Afghanistan has experienced civil war and political instability for 22 years.[2b] On 22 December 2001 the Interim Administration took office following the signing of The Bonn Agreement.[2b] The Bonn Agreement set out the provisions for the establishment of the Interim Administration. The Agreement stated that the Interim Authority, mandated to rule for six months would:

- act in accordance with basic principles and provisions contained in international instruments on human rights and international humanitarian law
- ensure the participation of women as well as the equitable representation of all ethnic and religious communities.[39b]

5.9 The Interim Authority, the repository of national sovereignty, consisted of an Interim Administration, a Special Independent Commission for Convening the Emergency Loya Jirga and a Supreme Court of Afghanistan. The Interim Administration (the Executive of the Interim Authority) took office on 22 December 2001. The Interim Administration was entrusted with the government of Afghanistan during its mandated period of rule. The Bonn Agreement specified the transfer of power to a Transitional Authority within six months and called for the convening of an Emergency Loya Jirga (under the auspices of a Special Independent Commission) to elect a Head of State and approve proposals for the structure and key personnel of the Transitional Administration.[39b] The 30 member interim cabinet which formed the Interim Administration was drawn from representatives of the Northern Alliance, the Rome group loyal to the former king Zahir Shah, and the smaller Cyprus and Peshawar exile groups, and included a mix of ethnic backgrounds.[25aa][25ab]

5.10 The Bonn Agreement called for a Special Independent Commission for Convening the Emergency Loya Jirga to be established within one month of the inauguration of the Interim Authority.[39b] Accordingly the members of the Commission were announced on 25 January 2002.[40a] The Special Independent Commission announced the procedures for the Emergency Loya Jirga on 31 March 2002. They said that the Loya Jirga would meet between 10 and 16 June 2002, to decide on a Head of State and the composition of a Transitional Administration. Selection of the delegates to the Loya Jirga would take place in two stages, nomination at district level followed by selection at regional level (regions being made up of several districts). [40b] The Commission said that 1,450 delegates would attend the Loya Jirga of which 1,051 would be elected, with the remainder being quotas of reserved seats for women, members of the Interim Administration, refugees, internally displaced people, nomads, business people, intellectuals, religious scholars and members of civil society.[25z][40b] Selection of the delegates at district level commenced in mid April 2002.[25af] District and regional meetings continued throughout April and May 2002 and into June 2002.[19a][40g][19b]

The Emergency Loya Jirga and Transitional Administration

5.11 The Loya Jirga finally opened on 11 June 2002, more than 25 hours after originally planned.[25ar] Recurring themes throughout the speeches by delegates from the various provinces included; the need to promote national unity in spite of political and ethnic differences; the need to address insecurity in many parts

of the country; the need to create a national army; the reform of the security agencies; the need to expand education; the need to bring about an ethnically balanced Government; and the need to curb corruption and patronage. Political differences emerged in particular over the role of the former King and a fundamentalist agenda put forward by some members of jihadi parties. Hamid Karzai emerged from these confrontations as a consensus candidate for the presidency of the Transitional Administration. He was elected overwhelmingly by secret ballot with 1,295 votes out of 1,575.[40s]

5.12 President Karzai supported the establishment of a transitional national assembly. This was not stipulated by the Bonn Agreement but had been suggested by the Special Independent Commission. Although the idea was broadly endorsed the debate over equitable representation of different regions and ethnic groups became bogged down in disagreements. Finally President Karzai suggested that the concept and mode of election to the assembly be revisited at a later stage, based on the recommendations of an advisory committee to be selected by the Loya Jirga. A transitional national assembly was not however established.[40s]

5.13 On 19 June 2002 following intense consultations President Karzai announced the names of 14 Ministers and 3 Vice Presidents who were endorsed by the Loya Jirga.[40s] The final make-up of the Transitional Administration which was announced later, was composed of 5 Vice Presidents, 3 Special or National Advisers with Cabinet status, and 30 Ministers.[40s] The ethnically mixed Transitional Administration included 13 Pashtuns including Hamid Karzai, nine Tajiks, three Uzbeks, three Hazaras, and one Turkmen. [48b] The Administration included three women, Dr Suhaila Seddiqi, Minister for Public Health, Habiba Surabi, Minister for Women's Affairs, and Mahbooba Huqooqmal deputy Women's Minister.[48b]

5.14 In a report dated 11 July 2002 the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council noted that the Loya Jirga process had not been without difficulties, imperfections being noted in the nomination and selection of delegates and incidents of intimidation during the Loya Jirga itself. However the Secretary General reported that the Loya Jirga had reached a successful conclusion, accomplishing the tasks of electing a Head of State and approving the structures and appointment of the Transitional Authority.[40s] The Secretary General's Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi also commented on 19 July 2002 that the Loya Jirga incorporated significant and innovative democratic elements. As a result two thirds of the 1,600 delegates who took part were actually selected by the people themselves, the members spanned every ethnic and political group, and 200 of them were women.[39f]

5.15 The new Afghan Transitional Islamic Administration was sworn in on 24 June 2002.[25az]

5.16 In July 2003, the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council said that, in spite of considerable obstacles, the implementation of the Bonn Agreement continues to be largely on track. The constitutional consultations are under way in advance of the Constitutional Loya Jirga scheduled for October 2003. The Secretary-General stated that the Government had fully understood the necessity for progress in the reform of key government institutions, including law enforcement and the judiciary. [39i]

5.17 In September 2003, President Karzai signed a decree to postpone the Constitutional Loya Jirga from October to December 2003, following advice from the Constitutional Commission that it needed more time to complete its work. The revised date is still in line with the Bonn Agreement. [40aw]

Elections

5.18 A key element of the Bonn Agreement is the holding of elections by June 2004. According to a UN Secretary-Generals report in March 2003 there is an absence of electoral institutions, no national electoral body, no electoral registration system and no laws regulating the conduct of elections or the functioning of political parties. Since the draft constitution is not scheduled to be completed until late 2003 it may not be possible to base the legal framework for the elections on the new constitution. Specific and limited electoral and political parties' laws may therefore have to be promulgated solely for the purposes of the of the 2004 elections.[39h]

5.19 In a report dated July 2003, the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council said that conducting the national elections mandated by the Bonn Agreement would be the largest political undertaking ever in Afghanistan. The Secretary General noted that preparations had commenced for initiating voter registration for the national election by October 2003 and that the recruitment of consultants and electoral staff was in progress. [39i]

Situation in Herat

5.20 The city of Herat lies in the northwestern corner of Afghanistan and has long been an important commercial, political, and military centre. Since November 2001 it has been governed by Ismail Khan. HRW issued a report on the situation in Herat in December 2002 and stated that Ismail Khan has created a virtual mini-state in Herat with little allegiance to Kabul. Herat remains as it was under the Taliban, a closed society in which there is no dissent, no criticism of the government, no independent newspapers, no freedom to hold open meetings and no respect for the rule of law. According to HRW since taking control of Herat Ismail Khan's troops have regularly committed acts of violence and intimidation against persons and groups perceived to oppose his rule. In particular HRW reported that violence and intimidation were especially severe in the run up to the June 2002 Loya Jirga, candidates were arrested in Herat and in several nearby provinces

5.21 According to sources consulted during a Swedish fact finding mission in November 2002, Ismail Khan continued to have complete control over the area and allowed no opposition. [61] However, in August 2003, President Karzai stripped Ismail Khan of his post as military commander of western Afghanistan, saying that he could not continue as both military commander and governor of Herat Province. [25bw]

1996 - 22 December 2001

5.22 On assuming power in 1996, the Taliban declared Afghanistan a "complete" Islamic state and appointed an interim Council of Ministers to administer the country.[1] The Taliban's restrictions regarding the social behavior of men and women were communicated by edicts and enforced mainly by the Religious Police. The edicts were enforced with varying degrees of rigor throughout the country.[2b] Following a visit in February 2001, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief stated that the Taliban "appear to be both unable and unwilling to cater to the basic concerns and needs of people under their control" and that "they seem to be consumed by their immediate goals of military gain and religious progress." [11d]

5.23 In 1997 the Taliban issued an edict renaming the country the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and named its leader Mullah Omar Head of State and Commander of the Faithful. Ultimate authority vested with Mullah Omar who headed the inner *Shura* (Council) based in the southern city of Kandahar.[2b] At the local level, local *Shura* were constituted and also ruled by decree.[11d] In practice however decision-making became totally centralised and secretive, with the Kabul ministers rarely consulted on key issues.[33] The Taliban appeared to have embarked upon an increasingly ideological hard-line stance during 2001, with observers commenting on the insanity of their complete confrontation with the international community.[38]

5.24 The Taliban controlled approximately 90% of the country the remaining 10% was controlled by a rival regime, the Islamic State of Afghanistan (generally known as the Northern Alliance or United Front). Former President Burhanuddin Rabbani who controlled most of the country's embassies and retained Afghanistan's United Nations seat nominally headed this regime. Rabbani and his military commander, Ahmed Shah Masoud controlled the majority of Tajik areas in the extreme north-east of the country. The anti-Taliban forces of the Northern Alliance acted in concert with the US led military coalition, Operation Enduring Freedom, which commenced on 7 October 2001.[2b]

Judiciary

Current Position

5.25 The Bonn Agreement stated that the judicial power of Afghanistan shall be independent and shall be vested in a Supreme Court of Afghanistan and such other courts as may be established by the Interim Administration. The Bonn Agreement also called for the establishment of a Judicial Commission to rebuild the domestic justice system in accordance with Islamic principles, international standards, the rule of law and Afghan legal traditions.[39b]

5.26 The International Commission of Jurists undertook missions to Afghanistan in April and May/June of 2002 and produced a report -Afghanistan's Legal System and its Compatibility with International Human Rights Standards. The report stated that the legal institutions established under the 1964 Constitution and subsequent legal norms continue to exist in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif. The legal and judicial institutions that do exist face a host of problems, including understaffed and ill-equipped courts and lack of access to applicable statutes and legal materials by judges, lawyers and educational institutions. In practice courts apply Islamic law, and not the provisions of the 1964 Constitution, or applicable statutory laws. In practice and legal reality Afghanistan's courts have been applying Islamic and customary laws since the 1964

Constitution. In addition non-state fora for the settlement of disputes like jirgas (councils of elders) have always played an important role in the legal system although they do not enjoy any legal status under the provisions of the 1964 Constitution.[57]

5.27 On 21 May 2002 a Judicial Commission was established by decree, consisting of 16 eminent Afghan scholars, legal practitioners and jurists. A subsequent decree promulgated on 6 June 2002 outlined the specific powers and functions of the committee.[40e] This first Judicial Commission was dissolved by President Karzai amid concerns that its membership was not sufficiently independent and with a view to broadening its representation to include more women and representatives of minorities. [6e] A new 12-member commission was subsequently mandated by presidential decree to lead the effort to reform the judicial sector, as called for by the Bonn Agreement. The new commission includes two women as members. The Commission began work on 28 November 2002 and has completed a national plan for the justice sector based on consultations with relevant parties in the justice sector.[39h][6e]

5.28 In a report in October 2002 UN Special Rapporteur Asma Jahangir reported that provincial governors, the central administration and the Chief Justice are making the appointment of judges. No particular merit-based criteria are being followed. The Supreme Court has been expanded beyond the constitutional requirement and there are 137 judges. In the 32 provinces of Afghanistan 244 District Courts are operative. According to the Ministry of Justice and the office of the Attorney-General there are approximately 4,000 judges and 3,000 prosecutors are currently employed.[6d]

5.29 The new chief justice of Afghanistan and head of the Supreme Court, Mr Fazal Hadi Shinwari asserted in January 2002 that, as an Islamic country, Afghanistan would continue to apply Islamic law to judgements in courts. He also announced an amnesty for those who had worked for the Taliban regime (but not those accused of murder).[24a] In October 2002 the Chief Justice told UN Special Rapporteur that he was familiar with international human rights law and norms and in his opinion there were no inconsistencies between international human rights norms and Shariah (Islamic Law).[6d]

5.30 During the course of a Danish Fact Finding mission in September 2002 the Deputy Minister of Justice stated that the country has a system of courts with three levels

- a primary court in each district,
- a secondary court-the appeals court-in each province,
- a court of third instance the Supreme Court in Kabul.

There is a Public Prosecution Department in each province and everybody is entitled to a defence. Sentences may only be pronounced for matters which are clearly set out in the criminal law. Judges are appointed by the President Karzai, and must be graduates from the Faculty of Law or the Faculty of Islamic Law. Promotion of judges is decided by the Supreme Court whose decision is final. The Supreme Court acts independently of the Government. [8c] However other sources interviewed during the course of the Danish Fact Finding mission stated that the judicial system was not functioning, weak and bordering on the non-existent.[8c]

5.98 US officials confirmed in January 2002 that they were holding 368 prisoners captured during the conflict, 306 at a base in Kandahar, 38 in Bagram outside Kabul, 16 at Mazar-i-Sharif and eight aboard the Navy ship USS Bagram.[25ad] A number of the US held prisoners including suspected members of Usama bin Laden's Al Qa'ida network and fighters from the ousted Taliban were flown to a US prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in January 2002.[25ad] By 25 January 2002 some 158 prisoners had been transferred to Guantanamo Bay. There was some international criticism of the treatment of the prisoners however the US maintained they were illegal combatants rather than prisoners of war and were therefore denied rights enshrined in the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war. The US insisted they were being treated humanely.[25ae] ICRC delegates were permitted to visit these detainees in accordance with ICRC standard working procedures. [42b]

5.99 In May 2002 Klaus-Peter Klaiber European Union Special Representative in Afghanistan called for urgent action to improve the conditions of former Taliban and Al Qa'ida fighters in Shebarghan prison camp. Over 2,000 prisoners were held at the camp all of whom were ethnic Pashtuns, mostly Afghans but some Pakistanis. The prisoners were reportedly being fed only on thin soup and some were being kept in rooms

only 1.5 meters square. A spokesman for the Deputy Defence Minister General Dostum confirmed that he shared concerns about the camp but said that funds were needed urgently elsewhere.[25a] In May 2002 it was reported that some 500 prisoners had been released from Shebarghan prison and another 400 were shortly due for release. The prisoners were Pakistanis who were returned to Pakistan following their release and were described as Taliban and Al Qa'ida foot soldiers.[20f]

5.100 In May 2002 the Interim Administration instituted an amnesty which it hoped would ease overcrowding in the country's jails. Commissions were set up around the country to review the cases of prisoners. The Kabul commission chairman reported that over 60 people including some women and children had been released during the commission's first four days of work. In Kabul's main detention centre convicted criminals are being held alongside untried defendants as the main prison is without sewers and water.[24c]

5.101 ICRC reported that during the period January to August 2002 it had visited 6,189 security detainees and prisoners held in 78 places of detention. Those detained were under the responsibility of the Afghan authorities or those attached to the US forces. In addition it had provided assistance to 3,043 detainees to help them return home.[42f]

5.102 According to a UN Secretary-General report in March 2003, in Kabul all prisoners regardless of their status are held in the Kabul detention centre, an overcrowded and dilapidated facility adjacent to the Kabul police headquarters. The Afghan prison authorities have started reconstruction of the Pul-i-Charki prison outside Kabul, but sufficient funds for this reconstruction and the rehabilitation of the prisons sector have not been provided.[39h]

5.103 In March 2003, following a recommendation from international donors, Amnesty International and UNAMA, the administration of prisons was transferred from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice. [7p] According to UNAMA, the key objective of this transfer is to improve the general standard of prisons starting with Kabul. In July 2003 Cellblock 1 of Pul-i-Charki prison was 90% complete using funds provided by the Italian government and would be assessed by engineers from UNAMA and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to ensure that prisoner's basic needs are met. It is anticipated that Cellblock 1 will be the model for other prison projects. [40as]

5.104 In May 2003, UNODC signed a project proposal "Reform of the penitentiary system" with the Ministry of Justice focusing on the reconstruction of the penal system. However, funds for this project, due to run for two years from July 2003 are inadequate and the UNODC acknowledges that the project only covers Kabul, leaving the rest of Afghanistan untouched. [7p]

5.105 In July 2003, Amnesty International (AI) reported that the prison system in Afghanistan was still suffering from a lack of attention and funding. Staff were untrained and prisoners, including women and children, were being held for months in overcrowded cells in prisons across the country before having the legality of their detention determined by a judge. Prisoners were sometimes shackled and had inadequate bedding and food. Some were suffering ill-treatment. [7p]

1996 - 22 December 2001

5.106 The Taliban operated prisons in Kandahar, Herat, Kabul, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Pul-i-Khumri, Shebarghan, Qala-e-Zaini and Maimana. The Northern Alliance maintained prisons in Panjshir and Faizabad. [2b] The Taliban also established female prisons in Kandahar, Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif and possibly Jalalabad according to the UN Commission on Human Rights.[30a]

5.107 Both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance reportedly held thousands of combatants. The Northern Alliance reportedly held a number of Pakistanis and other third country nationals, along with several hundred Taliban soldiers. A number of persons arrested by the Taliban in 1998 for political reasons were still believed to be in detention until the fall of the Taliban.[2b] Civilians suspected of collaboration with the Taliban were arbitrarily detained by opposition factions and severely beaten, with their family members also subject to ill treatment.[11d] All Afghan factions are believed to have used torture against opponents and POWs, though specific information is generally lacking. [2b]

5.108 In a 1999 report Amnesty International described prison conditions as particularly appalling. Prisoners were held in overcrowded conditions, deprived of adequate food, sleep, space and sanitation facilities. Torture was reported to be standard practice. Cells were intolerably hot in summer and cold in winter, with damp cells and poor hygiene the main cause of infectious diseases.[7k] The biggest prison run by the Taliban authorities was reportedly in Kandahar, where the majority of political prisoners or military combatants

were held. Some were subject to forced labour and died of exhaustion or from beatings by prison guards. [7k] There were credible reports that torture occurred in prisons under the control of both the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. [2b] The Taliban ran female prisons in Kandahar, Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif and possibly Jalalabad, the UN Commission on Human Rights reported in August 2000 that many women were held without official reason. [30a]

5.109 During 2001 there were reports of a number of detentions by the Taliban, including 60 civilians in Bamiyan's Yakawalang district. The detention of journalists increased during the military conflict late in 2001. [2b]

5.110 In November 2001 Human Rights Watch reported on the deaths of hundreds of Taliban fighters in a school in Mazar-i-Sharif following the capture of the city by the Northern Alliance. Reports varied as to whether they had laid down arms and were prisoners of war, or were holed up in the school compound exchanging fire with opposing forces and were targeted in the process of that exchange. [17c]

Military Service

December 2001 to date

5.111 In late February 2002 it was reported that the ISAF had commenced the training of a professional national army. After more than 20 years of civil war Afghanistan has large numbers of armed soldiers most remaining loyal to their local clan chiefs and war lords. It is planned to disarm as many of these local militias as possible replacing them with a professional national army under the control of central government. [25aj] In March 2002 Hamid Karzai leader of the Interim Administration speaking at a meeting of warlords from all over Afghanistan, said that Afghanistan would have an independent, multi-ethnic national army. [25aq] In early April 2002, the first 600 members of the newly formed First Battalion of the Afghan National Guard graduated from training. [30c]

5.112 In April and May 2002, in meetings with the Secretary-General of the UN Security Council, the Interim Administration produced plans outlining an armed force which would be overseen by a national security council and a defence council. [40s]

5.113 In June 2002 Human Rights Watch reported instances of families being forced to make cash payments to avoid the conscription of their sons into militia forces. This was occurring in northern Afghanistan where two ethnically based armed parties were involved in conflict. [17f]

5.114 The Secretary-General to the UN Security Council reported in July 2002 that difficulties had been experienced in assembling an ethnically and regionally balanced group of recruits for the first battalion of Afghan National Guard. Similar difficulties were being faced by the US and French who were involved in further troop training exercises. The Secretary General reported that over one third of the soldiers on the first battalion Afghan National Guard have left since completing their training due to lack of support from the Ministry of Defence. [40s]

5.115 In July 2003 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) launched a programme to train officers of the future Afghan National Army (ANA) in the law of armed conflict. [42h] In an interview on 2 August 2003, President Karzai said that, with international assistance, he hoped to speed up the process of creating a national army and police force. [25bu] The ANA has 5000 trained soldiers and will eventually comprise 70,000. However, this may not happen until warlords in Afghanistan disband their private armies. [25bv]

Pre 22 December 2001

5.116 Before 1992 conscription existed, military service could be performed in the armed services, the Ministry of the Interior and the secret police (KhAD). After the 1992 collapse of the communist government all serving conscripts were discharged, all deserters were granted amnesty (except very high-ranking officers) and the previous government's military bodies were dissolved. [9]

5.117 The vast majority of Taliban soldiers have reportedly been volunteers. Conscription has nonetheless apparently taken place, especially in critical situations. Conscripts might have included Hazaras, but were otherwise mainly Pashtuns. A source at the US representation in Pakistan advised that the Taliban's opposing factions have also practised conscription. [8a] It has also been reported that some paid bribes to keep their sons out of the conflict, and that revolts against forced recruitment occurred. [31a]

5.118 During its fact-finding mission in November 1997, the Danish Immigration Service reported a US source as claiming that the Taliban were known to recruit soldiers both in refugee camps in Pakistan and within Afghanistan itself. However, there was reportedly seldom any forced recruitment in camps in Pakistan.[8a] In May 2000 Hazara conscripts were reportedly executed for refusing to serve with the Taliban.[11d] Generally speaking however, it appears that as some communities in Afghanistan resisted conscription, the Taliban could easily find replacements elsewhere - notably in Pakistan with its availability of impoverished and undereducated youth.[33]

5.119 In September 2001 as fears of a US attack began to grow it was reported that the Taliban were forcibly seizing men (including Tajiks and Hazaras) aged between 18 and 30 to fight America. Those who resisted faced the threat of jail, with reports that some were also to be held as hostage. On 24 September 2001 the Taliban announced they were mobilising 300,000 men to defend Afghanistan against the feared attacks.[18d]

Medical Services

5.120 In a report dated January 2002 entitled Afghanistan: Preliminary Needs Assessment for Recovery and Reconstruction, it was noted that the health status of Afghans ranks amongst the poorest in the world. Life expectancy at birth, 44 for males and 45 for females is among the lowest in the world. The report further indicated that health infrastructure and human resources were grossly inadequate for a population of about 24 million, which is expected to rise to roughly 35 million in ten years.[4] Maternal health care is a particular problem, a World Health Organisation (WHO) medical officer reported in January 2002 a figure of 1,700 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births, the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world.[36k] Under the Taliban women were given only the most rudimentary access to health and medical care.[2c]

5.121 There is a strong urban bias in the provision of medical facilities with many being located in Kabul and an uneven distribution in rural areas. Only 30-40% of the population have access to some health service. About 75% of the population have access to emergency obstetric care, which was only available in 11 provinces. In January 2002 there were about 17,500 public sector health staff, 3,900 of who were doctors providing approximately two doctors per 10,000 of population. In addition it was noted that staff were deployed unevenly to the populations geographical distribution, the composition of staff did not meet the needs required and existing staff needed significant skill upgrading/refresher training to deliver an essential services package.[4]

5.122 The ICRC has for years pursued a strategy of supporting Afghan medical structures. Surgical structures have been the focus of ICRC activities due to the need for these in conflict situations. In 2001 ICRC maintained the regular support needed to uphold surgical services in key referral hospitals on both sides of the conflict and provided surgical facilities for an average of over 3,000 inpatients and 20,000 outpatients per month.[42c] In late January 2002 the first surgical operation in three years took place at Bamiyan hospital. ICRC had decided to rehabilitate the hospital in December 2001, and with assistance from the Norwegian Red Cross and Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) all essential services were expected to be in operation by the end of February 2002.[42d]

5.123 In a statement to the UN Security Council on 30 January 2002 Hamid Karzai said that he sought to build a health system that would offer affordable services to all.[39d] The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported in March 2002 that developing a functional health care system was a top priority in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. WHO also reported that the Afghan Ministry of Health had made important strides toward establishing a functioning structure for long-term health sector development; an organisational structure for the Ministry had been established defining roles and responsibilities for departments. A WHO training seminar on health management is to be followed by nationwide planning workshops.[43a]

5.124 In May 2002 a Danish Fact Finding mission to Afghanistan reported that there were 20 to 25 hospitals in Kabul which were functioning but charged fees which only a small part of the population could afford to pay. Although there were hospitals in most large towns not all were functioning. Generally there was better availability of treatment in Kabul than elsewhere. It was reported that some rural areas had little or no access to health treatment.[8b]

5.125 In June 2002 it was reported that a basic level of medical care was available in Kabul (much better provision than all other parts of the country).[51] A World Health Organisation report dated 5 April 2002 showed a concentration of health facilities in urban areas and detailed that Kabul had 12% of the population and 50% of the hospital beds in the country, and a ratio of one doctor per 1,000 people.[43b] In excess of 60 aid organisations are working on projects in Afghanistan covering health and social welfare.[52b]

5.126 The Afghan Red Crescent runs a national network of 48 clinics, which make a huge contribution to improving the healthcare of those most in need. In particular the Qalafatullah clinic in Kabul provides basic healthcare to 50,000 people, caring primarily for women and children.**[40u]** The ICRC reported at the end of August 2002 that it continues to provide regular assistance to seven hospitals throughout the country. Health facilities assisted by ICRC provided service to over 6,000 inpatients, 38,600 outpatients and performed 3,750 operations in the period from January to the end of July 2002.**[42f]**

5.127 According to a 2002 WHO report Afghanistan has limited Mental Health Resources, some therapeutic drugs are reported to be available, and there are some 0.027 psychiatric beds available per 10,000 of the population. There are however very few trained psychiatrists.**[43c]**

5.128 It was reported in February 2003 that despite the establishment of aid agency projects Afghanistan's health care services barely exist. An estimated 70% of medical programmes in the country have been implemented by aid organisations. Even the country's largest hospitals lack the most basic equipment needed for simple treatment. A recent survey describes maternal mortality as one of the highest in the world although maternal mortality rates vary widely across the country. However a spokesman from World Health Organisation said that services are slowly getting better. Kabul's largest maternity ward at Malalai hospital has been refurbished and staff have been trained in emergency obstetrics, the regional hospitals are receiving aid and advanced training, and small medical teams are reaching the country's largely inaccessible rural areas and equipping clinics with drugs.**[25b]**

5.129 In April and July 2003 it was reported by a Swedish fact finding mission and the UNHCR that, in general, it is not possible to treat serious diseases in Afghanistan and treatment is not available for chronic medical conditions. **[61]** **[11p]** The health infrastructure and human resources are reported to be grossly inadequate for the population of 24 million. Institutions have collapsed, physical facilities have been destroyed and the human resource base has been eroded, particularly of female professionals critical to women's health care given the predominant cultural observance of gender segregation. There is a strong urban bias to the limited medical facilities, with many located in Kabul, while rural services are unevenly distributed. There are few psychiatric health care facilities and the existing ones lack essential medical supplies. **[11p]**

5.130 The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to improve reproductive health care and reduce maternal mortality, **[40at]** aiming to establish a centre for the delivery of emergency obstetric care in each province **[39i]**. In May 2003 the obstetric and gynaecology ward of the refurbished Khair Khana Hospital in north-west Kabul opened and in July 2003 the hospital also began handling general medicine, internal medicine, outpatient and emergency cases. **[40at]**

5.131 In May 2003, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) announced a three year \$100 million programme entitled Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-based Healthcare (REACH). The aim of the programme is to improve the delivery of healthcare by providing basic essential health services to an estimated sixteen and a half million people each year. The programme is focused on moving healthcare closer to patients in rural communities. **[40au]**

5.132 In the report of the Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly Security Council on 23 July 2003, it was stated that most rural communities remain cut off from even minimal health-care services. However, the Ministry of Health is focusing on providing all rural communities with access to primary care by the end of 2003 through the Basic Package of Health Services programme, which is supported by the World Bank, USAID, the EU and UNICEF. **[39i]**

Educational System

5.133 In a report dated January 2002 entitled Afghanistan: Preliminary Needs Assessment for Recovery and Reconstruction it was noted that the education system was in a virtual state of collapse. Afghanistan's education indicators rank among the lowest in the world, with the highest gender gap and marked rural/urban and other geographic disparities. The gross enrollment rate in primary education was 38% and 3% for boys and girls respectively. Participation in secondary education was reported as extremely low and tertiary education institutions were hardly functioning.**[4]**

5.134 The Taliban eliminated most formal opportunities for girls' education, although some girls' schools still operated in rural areas and in some towns. Some girls nonetheless received an education in informal home schools, which were tolerated to varying degrees by the Taliban around the country. **[2b]**

5.135 In a statement to the UN Security Council on 30 January 2002 Hamid Karzai stated that he would invest in the education of children particularly girls.[39d] In February 2002 women took university entrance exams for the first time since the fall of the Taliban, about 500 young women joined seven times as many male students in the tests at Kabul University campus.[25a] A new Afghan school year commenced on 23 March 2002 when it was estimated up to 2 million children, including girls, returned to the 3,000 schools which re-opened. Women teachers who had been forbidden from working were rehired and resumed teaching.[25ak] [44a] The estimated school-age population is 4.5 million and more children are expected to return to school in April, May and June.[44a] The return to school followed a Back to School Campaign led by the Afghan Interim Administration which had organised an entire educational structure virtually from scratch. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported the Administrations efforts delivering more than 7,000 metric tons of learning materials to virtually every school in the country. [44a]

5.136 While girls throughout the country were able to attend school the UN reported that in some areas a climate of insecurity persisted. In Kandahar in spring 2002 anonymous leaflets distributed in schools urged citizens not to cooperate with foreigners. In addition there were several reports of attacks on schools during 2002.[2d]

5.137 In Kabul basic education facilities are available at primary level, and (to a much more limited extent) secondary level. There is also a functioning university.[51] There are 16 institutions of higher learning in Afghanistan. Kabul has the largest university but there are also universities in Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat. Herat University suffered under the Taliban, but is emerging again as a centre for higher learning, catering for some 3,100 students. The university has 17 female teachers and hundreds of female students, who study in separate classrooms from the male students.[36h]

5.138 In March 2003 it was reported that UNICEF is playing a major role in the reconstruction of the national education system. Attention is being focused on the issue of quality and gender-balance in education, a national reform of the primary level curriculum, reform of the system of teacher preparation and continuing education opportunities, supply and distribution of essential learning materials and the rehabilitation of schools. It was reported that over 3 million children enrolled in some form of education in 2002, 30% of whom were girls. The total enrolment rate is believed to be 60% higher than before March 2002 (over 90% higher for girls). UNICEF have set a target of 500,000 additional girls attending school by March 2004 [40ar]

5.139 A Human Rights Watch report published in July 2003 reported several attacks on schools between August 2002 and June 2003 in south-eastern Afghanistan. In most cases the identity of the attackers was unknown. In some areas, including Paghman and Ghazni, some families are reluctant to send their older girls to school because of security problems. [17f]

5.31 The International Crisis Group (ICG) report issued in January 2003 stated that Afghanistan's legal system has been nearly destroyed by 23 years of conflict and misrule. Delays in the establishment of the Judicial Commission had resulted in the Commission achieving little. However, the second Commission appointed in November 2002 appears more independent than the first, which was disbanded in August 2002. [26b]

5.32 ICG reported that Afghanistan has two court systems: general courts and special courts. General courts comprise the district, provincial and Supreme Courts. The major provincial courts are in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Nangrahar and Balkh and each city zone has one primary court. Kabul has sixteen primary courts and these courts have jurisdiction only within their zones. [26b]

5.33 The UNHCR reported in July 2003 that Afghanistan's legal institutions suffer from lack of resources. Court systems exist from district to national level but the influence of commanders and powerful figures often makes it impossible for fair and just decisions to be made over land disputes.[11p]

5.34 In a report dated July 2003, the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council said that the justice sector in Afghanistan had probably suffered more damage than any other part of the State structure and its rehabilitation would be unavoidably slow. Nonetheless the Judicial Reform commission had made some progress in the areas of infrastructure rehabilitation and training. Three training programmes for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and legal scholars were underway and in Kabul, reconstruction of the State judicial

infrastructure had commenced. [39i]

5.35 Amnesty International reported in August 2003 that long-term financial assistance is required to ensure the re-establishment of the rule of law in Afghanistan. Despite the political and security problems undermining the rule of law, courts are operating in some urban centres in Afghanistan but with limited capacity. However, in rural areas the judicial system is barely functioning. The report noted that at present the judiciary does not receive the support necessary to ensure that it is free from outside influences. Consequently, the independence of the judiciary is being undermined by political interference from certain armed groups, persons holding public office and private individuals. Furthermore, economic influences have led to a widespread problem of corruption. [7q]

1996 - 22 December 2001

5.36 Following their seizure of power in Kabul in September 1996, the Taliban imposed a strict Islamic code of conduct on Kabul, including the introduction of stonings, lashings, amputations, and the death penalty as punishment for various crimes.[1] According to the UN the Taliban established a lower court and a higher court in every province, with a Supreme Court in Kabul.[2b] However there was no functioning nation-wide judicial system in place. The Taliban regime recognised only the validity of Sharia (Islamic) law and did not accept the notion of secular law or binding international law.[11d] The Taliban ruled strictly in areas they controlled, establishing ad hoc and rudimentary judicial systems.[2b]

5.37 In 1997 the UNHCR reportedly had misgivings about the proper working of the legal system in northern Afghanistan (those areas not under Taliban control). This was considered especially true in areas where individual commanders had established independent power bases and accordingly acted as the legislative, judiciary and executive authority all in one.[8a]

Legal Rights/Detention

Current Situation

5.38 The Bonn Agreement provided for a legal framework to be applicable on an interim basis until the adoption of a new Constitution. The Bonn agreement stated that this legal framework would made up as follows:-

"i)The Constitution of 1964, a/ to the extent that its provisions are not inconsistent with those contained in this agreement, and b/ with the exception of those provisions relating to the monarchy and to the executive and legislative bodies provided in the constitution; and

ii)existing laws and regulations, to the extent that they are not inconsistent with this agreement or with international legal obligations to which Afghanistan is a party, or within those applicable provisions contained in the Constitution of 1964, provided that the Interim Authority shall have the power to repeal or amend those laws and regulations."[39b]

5.39 It has been reported that following the departure of the Taliban, judges in Afghanistan could not find any copies of the codes of Afghanistan. After the Taliban rose to power in 1996 the decrees of Mullah Omar and his harsh interpretation of Islamic law became the new governing institute and previous legal codes were often intentionally burned and destroyed. Efforts are currently underway to reassemble the legal codes in effect prior to Soviet and Taliban rule.[10] The International Crisis Group reported in July 2002 that in Afghanistan no semblance of a functioning national judicial system remains. Three decades of regime change have lead to massive alterations of the legal system in content and implementation. Afghanistan's few experts are uncertain which laws are actually in force.[26a] In October 2002 UN Special Rapporteur Asma Jahangir reported that the judicial system did not seem to follow any uniform legal system. The Law Ministry and Attorney Generals office had distributed law books to the judiciary and public prosecutors in the entire country. It appears that some courts are following traditional or customary law while others follow different interpretations of Sharia law without any form of consistency.[6d]

5.40 ISAF is not mandated to act as the Afghan police in Kabul, but is mandated to provide a stable and secure environment for the political process in support of the Interim and Transitional Administrations. Within Kabul some districts are safer than others, criminality in some areas is notorious. Mines and structurally unsafe buildings also cause safety concerns. The ISAF are not responsible for the protection of individuals or minority groups, and have no official authority to investigate complaints or take action. Complaints could be taken to the police, but they have a limited capacity to react in the face of a high level of crime and the

domination of warlords. A judicial and legal system exists but with limited function.[51] In an open letter to President Karzai in July 2002 Amnesty International urged the Transitional Administration to ensure the rapid development and implementation of a fully functioning criminal justice system conforming to international law and standards relating to human rights.[7m]

5.41 As local militias are dismantled a reformed national police force will have to provide the foundation of law and order in Afghanistan. The Minister of the Interior Ali Ahmad Jalali appointed on 28 January 2003 has displayed a readiness to reform the police. Discussions are underway to reorganize the Ministry with efforts to establish the Border Police under the Ministry of Interior. A German-led police training programme is proceeding well. A new group of 500 to 600 trainee officers have been recruited to commence training in March 2003.[39h]

5.42 The Government has taken steps to ensure the accountability of the police. President Karzai established an independent commission to investigate the violent police response to student demonstrations at Kabul University in November 2002. It concluded that the police had been responsible for the use of excessive force and that the miserable living conditions at the students' dormitory, which had apparently triggered the demonstrations, were partly the result of corruption. Several government officials, including some at senior levels were subsequently arrested. A special human rights department has also been created in the Ministry of the Interior. It is expected that the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and UNAMA will cooperate through this department to implement a programme of human rights education for the police.[39h]

5.43 UN Special Rapporteur Mr Kamal Hossain who undertook three missions to Afghanistan in 2002 reported that persons were being detained in jails and other places of detention for a prolonged period, since the capacity to investigate allegations against them and have their cases disposed of through judicial process had yet to be established.[6d]

5.44 According to HRW, in Herat military, police and Amniat forces have committed numerous cases of torture, beatings and arbitrary arrests. Independent and credible sources with access to detainees, including UNAMA officials confirmed that torture is common place at the Herat police station, where it is reported that special rooms have been set up to carry out torture. The HRW report issued in November 2002 details instances of torture both inside police stations and other sites used as detention cells, and outside police stations for example at military checkpoints. HRW reported that Pashtuns are specially targeted for arbitrary arrest and abuse. [17j]

5.45 In July 2003, Amnesty International reported that prisoners, including women and children, were being held for months in overcrowded cells in prisons across the country before having the legality of their detention determined by a judge. [7p]

1996 - 22 December 2201

5.46 Taliban courts imposed an extreme interpretation of Islamic law (not a formal countrywide legal code) and punishments followed swift summary trials. Those found guilty of murder or rape were generally ordered to be executed, although victims' relatives could alternatively accept other restitution.[2b] The judiciary in Taliban controlled areas consisted of tribunals, where clerics with little legal training ruled on Pashtun customs and the Taliban's interpretation of Sharia law.[11d]

5.47 With the absence of formal legal and law enforcement institutions, justice was not administered according to formal legal codes, and persons were subject to arbitrary detention. There were credible reports that both Taliban and Northern Alliance militia extorted bribes from civilians in return for their release from prison or freedom from arrest. Judicial and police procedures varied from locality to locality. Little is known about the procedures for taking persons into custody and bringing them to justice. In both Taliban and non-Taliban areas practices varied depending on the locality, the local commanders and other authorities. Some areas had a more formal judicial structure than others.[2b] In April 2001 UNHCR reported that in Taliban and Northern Alliance controlled areas the rule of law was similarly non-existent.[11d]

5.48 Little is known about the administration of justice in the areas that were controlled by the Northern Alliance. The administration and implementation of justice varied from area to area, and depended on the impulse of local commanders or other authorities who summarily execute, torture and mete out punishments without reference to any other authority.[2b]

Death Penalty

Current Situation

5.49 The Deputy Minister for Justice stated in September 2002 that there are still provisions for amputation and the death sentence in the law but such sentences are not applied in practice. A number of sources consulted during the course of the Danish Fact Finding mission in September 2002 also confirmed that they knew nothing about any amputations or death sentences having taken place in accordance with Sharia law since the fall of the Taliban. [8c] In November 2002, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) confirmed to a Swedish fact finding mission that there had been no known cases of the death penalty being carried out since the fall of the Taliban. [61]

5.50 In October 2002 an Afghan tribunal sentenced one of the country's most notorious commanders Abdullah Shah to death for murdering dozens of people. Abdullah Shah can appeal against the sentence, and President Hamid Karzai's approval for the death sentence is needed. If the court's decision is upheld it would be the first official execution since the fall of the Taliban regime. Asma Jahangir UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions who attended the court hearing expressed strong reservations about the way the trial was conducted. [55]

5.51 In August 2003, Amnesty International reported that the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code currently provided for the imposition of the death penalty in certain circumstances. However, at present, President Karzai has imposed a moratorium on the death penalty. [7q]

1996 - 22 December 2001

5.52 Public executions were reported, and during 2000 at least 15 people were executed in public. [7b] On 26 September 2000 a man convicted of adultery was publicly stoned in Maymana in Fariab province. The woman with whom he was convicted of engaging in adultery was sentenced to 100 lashes, although the sentence was postponed because she was pregnant. The punishment for homosexuality is to have walls toppled on those found guilty. This punishment was carried out on at least one occasion in 1999 and seven times in 1998 (resulting in five deaths). There were however no known instances of such punishment during 2000 or 2001. [2b]

5.53 Amnesty International reported that the Northern Alliance executed six prisoners on 6 December 2000 following their arrest two days previously; signs of torture were also reported. The arrests followed the ambush and shooting of Alliance members. A spokesman insisted that some sort of trial took place, despite the execution only forty hours after the accused were arrested. This action was possibly indicative of a political motive behind the executions. [71]

Internal Security

Current Situation

5.54 The Bonn Agreement raised the possibility of an international security force for Afghanistan and called upon the international community to assist in the formation of a national army and police force. [2b] A Military Technical Agreement was signed with the Interim Administration on 4 January 2002 on the deployment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Afghanistan to work alongside Afghan police to maintain security in and around Kabul. Britain agreed to be lead nation of the ISAF for the initial three months of its mandate [25ac][39c] The ISAF reached its full operating capacity of 4,500 troops on 18 February 2002. [39e]

5.55 A UNHCR report, dated 13 February 2002, indicated that the security situation whilst improved in urban centres had not improved in other parts of the country. In the provinces, pockets of instability remained or re-emerged, often as a result of unsettled power-sharing agreements. [11e] A further UNHCR update on the situation in Afghanistan dated July 2002 also reported that insecurity remained a major concern in certain regions. [11m]

5.56 ISAF reported in late April 2002 that the security situation in Kabul had improved significantly since their arrival. According to ISAF ongoing statistical analysis, crime rates have decreased across the city by as much as 70%. ISAF reported that the general population of Kabul welcomes the security and confidence that ISAF brings, with some 89% of respondents saying that they are happy with the presence of the Force. There were a few low-level incidents involving ISAF patrols, which ISAF associated with increased patrolling activity, especially in the hours of darkness, in the more lawless areas of the city. ISAF will continue to work to improve the security situation in these areas. [40d] In late May 2002, further evidence of the improvement in

the security situation in Kabul was provided when night time curfew hours were reduced, so that the curfew only ran from 2300 hours until 0400 in the morning.[40ac]

5.57 A Danish fact finding mission to Kabul in May 2002 reported that the security situation in Kabul was generally good although in certain areas, (particularly districts 5,6 and 7) civilian safety was poor. Crime in these areas was mainly directed against the wealthy. Some politically motivated crime was also reported, but thought to be in connection with the selection process for the Loya Jirga, still underway at the time of the visit. The director of the Danish Committee for Aid to Refugees (DACAAR) did not believe that there was any ethnically motivated violence in Kabul. The Deputy Chief of Police in Kabul stated that there were no security problems in Kabul. He attributed the crime rate to economic problems.[8b] In September 2002 during a Danish Fact Finding mission to Afghanistan most sources stated that the presence of international peace keeping troops (ISAF) in Kabul has the effect of ensuring good security in the capital. UNAMA also advised that the presence of the ISAF in Kabul had improved security and limited intimidation. According to the Co-operation Centre for Afghanistan the situation in Kabul is generally good, as there is no harassment or political arrests.[8c]

5.58 The Transitional Administration has limited reach outside Kabul. Various warlords and their forces continue to control the provinces.[50] There continued to be reports of tension and fighting between rival warlords in particular in the north of Afghanistan in Mazar-I-Sharif city, Sholgarah district and Sari Pul in late April and early May 2002. A Security Commission was set up to deal with the issues.[19c][17h] A Briefing Paper issued by HRW in June 2002, highlighted the factional rivalries and open hostility affecting the security situation in northern Afghanistan. The competing ambitions of two ethnically-based armed parties, the mainly Uzbek Junbish-e Milli led by General Abdul Rashid Dostum, and the mainly Tajik Jamiat-e Islami led by General Atta Mohammad were reported to have led to an increase in crime. Robbery, rape and other violent crimes were apparently being committed with impunity. The line between these two parties runs through the southern part of Balkh province and neighbouring Sari Pul province.[17f] Fighting erupted again in late June 2002.[40o] On 1 July 2002, President Karzai sent a four man team (headed by his personal advisor to the Ministry of Religious and Tribal Affairs) to the north to launch an investigation into factional fighting between rival warlords.[40q] Fighting was also reported around Gardez and in Wardak province in late April 2002 [17h] and around Kunduz in late May 2002.[20e]

5.59 The security situation was also covered in the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council's report dated 11 July 2002, (covering the period from 18 March 2002). He reported that in Kabul the ISAF has continued to have a very positive impact on security in conjunction with the Afghan police and other domestic security forces. However security in Afghanistan remains a cause for concern. In addition to actions by ex-Taliban and Al Qa'ida, armed factions that nominally support the Bonn process continue to pose a threat to the consolidation of peace and civil government in the country. Particularly in the north a rivalry between Jumbesh and Jamiat factions has prevented the establishment of effective security in Mazar city. The Secretary-General also reported that in the weeks prior to his report a number of armed attacks and robberies took place against international aid agencies. At the time of his report no credible measures had been taken to address these security problems.[40s]

5.60 On 23 May 2002 the UN Security Council voted to extend the mandate for the International Security Assistance Force for a period of six months beyond 20 June 2002. Commenting on the security situation Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said that the creation of new Afghan security institutions would take time. He also said that the current security situation, in particular outside Kabul, remained a major concern. A representative from Afghanistan who attended the meeting thanked the international community for its assistance, citing in particular the general establishment of peace and security in the country.[39e] On 20 June 2002, the UK handed over leadership of ISAF to Turkey. Major General John McColl, Commander of the UK force handed over command to Turkey's Major General Akin Zorlu. Commenting on the achievements of ISAF, General McColl said that a dramatic change in the nature of Kabul had been achieved, "when we arrived there was a great deal of lawlessness, now we have a situation where the city has come to life." [25ay] Leadership of ISAF passed to Germany and the Netherlands on 10 February 2003.[39h]

5.61 The Secretary General also reported in July 2002 on sporadic fighting and skirmishes in Uruzgan, Laghman, Kunar, Wardak, Paktia, Khost and Nimruz provinces. Disputed governorships had destabilized several provinces, with the Central Government frequently unable to quell military opposition to Governors it has legitimately named.[40s]

5.62 The ISAF monthly report covering the period 20 June 2002 to 31 July 2002 reported that the security situation in Kabul and its surrounding areas was generally calm, but said the security circumstances remained potentially vulnerable as demonstrated by the assassination of Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir on 6 July 2002.[40y]

5.63 In a quarterly report on ISAF operations covering the period 1 November 2002 to 10 February 2003 Turkish commander General Zorlu reported that Kabul continued to enjoy vastly improved security during the reporting period. Crime rates remain low and a full sense of normality has returned. He described the atmosphere as calm and peaceful, with a thriving commercial and social life. The night curfew was lifted on 3 November 2002 for the first time since 1979. There were a number of rocket attacks on the city from the hills beyond ISAF's area. However due to ageing rockets and crude firing mechanisms these caused no casualties or damage to property.[40z]

5.64 The UMAMA situation report for 22 to 28 September 2002 reported on stable or calm security situations in most areas in Afghanistan. However the situation in the north continued to be volatile, despite a recent spate of recent fighting ceasing as a result of intervention by the Security Commission.[40ab]

5.65 In a report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Security Council in March 2003 it was said that security remains the most serious challenge facing the peace process in Afghanistan. The report stated that since October 2002 rivalries between factional leaders had worsened in the west with the forces of Herat's Governor Ismail Khan and those of local leader, Amanullah Khan clashing in late 2002. In January 2003 fighting broke out in the province of Baghdis between forces loyal to Ismail Khan and the local Governor Gul Mohammed. In Kandahar a dispute over responsibility for law and order in the city was resolved after the intervention of tribal leaders. The report also stated that sporadic acts of terror continue to occur. Several sources in early 2003 reported increased activity by elements hostile to the Government and the international community in Afghanistan. There were signs that remnant Taliban groups and factions loyal to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar were trying to re-organise in the south-eastern and eastern border areas.[39h]

5.66 A UNHCR Returnee Monitoring Report issued in the spring of 2003 stated that the situation in Kandahar Province was generally unstable due to the reported presence of suspected Taliban and Al Qa'ida elements. Clashes between fighters from these groups and Afghan military forces have occurred periodically since the fall of the Taliban. [11o]. For example, in June 2003, 40 fighters believed to be allied to the Taliban and 9 Afghan pro-government militiamen were killed after a major clash between the two groups in the south-east border region of Loikarez, Kandahar province [20g].

5.67 A Swedish fact finding report published in April 2003 stated that security in Afghanistan had improved in some regions but worsened in others due to factional clashes repeatedly erupting between rival political and military figures attempting to gain regional influence. [61] In July 2003, the UNHCR reported that the absence of disarmament, lack of law enforcement and the consequences of a war economy have given rise to banditry and criminality. Road travel has become more dangerous in certain areas, including on some main road links, with money being demanded by bandits and individual commanders in ambushes or at checkpoints. [11p] At the beginning of July 2003, at least 11 people were killed in the north of the country during fighting between two rival militias. [25bt] In a report published July 2003, Amnesty International expressed serious concerns about the ongoing security situation in Afghanistan, stating that the situation in the country had not fundamentally changed during 2003 and if anything had deteriorated. [7o]

5.68 In a report to the UN Security Council dated 23 July 2003, the Secretary-General stated that the presence of the ISAF in Kabul had greatly contributed to security in the city, reducing crime and instilling a measure of confidence in its citizens. However, there remained a pressing need for international security assistance beyond Kabul. The Secretary-General stated that the overall situation throughout Afghanistan remained fragile and in many areas shows signs of deterioration. Clashes in the northern provinces of Balkh, Samangan and Sari Pul occurred repeatedly between the Jonbesh forces of General Abdul Rashid Dostum and the Jamiat forces of Ustad Atta Mohammed, resulting in the personal intervention of the two factional leaders. [39i]

5.69 The report also observed that members of groups thought to be aligned with the Taliban, Al Qa'ida and Hekmatyar (leader of Hizb-i-Islami), have stepped up their activities along the southern and eastern borders of Afghanistan, resulting in repeated clashes with Coalition and Afghan National Army forces operating in the region. US and Afghan military forces in Khost and Paktia Provinces have come under rocket attack on several occasions. On 7 June 2003 a suicide car bomber drove into a German ISAF bus, killing four soldiers and one bystander and injuring 29 others. [39i]

5.70 A spate of attacks took place in August 2003, mainly in the south and south-east of the country involving

suspected Taliban and Al Qa'ida elements. [25bx] In response, coalition forces launched Operation Mountain Viper in the mountainous territory of southern Afghanistan, resulting in the deaths of around 124 enemy fighters and five government soldiers. [25bz]

5.71 In August 2003 President Karzai replaced the governors of Kandahar and Zabul provinces, where anti-government insurgents had been active in recent months. [25by] At the same time, the governor of Herat, Ismail Khan, was stripped of his additional post as military commander of western Afghanistan. President Karzai has said that officials cannot hold both military and civil posts. [25bw]

5.72 In August 2003, a UNAMA spokesman announced the establishment of the Faryab Peace Commission in Maymana, Faryab Province, formed by representatives of the Governor's office, the major factions (Jamiat and Jonbesh) and the Faryab police. The Commission will be facilitated by UNAMA with support from the Mazar based Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). The spokesman said that the Commission would meet regularly to address, mediate and resolve issues that have the potential to degenerate into fighting. For example, tensions caused by local commanders vying for more power and disputes ranging from disagreements over livestock, annexation of land, extortion and illegal taxation. [40bb]

5.73 In September 2003, following calls by the UN and President Karzai for the ISAF to be expanded to help restore stability to Afghanistan's provinces, NATO who took over leadership of the ISAF the previous month, asked its military experts to begin studying the feasibility of extending the force beyond Kabul. [40bc]

National Security Directorate

5.74 Since the Soviet invasion the "secret police" has been a key tool of repression. While the agency's name has been changed several times many personnel and tactics have remained the same. The internal intelligence branch now called the National Security Directorate (NSD)(also known as Amniat) was formerly known as "KhAD". Since the fall of Kabul in November 2001 this has been controlled and staffed by the Panshiri Shura-i-Nazar. [a][8c] President Karzai has highlighted the establishment of the national army and police and reform of the NSD as being among his top priorities for the transitional period. [39f]

5.75 In September 2002 UNAMA advised that the National Security Directorate is not a ministerial department although it functions as such, it was unclear who the service reports to but it probably reports to the Ministry of Defence. According to UNAMA NSD carries out random arrests but could not be said to systematically violate human rights. [8c]

5.76 According to a report issued by Amnesty International in March 2003 members of NSD have committed human rights violations including arbitrary detention and torture. In addition Amnesty reported a widespread perception that the police are responsible for perpetrating human rights abuses rather than preventing or addressing them. [7n]

Accountability Department

5.77 In August 2002 it was reported that an Accountability Department tasked with ensuring Afghan Muslims refrained from such crimes as drinking alcohol, fornication and sodomy had been established. It was reported that this was similar to the notorious religious police of the ousted Taliban, but with less draconian powers. Deputy Chief Justice Manawi explained that Accountability employees would try to persuade people not to pursue vice and unlawful acts and that offenders will face gentler punishments than under the Taliban. The new punishments will depend on the crime but will include fines, imprisonment and lashings. [24b]

Army

5.78 The UN Secretary-General reported that the lack of security can only be resolved by loyal and unified government forces. On 1 December 2002 President Karzai signed a decree that provides the basis for the new Afghan National Army, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all factional forces and the reform of the Ministry of Defence. On 12 January 2003 the Defence Commission began implementing the decree by creating four commissions to coordinate these issues. Also in accordance with the decree an advisory committee was created on 18 February 2003. This brings together key Afghan ministers and representatives of the lead nations and UNAMA to promote the ANA and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. On 20 February 2003 15 positions in the Ministry of Defence were created or changed to create a better ethnic balance amongst the senior personnel. [39h]

5.79 In July 2003, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) launched a programme to train officers of the future Afghan National Army in the law of armed conflict. Under the Geneva Conventions, the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan must ensure that the rules and principles of the law of war are known and implemented by all members of the Afghan armed forces. The ICRC is organising teaching and providing documentation. [42h]

5.80 In September 2003, plans to reform the Defence Ministry were approved by the Cabinet. A senior analyst with the International Crisis Group stated that the reforms, including 22 new appointments, are intended to create a more equitable balance within the leadership of the Ministry and encourage national disarmament and demobilisation among commanders who feel they lack representation in the current Defence Ministry structure. [36o]

Police

5.81 In a report issued in March 2003 on police reconstruction Amnesty International reported on the need to rebuild an effective police force in Afghanistan. Amnesty documented a widespread pattern of human rights violations committed by members of the police, including torture and arbitrary arrest. Extortion is commonly practiced by police officers. Much of the current police force consists of former Mujahideen, who have extensive military experience but little or no professional police training or experience. Their loyalties rest with the powerful regional commanders who have been able to assert control in the provinces. [7n]

5.82 Amnesty reported that although according to Afghan law the police fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior it was unclear who was responsible for policing. General Salang is head of the Kabul police and has a force of ten thousand. In addition in Kabul General Jurat, Head of Security and Public Controls has a force of some 4,000 police who patrol Kabul 24 hours a day and control checkpoints at the airport and gates of the city. Afghanistan is divided into 32 provinces, sub-divided into smaller administrative districts. Each district has a police commander who should report to the provincial police commander. Amnesty was told that many commanders have no effective control over police in their district who act with impunity. [7n]

5.83 In July 2003, the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council reported that, in April 2003, President Karzai had issued a presidential decree mandating a new structure for the Ministry of the Interior and the establishment of a national police service consisting of 50,000 police officers and 12,000 border guards. The new structure separates the provincial administration of the Ministry from the police, establishes a clear chain of command for all police forces down to the district level and consolidates responsibility for all policing functions under the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry has devised a five-year framework for creating the national police service. [39i]

5.84 UNAMA spokesman, Manoel de Almeida e Silva, in a press briefing on 28 July 2003, reported that the first police trainees would be graduating from the Police Academy in Kabul that month. The non-commissioned officers will have completed their one year training courses and will be part of the new police force of 50,000 being trained with the assistance of Germany, the country leading on police reform in Afghanistan. Approximately 1000 commissioned officers have completed the first year of their three year training course. In addition, the US is complementing the Police Academy initiatives by embarking on a training programme aimed at existing police officers. Every two months 750 policemen will complete the course at the US training centre in Kabul. Regional training centres are to be set up in Gardez, Kunduz, Mazar, Bamian, Kandahar, Jalalabad and Parwan. [40as]

1996 - 22 December 2001

5.85 During the Taliban regime the Taliban's militia and religious police, part of the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice (PVSV) were responsible for internal security in areas under Taliban control. [2b]

5.86 Prior to 22 December 2001 civilians continued to be the primary victims of unabated fighting. [2b] Both sides of the conflict targeted civilians during their quests for military victory, subjecting them to the indiscriminate use of mortars, rocket and fighter plane attacks and also landmines. [11d][6b]

5.87 Following the arrival of the Taliban, it was reported in 1996 that many roads were reopened and security conditions apparently improved. [11a] The strict security enforced by the Taliban in areas under its control resulted in a decrease in abductions, kidnappings and hostage taking. However, there were also credible allegations that Taliban forces were responsible for disappearances, abductions, kidnappings and hostage

taking and maintained private prisons to settle personal vendettas.[2b]

5.88 In June 1997 Amnesty International reported that claims by the Taliban to have brought peace and stability to Afghanistan were often used by their supporters to justify human rights abuses, including their discriminatory practices against women. However, whilst Kabul's residents apparently welcomed an end to the rocketing and shelling that came from the Taliban's take over of the city, some questioned the price which they had to pay.[7a]

5.89 A Human Rights Watch report, dated July 2001, detailed a number of violations committed by both sides during the course of the conflict and indicative of the conduct of the warring parties. These included the massacre by the Taliban of some 176 civilians in the town of Yakaoloang in the Hazajarat region in January 2001 following fighting in and around the town between Taliban and Northern Alliance factions. A further execution of an unknown number of civilians also took place in June 2001. In January 2001 Taliban forces summarily executed at least 31 ethnic Uzbek civilians while retreating from Khwajaghar in Takhar province. There were also reports that the Taliban bombed residential areas of Taloqan prior to the fall of the town in September 2000 and that Taliban forces carried out summary executions of Northern Alliance sympathisers in villages in the area. In late 1999 and early 2000 internally displaced persons in and around Sangcharak district recounted summary executions, burning of houses and widespread looting during the four months that the area was held by the Northern Alliance.[17b]

5.90 On 7 October 2001 Operation Enduring Freedom, a US led international coalition began a military action aimed at toppling the Taliban regime and eliminating the Al Qa'ida network from Afghanistan.[2b] In November 2001 Northern Alliance forces killed approximately 100 to 300 Taliban fighters in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif when it shelled a former girls school that was being used as a military barracks by the Taliban. There were conflicting reports as to whether some of the Taliban forces had attempted to surrender before the shelling.[2b] It was further reported that another 120 Taliban prisoners were killed on 25 November 2001 following a riot of prisoners at the Qala-e-Jhangi fort.[2b][25at] In November 2001 following the capture of Kabul there were unconfirmed reports of civilians killing fleeing Taliban members, and Arabs and Pakistanis. [2b][25r]

5.91 On 16 October 2001 Taliban members were reported to have intermittently looted offices of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan over a period of two days in five separate Afghan cities.[2b] In November 2001 following the capture of Kabul by the Northern Alliance there were credible reports that as Taliban members fled the city they ransacked offices, stole vehicles, looted the museum and stole an estimated \$1.5 million from the currency exchange district.[2b]

Religious Police

5.92 The Taliban relied on a religious police force under the control of PVSF to enforce rules regarding appearance, dress, employment, access to medical care, religious practice, expression and other behaviour. Members of the PVSF, which was raised to the status of a Ministry in 1998 regularly monitored persons on the street to ensure that individuals were conforming to Taliban edicts. Those found in violation of the edicts were subject to punishment on the spot including beatings and detention. The edicts were generally enforced in cities, especially Kabul, but enforced less consistently in rural areas, in which more discretion was permitted based on local custom.[2b]

5.93 The UN Special Rapporteur met with the Head of the Religious Police in December 1997, who explained that the Religious Police had two roles. Firstly to promote virtue by calling people to good deeds and secondly to prohibit vice by keeping people out of crimes and other anti-religious activities. It was the duty of the police to investigate and then turn the case over to the Chief Justice and the Attorney General. [6a]

5.94 Small incidents (including small social and religious crimes) were dealt with exclusively by the Religious Police, who carried out punishments. Men and women in Kabul reportedly feared being stopped or harassed by the Religious Police (for example the Religious Police beat shopkeepers found in their stores at prayer time). Punishments for some offences reportedly ranged from 10-40 lashes. [6a]

Prisons and Prison Conditions

Current Situation

5.95 In January 2002, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported on the release of some 270 detainees in Kabul. They had been recently transferred from the Do Ab prison in Panjshir having

previously been in prison for up to six years. ICRC delegates confirmed that they were currently visiting some 4,800 detainees in approximately 40 places of detention throughout Afghanistan.[42a]

5.96 On 1 February 2002 Amnesty International (AI) raised concerns about the conditions under which thousands of prisoners in Afghanistan were detained. Under the Bonn Agreement the Interim Administration is formally responsible for detention facilities, however Amnesty reported that the US had a continuing responsibility for the welfare of prisoners in US custody, and in addition had significant influence over the situation of prisoners in facilities run by the Afghan authorities.[7c] In particular AI raised concerns about conditions in the US controlled Kandahar Airport facility, where there were reports of prisoners being gagged, blindfolded and shackled and held in unheated permanently lit quarters.[7c]

5.97 Physicians for Human Rights reported in January 2002 on conditions found at Shebarghan Prison west of Mazar-i-Sharif. Investigators found severe overcrowding, non-existent sanitation and exposure to winter cold, inadequate food and no medical supplies, resulting in epidemic illness and deaths. According to the commander of the facility, cells designed to hold 10-15 prisoners were holding 80-110 men. The prisoners held included 1,000 Pakistanis, Afghan Taliban who surrendered at Kunduz in December 2001 and 100-150 prisoners who had been held since before the Taliban rose to power.[45] The ICRC confirmed in March 2002 that it had been visiting detainees at Shebarghan prison since November 2001. The prison held the largest number of detainees captured after the fall of the Taliban, and ICRC had provided detainees with blankets, clothes, shoes, bowls, water containers and soap. Immediate steps had also been taken to ensure a sufficient supply of water.[42e]

AFGHANISTAN COUNTRY REPORT

OCTOBER 2003

Country Information & Policy Unit

6. HUMAN RIGHTS

6A. HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

Part I

Part II

Part III

6. HUMAN RIGHTS

6A. HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

OVERVIEW

Current Situation

6.1 The Bonn Agreement established the Interim Authority and demanded that the Interim Authority should

- act in accordance with basic principles and provisions contained in international instruments on human rights and international humanitarian law
- ensure the participation of women as well as the equitable representation of all ethnic and religious communities.

Those participating in the talks also affirmed their determination to end the tragic conflict in Afghanistan and promote national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability and respect for human rights in the country.[39b]

6.2 The 1964 Constitution, in effect under the Bonn Agreement, states that "The people of Afghanistan, without any discrimination of preference, have equal rights and obligations under the law." Statutory law has not been modified to be consistent with anti-discrimination principles. According to the US State Department at the end of 2002 local custom and practices generally prevailed in much of the country.[2d] In March 2002 the Interim Administration committed to establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate atrocities committed by all sides.[25ba]

6.3 In a paper, dated 13 February 2002, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the establishment of the Interim Authority and the gradual deployment of the international security assistance force in Kabul city and surrounding areas had paved the way for a significant improvement in the situation for Afghans. This was particularly true in urban centres where the previous situation of systematic discrimination by the Taliban no longer prevailed. UNHCR advised that serious problems could continue to be faced by some individuals or groups if they were returned to Afghanistan. In particular this could be on political grounds depending on the group in control of their area of origin or on ethnic grounds for persons originating from and returning to an area where they constitute an ethnic minority. In addition those who were associated with or are perceived to have been associated with, either the former Taliban or pre 1992 Communist regimes might face serious problems on return.[11e] In a note issued on 10 July 2002 UNHCR, stated that the majority of refugees had freely opted to return and had done so safely, mostly to Kabul and Nangarhar provinces. UNHCR noted that the situation is now generally conducive to the safe return of a broad spectrum of asylum seekers.[11h]

6.4 UN Special Rapporteur Asma Jahangir undertook a mission to Afghanistan in October 2002. Information collected during the mission indicated that whilst incidents of extrajudicial and summary executions have decreased dramatically they do continue. In many places an atmosphere of fear prevails especially outside Kabul. In general the Special Rapporteur noted that the human rights monitoring capacity of the United Nations and the Transitional Administration is thoroughly inadequate, making it impossible to have a clear picture of the human rights situation throughout the country.[6d]

6.5 Most sources interviewed during a Danish Fact Finding mission to Afghanistan in September 2002 believed that human rights violations still take place particularly in the northern regions. Ahmad Zia Langari a commissioner of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission believed that in general the human rights situation has improved since the downfall of the Taliban, but that outside Kabul the warlords are in control. According to UNAMA the main problem is not the lack of central government will to implement the requirements to observe human rights, but the central governments lack of penetration into the provinces. [8c]

6.6 A UNHCR report in July 2003 stated that persons of the following profiles might be at particular risk of violence, harassment or discrimination:

- Persons associated with or perceived to have been associated with the Communist regime, as well as others who have campaigned for a secular state;
- Certain profiles of women;
- Persons at risk of persecution on political grounds;
- Persons originating and returning to areas where they constitute an ethnic minority;
- Persons who are perceived to have been associated with or supported the Taliban regime;
- Non-Muslim religious minorities;

vii. Converts from Islam to Christianity, or Judaism.

For more information on the above categories, see also paragraphs on former KHAD and PDPA members 6.160-6.170; Women 6.113-116; Freedom of speech and media 6.27; Pashluns 6.75-6.81; Former Taliban members 6.209-6.213; Sikhs and Hindus 6.45-6.54; Converts 6.55-6.56.

6.7 In a report dated July 2003 into human rights abuses in southeast Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch reported that human rights violations by warlords continued to occur throughout Afghanistan. During the period January to June 2003, reports were received of serious human rights violations in Kandahar, the northern provinces around Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat. The report acknowledged that attempts are being made by the Afghan Transitional Administration to address the ongoing problem, such as Ministry of Defence reform and planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). However, the report calls for both national and international authorities to concentrate their attention on expediting such reforms and bring former fighters and commanders under civilian rule in order to put an end to endemic fighting and human rights abuses. [171]

6.8 In August 2003, as part of a reshuffle of provincial governors and officials, President Karzai stripped Ismail Khan, the governor of Herat, of his additional post as military commander, stating that officials could not hold both military and civil posts. The governor of Kandahar Province, Gul Aga Sherzai, was appointed Construction Minister for Kabul and replaced as governor of Kandahar by Yusuf Pashtoon, the former Construction Minister. [25bw]

6.9 The Secretary-General to the UN Security Council stated in July 2003 that the initiation of the disarmament programme, due to commence on 1 July 2003, had been delayed, pending the implementation of a series of reforms at the Ministry of Defence to restructure the Ministry's most senior echelon, including the appointment to high level positions of people from differing political, regional and ethnic backgrounds. However, preparations for the DDR programme were underway in Bamian, Gardez, Kandahar and Kunduz. [39i]

6.10 UNAMA reported that a voluntary disarmament process, organised and conceived by the Security Commission of the North, began in Sholgara in August 2003. The Sholgara disarmament is supported by three key leaders of Jonbesh-e-Melli, Jamiat-i-Islami and Hizb-e-Wahdat: Generals Abdul Rashid Dostum, Ustad Atta Mohammad and Sardar Saidi, who have reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing security in the north. However, this exercise is not part of the national DDR programme which has yet to begin. [40bb]

6.11 In September 2003, plans to reform the Defence Ministry were finally approved by the Cabinet. A senior analyst with the International Crisis Group stated that the reforms, including 22 new appointments, are intended to create a more equitable balance within the leadership of the Ministry and encourage national disarmament and demobilisation among commanders who feel they lack representation in the current Defence Ministry structure. Commanders in several regions, including the Pashtun southeast and the Uzbek regions of the northeast, had previously said that they would not comply with national disarmament if all the leadership positions in the Defence Ministry were held by Panjshiri Tajiks. [36o]

Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission

6.12 On 6 June 2002 Hamid Karzai signed into law a decree establishing the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan. [40m] This Commission was the product of a national consultative process between Afghan human rights activists, the Interim Administration and the UN. [40s] The Commission is charged with developing a national plan of action for human rights in Afghanistan. The 11 members of the Commission were appointed on the basis of their individual human rights expertise, personal and professional integrity, competence, demonstrated independence, and commitment to human rights. [40m] The Commission comprises men and women from all the major ethnic groups. [40s] Members of the Commission will serve for two years during which time they will not be subject to removal by any external authority. [40m]

6.13 On 28 June 2002 the Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) meeting for the second time unanimously approved the appointment, by Hamid Karzai, of the former Minister for Women, Dr Sima Samar, as its Chair. Two members of the AIHRC recently appointed to cabinet positions resigned at the same meeting. In order to ensure its independence the terms of reference of the AIHRC do not allow Cabinet members to be members of AIHRC. [40p]

6.14 Speaking in September 2002 Dr Sima Samar said that the Commission is an independent body, which will work for human rights education in schools, the advancement of women, children and transitional justice

and undertake monitoring and investigation of human rights abuses. [36i] In late March/early April 2003 the Commission opened sub-offices in Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Bamian. [40ai]

6.15 It was reported in March 2003 that the commission had received some 600 petitions and complaints from individuals and groups across the country. Its investigations have focused on complaints of abuses against witnesses to human rights violations, the situation of Pashtuns in the north, and complaints of the Hazara community from Helmand. The Commission is also participating in an investigation into prison conditions throughout the country. [39h]

6.16 On 18 May 2003, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) completed its planned expansion in the interior of the country. Seven satellite offices are now fully operational. The AIHRC together with UNAMA are jointly monitoring and investigating human rights violations, as well as organising educational and other promotional activities. [39i] In August 2003, Amnesty International reported that the AIHRC had recently established a unit to deal with "transitional justice" and had started collecting information regarding past human rights violations and international crimes over the past 23 years. However, it does not have the mandate to commence criminal investigations into past violations of human rights and international crimes. [7q]

1996 - 22 December 2001

6.17 The overall human rights situation throughout 2000 and 2001 was extremely poor and serious human rights violations continued to occur. The Taliban carried out summary justice and political and other extra judicial killings. [2b] Afghans continued to suffer a wide range of deprivations and violations, with policies and practices that severely restricted or denied their human rights. The continuing civil war was the most significant factor. Both warring factions demonstrated total disregard for the protection of civilians and international humanitarian law. [11d]

6.18 On assuming power the Taliban imposed a strict and intimidating Islamic code. [11d] A reported formal easing of restrictions in 2000 reversed during 2001. The Taliban attempted to increase its control by increasing the authority of the PVSV religious police, by increasing restrictions and by committing a greater number of abuses. [2b]

6.19 The Taliban and members of other warring factions committed numerous serious human rights abuses in areas they occupied in 2000 and 2001. In the past there have been reliable reports that individuals were detained by both the Taliban and Northern Alliance because of their ethnic origins and suspected sympathy with opponents. There have also been credible reports that both sides were responsible for torture in prisons. The human rights situation in areas outside Taliban control also remained extremely poor and Northern Alliance members have committed numerous serious abuses. Anti-Taliban forces continued sporadic rocket attacks against Kabul in 2000 and bombarded civilians indiscriminately. Armed units of the Northern Alliance, local commanders and rogue individuals have been responsible for political killings, abductions, kidnapping for ransom, torture, rape, arbitrary detention and looting. [2b]

- **6.20** A UNHCR report dated April 2001 noted that in a situation of continued conflict, abysmal economic conditions and widespread human rights violations there are no clear definable rules concerning who is or who is not at risk in Afghanistan. However UNHCR reported that among the prime targets of human rights abuses were the following:
 - Members of non-Pashtun ethnic groups not associated with the Taliban.
 - Members of certain Pashtun tribes not linked to the Taliban.
 - Minority religious groups.
 - Educated women.
 - Educated Afghans not associated with the Taliban.
 - Intellectuals seeking an end to the war.
 - Afghans working with the UN and NGOs.
 - People associated with the former pro-Soviet governments.

The main element of the violations that occurred however was not necessarily religious affiliation or ethnicity, but rather the actual or imputed opposition to the Taliban. [11d]

Domestic and International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)

6.21 There are many domestic and international NGOs in the country. Some are based in neighbouring countries (mainly Pakistan) with branches inside the country. The focus of their activities is primarily humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation, health, education and agriculture.[2d][52a][52b]. During 2002 the lack of security particularly in the north and southeast severely reduced NGO activities.[2d] In June 2002 Human Rights Watch(HRW) reported on several attacks on NGO workers in Balkh province in northern Afghanistan. The attacks took place mainly in Mazar-i-Sharif and it was reported that many NGO's in northern Afghanistan had removed female aid workers from undertaking field missions temporarily as a result. HRW blamed the attacks on the absence of a coherent, accountable administration in Balkh province.[17f] In a briefing on 27 June 2002 a spokesman for the Secretary General's Special Representative reported that the ban on female aid workers undertaking field missions had been lifted.[40n]

6.22 In August 2003, the United Nations and a number of other NGOs suspended activities in parts of southern Afghanistan following a spate of attacks on Afghan aid workers and policemen. UN missions were ordered to avoid travel in parts of Kandahar and Helmand provinces and in all of Uruzgan and Zabul. UNHCR announced that it was suspending operations in Kunar Province in the east of the country following the firing of a rocket near one of its compounds. [25bq] [25bx]

Freedom of Speech and Media

Current Situation

6.23 The 1964 Constitution provided for freedom of speech and press, however according to the US Dept of State report for 2002 some senior officials attempted to intimidate journalists and influence their reporting. A draft press law contained articles that curtail press freedom, specifically information that "offends Islam" or "weakens Afghanistan's army". All information must follow Sharia law and a publication could be suspended when the article on forbidden content was violated, although there were no reports of such action during the year.[2d] In a report to the UN Security Council in March 2003 the Secretary-General reported that in the previous 12 months the media in Afghanistan had developed from near non-existence to a vibrant sector, in spite of poor resources and occasional limitations imposed by State agents. According to the Ministry of Information and Culture there are over 170 publications in the country.[39h] Human Rights Watch reported in July 2003 that scores of newspapers opened in Kabul city in 2002 and early 2003 but other cities had far fewer new publications [17i]

6.24 It was reported that during 2002 journalists were subject to harassment, intimidation, and violence. For example HRW reported that security officials in Herat detained and mistreated a local journalist to prevent him from covering the local Loya Jirga selection process. At the end of 2002 there were reports that outside newspapers, including the Kabul Weekly, "Ebtakar" and "Takhassos" were circulating with greater frequency and in greater quantities than in earlier times.[2d][17j]

6.25 Government and factional control of television, radio, and most publications throughout the country effectively limited freedom of the press. During 2002 the central Government maintained a predominant role in the news media, and criticism of the authorities was rare. There were reports that government forces prohibited music, movies, and television on religious grounds. In August 2002 the Head of Kabul Radio and TV briefly banned the appearance on television of women singers. Unlike in previous years televisions, radios and other electronic goods were sold freely, and music was played widely.[2d] On 8 March 2003 Radio of the Voice of Afghan Women and independent FM radio station in Kabul was launched.[39h] In January 2003 cable television stations were banned from broadcasting by Chief Justice Shinwari who said there had been complaints about "half-naked singers and obscene scenes". In April 2003 the cabinet passed a law allowing them to go back on air and as a result cable television was switched back on.[25bi]

6.26 In July 2003, reports issued by Human Rights Watch and the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council stated that threats against journalists continued. [17i][39i] On World Press Freedom Day in May 2003, President Karzai appointed a commission to protect journalists. Nevertheless, intimidation and threats continued to be reported, most notably in Herat but also in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif. [39i] Human Rights Watch reported that the current media law is outdated and does not provide proper legal protections for media activity. [17i] On 17 June 2003, the editor and deputy editor of the Kabul newspaper *Aftab* were arrested for defamation of Islam on the instructions of the Supreme Court. President Karzai ordered their release on 25 June 2003 but said that they would still have to stand trial for blasphemy. [17i][39j]

6.27 UNHCR reported in July 2003 that, although not systematic, political repression may particularly affect certain categories of people perceived by commanders/factions to represent a threat to their power. These vulnerable categories include the media and journalists, civil society organisations such as women's

associations and professional *shuras* (councils) and witnesses of gross human rights violations. [11p]

Freedom of Assembly and Association

6.57 The 1964 constitution states that citizens have the right to assemble without prior permission and to form political parties. According to the US Department of State 2002 Report, tenuous security and likely opposition from local authorities seriously inhibited freedom of assembly and association outside Kabul during most of 2002. In Kabul a spectrum of organisations and political parties operated. According to the US Department of State 2002 Report the Government used excessive force and harassment against demonstrators on some occasions during the year. For example, in November 2002 Interior Ministry forces fired on Kabul University students protesting about poor living conditions and two demonstrators were killed. The Government allows for freedom of association, however in Herat it was reported that Ismail Khan's officials harassed and interfered with meetings of the Professionals Shura, the Herat Literary Society, and the Women's Shura. [2d] [17j]

6.58 Civil war conditions and the unfettered actions of competing factions effectively limited the freedom of assembly and association during most of 2001. The Taliban used excessive force against demonstrators but there were no reports of this in 2001. [2b]

Employment Rights

6.59 The Bonn Agreement revived the 1964 Constitution's broad provisions for protection of workers and a mixture of labour laws from earlier periods. According to the US Department of State 2002 Report little is known about labour laws, their enforcement, or practice. Labour rights are not defined and there was no effective central authority to enforce them. The only large employers in Kabul were the government's minimally functioning ministries and local and international NGO's. [2d]

People Trafficking

6.60 There was no legislation prohibiting trafficking in persons. A July 2002 UN report on Women and Girls Human Rights reported increasing anecdotal evidence of trafficking in Afghan girls to Pakistan, Iran and the Gulf States. Some girls were reportedly kept in brothels used by Afghans. The whereabouts of many of the girls, some as young as 10, reportedly kidnapped and trafficked by the Taliban remain unknown. [2d]

Freedom Of Movement

Current Situation

6.61 In May 2002 it was reported that there is free movement both in and out of Kabul. In the remainder of the country there are no official restrictions on movement although there may be some local roadblocks due to local acts of war. Banditry persists. The director of DACAAR stated that people now travel freely including on country roads and that there are fewer roadblocks than previously. In particular the main road running through Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad and back to Kabul is fully open. [8b] The 1964 Constitution provides for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration and repatriation for men. In practice the ability to travel is limited by sporadic fighting, brigandage, landmines, a road network in a state of disrepair and limited domestic air service. Despite these obstacles many men continue to travel freely with buses using routes in most of the country. The law provides that women are required to obtain permission from a male family member before having an application for a passport processed. [2d]

6.62 A number of sources were consulted, during the course of a Danish Fact Finding mission in September 2002, on the need for personal and social networks in areas people wish to move to. UNHCR Kabul advised that the availability of personal and social networks is vital for a person's ability to live in a given area. This is even more important for women, who in practice have difficulty in moving without male relatives. In larger cities the need for people to have relatives in the area is not as strong as in rural areas. Other sources confirmed the need for such networks particularly in rural areas and for more vulnerable groups. [8c]

6.63 A Swedish Fact Finding Mission to Afghanistan in November 2002 reported in April 2003 that travel is possible in almost the whole country but is limited by the risk of looting along the roads. For example, the roads in western Afghanistan from Herat to the north and from Herat to Helmand are unsafe, as is the road

between Kabul and Ghazni. However, the situation has greatly improved overall and conditions are still improving, shown by the decrease in the number of roadblocks. A spokesman for UNAMA stated that it is possible for anyone experiencing problems in one area of Afghanistan to move to another area. [61]

6.64 However, a UNHCR report issued in July 2003 emphasised the practical difficulties in internal relocation, stating that the traditional family and community structures of the Afghan tribal system constitute the main protection and survival mechanism. The report stated that protection provided by families, extended families and tribes is limited to areas where family or community links exist, in particular in the place of origin or habitual residence. [11p]

6.65 According to a Human Rights Watch report published in July 2003 on human rights abuses in southeast Afghanistan, there are no longer any government regulations barring women from going out without wearing a burqa or without a close male relative. However, in practice many women and girls are not going out, particularly in rural areas, due to fear of harassment, kidnapping or rape by armed men. [171]

See also Women paras 6.109 - 6.118

1996 to 22 December 2001

6.66 In principle male citizens had the right to travel freely both inside and outside the country, although their ability to travel within the country was hampered by warfare, lawlessness, landmines, a road network in disrepair and a limited domestic air service. The Taliban's restrictions on women curtailed their ability to travel freely. Some Afghans reported difficulty in receiving necessary permits to leave the country for tourism or business purposes. Despite these obstacles many people continued to travel relatively freely prior to the US military action in October 2001, with buses plying routes in most parts of the country. [2b]

1996 - 22 December 2001

6.28 There were no laws effectively providing for freedom of speech and of the press. Senior officials of various warring factions attempted to intimidate journalists and influence their reporting. There were fewer than ten regular publications in the country. All other newspapers were only published sporadically and for the most part were affiliated with different factions. [2b] The Taliban radio station, the Voice of Shariat, broadcast religious programming and Taliban pronouncements. [2b] The Taliban selectively banned the entry of foreign newspapers into their territory and many foreign books were banned. [2b] The Taliban prohibited music, movies, and television on religious grounds. In August 1998 television sets, videocassettes, videocassette recorders, audiocassettes, and satellite dishes were outlawed in order to enforce the prohibition. The ban continued through most of 2001 although reportedly television sets were sold widely and their use ignored unless reported by a neighbour. [2b]

6.29 All factions attempted to pressure foreign journalists who reported on the conflict. The Taliban initially cooperated with members of the international press who arrived in Kabul, however in August 2000 the Taliban introduced strict regulations governing the work of foreign journalists in the country. Foreign journalists were forbidden to film or photograph people or animals, were not allowed to interview women and were required to be accompanied at all times by a Taliban escort to ensure that these restrictions were enforced. During 2000 and 2001 there were also credible reports of the detention and torture of those believed to have been helpful to Western journalists. [2b]

6.30 Taliban arrests and restrictions against journalists increased during the intensified military conflict late in 2001. In September 2001 foreign media were banned from areas under Taliban control. A British journalist and her two Pakistani guides were arrested by the Taliban and later released, and a French and a Pakistani journalist and their Pakistani guide were arrested in October 2001 and also later released, a Japanese journalist was similarly arrested in October 2001 and released by the Taliban in November 2001. [2b]

6.31 A number of journalists were killed during the intensified fighting late in 2001. On 11 November 2001 Taliban forces fired on a Northern Alliance convoy and killed three journalists who were in an armoured personnel carrier. On 19 November 2001 in Mungarhar province armed men forced four journalists out of their convoy of vehicles and executed them and on 26 November 2001, in an apparent attempted robbery in Taloan, armed men broke into a house demanded money, stole equipment and killed a Swedish journalist. [2b]

Freedom of Religion

Background and Demography

6.32 The majority of Afghans are Muslims of the Sunni sect; there are also minority groups of Shia (Shi'a) Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Jews.[1][2a] Reliable data on the religious demography is not available but it is estimated that 84% of the population are Sunni Muslim and most of the remaining 16% are Shia Muslim and other religions. Sikhs, Hindus and Jews make up less than 1% of the total population.[2a] There are small numbers of Ismailis who are Shia Muslims who consider the Aga Khan their spiritual leader. In the past small communities of Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and Christians lived in the country, however most members of these communities have left. Even at their peak, these non-Muslim minorities constituted only one per cent of the population. Almost all members of the Hindu and Sikh population, which once numbered 50,000, have emigrated or taken refuge abroad. Hindus and Sikhs now numbering only in the hundreds often work as traders. The few Christians and Jews who live in the country apparently are almost all foreigners who are assigned temporarily to relief work by foreign NGO's.[2b]

6.33 Several areas of the country are religiously homogenous. Sunni Muslim Pashtuns, centered around the city of Kandahar, dominate the south, west and east of the country. The homeland of the Shia Hazaras is the Hazarajat or the mountainous central highlands around Bamiyan. Badakhshan province in the extreme northeast has historically been an Ismaili region. Other areas, including Kabul the capital are more heterogenous, for example around the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif there is a mix of Sunnis and Shia belonging to a number of ethnic groups.[2a]

6.34 No sources consulted during a September 2002 Danish Fact Finding mission to Afghanistan had any knowledge of the possible existence of Bahais or a Bahai community in Afghanistan.[8c]

Current Situation

6.35 Since 22 December 2001 the legal basis for religious freedom is the 5 December 2001 Bonn Agreement and the 1964 Constitution. The 1964 Constitution proclaims "Islam" the "sacred religion of Afghanistan" and states that religious rites of the state shall be performed according to the Hanifa doctrine. The Constitution also proclaims that "non-Muslim citizens shall be free to perform their rituals within the limits determined by the laws for public decency and public peace." [2a] According to the US Department of State Report, during 2002, the central Government began to pursue a policy of religious tolerance. However custom and law required affiliation with some religion, and atheism was considered apostasy and was punishable by death. [2d] In September 2002 several sources stated that non-Islamic/secular conduct was not acceptable in Afghanistan, although religious tolerance of Ismaelitis, Hindus and Sikhs was reported.[8c]

6.36 In August 2002 it was reported that an Accountability Department tasked with ensuring Afghan Muslims refrained from such crimes as drinking alcohol, fornication and sodomy had been established within the Ministry for the Hajj. It was reported that this was similar to the notorious religious police of the ousted Taliban, but with less draconian powers. Deputy Chief Justice Manawi explained that Accountability employees would try to persuade people not to pursue vice and unlawful acts and that offenders will face gentler punishments than under the Taliban. The new punishments will depend on the crime but will include fines, imprisonment and lashings.[24b]

1996 - 22 December 2001

6.37 Freedom of religion was restricted severely. Due to the absence of a constitution and the ongoing civil war, religious freedom was determined largely by the unofficial, unwritten, and evolving policies of the warring factions.[2b] In mid 1999 the Taliban claimed it was drafting a new constitution based on the sources of Islamic religious (Sharia) law. It was stated that the new constitution would ensure the rights of all Muslims and of religious minorities, however a constitution was never adopted. Custom and law required affiliation with some religion, and atheism was considered apostasy, and was punishable by death. Licensing and registration of religious groups did not appear to be required by the authorities in any part of the country. The small number of non-Muslim residents in the country were allowed to practice their faith but not proselytize. [2b]

6.38 The country's official name according to the Taliban was the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, and according to the Northern Alliance was the Islamic State of Afghanistan. These names reflected the desires of both factions to promote Islam as the state religion. Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar carried the title Commander of the Faithful.[2a]

6.39 In areas it controlled the Taliban sought to further institute its extreme interpretation of Islam declaring that all Muslims must abide by their interpretation of Islamic law. Proclamations and edicts were announced through broadcasts on Radio Shariat and enforced by the religious police under the control of PVSV. Violations were subject to on the spot beatings and detentions. **[2b]**

6.40 On 7 January 2001 the Taliban issued a decree calling for capital punishment for any Afghan who converted from Islam. In March 2001 the Taliban acting on what it claimed to be religious grounds destroyed two giant statues of the Buddha dating from pre-Islamic times which were carved into the cliffs near Bamian. The destruction received worldwide criticism including from numerous Islamic authorities. On 23 May 2001 the Taliban decreed that Hindus and Sikhs would be required to wear a piece of yellow cloth attached to their clothing to identify their religious affiliation. **[2b]**

See also Sikhs and Hindus paragraphs 6.45 - 6.54

6.41 In June 2001 a decree was issued relating to foreigners in Afghanistan stating that those preaching other religions to Afghan Muslims would be deported after being imprisoned for three to ten days. Taliban officials later stated that the decree was only an initial guideline. In August 2001 eight foreign nationals and an estimated 48 Afghans working for the German based NGO Shelter Now International were arrested by the Taliban on charges of proselytising and apostasy. Those arrested were freed on 15 November 2001 by opposition forces following the fall of Kabul. In August 2001 the Taliban expelled two other religion-based NGO's with longtime presence in the country. Their personnel were ordered to leave within 72 hours. **[2b]**

Religious Groups

Shia Muslims

6.42 Historically the minority Shia have faced discrimination from the majority Sunni population. **[2d]** It is not clear however whether the Taliban's actions against the Shia Muslims were on account of religion or more along ethnic lines. The Hazara ethnic group for example is predominantly Shia and suffered persecution at the hands of the Taliban. Religion may therefore have been a significant factor rather than the sole cause of their persecution. **[2a]** Shias have long maintained religious links with Iran, where their 'ulema' studied at the famous seminaries in Qum and Mashad. **[11b]** The Taliban nonetheless introduced several prominent Shia commanders into its organisation, arguably to counter the perception that they were an exclusively Sunni Pashtun movement. **[2a]**

6.43 The Central Highland Hazarajat region - governed mostly by various factions of the Shia Hizb-i-Wahdat Party since 1989 - fell to the Taliban in September 1998. Since then, non-Hazarajat Taliban forces were deployed to maintain tight control and exert heavy pressure on the local population, with restrictions on their freedom of religion imposed. **[11d]** In February 2001 several enclaves within Hazarajat still remained under the control of a Hizb-i-Wahdat faction, led by the Shia mullah Karim Khalili. In some areas the Hizb-i-Wahdat governed with the support of an allied Shia party, the Harakat-i-Islami. **[17a]**

See also Hazaras paragraphs 6.86 - 6.95

Ismailis

6.44 The Ismailis are a Muslim minority group that split from the Shias in the year 765. They are estimated to consist of 2% of the total Muslim population in Afghanistan. Ismailis have been regarded as "non-Muslims" by radical elements of the Muslim population (they believe that their spiritual leader, Karim Aga Khan, is a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammad). **[11a]** Ismailis have also fought for the Northern Alliance and suffered reprisals when the Taliban captured territories they previously held. The Taliban has reportedly mistreated Ismailis. **[2b]** According to the Co-operation Centre for Afghanistan in September 2002, there is religious tolerance to Ismailis who have the right to practice their religion. **[8c]**

Sikhs and Hindus

6.45 Afghan Sikhs comprise descendants of traders drawn to Afghanistan through Afghan intervention in northern India and British-Indian intervention in Afghanistan, plus some whose emigration was stimulated by the upheaval of 1946-47 that accompanied the partition of the Indian Empire. The Afghan Sikhs retain the use of Punjabi amongst themselves. Given their involvement in trade, Dari/Farsi is probably the most important additional language for them. **[15b]**

6.46 The total non-Muslim population at its peak was only around 50,000. Almost all of the Hindu and Sikh population have now either emigrated or taken refuge abroad. **[2a]** Sikhs left Afghanistan en masse along with thousands of Hindus after the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India in December 1992. Seeking revenge, some radical Muslims in Afghanistan saw their countrymen of Indian origin as soft targets to exact revenge; large scale looting of Hindu and Sikh temples ensued. **[36f]** Although Sikhs also fled Kabul in 1996 when the Taliban assumed control, it was reported in October 1997 that there were a small number of Sikh shops in Jalalabad. **[15a]**

6.47 According to one report Sikhs appeared to have adapted their worship to comply with Taliban dictates and for the tiny Sikh minority (including a close-knit community of around 500 in Kabul) relations with the Taliban were relatively smooth compared to other religious minorities. This is due in part to their small numbers, but also to their willingness to adapt to Taliban rules. **[30b]** However a Sikh shopkeeper believed that some Sikhs would like to leave Afghanistan for India, as they have to behave according to Afghanistan's current circumstances. He nonetheless asserted that they were treated well by the country's current rulers, but also that the economic situation was poor for them. **[30b]** A UN source also stated that in general the Sikh community does not have any problems with the authorities. He added that they are able to run their businesses and are allowed to practise their religion with no restriction on their movement. **[36f]**

6.48 Similarly in Jalalabad, a leader of the Sikh community stated that the Sikh community also felt safe in Afghanistan despite Taliban rule. There were reportedly one hundred Sikh families in Jalalabad (about seven hundred in total) who came to worship at the city's two Gurdwaras. Sikhs dominate the textile market in Jalalabad's retail shops, receiving the fabric from Muslims via the Afghan-Pakistan border. This system of commerce has been built on a foundation of communal coexistence and mutual reliance. **[35a]**

6.49 Hindus have been an integral aspect of the economy and Afghan society, although their businesses were eroded under the Taliban due to the dire economic situation. It was reported however that the Taliban did not target or mistreat the Hindu community; as a small group they were not perceived as a threat. A 1998 report corroborates this viewpoint, stating that for Hindus and Sikhs it was the Taliban's opponents who caused them the most problems. **[3b]** For the small community of Hindus and Sikhs that remained in Afghanistan, the Taliban were generally tolerant, as they were with other 'non-believers'. Individual cases of discrimination did nonetheless still occur. **[3c]**

6.50 On 23 May 2001, the Taliban decreed that Hindus and Sikhs would be required to wear a piece of yellow cloth attached to their clothing to identify their religious affiliation. This was purported to be to identify non-Muslims so they could be spared from harassment by PVSF enforcing mandatory rules on Muslims. The requirement was later suspended and identity cards were to be issued. On 3 July 2001 the Taliban announced that Hindus would be consulted before ordering them to wear any distinctive marks differentiating them from Muslims. **[2b]**

6.51 In May 2002, Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Transport, said during a visit to India, that the Interim Administration had decided to grant protection to Afghan Sikhs and Hindus who had fled from the country, most of whom had migrated to India or Pakistan. **[37]** In June 2002 one report indicated that there were 30,000 Afghan Hindus and Sikhs. Unlike their counterparts in India where the faiths are clearly separate it is reported that Sikhs and Hindus, in predominantly Muslim Afghanistan, have become united in adversity. They share the same temples as well as many religious ceremonies. **[49]** Another report in June 2002 indicated that as few as 1,000 Sikhs remained in the country, half of which were concentrated in Jalalabad. There were also reported to be four or five Hindu families and about 15 Sikh families in Kandahar and a further 15 to 20 families in Helmand province. **[40i]** In October 2002 the US Department of State estimated that numbers of non-Muslims including Sikhs and Hindus were only in the hundreds. **[2a]** Four Hindu and Sikh delegates attended the Loya Jirga in June 2002. **[49]** They reported that they were no longer repressed and felt free to practice their religions. **[2a]**

6.52 In September 2002 UNHCR-Kabul and Co-operation Centre for Afghanistan confirmed that the situation for Hindus and Sikhs is generally good, there is religious tolerance to these groups and they have the right to practice their religions. **[8c]**

6.53 A report by the Afghan Professional Alliance for Minority Rights (APAMR) on 22 May 2003 stated that, in 2002, some 50 Hindu and Sikh families returned to Afghanistan, some of whom found their houses, temples, lands and shops being occupied by commanders, tribal leaders and armed groups. Some are too afraid to attempt to repossess their properties for fear of reprisals from the present occupants. Problems of this nature were reported in Kandahar, Helmand and Khost Provinces. The Hindus and Sikhs who have returned to Afghanistan are reported to be mostly living in temples (Daramsals) in Kabul and other provinces, as they do not have a house or job to support themselves. Representatives of the Hindu and Sikh community told

APAMR that they had not been consulted about the selection of a member for the Constitution Commission to represent their community and they have not been consulted them about the difficulties and problems their community face. It is estimated that 1200 Hindu and Sikh families are now living in Afghanistan including 350 families in Kabul. [64].

6.54 In July 2003 the UNHCR reported that there were some 3,500 Sikh and Hindu families in Afghanistan, mainly living in the Kabul, Ghazni, Kandahar, Helmand and Nangahar provinces. The report notes that the community still suffers from the consequences of a more rigorous and less tolerant application of Islamic values by the State and the various factions in power during the last 14 years. As a result, the community still faces forms of intimidation in public places and their children cannot attend earlier existing Sikh/Hindu schools. [11p] In some provinces, including Kandahar, Helmand, Khost, Nangahar and Ghazni it is reported that there is either no school or the schools are in need of reconstruction. Representatives of the Hindu and Sikh community state that people are unwilling to send their children to other Afghan schools for fear of mistreatment. [64]

Converts

6.55 The Co-operation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA) informed a Danish fact finding mission in September/October 2002 that it is not permitted to convert from Islam to Christianity and to do so carries the death penalty. NGOs might have converted Muslims to Christianity, but if so this had not been discovered and any converts would have fled the country. [8c]

6.56 In a report dated July 2003, UNHCR Geneva reported that a risk of persecution continues to exist for Afghans suspected, or accused, of having converted from Islam to Christianity, or Judaism. Conversion is punishable by death throughout Afghanistan. However, UNHCR were unaware of any death sentence since the establishment of the Interim and Transitional Administration [11p] and President Karzai has now imposed a moratorium on the death penalty. [7q]

AFGHANISTAN COUNTRY REPORT

OCTOBER 2003

Country Information & Policy Unit

6B HUMAN RIGHTS - SPECIFIC GROUPS

Part I

Part II

Part III

Part IV

6B. HUMAN RIGHTS - SPECIFIC GROUPS

ETHNIC GROUPS

Introduction

6.67 Afghanistan is largely a tribal society divided into many tribes, clans and smaller groups. Considerable variation in the types of terrain and obstacles imposed by high mountains and deserts account for the country's marked ethnic and cultural differences. **[11a]** An estimated 38% of the population are Pashtuns divided into two main subgroups, the Durrani and Ghilzai, in addition there are other sub-groups and clans. While most of the Pashtuns are settlers, some of them, the Koochis (or Kuchis), lead a nomadic or semi-nomadic life, based on animal husbandry. Tajiks are estimated to form 25% of the population, Hazaras 19% and Uzbeks 6%. Turkmen, Aimaks, Baloch and other smaller ethnic groups make up the remaining 12%. **[11p]**

Current Situation

6.68 The 1964 constitution, in effect under the Bonn Agreement, states that "the people of Afghanistan, without any discrimination or preference, have equal rights and obligations under the law." Statutory law has not been modified to be consistent with anti-discrimination principles. At the end of 2002 local custom and practices generally prevailed in much of the country. **[2d]** The Interim Administration included representatives from Pashtun, Hazara and Tajik ethnic groups. **[25ab]** The Transitional Administration inaugurated following the Loya Jirga in June 2002 has an ethnically mixed cabinet; 13 Pashtuns (including Hamid Karzai); nine Tajiks; three Uzbeks; three Hazaras; and one Turkmen. **[48b]** In a paper dated February 2002 UNHCR advised that serious problems *could* continue to be faced by some ethnic groups for those persons originating from and returning to an area where they constitute an ethnic minority. **[11e]** In May 2002 UNHCR Afghanistan expressed concerns about Pashtuns returning to northern areas. **[8b]** In July 2003, the UNHCR reported that, although the situation for Pashtun minorities in many areas had progressively improved since April 2002, the situation in the North-West remained precarious due to continuing harassment by local commanders. **[11p]**

See Pashtuns paragraphs 6.75 - 6.81

Pre 22 December 2001

6.69 During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, ethnic divisions were largely superseded by a common military and political desire amongst the mujahidin. Since 1995 however ethnic tensions have become more prominent. As areas were captured and re-captured by rival factions, atrocities were committed against certain ethnic groups. **[7i]** Several sources have referred to abuses and protection problems for minorities within regions, especially for non-Pashtuns in Taliban controlled territory and for Pashtuns in Northern Alliance controlled territory. A UN source explained that the ethnic dimension to the war ran along political lines, with the parties and military alliances being based on ethnic background. Afghanistan did not experience any ethnic cleansing as such, although there has been ethnic polarization, especially between the Taliban and the Hazara population. **[8a]**

See also Hazaras paragraphs 6.86 - 6.95

6.70 In the past there were reliable reports of individuals being detained by both the Taliban and Northern Alliance because of their ethnic origins and suspected sympathy with opponents. **[2b]** Amnesty International reported in their 1999 Annual Report that during 1998 non-Pashtun Afghans were barred from moving about the country freely, and that many were detained solely on the basis of their ethnicity. In July of that year hundreds of people travelling to Pakistan were reportedly stopped in the Jalalabad area by Taliban guards who took away Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek and Panjsheri men and boys as young as twelve. **[7f]** There were reports during 1999 and 2000 that there was harassment and forced expulsions of ethnic Hazaras and Tajiks from Taliban controlled areas. **[2b]**

Pashtuns

6.71 Pashtuns (also called Pathans) are the largest single ethnic group, constituting some 44% of the population. **[23]** They are Sunni Muslims, living mainly in the east and south of the country adjacent to Pakistan. Pashtuns have always played a major role in Afghan politics, adopting a dominant position, which triggered aspects of the civil war. Conflict arose for example between partners who fought against Soviet occupation. President Rabbani's regime represented the Tajik minority, whereas troops led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (and later the Taliban) were mainly Pashtun. **[27]**

6.72 The traditional social code followed by the Pashtuns is based on the 'Pashtunwali' code, requiring the

speaking of the Pashtu language and adherence to established customs. Hospitality is an important principle, as are reliance on the tribal 'jurga' for resolution of disputes and local decision-making. Other attributes of the code are the seclusion of women from all affairs outside the home, emphasis on personal authority and freedom, and political leadership based on personalities rather than ideologies or structures.[27]

6.73 The Pashtuns are not a homogeneous group, with many having fallen victim to oppression by their own elites. The power and leadership of individuals are arguably the root of the Pashtuns' divisions into tribes and numerous sub-tribes - each isolated within its own borders. Throughout history interference in one another's affairs has caused sub-tribal conflict, although in the event of external influence or central government interference a unified response has been the usual result.[27]

6.74 It was noted in 1997 that Pashtuns made up the great majority of the refugees in Pakistan. The Pashtun tribal population of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) still has much in common in terms of culture, language and traditions with their fellow Pashtu-speakers across the border (the 'Durand Line') in Afghanistan. There is a long tradition of mobility among the Pashtuns who live in the NWFP and those of eastern Afghanistan. Notably, some 60,000 nomads ('kuchis' or 'powindahs' as they are respectively known in Afghanistan and Pakistan) were accustomed to moving annually with their herds between summer pastures in Afghanistan and winter pastures in Pakistan. Others were merchants or businessmen with interests in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad in Afghanistan and Peshawar in Pakistan, who moved regularly between the two countries. [11a]

Current Situation

6.75 In early March 2002 Human Rights Watch reported the testimonies of Pashtuns in Northern Afghanistan, which depicted violence, looting, and intimidation at the hands of local commanders.[17d] A full report of the findings of Human Rights Watch researchers who visited northern Afghanistan in February and March 2002 was issued in April 2002. The report detailed abuses suffered by ethnic Pashtuns in northern Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in November 2001. The abuses included killings, sexual violence, beatings, extortion, and looting, and targeted Pashtuns as their ethnic group was closely associated with the Taliban. The three political factions active in the north Junbish-i-Milli-yi Islami, Jamiat e- Islami and Hizbi-l Wahdat, are drawn largely from the Uzbek, Tajik, and Hazara ethnic groups respectively. Each of these groups and their militia were directly implicated in many of the abuses as were non-aligned Uzbeks Tajiks and Hazaras taking advantage of the vulnerability of unprotected and selectively disarmed Pashtun communities. Each of these groups was reported to have targeted the Pashtun community in areas under its control, partly in reprisal for the communities' perceived or actual association with the predominately Pashtun Taliban movement. In Faryab province, commanders whose forces were associated with the abuses were removed by General Abdul Rashid Dostum. This appeared to have contributed to a reduction in violence and abuse. However, in other areas, abusive commanders continued to act without restraint or reprimand. Hamid Karzai appointed a three-person independent commission to investigate the claims of discrimination against ethnic minorities in northern Afghanistan.[17e]

6.76 In May 2002 UNHCR Afghanistan and other sources suggested that there would be problems for Pashtuns returning to northern areas. However UNHCR Afghanistan also said that the number of attacks in northern Afghanistan against Pashtuns had reduced, but Pashtuns were still leaving the area to move to eastern and southern parts of Afghanistan. In contrast the Norwegian Ambassador in Afghanistan said that the attacks, which were suppressed in April 2002 had grown worse again leading to a movement of refugees to the south. He believed that the attacks were associated with a struggle for power as a result of the Loya Jirga process. The director for Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA) stated in May 2002 that Pashtuns still occupy the trade and transport sector in northern areas. Several thousand Pashtuns are living in Mazar-i-Sharif without any problems.[8b]

6.77 In a paper dated July 2002 UNHCR Geneva stated there had been confirmed reports of persecution of ethnic Pashtuns where they are an ethnic minority in the North and parts of the Western region of Afghanistan. In particular in Faryab, Jawzjan, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar, Sar-i-Pul and Samangan and in addition around Herat mainly among displaced persons. In a reaction to these reports the Interim Administration sent an official mission to the North which confirmed the reports and recommended the establishment of a commission against ethnic violence in the North. The commission is tasked to investigate reports of violence and encourage dialogue between the communities.[11m]

6.78 Several sources consulted during a Danish Fact Finding mission in September 2002 pointed out that ethnically based persecution of Pashtuns was still continuing in northern regions and in some districts in Herat. The sources spoke of serious injustices, harassment and cruelty. According to UNHCR Mazar-i-Sharif, although there is considerable discrimination against Pashtuns in terms of access to resources and

there are incidents of persecution, generally the situation has improved since March 2002.[8c]

6.79 In November 2002 HRW issued a report on the situation in Herat, and reported that Pashtuns have been especially targeted for military and police brutality particularly on the streets and roads around Herat. Several sources described a pattern of arbitrary arrests, usually followed by beatings.[17j]

6.80 In early March 2003 it was reported that the main local leaders in Afghanistan have agreed to bring to an end factional fighting and help thousands of Afghans return to their homes. The agreement was reported to have been secured by Ruud Lubbers UN High Commissioner for Refugees.[25bk]

6.81 According to a UNHCR report issued in July 2003, the situation for Pashtuns in the North and West has progressively improved since April 2002 and the majority party leaders in the North have given assurances that the rights of Pashtuns will be respected. The situation has calmed in certain areas, particularly in Badghis and the North East where there have been larger numbers of Pashtuns returning. However, the situation in the North West is reported to remain precarious for Pashtun communities as harassment by local commanders continues. [11p] Some, such as Ismail Khan in Herat, still consider Pashtuns to be traitors. [61]

Tajiks

6.82 Tajiks - the second largest group - make up about 30% of the population. Their language is a form of Farsi, close to the national language of Iran. [27] Most of them are Sunni Muslims, but Shia Muslim Tajiks are also found in the west of the country (in and around the city of Herat) and in Kabul.[11a] Tajiks generally however are divided between the north, the west and Kabul. Of central Asian origin, there are around 4 million of this group living in neighbouring Tajikistan. Tajiks have had significant political influence due to their level of education and wealth. They have no specific social structure (as the Pashtuns do), adopting the social and cultural patterns of their neighbours.[27]

6.83 Tajikistan - racked by civil war and with a government backed by Russian troops - has been sympathetic to fellow Tajiks led by Rabbani. Many Afghan Tajiks also favour a greater Tajikistan, entailing the merging of Tajik areas of Afghanistan with Tajikistan.[11a]

6.84 Around 2,000 Tajik and Hazara men were rounded up from their homes in Kabul in July 1997 and held in various jails according to Amnesty International. Most of them were believed to be prisoners of conscience. [7d] During 2001 there continued to be reports of harassment, extortion and forced expulsion from the homes of Tajiks by Taliban soldiers. [2b]

Current Situation

6.85 In May 2002 UNHCR Afghanistan and CCA both reported problems between Hazaras and Tajiks in Bamian province and in particular in the city of Bamian. The problems related mainly to Tajiks returning to the area and claiming properties, which had been occupied by Hazaras, and to the power struggle associated with the Loya Jirga. The director of the International Crisis Group (ICG) stated that Tajiks were safe in Kabul but expressed concerns for their safety in northern areas where there had been clashes between Uzbeks and Tajiks.[8b]

Hazaras

6.86 Hazaras number around 16% of the population, living mainly in the central highlands.[27] The Hazara ethnic group is predominantly Shia and they are among the most economically disadvantaged. [2b] Hazaras show their origins both in their physical appearance and in their cultural customs. They speak a variant of Persian and most of them are Imami Shia Muslims. [8a] Economic, social and political repression resulted in Hazaras combining with other Shia minority groups throughout the prolonged civil war. [27]

6.87 Amnesty International reported in May 1997 that the bodies of 12 ethnic Hazaras, reportedly all civilians, were found in a neighbourhood west of Kabul. Taliban soldiers were believed to have been responsible for their deaths. Amnesty also reported in 1997 that thousands of people were held for up to several months on account of their ethnicity. Among these were around 2,000 Tajik and Hazara men rounded up from their homes in Kabul in July 1997 and held in various jails. Most of them were believed to be prisoners of conscience. [7d]

6.88 During a visit to Mazar-i-Sharif in December 1997, the UN Special Rapporteur visited villages where massacres were reported to have occurred in September 1997. The perpetrators were reportedly Taliban forces during their second offensive of Mazar-i-Sharif, against villagers belonging to the Hazara ethnic minority. The UN Special Rapporteur was advised that a group of 14 or 15 young men were taken from the village to the nearby airport where they were tortured and subsequently executed. Some 53 other villagers were killed in another village and around 20 houses were set on fire. The Special Rapporteur was told that the killings were carried out on religious grounds, since the villagers were Hazara Shias, and out of revenge for when villagers fiercely resisted the Taliban during their first offensive in May 1997. [6a]

6.89 In August 1998, the Taliban captured Mazar-i-Sharif. There were reports that as many as 5,000 persons - mostly ethnic Hazara civilians - were massacred by the Taliban after the takeover. [2b] The Taliban were reportedly intent on avenging a massacre of some 2,000 of their own men in 1997, when the Hazaras and other fighters turned against them. The Taliban's recapture of Mazar-i-Sharif has been described as a campaign to exterminate the Hazaras. Men, women and children were reportedly shot in their homes and on the street, with hospital patients murdered in their beds. Witnesses claim that the Taliban also conducted house-to-house searches for Hazara men. Some were shot dead and left with their throats cut. Others not murdered on the spot were stuffed into containers after being badly beaten. Aid officials regarded the evidence of the atrocities as credible, with the view that the Taliban's Mazar-i-Sharif summer 1998 offensive was an abominable episode of butchery and rape. [12] In a report submitted in October 1998 by the UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, it was alleged that the Hazara ethnic minority was principally, though not exclusively, targeted by the Taliban in its capture of Mazar-i-Sharif. [11b]

6.90 When the Taliban captured Bamian on 9 May 1999 from the Hizb-i-Wahdat (a party with Hazara support), the majority of Hazaras fled to the surrounding mountains. Those who remained were reportedly the victims of systematic killings by Taliban guards. Kuchi Nomads (from Pashtun tribes) were reportedly encouraged to settle in Bamian after the Taliban had assumed control. [7i]

6.91 In May 2000 a massacre of primarily Hazaras by the Taliban was reported, near the Robatak pass on the border between Baghlan and Samangan provinces in the north central area. A Human Rights Watch report stated that all of those killed had been detained for four months and many had been tortured. Thirty-one bodies were found at the site, 26 were identified as civilians from the Baghlan province. From January 2001 to June 2001 Human Rights Watch and the UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights reported on summary executions and reprisals against local civilians mainly ethnic Hazaras. These were carried out by the Taliban when they fought with Northern Alliance factions for control in and around the town of Yakaolang (Yakawalang). [17b][39a] It was estimated that there were approximately 180 killed in January 2001 and reports of a further 30 in May and June 2001. There were also reports that in June 2001 civilian property was targeted including the burning of bazaars and roadside houses. In particular Nayak town was reported to have suffered large scale destruction with property being looted prior to destruction. [39a] The Special Rapporteur indicated that for three days in January 2001 the killings seemed to be indiscriminate and even prominent local figures who had previously co-operated with the Taliban were killed. [39a]

6.92 In April 2002 three mass graves were discovered in the central Afghan region of Bamiyan. It was reported that the graves contained at least 35 bodies and were thought to contain the bodies of local Hazaras killed a month before the fall of the Taliban in late 2001. [25be] A UN investigative team which visited the area reported later that it had examined two sites in Daudi village, and a UN spokesman reported that they had found at least four people buried. Forensic teams were to be called in to carry out a more thorough examination of the sites and the UN spokesman confirmed there were strong indications of other sites in the area. [25bf]

Current Situation

6.93 In May 2002 several sources confirmed that there are no problems for Hazaras in Kabul where they can move around freely and many are employed in administration in Kabul. There are also no security based problems related to their return to Bamian province. The director of ICG also confirmed that since the fall of the Taliban there is no longer an open war against Shia Muslims although they remain a religious minority in the country. [8b]

6.94 In September 2002 UNHCR Kabul and the EU's special representative stated that discrimination against Hazaras in access to employment and education continues. However representatives of Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan and the Agency Coordination Body for Afghanistan stated there were no problems for Hazaras, and that the group in general believes itself to be free. [8c]

6.95 A Swedish fact finding mission reported in April 2003 that Hazaras are not at risk in Kabul due to their ethnicity. [61] However, Amnesty International reported in June 2003 that some Hazara returnees in western Kabul had been targets of violence and petty crime in that area, some of which was carried out by rival ethnic groups and alleged that the police usually made no attempt to investigate their complaints. [70] In July 2003, UNHCR reported that Hazaras from the Kamard district of Bamian had complained of persecution by Tajik or Tatar commanders, including extortion, beating and intimidation, causing population movements throughout 2002 and into 2003. [11p]

Situation of Women and Girls in Herat.

6.133 In December 2002 HRW issued a report on the situation of women and girls in Western Afghanistan. HRW reported that the central government is not yet in a position to protect the human rights of women and girls especially outside the capital, Kabul. An area of special concern is the province of Herat where under the rule of the local governor Ismail Khan, women's and girls' rights steadily deteriorated throughout 2002. HRW reported that while conditions were undoubtedly better than under the Taliban- women and girls have better access to education and are not beaten by the authorities in the streets, many Taliban era restrictions still remain. According to a UN official working with women's groups throughout the country "Herat is the worst province for women in Afghanistan" and although the situation in the city is bad conditions in rural areas of the province are likely to be worse. [17i]

6.134 According to the HRW report a woman in Herat has little access to public life including employment, civic organisations or other fora where she can participate in public debate. In order to leave her home she must travel in a way that she will not be harassed, arrested and taken off to hospital to be subjected to an "abusive" chastity examination. At home women can expect no protection against violent and abusive family members and as in most parts of the country fleeing her home may result in arrest and prosecution. She has no way to contest the decisions of male family members about whom she will marry or whether she can attend school or work. She is effectively politically socially and economically marginalised. Ismail Khan has responded to criticism of his human rights record by denying any violations and claiming that Afghans have different human rights "values". [17i]

6.135 In July 2003, UNHCR reported that the Herat government continued to discriminate against women and their right to work. Few jobs are open to women and those that are have significant restrictions placed on them by the government. The governor of Herat, Ismail Khan, has pressured women not to work for NGOs or the UN. [11p]

1996 to 22 December 2001

6.136 As lawlessness and interfactional fighting continued in some areas, violence against women occurred frequently including beatings, rapes, forced marriages, disappearances, kidnappings and killings. Such incidents generally went unreported and most information was anecdotal. Although the stability brought by the Taliban acted in general to reduce violence against women -notably rapes and kidnappings - Taliban members threatened or beat women to enforce the Taliban's dress code and imposed wide-ranging and even life-threatening restrictions on women's mobility and their ability to obtain gainful employment. The enforced seclusion of women within the home greatly limited the information available on domestic violence and marital rape. [2b]

6.137 All factions have used the status of women as a political tool to claim legitimacy or gain popularity. Cultural constraints emanating from tradition and religion have been raised to the political level, but the most consistent and stringent in the enforcement of these demands were the Taliban. [7j]

6.138 Ideologically, the Taliban believed that the state should preserve the dignity and honour of the family and guarantee the personal security of women. [11d] The treatment of women under Taliban rule was however particularly harsh. The Taliban initially excluded women from all employment outside the home, except the traditional work of women in agriculture. In July 2000 the Taliban issued a decree which banned women's employment (except in the health care sector) by UN agencies and NGOs. Implementation remained erratic, but the UN and NGOs kept their female staff at home to avoid open confrontation with the Taliban. [2b]

6.139 In urban areas, and particularly after the Taliban took Kabul in 1996, the Taliban forced almost all

women to concede their jobs as professionals and clerical workers, including teachers, doctors, nurses, bank tellers and aid workers. In a few cases, the Taliban allowed women to work in health care occupations under restricted circumstances.[2b]

6.140 An international aid agency expressed concern in August 2000 about the fate of widows and their children, after a Taliban ruling forbade women from being employed by foreign aid agencies. An agency concerned provided food to 7,000 of Kabul's poorest widows, and stated that it needed to employ Afghan women for distribution of the food. [25d]

6.141 Taliban actions significantly reduced women's access to health care. In practice women were excluded from treatment by male physicians in most hospitals. When treatment by a male physician was permitted the doctor was prohibited from examining her unless she was dressed in the Taliban approved burqa and was also prohibited from touching her. The possibility of meaningful diagnosis was therefore limited. There were credible reports that the restrictions on women's health care were not applied in practice and improvements in women's medical care were reported in 1999 and 2000. In 2001 the process of improvement was reported to have slowed.[2b]

6.142 The Taliban decreed what women could wear in public. Women in public spaces were required to wear the burqa - a loose head to toe garment that has a small cloth screen for vision. While in many rural areas of the country the burqa was the customary women's outer garment, the requirement for all women to wear the burqa represented a significant change in practice for many other women, particularly in urban areas. According to a decree announced by the religious police in 1997, women found outside the home who were not covered properly would be punished severely along with their family elders. In Kabul and elsewhere women found in public who were not wearing the burqa, or whose burqas did not cover their ankles properly, were beaten by Taliban militiamen. Some women could not afford the cost of a burqa, and thus were forced to remain at home or risk beatings if they went out without one. [2b]

6.143 There were reports of inconsistencies in the enforcement of the requirement for women to wear the burqa. Enforcement was reportedly relatively lax in rural and non-Pashtun areas, and there were reports that some women in Herat and in rural areas covered their heads with large scarves that left the face uncovered and did not face reprisals. The Taliban's dress code for women was apparently not enforced strictly upon the nomad population of several hundred thousand, or upon the few female foreigners who must still cover their hair, arms and legs. Women in their homes must not be visible from the street, and the Taliban required that homes with female occupants have their windows painted over.[2b]

6.144 Women were expected to leave their homes only while escorted by a male relative, or run the risk of beatings by the Taliban. Women were not allowed to drive and taxi drivers were reportedly beaten for taking unescorted women as passengers.[2b]

6.145 Many of these extreme restrictions on women were not however invented by the Taliban. For centuries they have governed the lives of ethnic Pashtuns in border areas with Pakistan. Such customs have nonetheless been slowly subsiding in cities, although they remain prominent in the villages. The Taliban chose to adopt the most uncompromising Pashtun customs, and then attempted to enforce such concepts of family honour on an entire society. Hence in the villages where these customs had hitherto already existed, there were no great protests at the Taliban's demands. In Kabul however, where modernity and tradition have competed for most of the 20th Century, these ultra-conservative demands posed a much greater problem. [18b]

6.146 The Taliban's restrictions regarding the social behavior of men and women were communicated by edicts and enforced mainly by the Religious Police. The edicts were enforced with varying degrees of rigor throughout the country. The restrictions were enforced most strictly in urban areas, where women had enjoyed wider access to education and employment opportunities before the Taliban gained control. [2b]

6.147 Following the September 1999 visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, some improvements in the status of women were noted. These included the existence of home schools as well as limited primary educational institutions for girls run by the Religious Ministry in Kabul; increased access of women to health care; and the permission given for widows to work. The Special Rapporteur however also noted continuing violations of the physical security of women. These included lashings and public beatings; violations of the rights to education, health, employment, freedom of movement, and freedom of association, and of family rights - including the existence of polygamy and forced marriage. It was also noted that minority women were sometimes subject to forced displacement, and that there were some cases of trafficking in women and children [11b]

Children

6.148 Approximately 45% of the population are children aged 14 or under. The situation of children is very poor. Infant mortality is 250 in 1,000 births and Medecins Sans Frontieres reported in 2000 that 250,000 children a year die of malnutrition and 25% of children die before the age of five. A UNICEF study reported that the majority of children are highly traumatized and expect to die before reaching adulthood. According to the study, some 90% have nightmares and suffer from acute anxiety, while 70% have seen acts of violence, including the killing of parents or relatives. [2d]

6.149 In November 1999 Amnesty International reported that Afghanistan's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child amounted to no more than a paper promise as Afghan children were denied the most basic rights. Female and sometimes male children suffered rape and sexual abuse, and were abducted by local warring commanders. Others were sold into prostitution. Such atrocities were an endemic characteristic of a long war-torn country like Afghanistan and were occurring long before the Taliban swept to power. [7g]

6.150 According to the US State Department report 2002 there were credible reports that both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance used child soldiers. Northern Alliance officials publicly stated that their soldiers must be at least 18 years of age, but press sources reported that preteen soldiers were used in Northern Alliance forces. [2d]

6.151 The UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict carried out a mission to Afghanistan in August 2002. He called for major investment in the children and youth of the country in the areas of education, nutrition and basic medical care. He stated that during the years of conflict one out of three children had lost one or both parents, some 20% had died before their first birthday, 50% had suffered chronic malnutrition and children made up about half the country's landmine victims. He said that it was known that all fighting groups had enlisted young people under the age of 18, but following the end of the war many had been demobilised. He had sought commitments that no person below the age of 18 would be enrolled, and that the Government would move rapidly to ratifying the Optional Protocol on the participation of children in armed conflict. [40v]

6.152 The designated "National Day of Unity for Children" on 20 May 2003 commemorated the work accomplished so far on immunization, education and other child rights and committed to several important initiatives for children. Among the initiatives is the government's decision to pioneer a collaboration between the polio "National Immunization Days" campaign and the first ever national birth registration programme. As a result of the immunization programme, polio is on the verge of eradication in Afghanistan. However, UNICEF reported that there is some way to go in Afghanistan to ensure that access to basic rights and services are actually delivered for all Afghan children, especially for girls. [40aq]

6.153 In July 2003, UNHCR reported that infant and under-five mortality rates remained among the highest in the world. A large proportion of illnesses and deaths were due to preventable communicable diseases such as measles, cholera, tuberculosis, malaria, meningitis, hepatitis, typhoid, childhood respiratory infections and diarrhoea. [11p]

6.154 In August 2003, it was reported that UNICEF estimates there are some 8,000 former child soldiers in the country, both those who are still retained by armed groups and those who have been disarmed through informal processes but who remain in urgent need of rehabilitation within the community. UNICEF is supporting the establishment of a number of projects throughout Afghanistan, which will assist the reintegration of former child soldiers and other young people who have been affected by conflict. In May 2003 the recruitment and use of child soldiers in the Afghan National Army was outlawed. [40ax]

For information on [Education System](#) see paragraphs 5.133 - 5.139

Child Care Arrangements

6.155 Prior to 1981 there were no state orphanages in Afghanistan. The orphanage system was a product of Sovietisation during the 1980's when two decades of war produced an abundance of genuine orphans. In Kabul there are two state-run orphanages. [25y] A report on conditions in the Kabul state orphanage in November 2002 indicated that it housed some 2,000 children aged between 3 and seventeen. Conditions in the orphanage were poor with poor hygiene, inadequate nutrition and lack of sanitation. [40k] According to UNICEF there are hundreds of orphanage and similar projects in Afghanistan most of them catering to children from poor families rather than orphans. [44c]

6.156 At the request of UNICEF, War Child UK carried out a survey of institutions for children deprived of parental care in western Afghanistan. It was reported in June 2003 that after two decades of war, the coping mechanisms of the extended family had weakened and an increasing number of children who had lost one or both parents had been placed in institutions. Primarily, children are placed in these institutions because of economic reasons, better education and food provision. [40ap]

KhAD (former State Security Services)

Background

6.157 The Khadimat-e Atal'at-e Dowlati (meaning State Intelligence Service in Dari) was set up in 1980 and soon came to embody the highly repressive communist regime. The secret service became notorious and feared under its acronym "KhAD". The first head of the KhAD was Dr Najibullah one of the former leaders of the Parcham faction of the Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). As a result of his post in KhAD he rose rapidly in the hierarchy of PDPA. In November 1985 he left to devote himself to work for the party and handed over responsibility to Major-General Ghulam Faruq Yaqubi. Dr Najibullah shortly afterwards became Secretary General of the party and President of the country a post he retained until 1992. On 9 January 1986 the KhAD was transformed into a separate ministry under the name of Wazarat-e Amani-ye Dowlati or Ministry of State Security". Although the official abbreviation was then WAD the secret service continued to be popularly known as KhAD.[34]

6.158 The Security Services played a crucial role in the survival of the Communist regime, which had very little support amongst the population. The KhAD ensured the existence of the regime and operated by means of tracking down and fighting enemies as they saw fit. The slightest sign of disloyalty or opposition provided a pretext for such action. KhAD subordinates were instructed to carry out arrests, detentions, judicial sentencing, exile, torture or extra-judicial execution of perceived opponents of the regime. Adopting brutal methods, their notorious ruthlessness induced a climate of terror due to the level of autonomy that they were given.[34]

6.159 All KhAD and WAD NCO's and officers were guilty of human rights violations, however they could not operate within the organisation until they had given proof of their unconditional loyalty to the Communist regime. During their trial periods officers had to pass a severe loyalty test. On first assignment NCO's and officers were transferred to KhAD and WAD sections actively engaged in tracking down subversive elements. Only those who proved their worth were transferred to sections with more administrative or technical activities. According to report produced by the Netherlands delegation to the European Union, in practice this means that all KhAD and WAD NCO's and officers took part in interrogation and torture of real and alleged opponents of the Communist regime.[34]

Treatment of former KhAD members

Current Situation

6.160 In May 2002 UNHCR stated that the level of risk to those affiliated to the former communist regime would depend on the area from which they came and whether family relationships could provide them with protection. UNHCR also stated there would be problems for high-ranking former communist military officers (including former communist regime security service-KhAD members) and their families.[8b]

6.161 A Swedish fact finding mission in November 2002 consulted various sources and reported that high-ranking members of the former communist regime could be targeted. However, many members of the former communist regime have lived in Afghanistan since the 1980s, seemingly without persecution. High ranking members who have been involved in decisions that meant life or death could be at risk but normally it is a matter of vendetta from individuals who have been affected by these decisions. The Human Rights Team at UNAMA stated that former communists could be targeted but they are not systematically targeted. Whether or not they were targeted depended on a variety of reasons including the current political context and who they were affiliated to. It is not possible to exclude the possibility that former KHAD members could be targeted. [61]

6.162 In a paper issued in July 2003, UNHCR stated that the risk to members of some groups on return to Afghanistan requires careful assessment. These groups included former KHAD who, it was stated, continued to be generally at risk, given their identification with human rights abuses during the communist regime. [11p]

1992 to 22 December 2001

6.163 After the fall of the Communist regime in 1992 many KhAD and WAD agents went to work for the new ruler's intelligence services. The Taliban intelligence service Estikhabarat too was partly manned by former KhAD and WAD agents. Despite their reputation, former members of the Communist security services and their relatives were not by definition at risk of Taliban persecution. The Taliban even accepted some former KhAD members within their own intelligence apparatus, regarding their specific experience as more important than their political past. However others who made too many enemies in the past, or were unwilling to work for the Taliban risked persecution by the Taliban, although the level of risk depended on the individual concerned.[34]

6.164 In 1997 it was reported that the Taliban had detained former members of KhAD. They were particularly interested in apprehending former KhAD members who had been guilty of widespread torture and killings. However many had left the country or changed their place of residence and possibly their appearance. There was also very little archive material available on the KhAD, much having been destroyed at the end of the Communist regime.[8a]

Former Members of the PDPA

Current Situation

6.165 In a report dated 13 February 2002 UNHCR advised that certain groups or individuals could face serious problems were they to return. Amongst these groups they identified persons associated or deemed to have been associated with the Communist regime overthrown in 1992, and warned that they might be at risk of violence, harassment or discrimination.[11e]

6.166 UNHCR stated in May 2002 that conditions are not safe for the return of former members of the communist central committee and their families and members of the communist committees structures at district and province level. UNHCR also considered it was not safe to return for those involved in the former communist party's social organisations including those who worked at district and province level.[8b]

6.167 In May 2002 UNHCR Afghanistan, OXFAM in Afghanistan, and United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan (UNAMA) confirmed that former members of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime were working in the interim administration, the security service and the military. UNAMA and Oxfam believed there would be no problems for low-profile former members of PDPA in returning to Afghanistan. DACAAR further confirmed that the situation in May 2002 was unchanged from that under the Taliban, when there was hardly any persecution of those at a low level whilst higher profile members faced problems.[8b]

6.168 In September 2002 UNHCR Kabul knew of only a few former communists who have returned to Afghanistan, but stated that not all former members of PDPA are able to return to Afghanistan, but not all risk persecution. The more purely technical-administrative the position occupied during the communist regime the safer the person would be.[8c]

6.169 According to UNAMA's civil affairs branch in September 2002 the situation for former communists is not consistent. Several high-ranking former communists are doing well under the new government-it is predominantly high-profile former communists who need a connection to the current administration in order for them to manage. With regard to local profile communists UNAMA said their situation depends on their work and actions during the communist regime. Those who had been involved in injustices, violence, torture and killings would have problems today. UNAMA also stated that the Taliban took a tough line against former communists, but those who survived the Taliban and the period during 1992 to 1996 would have nothing to fear from the current rulers because of a communist past. [8c]

6.170 In a paper dated July 2003, UNHCR stated that the risk to members of some groups on return to Afghanistan, if without any links with existing Islamic/political parties or tribal protection, requires careful assessment. These groups included high ranking members of the PDPA, irrespective of whether they belonged to the Parcham or Kalq faction of the party. They will be at risk only if they are known by armed factions, and this includes:

- i) Members of Central, Provincial Cities and Districts Committees of PDPA and their family members

- ii) Some of the heads and high-ranking members of social organisations such as the Democratic Youth Organisation and the Democratic Women Organisation at the level of country, province, city and districts. According to UNHCR, five former members of the PDPA are ministers in the Transitional Authority. [11p]

1996 - 22 December 2002

6.171 A UNHCR report issued in April 2001 stated that those affiliated to the former communist government through membership of the PDPA - or as a result of their functions or profession - continued to be at risk of human rights violations by the Taliban. The degree of risk was dependent on several factors, such as the level of communist ideology the individual identifies with, human rights violations committed during the communist era, the rank or position held and the context in which they operated. Family links (including extended family), education and stay abroad may also be relevant factors. [11d] Many former PDPA members were nonetheless amongst the Taliban's ranks. [8a]

6.172 In 1997 it was reported that the Taliban had detained people from the PDPA and former members of the KhAD. They were particularly interested in apprehending former KhAD members who had been guilty of widespread torture and killings. Most high-ranking PDPA and especially KhAD personnel had nonetheless already left the country. [8a]

6.173 PDPA membership in itself might have attracted harassment and persecution by the Taliban. However the question of the risk faced by those associated with the PDPA regime is full of contradictions, with a number of senior members of the Taliban movement, including various military commanders, having previously been communists and members of the PDPA. These are mainly individuals with especially valuable qualifications, in particular people having undergone lengthy training in the use of military technology. [8a]

6.174 The protection enjoyed by some apparently stemmed from their clan membership and links with influential ethnically and family-based groupings ('qawms'). Members of influential 'qawms' were thus able to achieve 'rehabilitation' in Afghanistan under the Taliban to a greater extent than others. Those lacking such cultural and social protection risked harassment and persecution by the Taliban merely on account of membership of the PDPA. The pattern of Taliban reactions was so arbitrary, unsystematic and unpredictable that social power structures and private links with the Taliban may have been the decisive factor as regards the risk of ill treatment. One Afghan NGO expressed no specific knowledge of ill treatment of low ranking PDPA members. [8a]

6.175 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Netherlands suggested in December 1998 that people belonging to the Khalq factions of the Communist Party were reported to run less of a risk than those belonging to the Parcham faction. This is connected with dissension between the various Pashtun tribes, which were also present in the PDPA. The Ministry also reported that prominent communists, such as former Ministers, certain judges, law officers, high-ranking soldiers, intellectuals and other well-known personalities, may also be at risk. Because of their previous activities such individuals generally had something to fear from the authorities in 1998, and sometimes in neighbouring Pakistan. [14]

6.176 Amnesty International reported that in May 1998 the Taliban announced that "communists" would be detected and if found to be "committing heinous deeds and crimes against the people, they would be heavily punished". This raised fears that Pashtun nationalists opposing Taliban policies, particularly some members of the former Khalq communist faction, might be targeted for human rights abuses. [7f]

6.177 A Pakistani daily reported that in December 1999 Mullah Omar ordered the identification of government employees who won awards during the Soviet occupation. The report stated that ministries were drawing up lists of officials, which were to be sent to the Taliban's ruling council for discussion. [20a]

Homosexuals

6.178 Homosexual relationships for both men and women are forbidden by Sharia law, which applies in Afghanistan. [41] Under the Taliban the stipulated punishment for those found guilty of homosexual acts was to have walls toppled on them. Although there were no known instances of such punishment in 2001, it was carried out on at least one occasion in 1999 and seven times in 1998. [2b] In particular in February 1998 a wall was felled by a battle tank on three men convicted by Sharia court of committing sodomy with young boys. The punishment took place in front of thousands of spectators including the Taliban leader Mullah Omar who ordered that they remain buried for 30 minutes. Two men died in hospital the next day and the

third survived.[41] News reports indicate that sexual activity between Afghan men is far from uncommon. It has been reported that between 18% and 45% of Afghan men may engage in homosexual acts.[31b] In April 2002, the chief of Afghanistan's supreme Court was reported as saying that, although these punishments could still be implemented, they would only be carried out following a detailed legal process in which the accused could contest the charges and appeal for clemency through measures such as paying restitution to avoid harsh sentences [60].

Intellectuals

6.179 The Afghan intelligentsia (consisting of various religious and political groups) are scattered around the world. Some supported the Taliban, while others backed the Northern Alliance. Others generally favoured an end to the conflict and a negotiated settlement. It is this particular group that was the particular target of assassination attempts both inside Afghanistan and in Pakistani refugee camps.[7h] UNHCR confirmed that among the most targeted were educated Afghans not associated with the Taliban regime or intellectuals seeking an end to the war. [11d]

6.180 Escalation of power and influence from radical Islamic elements can result in the targeting of educated people. This particular group may be perceived as a threat to the power base of the radicals, and due to their often moderate or liberal views they could also be interpreted as being secular or insufficiently Islamic.[32] Rumour or behaviour (such as absence from mosques at prayer time) may have induced suspicion of Taliban opposition. This applied more to ethnic Pashtuns who may be perceived as contributing to the disunity of the movement. The risk was greater to the educated, especially those educated abroad.[11d]

6.181 Many Afghan intellectuals had been suffering persecution and murder at the hands of armed Mujahidin groups since the late 1980s. Political personalities including intellectuals, community leaders and former army officers were also subsequently targeted and arrested by the Taliban in 1998 and 1999 due to their peaceful opposition to the continued civil war. Some were reportedly tortured and others killed in custody. [7h]

6.182 Amnesty International reported that from 1999 to 2000 dozens of Afghan leaders and intellectuals living in Pakistan received death threats, and several had have been killed. A number of moderate activists relocated out of Pakistan to other countries, in part as a reaction to killings in Pakistan.[2b]

6.183 According to Amnesty International death threats were made against many Afghan citizens based in Pakistan. The identity and political links of the assassins were not known, but those targeted include prominent Afghan personalities (intellectuals, human rights defenders and women's rights campaigners) actively opposed to Taliban policies. Most of them were Afghan intellectuals of Pashtun ethnic background. In some cases, individuals claiming to represent the Taliban reportedly delivered warnings in person, seeking an end to what they have termed as "anti-Taliban activity". The Taliban claimed no responsibility for such attacks:[7e] therefore there was an anarchic nature to the threats, intimidation and attacks on Afghans resident in Pakistan. Afghan intellectuals and professionals (amongst other political, ethnic and religious groups) as a result felt insecure in Pakistan.[32] Certain Afghan refugees who do not feel safe in Pakistan (due to links with civilian activities in Afghanistan or more notably educated urban women without traditional family support) have been repatriated to third countries with UNHCR assistance, or when appropriate have been relocated within Pakistan.[11c]

Uzbeks and Turkomans

6.96 Uzbeks and Turkomans are followers of the Sunni Muslim tradition. A significant Turkoman population in western Afghanistan has historically been victimised by the Pashtuns. [11a] Forming around 13% of the population, they are ethnically and linguistically Turkic. They are related closely to the people of modern Turkey to the west, and identical to the majority Muslim population of Central Asia across the border to the north. Because of their relative prosperity (through arable land ownership and carpet production) they have traditionally not been dependent on the central government and not attempted to gain political influence.[27]

6.97 Uzbekistan's president had clandestinely supported his fellow Uzbek General Dostum with tanks, aircraft and technical personnel. The expectation was that Uzbek dominated provinces in northern Afghanistan would provide a buffer against the spread of fundamentalism from Afghanistan. [11a]

6.98 In January 2001 it was reported that Taliban forces summarily executed at least 31 ethnic Uzbek citizens

while retreating from Khwajaghar in Takhar province, during battles with Northern Alliance forces.[17b]

Baluchis

6.99 Baluchis number around 384,000 - around 2% of the population. Their language is Baluchi. They live in the pastoral lands of the south and south-west, and are Sunni Muslims. The group is divided between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan with a tradition of rebellion against their respective central governments. They have had ambitions to form an independent state of Baluchistan, although these demands have faded after political repression in all three countries. The Baluchis' independence struggle has attracted little attention from the outside world. [27]

Nuristanis

6.100 Nuristanis have a population of around 100,000, residing mainly in the east and the north. Their scattered settlement was a result of late 19th Century turbulence, when the land that was then Kafiristan (located in the middle of the Hindu Kush mountain range in four valleys) was converted to Nuristan ('Land of Light') through forced Islamisation of the tribe. Even in fairly recent times other ethnic groups have been suspicious of them for still being 'kafirs' - a word which can be interpreted as 'infidel'. Few Nuristanis have had access to education, although those who travelled to Kabul did gain access to schools and subsequently became well-known figures in the army and government.[27]

Panjsheris

6.101 The Panjsheris are a sub-group of Tajiks who also practise Sunni Islam, and speak a language known as Panjeri, a dialect of Dari. [11a] They number around 100,000, and live in the mountainous areas north of Kabul.[27]

Kuchis

6.102 The Kuchi tribes are Pashto speaking nomads who are reported to make up 10% of Afghanistan's population.[25ag][35b] Kuchis had an allocation of 26 seats at the Loya Jirga in June 2002.[25ag] In May 2002 it was reported that the Taliban guaranteed grazing areas for these nomads who they used as a form of intelligence service. Since the fall of the Taliban they have been driven from the northern and central areas of Afghanistan threatening their survival as a nomadic population.[8b]

Women

22 December 2001 to date

Overview

6.103 The Bonn Agreement reinstated part of the 1964 Constitution including, amongst others, the provision prohibiting discrimination based on sex.[2b] Following the Taliban's fall from power some improvements in the status of women have been noted however serious problems remain. HRW reported that advances in women's and girls' rights were tempered by growing government repression of social and political life. Women have regained some measure of access to public life, health care, and employment; however, lack of education and limited employment possibilities continued to impede the ability of many women to improve their situation.[2d]

6.104 On 25 March 2002 the UN Commission on the Status of Women approved a resolution on the status of women and girls in Afghanistan. The resolution urged the Afghan Interim Authority and the future Transitional Authority to

- fully respect the equal human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in accordance with international human rights law;
- give high priority to the issue of ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- consider signing its Optional Protocol which gives individuals the right to bring their concerns to the Conventions monitoring body;
- repeal all legislative and other measures that discriminate against women and girls as well as

those that impede the realisation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms;

- enable the full, equal, and effective participation of women and girls in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life throughout the country at all levels
- ensure the equal rights of women and girls to education.

[40c]

6.105 A Human Rights Watch (HRW) Briefing Paper issued in May 2002 stated that since the fall of the Taliban in November 2001, women and girls in Afghanistan have gained greater freedom to participate in public life and access to education, health care and employment. This is the case particularly in Kabul where ISAF has helped to bring much needed security. However even in Kabul women faced constant threats to their personal security from other civilians as well as from armed men belonging to various political factions. Whilst there were no reports of physical attacks in Kabul there were reports of instances of harassment. The HRW report indicated that outside Kabul (where the ISAF does not operate) women and girls continue to face serious threats to their personal security as a result of general lawlessness and insecurity.[17g]

6.106 HRW reported in May 2002 that the Afghan Interim Administration had publicly endorsed women's rights to obtain education and employment, but had not officially repealed Taliban edicts. Women interviewed by HRW felt that a public rescinding of all Taliban edicts would foster their confidence in the government and provide them with the legal ability to challenge gender-specific discriminatory edicts. In Mazar-i-Sharif HRW reported that the general insecurity restricted Afghan women so that they felt compelled to abide by Taliban edicts or risk abuse or even assault. Even in Kabul women were reported to be hesitant about participating in public life, their fears stemming mainly from their personal experience of violence and discrimination since 1992.[17g]

6.107 In May 2002 a Danish Fact Finding Mission reported that women can now move around without fear of the Taliban religious police. However generally women continue to wear the burka for their own safety.[8b] In June 2002, journalists commenting on the changes in Kabul since the fall of the Taliban, reported some women on the streets of Kabul in dresses either with headscarves or with their heads uncovered.[25an] [13b]

6.108 In an interview in September 2002, Sima Samar, the chairwoman of Afghanistan's Human Rights Commission said that the Commission would work on the advancement of women. She said that women did not have many rights in Afghanistan, despite the presence of women in the cabinet.[36i]

6.109 According to a HRW report issued in December 2002 restrictions on women and girls are again increasing all over Afghanistan. HRW reported that during the preceding 12 months they had documented serious human rights abuses against women and girls by warlords all over Afghanistan. In Kabul a reconfigured Vice and Virtue Squad is now operating (see also Accountability Department above). A team of some 90 women under the Ministry of Religious Affairs has reportedly been harassing women for "un-Islamic behaviour" such as wearing make-up. Women have also reported being harassed and threatened by unidentified men for discarding particular aspects of the Taliban-mandated dress code.[17i]

6.110 In a report issued in March 2003 the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council reported that Afghan women particularly in urban areas are slowly reentering public life. Over 30% of the students who returned to school in 2002 were girls and a third of the teachers were women.[39h]

6.111 In the course of a Danish Fact Finding mission to Afghanistan in September 2002 several sources emphasized the need for women to have networks including male relatives in order to obtain protection. Women without these networks and male relatives to whom they could turn for protection may face serious problems.[8c]

6.112 A UN Commission on the Status of Women report issued in March 2003 reported that following Afghanistan's emergence from 24 years of conflict one of the major changes has been the re-emergence of women in urban areas with relatively better access to employment, healthcare, and education. However women are reported to restrict their participation in public life to avoid being targets of violence by armed factions and elements seeking to enforce the repressive edicts of the previous regime. Despite positive developments regarding women's rights, intimidation and violence by regional and local commanders continue unabated. In rural areas, especially the more conservative tribal belt, the situation of women has not changed to any great extent since the removal of the Taliban. The prevalence of conservative attitudes limits the full and effective participation of women in civil, cultural, economic political and social life throughout the country.[6e]

6.113 In a report issued in April 2003 by a Swedish Fact Finding mission to Afghanistan, most of the sources interviewed, including the Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs and the Human Rights Team at UNAMA, confirmed that the security situation for women is difficult, particularly single head of households without extended families to care for them and provide protection. Such women are at risk because they have no family protection, no money and no employment. If they have children, the risk is extended to the child. [61] In June 2003, Amnesty International reported that many unaccompanied returnee women had been forced to beg on the streets of Kabul as their only means of survival and reports had been received of verbal and physical harassment of women returnees. [70]

6.114 A report issued in July 2003 by Human Rights Watch stated that almost every woman and girl interviewed in southeast Afghanistan said that life was better now than under the Taliban and that there was no longer any legislation preventing them from studying, working and going out without wearing a burqa or a close male relative. In practice, however, many did not go out, especially in rural areas, for fear of being attacked, raped or kidnapped by armed men. In Ghazni province UN officials confirmed cases of kidnappings, rape and forced marriages of girls and women, mainly in districts controlled by Hizb-e Wahdat forces. Kidnappings and rapes by armed men were also reported in Laghman and Paghman provinces. [171]

6.115 In July 2003, UNHCR reported that, in some urban areas, women were becoming increasingly involved in public life and were returning to work and school. However, discriminatory and conservative traditions in many provinces continue to limit the full, equal and effective participation of women in Afghan society. The improvements for women noticeable in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif were not taking place to the same extent in other urban areas. [11p]

6.116 UNHCR also reported in July 2003 that the persistence of discrimination and conservative cultural practices, at times leading to acts of violence including death (honour killing), mean that the following categories of women should be considered to be at risk and exposed to possible persecution, if they return to Afghanistan:

- i) Women without effective male and/or community support
- ii) Women perceived as or actually transgressing prevailing social mores.

The UNHCR report also included women's associations in the category of vulnerable groups who may be particularly exposed to acts of political intimidation. [11p]

6.117 On 3 August 2003, the women's group Negar, presented the Constitutional Review Commission with a declaration and 100,000 signatures demanding equal rights for women under the forthcoming constitution. The "Declaration of the Essential Rights of Afghan Women" drafted in 2000 by Afghan women exiled in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, seeks to end gender based discrimination and grant women freedom of movement and choice in matters such as dress. [40ao]

6.118 A thousand women protested in Kabul in August 2003, to voice their concerns about continuing insecurity. The protest was held in the Women's Park, a walled garden reserved for women and children only, after it was decided that a march through the streets would be too risky. A declaration called for troops to be sent to cities throughout the country and for all militias and fighters outside central government control to be disarmed [25br].

Legal Provisions

6.119 In January 2002 Hamid Karzai demonstrated his support for women's rights by signing the "Declaration of the Essential Human Rights of Afghan Women" which affirmed the right to equality between Afghan men and women. [6c] In December 2002 President Karzai decreed that women have the right to choose whether to wear the burqa. [2d]

6.120 On 5 March 2003 Afghanistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of the All Forms of Discrimination against Women. [39h] The Convention defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination [56]

6.121 The ICJ reported a large degree of confusion over the exact rights of women and their legal status. In June 2002 there were some 30 women in Kabul jail. Some were accused of criminal offences but the majority were detained for offences related to family law such as refusing to live with their husbands, or to marry a

husband chosen by their parents, or for having run away from parents or husband. ICJ reported that these women appeared to have no access to lawyers, no information on their rights, if any, and generally are left in jail until relatives intervene. There appeared to be a profound uncertainty regarding the legality of the detention of these women.[57]

6.122 In November 2002 President Hamid Karzai pardoned 20 of the women held in Kabul jail after mounting international pressure to improve conditions for prisoners. President Karzai also ordered an investigation into the cases of 11 women still in the prison. [62]

6.123 In July 2003, Amnesty International reported that hundreds of women and children were being held in prisons across the country, the majority for violating social, behavioural and religious codes. Girls from 13 years of age were being held in prison with adults alongside elderly women of approximately 70 years of age. The majority of women prisoners were from 18 to 25 years of age. Like men and children, they were being held for months in prisons before having the legality of their detention determined by a judge. Women are often held within a compound in the main prison area rather than in a separate compound. [7p]

Women's Participation in Public Institutions

6.124 In June 2002 women actively participated in the Loya Jirga. They were able to question leaders openly and discuss inter-gender issues during the Loya Jirga. Dr Masouda Jalal, a woman, stood as a candidate for the presidency. However some security officials attempted to intimidate female participants. During the Loya Jirga Sima Samar Minister for Womens Affairs in the Interim Administration received death threats for allegedly insulting Islam. Samar charged that fundamentalists who objected to her outspoken manner trumped up the allegation. The controversy did not end publicly until Supreme Court Justice Fazl Shinwari exonerated her of the charge.[2d] The Transitional cabinet announced following the Loya Jirga contains three women, Dr Suhaila Seddiqi, Minister for Public Health, Habiba Surabi, Minister for Women's Affairs, and Mahbooba Huqooqmal deputy Women's Minister.[48b]

6.125 In a report issued in March 2003 the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council reported women journalists have been able to return to their jobs as radio and television broadcasters. Hundreds of women are working as civil servants and professional in hospitals, courts, government and non-government institutions, the United Nations and the private sector. The Independent Human Rights Commission, the Judicial Commission, and the Constitutional Commission all include women members.[39h]

6.126 In a report issued in April 2003, the Deputy Minister of Women Affairs stated that about 1500 work at the Ministry of Women Affairs in Kabul and about 1500-1600 in the provinces. The role of the ministry is political and they promote issues such as women's rights, education, health and work. Women come directly to the Ministry with their problems. However, lack of funding limits their ability to help all the women who approach them. [61]

Marriage/Divorce/Child Custody

6.127 The issue of arranged marriages was discussed by several sources during a Danish Fact Finding mission in September 2002. The Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs said that the type of arranged marriages which took place under the Taliban did not occur any more, and that women who are at risk of being forced to marry or are in an arranged marriage can contact the Ministry and get assistance and a lawyer. If a girl is being forced into a marriage she does not want, the Ministry will support her and emphasise the importance of her happiness to the family. However, if the family insists on the marriage taking place the Ministry can do no more and most girls will have to accept the marriage. A UNAMA representative and UNHCR said there are continuing reports of arranged marriages involving girls as young as 10 and instances where payment may be offered, which families feel unable to refuse.[8c] The UNHCR reported in July 2003 that accounts of early and forced marriages continue. [11p]

6.128 The International Committee of Jurists following visits to Afghanistan in 2002 issued a report, which said that due to the demise of governmental institutions in Afghanistan marriages are generally no longer registered. Although under a 1977 law this would render them invalid in practice unregistered marriages are considered valid.[57]

6.129 According to the Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs in September 2002 if a woman is beaten by her husband she can get assistance from a crisis centre in Kabul, which gives advice and refers her to the

Ministry where the case will be prepared and forwarded to the appeal court. There are only 25 places in the crisis centre in Kabul, but the Ministry said it was in the process of setting up 31 similar centres in the provinces. However other NGO sources stated that there are no organisations fighting for the rights of women or where women can seek protection or assistance from their husbands or others.[8c]

6.130 A Swedish Fact Finding mission to Afghanistan in November 2002 were told by a UNHCR Protection Officer in Kabul that victims of domestic violence had nowhere to go to seek refuge as there were no shelters. Women could not get help from the few lawyers that exist because they could not afford to. [61] The UNHCR reported in July 2003 that there have been some instances of women being imprisoned as the only means of protecting them from domestic violence inflicted for perceived transgressions of social mores. [11p]

6.131 According to the Human Rights Commission, under Sharia law a man can easily divorce a woman by a verbal declaration in the presence of two witnesses, however generally a woman cannot divorce her husband if he does not agree. According to the International Human Rights Law group however divorces are rare. The importance of family honour means that most women choose to tolerate domestic violence rather than seek a divorce.[8c]

6.132 In the case of divorce the children go to the father although the husband might allow the wife to keep the children and in this case the permission will appear on the divorce certificate. According to the Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs the custody of children under two may remain with the mother but custody will automatically pass to the father once they reach two.[8c]

AFGHANISTAN COUNTRY REPORTS

OCTOBER 2003

Country Information & Policy Unit

6C. HUMAN RIGHTS - OTHER ISSUES

Part I

Part II

6C. HUMAN RIGHTS - OTHER ISSUES

Mines and Unexploded Ordinance

6.184 The UN has estimated that there are 5 to 7 million landmines and over 750,000 pieces of unexploded ordinance (UXO) throughout the country, dating mainly from the period of the Soviet occupation. The landmines and UXO cause deaths and injuries, restrict areas available for cultivation and slow the return of refugees.[2b] The mine and UXO problem in Afghanistan has been exacerbated by events in 2001 with new areas being contaminated by coalition UXOs. Ammunition depots in major towns when hit have spread UXOs over as much as a 5km radius and injuries have escalated due to new contaminations and increased population movement.[4]

6.185 In July 2002 the Government of Afghanistan acceded to the Ottawa Convention banning land mines. UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy said that; Afghanistan contains about 10% of the 60 to 70 million land mines laid world-wide; close to 5% of Afghan households have at least one person who has been affected by a landmine or UXO injury; children are the most vulnerable victims and represent half of all deaths and injuries in Afghanistan; growing numbers of returning populations are at risk as they resettle across the country.[44b]

6.186 In May 2003, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that it was interviewing victims and collecting data in nearly 400 health care facilities throughout Afghanistan about the accidental detonation of mines and UXOs, in order to provide reliable statistics for those working to eradicate these dangers and to improve its mine awareness programme. The ICRC reported that economic necessity often forces people to return to dangerous areas. [42g]

6.187 The UNHCR reported in July 2003 that Afghanistan is the most mine and UXO affected country in the world with 732 square kilometres of known mined area. UN reports indicate that over 100 square kilometres were cleared during 2002 and almost 40,000 mines and over 890,000 UXOs were destroyed, allowing Afghans to return home in relative safety. However, an estimated 3,000 cases of injuries from landmines and UXOs are reported every year and approximately 4-5% of the population are disabled, many by mines and UXOs [11p]

Humanitarian Situation

6.188 In January 2002 the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Development Bank and the World Bank prepared a Needs Assessment Report on Afghanistan. The report judged that more than two decades of conflict and three years of drought had led to widespread human suffering and massive displacement of people in Afghanistan. The infrastructure base had been destroyed or degraded, and human resources depleted. State institutions had become largely non-functional and the economy increasingly fragmented. [4] The report was presented to an international meeting in Tokyo jointly chaired by the United States, the European Union, Japan and Saudi Arabia. [25aw] Overall donors pledged \$4.5 billion over the next 5 years \$1.8 billion of which is to be committed within 2002. At the Tokyo conference the UK Department for International Development (DfID) committed £200 million over the next five years for reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. [46] In early June 2002 Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General Nigel Fisher reported that between \$1.3 billion and \$1.4 billion of the aid promised for 2002 had been received. [40x]

6.189 The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) set up a special fund The Afghan Interim Authority Fund (AIAF) to support government activities in Afghanistan and the fund has received more than \$26 million from international donors during its first three months. This has enabled the Interim Authority to pay civil service salaries and cover crucial administrative costs. [47] The UNDP was succeeded by the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), jointly funded by the Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, UNDP, and the World Bank (administrator of the ARTF). The functions of the ARTF include meeting funding shortfalls for civil service salaries and funding the development of priority projects which would otherwise go unfunded. The ARTF also acts as one of the funding sources to facilitate the return of skilled Afghans. [69]

6.190 In a report issued in April 2002 covering the period October 2001 to April 2002 Action Against Hunger (AAH) warned that Afghanistan is in ruins. The infrastructure is destroyed, public services minimal and consecutive droughts have led to serious food shortages. [40e] A report by Tufts University based on interviews with over 1,100 households in Afghanistan suggested that the number of households with a secure source of food and water had recently plummeted. [53] Speaking at the end of May 2002 Andrew Natsios a top official for the United States Agency for International Development reported that a wide-scale famine had been averted in Afghanistan and relief had been extended to 1 million homes. [40h]

6.191 In August 2002 a joint report by the World Food Programme and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation said that humanitarian concerns were raised by a number of factors, drought, military and political upheavals, devastating earthquakes in the north, and devastating locust infestation during the 2002 crop year. However despite these factors overall cereal production has recovered strongly, mainly due to increased and timely rainfall. In particular the Afghan staple wheat production is estimated at 2.69 million tonnes an increase of some 67% over the previous year. [36c]

6.192 In a report issued in January 2003 UN Special Rapporteur Kamal Hossain reported that despite a good harvest in 2002, the effects of years of conflict, drought, isolation and impoverishment are still in evidence. Some 2.2 million Afghans were highly vulnerable to the expected effects of the harsh winter weather and receiving emergency food aid and support for shelter and warmth to combat the cold. In 2003 some 4.1 million Afghans are expected to continue to need emergency food aid. [6d]

6.193 A Transitional Assistance Programme for Afghanistan 2003 (TAPA) is being completed by the Transitional Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations. A significant element of this programme is the restoration of agricultural opportunities and the recovery of agriculture. TAPA will also address the survival, shelter and livelihood needs of Afghanistan's growing urban population supporting urgently needed

sites and services as well as longer-term urban planning. [6d]

6.194 In June 2003, President Karzai appealed for \$15-20 billion for reconstruction in Afghanistan. In July 2003, US officials confirmed that they were preparing an aid package worth about \$1 billion, reportedly for reconstruction projects. [25bm] On 31 July 2003, The European Commission adopted a proposal to finance a Third Reconstruction Programme with a total budget of 79.5 million euros. This is part of a 400 million euro package to Afghanistan for 2003-2004. [40aj]

6.195 In June 2003, Afghanistan became a member of the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) which allows for MIGA to provide political risk insurance for investments going into and out of Afghanistan, as well as to help the country develop its ability to attract investment. The Afghan Finance Minister said that membership of MIGA would help the country to attract and retain more foreign investment, promote economic growth and ultimately benefit the Afghan people. The World Bank reported that after 23 years of conflict, the Afghan people are working to restore peace and prosperity but daunting challenges remain: 70% of the population is malnourished, only 23% have access to safe water, 12% to adequate sanitation and 6% to electricity. More than 70% of schools need repairs as do most of the country's primary roads. [40ay]

6.196 In July 2003, the UNHCR reported that there is a dire need for wage-labour and cash as an increasing number of Afghans are indebted and unable to buy food even when it is available. Food insecurity and lack of income have exacerbated existing land problems that have arisen due to destruction or illegal occupation of property. The presence of landmines in land surrounding villages has, in some areas, rendered farmland unusable. [11p] By the end of July 2003, UNHCR had contracted with NGOs to help Afghans construct more than 41,000 shelters, of which half were under construction or completed. [11q]

6.197 A Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) mission visited Afghanistan in June/July 2003 and reported that, in 2003, agricultural production in Afghanistan continued its strong recovery for the second consecutive year. Aggregate 2003 cereal production is the largest harvest on record. However, despite significant improvements in overall food security prospects, a considerable number of vulnerable Afghan people, including the rural and urban poor, will continue to face food insecurity and will remain dependant on targeted food assistance during 2003/04. In the south, food insecurity is expected to improve only marginally due to continued conflict, slow recovery from drought and high cereal prices. A multi-agency National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) is currently underway throughout the country to estimate the level and geographic distribution of humanitarian assistance requirements in 2003/04. [65]

6.198 In September 2003, the World Food Programme (WFP) mission reported that humanitarian operations in the southern and southeastern provinces continued to be hampered because of military operations in those areas. [40az]

See also Refugees outside Afghanistan paragraphs 6.214 - 6.224 for details of recent refugee returns.

Humanitarian Situation Kabul

6.199 The situation in Kabul has greatly improved. News reports in June 2002 suggested the return of normal life to the city of Kabul, with reconstruction underway in many districts and new businesses opening. [40i] In June 2002 journalists reported on the general return to normal life within the city including traffic jams in the rush hour, the reopening of restaurants, and the availability of food, drink and luxury commercial items, including DVD's in Kabul. [13b][25an]

6.200 A report in June 2002 has confirmed the availability of food and water in Kabul. Most people rely on wells, many of which are running dry with the water table still low after four years of drought. There is no urban sanitation system, no sewage treatment, and pit latrines are the norm. [51] Work is being undertaken to improve water and sanitation in Kabul, over 50 aid organisations are working on water and sanitation projects in Afghanistan. [52b] The CARE International Organisation in particular has a project dealing with water supply in Kabul. [52b] The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) have carried out some work on water supply systems and sewage systems within hospitals, orphanages and apartment blocks in Kabul and other areas and have carried out emergency repairs on the water network in Kabul and Herat. In Kabul they also maintain over 300 hand pumps for water. [40f] In September 2002 it was reported that international organisations were struggling to stem a local water crisis resulting from decades of war and drought. The water table has been lowered by many years of drought forcing residents to dig deeper wells, which prevent shallower springs from refilling. Water is also lost through cracked and broken pipes. As a result many residents had to carry water huge distances from public fountains. However an official from the sanitation

department confirmed that funding to undertake the repairs was available and it was only a matter of time before supply to all houses in Kabul will be restored.[40aa]

6.201 Accommodation is available in Kabul although housing is increasingly limited as more families arrive. [51] Aid officials in Kabul have raised concerns about the huge influx of returning refugees which have placed strains on the city's housing and infrastructure.[25ah] However reconstruction is under way in Kabul[40i] and in addition over 30 aid agencies are currently working within Afghanistan on shelter and housing projects. [52b] In late July 2002 it was reported that land was at a premium in Kabul, officials estimated that they had about 3,000 to 4,000 plots in various stages of rehabilitation to allocate for family houses. This was not sufficient to meet the demands of residents and those returning. As a result thousands get by in tents, inside commercial containers with holes cut for windows, but mostly through extended family networks.[40t]

6.202 Skilled labour is currently in demand in Kabul.[51] The Recovery and Employment Afghanistan Programme working on projects in the employment, infrastructure and environment sectors has employed 12,000 people in Kabul since February and is now expanding to Kandahar and Jalalabad where it expects to assist some 30,000 unemployed Afghans.[40r]

6.203 In January 2003 the UN Special Rapporteur commented on the situation in Kabul. He stated that during 2002 the population had doubled in size to 2.7 million. About 600,000 of the 2 million Afghans returning from exile returned to Kabul along with others from rural areas. These people are attracted to Kabul by its relative peace and the slim possibility of employment. As a result of the numbers of people in Kabul, rents have soared, and most residents face a difficult daily struggle to survive.[6d]

6.204 In July 2003, UNHCR reported that increased urbanisation in Kabul had placed a burden on water and electricity resources. Many returnees were living in tents and partially destroyed public buildings, while others were sharing apartments. [11p] In August 2003, the Minister of Urban Housing and Development said that half of the 20,000 low-cost housing units planned for Kabul would be set aside for returnees. [11q]

6.205 In September 2003, President Karzai sacked Kabul's security chief, Basir Salangi after Mr Salangi ordered the partial bulldozing of more than a dozen homes belonging to the poor in order to clear the way for the construction of luxurious compounds for Kabul's elite. General Baba Jan has replaced Mr. Salangi and President Karzai has set up an independent commission to investigate the scandal. [25ca]

Taliban-Current Situation

6.206 In December 2001 former members of the Taliban formed a new party Khudamul Furqan Jamiat - Association of Servants of the Koran Society, under the leadership of Chief Ahmad Amin Mujaddedi.[1]

6.207 A number of sources interviewed in the course of a Danish fact finding mission, undertaken in May 2002, confirmed that the Taliban, as a political movement no longer exists. Former members were reported to be in the southern and south-eastern areas of Afghanistan particularly but also were present all over the country. It was generally reported that they do not constitute a political threat or a threat to civilian life. Pashtun leaders who had allied themselves with the Taliban are now loyal to current local leaders. Several sources interviewed in May 2002 confirmed that the Taliban generally do not constitute a risk for people who fled from their forced recruitment of soldiers.[8b]

6.208 In September 2002 UNHCR Kabul confirmed that the Taliban does not exist as a powerful movement, but there are groups closely associated with the movement who constitute a security problem engaging in activities in the provinces of Zabul, Paktia and Khost.[8c] In July 2003, UNHCR advised that there were, reportedly, still pockets of resistance of Al Qa'ida and Taliban forces and indications that some Taliban forces might be regrouping. [11p] In August 2003, suspected Taliban fighters were reported to have stepped up attacks in the southern and south-eastern regions. Coalition troops, led by the US military, continue to search for Al'Qa'ida and Taliban remnants, mainly in the militia's former strongholds in the east and southeast. [40av]

Former Taliban Members

6.209 Thousands of Taliban fighters were captured during the US led coalition military action against Al Qa'ida and their Taliban supporters, which started in October 2001. Many continue to be at large.[25au] The military action aimed at routing out the remaining Al Qa'ida members and Taliban supporters continues.[5i] [5j] The situation for other former Taliban members is different. In early January 2002 more than 260 Taliban prisoners were freed from Kabul prison. Hamid Karzai leader of the Interim Administration stated his intention to free all prisoners who held no senior position, and said the Taliban rank and file would not be punished.

[25au] A further 300 captured Taliban soldiers released in February 2002 were described by Hamid Karzai as innocent. In southern Afghanistan the former Taliban foreign minister Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil surrendered and was being questioned by US officials.[25av]

6.210 In a paper in February 2002 UNHCR advised that serious problems *could* continue to be faced by some individuals or groups, and those who were associated with or are perceived to have been associated with the former Taliban *might* face serious problems on return.[11e] In May 2002 UNHCR-Afghanistan and Oxfam representatives in Afghanistan said that ordinary members of the Taliban movement in southern Afghanistan had been able to integrate themselves into the general Pashtun population. But UNHCR emphasised that in other areas there is a serious risk that former Taliban or those suspected of affiliation with the Taliban movement, may be exposed to infringements of human rights. In particular those people who have worked for the religious police will have problems.[8b] According to UNHCR it is expected that an amnesty will be declared for Taliban members who have not committed war crimes. However at present there is a legal vacuum.[8b]

6.211 A Danish Fact Finding mission to Afghanistan in September/October 2002 reported that according to international aid workers many Pashtuns are in prison in Afghanistan suspected of having served the Taliban. UNHCR in Mazar-i-Sharif said that the issue of being suspected of having served the Taliban continues to be a major concern for many Pashtuns who fled the northern regions. According to the co-ordinator of UNAMA's Civil Affairs Branch former Taliban who previously held high positions and were leaders in the provinces or central regions risk persecution in the northern regions and Kabul unless they are part of a powerful network. [8c]

6.212 According to the Director of the Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA-an Afghan NGO) a large number of people in Afghanistan served the Taliban but were not directly involved in the Taliban movement and these people do not have problems in Afghanistan today. However for those who were commandants and leaders or who participated in mass murders and injustice against the population the situation is different. CCA stressed that the current authorities have not initiated any legal proceedings against persons who are known to have committed injustices under the Taliban. Two sources also confirmed that many of those in administrative positions under the Taliban continue to work in the same administrative positions under the current administration.[8c]

6.213 In a paper dated July 2003, UNHCR Geneva reported that it is generally presumed that most "rank and file" Taliban had already returned to their communities of origin either in Afghanistan or Pakistan. Some hundreds of Taliban fighters were released by the Afghan Interim Administration on the grounds that they were "innocent" conscripts. UNHCR however reported accusations, discrimination and threats against civilians who worked in the administration during the Taliban regime. According to UNHCR the likelihood that they could rise to the level of persecution is greater where rank and influence within the movement was more significant. UNHCR stated that the risk to specific members and commanders of the Taliban movement requires careful assessment, given the amply documented record of attacks, summary executions and massacres by Taliban forces. [11p]

Refugees Outside Afghanistan

6.214 In June 2001 UNHCR regional spokesman Yusuf Hassan stated that Afghan refugees constituted the world's largest refugee population, with some 2 million in Pakistan, 1.5 million in Iran and thousands of others scattered around neighbouring central Asian republics, India, Russia and many other parts of the world. He estimated a total of nearly four million Afghan refugees around the world.[36a] Prior to the 11 September 2001 attack on the US and subsequent US action in Afghanistan, a UNHCR source stated that despite their objective of facilitating returns, they would not assist returns to areas affected by conflict or drought.[36a] By July 2001 39,600 Afghans had voluntarily returned home from Iran and Pakistan in the year, with only 3,000 seeking UNHCR repatriation. With Iran and Pakistan also affected by serious drought however, many Afghans opting to return decided that they could live at least as well back home as they could in these two asylum countries. A UNHCR survey revealed that only 21% had opted to return due to improved security conditions, with the majority fearing huge economic difficulties or deportation. In the first six months of 2001, 82,000 had been deported from Iran and 3,400 from Pakistan (although the true figure could be much higher). [36b]

6.215 After considerable resistance, the UNHCR reached an agreement in August 2001 with the Pakistani government on the process of screening unregistered Afghan refugees who had arrived in the last couple of

years. Under the agreement, joint UNHCR and Pakistani teams would screen Afghans in the Jalozi, Nasir Bagh and Shamshato camps (comprising an estimated 180,000 Afghans). Those opting to return would receive a voluntary repatriation grant. Those opting to join the screening programme would be interviewed, and if found to be in need of protection would be relocated to other settlements with UNHCR assistance. Others whose cases were rejected would have the right of appeal, but would have to return home once a final decision had been taken. [20d]

6.216 Following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington and the subsequent US targeting of Usama bin Laden sheltered by the Taliban, there was an expected increase in the influx of Afghans into Pakistan. The Pakistani government announced in late September that the border would remain closed to Afghans without proper travel documents. Those managing to cross illegally would nonetheless still be assisted in the camps. It was acknowledged that Afghan refugees trickling through unfrequented routes along the porous border could not be ruled out. Some refugees claimed that those with enough money were bribing their way through the border. [36g] The Pakistan government also warned that it would deport any Afghans found to be involved in pro-Taliban demonstrations, although observers believed that most of these demonstrators were Pakistani religious hard-liners rather than Afghans. [25q]

6.217 After the events of 11 September 2001 an estimated 250,000 Afghans fled to Pakistan and tens of thousands more may have been smuggled to Iran. Following the fall of the Taliban refugees continued to flee mostly from food shortages. But large numbers are also returning home. By March 2002 an estimated 250,000 had returned since November 2001. [25as] In February 2002, UNHCR emphasised that peace within Afghanistan was the overriding factor in motivating refugees to return and estimated that in January 2002 107,000 had returned from Pakistan and 20,000 from Iran. [36j]

6.218 Assisted repatriation from Pakistan began in March 2002 with about 5,800 returning in the first three days. [11f] By early April a total of 160,000 had returned from Pakistan. On 3 April 2001 UNHCR, Iran and Afghanistan signed a repatriation agreement for the assisted voluntary return of Afghan refugees from Iran and it was estimated that if repatriation continued at the rate already seen the number returning during 2002 could possibly rise to over one million. [11g] By the middle of April 2002 it was estimated that 40,000 Afghans per week were returning from Pakistan bringing the total number of returns from Pakistan since the start of the repatriation programme to 285,000. [25bg]

6.219 The UNHCR estimated on 30 May 2002 that over 800,000 Afghans had returned since they began facilitating voluntary returns on 1 March 2002, with a further 100,000 returning outside UN channels. [11j] By 29 June 2002 these figures had increased to over 1.1 million returning under the UNHCR scheme with an estimated additional 200,000 returning spontaneously. [11i] In September 2002 UNHCR reported that UNHCR assisted returns from Iran, Pakistan, and the Central Asian states had reached 1.6 million. In addition more than 230,000 internally displaced persons (IDP's) had been assisted to return home, and some 400,000 refugees abroad and IDP's returned without UNHCR assistance. Of the more than 1.4 million Afghans returning from Pakistan ethnic Pashtuns were the majority, followed by ethnic Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and Turkmen. UNHCR stated, however, that the security and living conditions were not yet wholly satisfactory to encourage all refugees to repatriate. [11i]

6.220 The UNHCR emphasised in May and June 2002 that it did not promote return to Afghanistan but only assisted those who themselves opt to return. [11j][11k] UNHCR emphasised in May and June 2002 that the security situation in many parts of the country remained fragile. Access to food, health care, shelter and water remained limited in many regions. [11j] In a note issued on 10 July 2002, UNHCR stated that the majority of refugees had freely opted to return and had done so safely, mostly to Kabul and Nangarhar provinces. UNHCR noted that the situation is now generally conducive to the safe return of a broad spectrum of asylum seekers. [11h]

6.221 During 2002 more than 1.8 million refugees returned home assisted by UNHCR and the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. In addition more the 250,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) went home with assistance and a further 200,000 Afghans returned on their own. In 2003 the UNHCR is planning to assist 1.2 million refugees and 300,000 IDPs to return to their homes. [11n]

6.222 In June 2003, Amnesty International published a report based on interviews conducted in April 2003 with over 100 returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) throughout Afghanistan. The report expressed concerns that, under the current security and human rights situation, the inability of many refugees and IDPs to sustain their return to their places of origin or preferred destination was leading to destitution and renewed cycles of displacement. [7o] In July 2003, Human Rights Watch reported that human rights abuses and the general security situation were impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid and keeping some refugees and internally displaced persons from returning to their homes. [17i]

6.223 UNHCR reported in July 2003 that some 390,000 Afghans had returned home so far in 2003 and that Afghanistan was on course to see one of the largest repatriations in 11 years, second only to 2002. More than 2.3 million Afghan refugees have returned since 2001 under the joint UNHCR/Afghan government programme, leaving a similar number of refugees in Pakistan and Iran. [11q] The majority of returnees (36%) went back to the central region (Kabul province) and to the province of Nangarhar in the east of the country (18%). Regardless of their origins, some 40% of returnees are moving into urban areas. [11p] [11q] UNHCR emphasised the link between relief assistance and security and stated that Afghanistan's economic and social problems are linked to insecurity in some rural areas where needs are greatest, but also where aid workers face serious security problems. The success of the massive repatriation had been marred by a spate of attacks resulting in the deaths of aid workers and other Afghans and hindering the delivery of relief aid to some areas of the country. [11q]

6.224 In July 2003 UNHCR advised that persons in particularly vulnerable circumstances should not be required to return to Afghanistan. These include:

- handicapped and ill individuals, or families with handicapped or ill members;
- unaccompanied elderly;
- unaccompanied minors; and
- landless, destitute Afghans, particularly those originating from food-insecure areas and drought affected areas. [11p]

Al Qa'ida

6.225 Usama bin Laden's Al Qa'ida organisation ran a number of training bases in Afghanistan. The organisation was widely assumed to be responsible for the September 2001 terrorist suicide attacks in the USA. A composition of Arabs and Pakistanis were reportedly being trained in the camps. It had its own private army known as the 055 brigade, numbering perhaps 2,000 - 3,000 who fought on behalf of the Taliban against the Northern Alliance. Al Qa'ida differed immensely from the Taliban in terms of its aims and vision. The Taliban's concern had been the establishment of an independent Islamic State in Afghanistan. Al Qa'ida's 055 brigade on the other hand have more of an international outlook and contrast to the Taliban in terms of language, habit, interpretation of Islam and vision of Afghanistan's future. [13a]

6.226 In October 2001 (updated November 2001) a paper was issued by the British Government detailing in full the background of Usama bin Laden and the Al Qa'ida terrorist network, its links with the Taliban and evidence of its involvement in terrorist atrocities. The paper concludes that the attacks on 11 September 2001 were carried out by the Al Qa'ida organisation, which is headed by Usama bin Laden. [48a] The organisation is proscribed in the UK under the Terrorism Act 2000 (Proscribed Organisations) (Amendment) Order 2001. [21]

6.227 US military operations continued during 2002 in an effort to capture and detain remaining Taliban and Al Qa'ida fighters. [2d] In early April 2002 a senior member of the network Abu Zubaydah (bin Laden's senior field commander) was captured in Pakistan and was described as the highest ranking member to fall into American hands since 11 September 2001. [25bi]

6.228 In March 2003, one of Al Qa'ida's most senior leaders, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, was arrested in a joint Pakistani-CIA operation near Islamabad. He had long been on the FBI's most wanted list. [25bo] In August 2003, an increase in attacks by suspected Al Qa'ida and Taliban fighters was reported and coalition troops, led by the US military, continued to search for Al Qa'ida and Taliban remnants mainly in the militia's former stronghold in the east and south-east of Afghanistan. [40av]

Documents

6.229 In September 2002 the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees said that in general the circulation of false documents is widespread. This applies particularly to examination certificates from universities. A particular mention was made of examination certificates from the University of Jalalabad. [8c]

6.230 According to the Minister of the Interior birth certificates are issued by the hospital where a person is born. An ID card or tazkara with a photo attached will be issued when a person reaches seven years old, such a card will be required in order to be able to start school. The ID card will be replaced when the holder turns 18. In Kabul, ID cards are only issued by the Ministry of the Interior, in the provinces this is done at the Regional Governor's office and in the districts by the "District Commissioner". ID cards can also be issued by Afghan Embassies abroad. [8c] A report by a Swedish fact finding mission in November 2002 stated that the

German police are assisting the Afghan authorities in the development of a new kind of ID card. The current ID card is one single paper, issued at a provincial level. [61]

6.231 UNHCR Afghanistan stated that passports issued by either the Taliban or warlords are now invalid. Anyone attempting to make a forged passport will risk 3-6 months imprisonment. The Central Police Department in Kabul issues passports for Kabul residents. Afghans from other areas are issued passports by the Ministry of Interior in Kabul and at the ministry's offices in other cities eg Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat. The Minister of Interior stated that there are no fixed rules on what is required in order to obtain a passport or an ID card and no specific papers are required to obtain a passport [61]

ANNEX A: CHRONOLOGY

[25b]

1964 - Constitutional monarchy introduced, which leads to political polarisation and power struggles.

1973 - Mohammed Daud seizes power in a coup and declares a republic. Tries to play off the USSR against Western powers. His style alienates left-wing factions who join forces against him.

1978 - General Daud is overthrown and killed in a coup by the leftist People's Democratic Party. The party's Khalq and Parcham factions fall out, leading to purging or exile of most Parcham leaders. At the same time, conservative Islamic and ethnic leaders who objected to social changes begin armed revolt in the countryside.

1979 - The Power struggle between leftist leaders Hafizullah Amin and Nur Mohammed Taraki in Kabul is won by Amin. Revolts in the countryside continue and the Afghan army faces collapse. The Soviet Union finally sends in troops to help remove Amin, who is executed.

1980 - Babrak Karmal, leader of the People's Democratic Party Parcham faction, is installed as ruler, backed by Soviet troops. Anti-regime resistance nonetheless intensifies with various mujahedin groups fighting Soviet forces. The US, Pakistan, China, Iran and Saudi Arabia supply money and arms.

1985 - Mujahedin come together in Pakistan to form an alliance against Soviet forces. Half of the Afghan population now estimated to be displaced by war, with many fleeing to neighbouring Iran or Pakistan. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev says he will withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

1986 - The US begins supplying the mujahedin with Stinger missiles, enabling them to shoot down Soviet helicopter gunships. Babrak Karmal is replaced by Najibullah as head of the Soviet-backed regime.

1988 - Afghanistan, the USSR, the US and Pakistan sign peace accords and the Soviet Union begins pulling out troops.

1989 - The last Soviet troops leave, but civil war continues as the mujahedin push to overthrow Najibullah.

1991 - The US and USSR agree to end military aid to both sides.

1992 - Resistance closes in on Kabul and Najibullah falls from power. Rival militias vie for influence.

1993 - Mujahedin factions agree on formation of a government with the ethnic Tajik, Burhanuddin Rabbani, proclaimed president.

1994 - Factional contests continue and the Pashtun-dominated Taliban emerge as a major challenge to the Rabbani government.

1996 - The Taliban seize control of Kabul and introduce a hard-line version of Islam, banning women from work and introducing Islamic punishments which include stoning to death and amputations. Rabbani flees to join the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance.

1997 - The Taliban is recognised as the legitimate rulers by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Most other countries continue to regard Rabbani as Head of State. The Taliban now control about two-thirds of the country.

1998 - Earthquakes kill thousands of people. The US launch missile strikes at suspected bases of militant Usama bin Laden, accused of bombing US embassies in Africa.

1999 - The UN imposes an air embargo and financial sanctions to force the Taliban to hand over Usama bin Laden for trial.

2001 January - The UN imposes further sanctions on the Taliban to force them to hand over Usama bin Laden.

2001 March - Taliban blow up giant Buddha statues in defiance of international efforts to save them.

2001 May - Taliban order religious minorities to wear tags identifying themselves as non-Muslims, and Hindu women to veil themselves like other Afghan women.

2001 September - Eight foreign aid workers on trial in the Supreme Court for promoting Christianity. This follows of tension between Taliban and aid agencies. Ahmad Shah Masood, guerrilla and leader of the main opposition to the Taliban, is killed, apparently by assassins posing as journalists.

2001 October - USA and Britain launch air strikes against Afghanistan after Taliban refuse to hand over Usama bin Laden, held responsible for the 11 September attacks on America.

2001 November - Opposition forces seize Mazar-i- Sharif and within days march into Kabul and other cities.

2001 5 December - Afghan groups agree deal in Bonn for interim government

2001 7 December - Taliban finally give up last stronghold of Kandahar. Mullah Omar remains at large.

2001 22 December - Pashtun royalist Hamid Karzai is sworn in as head of 30 member interim power-sharing government.

2002 January - First contingent of International Security Assistance Force in place

2002 April - Former king Zahir Sha returns but says he makes no claim to the throne.

2002- May - UN Security Council extends mandate of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan until December 2002. Allied forces continue their military campaign to find remnants of Al Qa'ida and Taliban forces in the South East.

2002 June - Loya Jirga elects Hamid Karzai as interim head of state. Karzai picks members of his administration, which is to serve until 2004. Turkey takes over as lead nation in ISAF.

2002 July - Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir assassinated.

2002 September - Karzai narrowly escapes an assassination attempt in Kandahar his home town.

2003 February - Germany and Netherlands take over as lead nations in ISAF.

2003 August - NATO takes control of security in Kabul. It is the organisation's first operational commitment outside Europe in its history.

ANNEX B: POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER GROUPS

Harakat-e-Islami (Islamic Movement of Afghanistan): Led by Ayatollah Muhammed Asif Muhsini; a Shi'a party with a mainly non-Hazara leadership; allied with Jamiat-i-Islami. This faction is represented in the ITAA

by Mr. Said Hussain Anwari, Minister of Agriculture and Mr. Said Ali Jawid, Minister of Transportation.[11m]

Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin (Islamic Party Gulbuddin)

Pashtun/Turkmen/Tajik; led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. [1] Radical Islamist, controlled few military or political resources in June 2001. [33] In December 2002 Hekmatyar issued holy jihad against foreign troops. According to reports his whereabouts are still unknown after he was expelled from Iran in summer of 2002. [25s] There are however reports that he is in Afghanistan.[25ax] [5l] In January 2003 it was reported that the expelled Taliban regime had regrouped and allied itself to Hekmatyar [5l]. Reports of an alliance between Hizb-i-Islami and the Taliban were denied by Taliban officials and supporters of Hekmatyar.[25ao] In August 2003 it was reported that Hizb-i-Islami are one of the groups believed to have been responsible for a spate of attacks on Afghan and Western government, military and humanitarian targets. [40av]

Hizb-i Islami Khalis (Islamic Party Khalis)

Pashtun; led by Maulvi Muhammed Yunus Khalis. [1]

Hizb-i Wahdat-e-Islami (Islamic Unity Party)

Principal Shi'a party in Afghanistan consisting mainly of Afghans of Hazara ethnic group. Founded under Iranian sponsorship in 1988 as a union of 9 Shi'a parties, led by Abdul Ali Mazari until his death in Taliban custody in February 1995. Split in 1993: Mohammad Karim Khalili leads the Hezb-e-Wahdat based in Bamian/Yakawlong, while Mohammad Akbari closely affiliated with the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani, remained in Kabul until the arrival of the Taliban in 1996. In November 1998 Mohammad Akbari surrendered to the Taliban, while the other faction of the Hezb-e-Wahdat, led by Khalili and Haji Muhammed Mohaqeeq (representing the party in Mazar-i-Sharif) actively fought the Taliban in Hazarajat. Mr. Mohaqeeq was Minister of Planning and one of the five Vice-Chairmen in the Interim Administration of Afghanistan and continues to hold the position of Minister of Planning of the ITAA. Besides Mohaqeeq, Abdul Karim Khalili, one of the five Vice-Presidents, and Said Mustafa Kazemi, Minister of Commerce, represent this faction in the Interim Transitional Administration.[11m]

Hizb-i Watan (Homeland Party)

Formerly PDPA (changed its name in 1988), party dissolved 1991/2. [11a]

Ittihad -i Islami Bara-yi Azadi (Islamic Unity)

Led by Abdul Rab al-Rasoul Sayyaf; previously reported to be supported by Saudi Arabia; Anti Shi'a; allied with Jamiat-e-Islami; played a major role in the early fighting in Kabul in 1992-95, but has since faded as a military force; is reported to play an important role in financing the opposition. His faction is represented in the ITAA by Mr. Abdullah Wardak, Minister of Martyrs and Disabled.[11m]

Jamiat-i Islami (Islamic Society)

Led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, predominantly Tajik and dominated by Dari (Persian) speakers; founded in 1973; significant player Ahmed Shah Massoud, who was heading a prominent group and party, the "Shura-e-Nazar"; another key player is Ismail Khan, the pre-Taliban and current governor of Herat. This faction is represented in the Islamic Transitional Authority of Afghanistan (ITAA) by Marshal M. Q. Fahim, Vice President and Minister of Defence, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Younus Qanooni, Special Advisor to the President on Internal Security and Minister of Education, Enayatullah Nazari, Minister of Repatriation. Mirwais Saddiq, the Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism represents not only the Jamiat-e-Islami but is the representative of his father, Ismail Khan.[11m]

Jonbesh-e Melli-e-Islami (National Islamic Movement)

Party of Northern Afghanistan's warlord, General Abdul Rashid Dostum - former leader of a militia allied with Najibullah; dominated by Uzbeks; in May 1997, Dostum's Deputy General Malik defects and helps the Taliban enter the north, resulting in General Dostum's escape from Afghanistan; General Dostum returns in September 1997 after the second Taliban assault on Mazar-i-Sharif, but remains unable to fully re-establish his power in the North; in August 1998 he is defeated and leaves again, later returns, fighting the Taliban in Northern Afghanistan. With the support of Coalition forces he re-captured and re-established himself in

Mazar-i-Sharif and was appointed deputy head of the department of defence of the Interim Administration. Following the Emergency Loya Jirga, he holds no official position in the cabinet, and his faction is represented by Mr. Mohammad Alem Razm, Minister of Light Industry, Noor Mohammad QarQin, Minister of Social Affairs and Mr. Ahmad Saker Kargar, Minister of Water and Power. All of them are former PDPA members.[11d]

Khudamul Furqan Jamiat (Association of Servants of the Koran Society): Kabul; Pashtun; former members of the Taliban; revived December 2001; Chief : Ahmad Amin Mujaddedi.[1]

Northern Alliance

See UIFSA. [1]

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)

The PDPA was founded in 1965 and split in to two factions in 1967: Khalq (The People), led by Nur Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin and Parcham (The Banner), led by Babrak Kamal. Khalq was more rural-based, mostly comprising of members of the Pashtun tribes. Parcham was more urban oriented and was dominated by Dari speakers. In 1977, the two factions reunited under Soviet pressure. In 1988 the name of the party was changed to Watan (Homeland) Party. The PDPA based government collapsed in 1992 when, following the Peshawar Accords, Mujaheddin troops entered Kabul and the last President of a 'communist' government in Afghanistan, Mohammed Najibullah (previously head of the secret service Khad) had to seek refuge in a UN-building in Kabul where he stayed until he was killed by Taliban troops entering Kabul in September 1996.[11m]

Shura-e-Mashriqi (Council of the East): Regrouping of former pre-Taliban members of the Shura of Jalalabad under the leadership of the previous governor Haji Abdul Qadir, reported to be operating in Laghman and Kunar provinces with changing alliances of local commanders. Haji Abdul Qadeer was the governor of Nangarhar province during the Interim Administration and he has been appointed as the Vice-President and Minister of Public Works in the ITAA. He was assassinated in Kabul on 6 July 2002.[11m]

Taliban

Militant fundamentalist group, mainly Sunni Pashtuns. Leader: (Mullah) Mohammad Omar. [1] Formed in 1994 by a group of graduates from Pakistani 'madrassas' (Islamic colleges) bordering Afghanistan. [11a] Taliban being the plural of 'Talib', meaning 'seeker of religious knowledge'. [1] Controlled 90% of the country from end of August 1998 [5a] until ousted by US led coalition in November/December 2001. Largely disbanded. [1]

United Front

See UIFSA

United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan Jabha-yi Muttahid-i Islami-yi Milli bara-yi Nijat-i Afghanistan (UIFSA) /United Front/Northern Alliance

Established June 1997, comprising various anti-Taliban groups. Also known as the Northern Alliance or the United Front[17b][1] Loose coalition whose membership has varied but includes Jamiat-i Islami, Hizb-i Watan, Jonbesh-e Melli-e-Islami, Harakat-i Aslami-yi and Ittihad -i Islami Bara-yi Azadi.[17b]

ANNEX C: PROMINENT PEOPLE

Dr ABDULLAH ABDULLAH

Northern Alliance Foreign Minister. [25o] Appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Afghan Interim Administration, 22 December 2001. Tajik [25ab]

DOSTUM (General) Abdul Rashid

Leader of the National Islamic Movement (Jonbesh-e-Melli-e-Islami), Uzbek. [1] Returned in April 2001 after a three-year exile. Defected to the Mujahideen in 1992, bringing about the fall of the Communist government. Later joined forces with other factions to fight Commander Ahmed Masoud in an attempt to oust him and his government from power. After his return however engaged Masoud due to a common hostility to the Taliban. [25i]

KHAN (General) Mohammed Fahim

Appointed successor of Ahmed Shah Masoud following Masoud's assassination in September 2001. [1] Appointed Vice Chair and Minister for Defence in the Afghan Interim Administration 22 December 2001. Tajik [25ab]

HEKMATYAR (Engineer) Gulbuddin

Leader of Hizb-i-Islami Gulbuddin. Prime Minister 1996. [1] Hekmatyar was at one time supported by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but eventually Pakistan turned against him preferring to give support to the Taliban. Hekmatyar fled Kabul when the Taliban swept to power and was given refuge by the Iranians. His vocal opposition to the new president Karzai was an embarrassment to the Iranian government who expelled him in February 2002 and closed his offices in Tehran. A number of his supporters were detained in Kabul in April 2002 accused of conspiring to plant bombs. Hekmatyar himself remains elusive although there are reports that he is in Afghanistan. [25ax] [5i]

KARZAI Hamid

Pashtun leader of Interim Administration from 22 December 2001. [1] Leader of Transitional Administration and President of the Islamic Transitional Administration from June 2002. [40s] Chief of Popolzai tribe. Describes himself as moderate Muslim. Initially supported Taliban but feared overt Pakistani influence over the regime. Returned from exile in Pakistan shortly after start of US led military action. [25bb]

KHALILI (General) Abdul Karim

Leader of the Hizb-i-Wahdat faction of the anti-Taliban alliance. [18g]

KHAN Ismail

Opposition leader. Escaped from Taliban prison in March 2000. [20b] Was the governor of Herat [11d] following Soviet withdrawal, but was forced to flee when the Taliban took control of the area in 1995. In 2001 was amassing forces in the Ghor and Badghis provinces. [18g] In November 2001 regained position as governor of Herat. [17i] Stripped of his additional post as military commander in August 2003. [25bw]

MALIK (General) Abdul

Former leader of the National Islamic Movement (Jonbesh-e-Melli-e-Islami). [1]

MASOUD (General) Ahmed Shah

Commander allied to the Jamiat-i-Islami. Tajik. Assassinated in September 2001. [1]

OMAR (Mullah) Mohammad

Supreme Taliban leader Carried the title "Commander of the Faithful". [2b] Sought by US led coalition forces following fall of Taliban whereabouts unknown. [29b]

RABBANI Burhanuddin

Leader of Jamiat-i-Islami. "President" from 1992. [1]

SAMAR Sima

Vice Chair of Interim Administration and Minister for Women's Affairs from December 2001 to June 2002.

[25ab] Hazara Doctor who runs an organisation in Quetta Pakistan providing health and education services for Afghan woman and children.[25bc] In June 2002 appointed Chair of the Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission.[40p]

SEDDIQI Suhaila

Health Minister in Interim Administration. Tajik doctor and army general, never left

Afghanistan where she played a key role in keeping Kabul military hospital running.[25bd]

ANNEX D: The Cabinet Members and Vice Presidents and Advisors of Transitional Government of Afghanistan

[67]

President

H.E. Hamid Karzai

Vice Presidents:

Mareshal Mohammad Fahim

Karim Khalili

Nematollah Shahrani

Hedayat A. Arsala

Mareshal Mohammad Fahim

Defence Minister

Dr. A. Abdullah

Foreign Minister

Ali Ahmad Jalali

Interior Minister

Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq

Planning Minister

DR. Ashraf Ghani

Finance Minister

Yonus Qanooni

Education Minister

Arif Noorzai

Borders & Tribal Affairs Minister

Dr. M. Amin Farhang

Reconstruction Minister

Vacant. Acting Minister - Mahfooz Nedaye

Mines and Industries Minister

Mohammad Alem Razm

Light Industries Minister

Ms. Habiba Sorabi

Women's Affairs Minister

Dr. Sohaila Siddiqi

Public Health Minister

Sayed Mustafa Kazemi

Commerce Minister

Sayed Hussain Anwari

Agriculture Minister

A. Rahim Karimi

Justice Minister

Masoom Stanakzai

Communications Minister

Enayatullah Nazari

Refugees Affairs Minister

M. Amin Naziryar

Haj and Religious Affairs Minister

Eng. Yusuf Pashtun

Urban Affairs Minister

Noor Mohammad Karkin

Social Affairs Minister

A. Shaker Kargar

Water and Power Minister

Dr. A. Yusuf Nuristani

Irrigation and Environment Minister

Abdullah Wardak

Martyrs and Disabled Minister

Dr. Sharif Fayez

Higher Education Minister

Mirwais Saddiq

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister

S. Mohammad Ali Javed

Transportation Minister

Hanif Atmar

Rural Development Minister

Dr. Zalmai Rassoul

National Security Advisor

Sheikh Hadi Shinwari

Supreme Court Chief Justice

Yonus Qanooni

Special Advisor on Security

Mahbouba Hoqooqmal

Advisor on Women's Affairs

National Defence Commission:

Marshall M.Q. Fahim
 Gen. Abdul wali
 Mohammed karim khalili
 Gen. Ismail khan
 Gen. Abdurrashid Dostom
 Gen. Sayed Hosain Anwari
 Gen. Asef Delawar
 Gen. Abdurrahim Wardak
 Gov. Gulagha Sherzai
 Gen. Bismella khan
 Gen. Atiqulla Baryalai
 Gen. Golzarak Zadran
 Gov. Haji Din Mohammed
 Gen. Atta Mohammed

Constitution Review committee:

Prof. Nematollah Shahrani (Chairman)
 Prof. Abdussalam Azimi (Deputy Chairman)
 Prof. Mohammed Musa Marufi
 Mohammed Musa Ashari
 Dr. Mohammed Rahim Sherzoi
 Mohammed Sarwar Danesh
 Dr. Abdulhai Elahi
 Mohammed Ashraf Rasuli
 Abdulhagh Wala
 Prof. Abdulaziz
 Dr. Mohammed Tahir Burgi
 Dr. Mohammed Yaqub Wahedi
 Wakil Shamsoddin
 Dr. Mohammed Alam Eshaqzai
 Ghazi Mohammed Amin Weqad
 Eng. Mohammed Ekram
 Nadershah Nikyar
 Likraj
 Mrs. Parwin Mohmand
 Mohammed Amin Ahmadi
 Mir Mohammed Afzal Mirgazargah Sharif
 Mrs. Fatima Gilani
 Sulaiman Baloch
 Mrs. Shokria Barekzai
 Mrs. Sedigha Balkhi
 Prof. Mohammed Hashem Kamali
 Parwin ali Majruh
 Eng. Merajuddin Hakema Mashal
 Eng. Dawood Moosa
 Naderali Mahdawi
 Prof. Mohammed Tahir Hashimi
 Mrs. Amena Afzali
 Mohammed Siddigh Patman
 Abdulhai khorasani
 Dr. Mohammed Faruq (Secretary)

Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority Commission

Hamid Karzai, President
 Hedayat Amin Arsala, Vice President
 Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs
 Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, Minister of Finance
 Haji Mohammed Mohaqeq, Minister of Planning

Mir Mohammed Amin Farhang, Minister of Reconstruction
 Hanif Atmar, Minister of Rural Dev.
 Yusof Nooristani, Minister of Water Sources Environment
 Abdullah Ali, Minister of Public Works
 Mohammed Yusoof Pashtoon, Minister of Urban Dev.
 Massum Stanakzai, Minister of Telecommunication
 Minister of Mines & Industry, TBA
 Zalmai Rassoul, NSC Advisor
 Anwarulhaq Ahadi, President Central Bank
 Mohammed Yusof Etebar, Dir. State Admin. Affairs
 Said Tayeb Jawad, Chief - of - Staff

ANNEX E: LIST OF DEPUTY MINISTERS IN THE TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION

MINISTRY - DEPUTY MINISTERS

1. Education	Zabihullah Esmati + Mohammad Moeen Marastyal	
2. Reconstruction	Abdul Jabar Taqwa + Nazeer Ahmad Shaheedi	
3. Information & Culture	Abdul Hameed Mubarez+ Rasool Yosufzai+Ms Sheela	
4. Hajj	Mubarez+Moulau Mohammad Qasim+ Ataurahman	
5. City Reconstruction	Naseer Ahmad Sabiri	
6. Public Works	Dr Wali Mohammad Rasooli	
7. Social Works	Mohammad Ghous Bashiri+Zakiri	
8. Power & Water	Eng Mohammad Amin Munsif+Eng Mohammad Yonus	
9. Martyrs & Disabled	Wakil Baz Mohammad Zurmati	
10. Women's Affairs	Tajwar Kakar+Shafiq Yarqeen	
11. Higher Education	Mohaidin Dareez + Mohammad Sabir Khoshki	
12. Aviation	Raz Mohammad Alami + Jahid Azimi	
13. Rural Development	Mr Nazari+ Mr Nezami	
14. Transport	Dr Abdull Hadi Musini	
15. Agriculture	Eng Mohammad Sharif+Ghulam Mustafa Jawad	
16. Defence	Abdul Rahim Wardak + General Mohibullah + Baz Mohammad	Jouhari + Hor
17. Interior	Fazel Ahmad Azimi+Ghulam Ghous Nasiri+ Hillaludin Hillal	
18. Foreign Affairs	Mohammad Rahim Sherzoi+Mohammad Haidar Reza	
19. Finance	Mr. Rahimi + Omar Sayed Jahish	
20. Justice	Ashraf Rasooli + Dr Hashimzai	
21. Planning	Ali Asghar Paiman+Haji Abdul Salam	
22. Commerce	Ziaudin Zia + Nabi Farahi	
23. Communication	Eng Mohammad Alim+Eng Baryalai	
24. Borders Affairs	Alhaj Mirza Ali+Babrak Zoi+Abdul Qadir Emami	
25. Refugees Return	Abdul Qadir+Moalim Naeem	
26. Mines & Industries	Nazar Mohammad Mangal	
27. Light Industries	Eng Mohammad Hashim Toufiqi+Mirza Khan Dalili	
28. Public Health	Ferozudin Feroz+Dr Mehraban	

Information supplied by the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs September 2003.

AFGHANISTAN COUNTRY REPORTS**OCTOBER 2003****Country Information & Policy Unit****LIST OF FORMER TALIBAN MINISTERS**Part IPart II**ANNEX F: LIST OF FORMER TALIBAN MINISTERS**

Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, Chairman of the Ruling Council, Head of the Council of Ministers;

Mullah Hadji Mohammad Hassan, First Deputy, Council of Ministers; Governor of Kandahar;

Maulavi Abdul Kabir, Second Deputy, Council of Ministers; Governor of Nangahar

Mullah Mohammed Omar, Leader of the Faithful ('Amir ul-Mumineen'), Afghanistan

Mullah Mohammad Tahre Anwari, Administrative Affairs;

Maulavi Sayyed Haqqan, Minister of Administrative Affairs;

Maulavi Abdul Latif Mansur, Minister of Agriculture;

Mullah Shams-ur-Rahman, Deputy Minister of Agriculture;

Maulavi Attiqullah Akhund, Deputy Minister of Agriculture

Maulavi Abdul Ghafoor, Deputy Minister of Agriculture;

Akhtar Mohammad Mansour, Minister of Civil Aviation and Transportation;

Hadji Tahis, Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation;

Mullah Mohammad Naim, Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation;

Hidayatullah Abu Turab, Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation;

Mullah Yar Mohammad Rahimi, Minister of Communication;

Mullah Haji Alla Dad Tayeb, Deputy Minister of Communication;

Maulavi Abdul Razaq, Minister of Commerce;

Maulavi Faiz Mohammad Faizan, Deputy Minister of Commerce;

Maulavi Nik Mohammad, Deputy Minister of Commerce;

Mullah Matiullah, Kabul Custom House;

Maulavi Dadullah Akhund, Minister of Construction;

Mullah Hadji Ubaidullah Akhund, Minister of Defence;

Mullah Fazel M. Mazloom, Deputy Chief of Army Staff;

Mullah Baradar, Deputy, Minister of Defence;

Mullah Abdul Rauf, Commander of Central Corpus;

Mullah Amir Khan Motaqi, Minister of Education;

Mullah Mohammad Nasim Hanafi, Deputy Minister of Education;

Maulavi S. Ahmed Shahidkhel, Deputy Minister of Education;

Mullah Abdul Wasay Aghajan Motasem, Minister of Finance;

Mullah Arefullah Aref, Deputy Minister of Finance;

Mullah Haji M. Ahmadi, President of Da Afghanistan Bank;

Abdul Wakil Mutawakil, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Abdul Rahman Zahed; Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Mullah Abdul Jalil, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Abdul Satar Paktis, Protocol Dept., Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Maulavi Faiz, Information Dept., Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Shams-us-Safa Aminzai, Press-Centre, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Maulavi Abdul Baqi, Consulate Dept., Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

M. Jawaz Waziri, UN Dept., Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Maulavi Djallalouddine Haqani, Minister of Frontier Affairs;

Maulavi Abdul Hakim Monib, Deputy Minister of Frontier Affairs;

Alhaj M. Ibrahim Omari, Deputy Minister of Frontier Affairs;

Qari Din Mohammad, Minister of Higher Education;

Maulavi Hamidullah Nomani, High Ranking Official in the Ministry of Higher Education;

Zabihullah Hamidi, Deputy Minister of Higher Education;

Maulavi Arsalan Rahmani, Deputy Minister of Higher Education;

Maulavi Qudratullah Jamal, Minister of Information;

Mullah Abdul Baqi, Vice-Minister of Information and Culture;

Maulavi Abdul Rahman Ahmad Hottak, Deputy (Cultural) Minister of Information and Culture;

Maulavi Rahimullah Zurmati, Deputy (Publication) Minister of Information and Culture;

Abdulhai Motmaen, Information and Culture Dept., Kandahar;

Maulavi Mohammad Yaqoub, Head of BIA;

Mullah Abdul Razaq, Minister of Interior Affairs;

Mullah Abdul Samad Khaksar, Deputy (Security) Minister of Interior Affairs;

Mohammad Sharif, Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs;

Maulavi Noor Jalal, Deputy (Administrative) Minister of Interior Affairs;

Maulavi Saed M. Azim Agha, Passport and Visa Dept;

Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, Minister of Justice;

Maulavi Jalaluddine Shinwari, Deputy Minister of Justice;

Alhaj Mullah Mohammad Essa Akhund, Minister of Mines and Industries;

Maulavi Sayeedur Rahman Haqani, Deputy Minister of Mines and Industries;

Mullah Abdul Salam Zaief, Deputy Minister of Mines and Industries;

Maulavi Mohammad Azam Elmi, Deputy Minister of Mines and Industries;

Qari Din Mohammad Hanif, Minister of Planning;

Maulavi Ezatullah, Deputy Minister of Planning;

Maulavi M. Musa Hottak, Deputy Minister of Planning;

Mullah Mohammad Abbas Akhund, Minister of Public Health;

Sher Abbas Stanekzai, Deputy Minister of Public Health;

Maulavi Mohammadullah Mati, Minister of Public Works;

Maulavi Rostam Nuristani, Deputy Minister of Public Works;

Hadji Molla Atiqullah, Deputy Minister of Public Works;

Maulavi Najibullah Haqqani, Deputy Minister of Public Works;

Maulavi Sayyed Ghiassouddine Agha, Minister of Haj and Religious Affairs

Maulavi Moslim Haqqani, Deputy Minister of Haj and Religious Affairs;

Maulavi Qalamudin Momand, Deputy Minister of Haj Affairs;

Maulavi Abdul Raqib Takhari, Minister of Repatriation;

Ramatullah Wahidyar, Deputy Minister for Martyrs and Repatriation;

Mohammad Sediq Akhundzada, Deputy Minister of Martyrs and Repatriation;

Maulavi Mohammad Wali, Minister of Department of Preventing Vice and Propagating Virtue;

Maulavi Mohammad Salim Haqqani, Deputy Minister of Preventing Vice and Propagating Virtue;

Maulavi Sayed Esmatullah Asem, Deputy Minister of Preventing Vice and Propagating Virtue;

Qari Ahmadulla, Minister of Security (Intelligence);

Maulavi Abdul-Haq-Wasseq, Deputy Minister of Security (Intelligence);

Maulavi Ehsanullah, Deputy Minister of Security (Intelligence);

Mullah Habibullah Reshad, Head of Investigation Dept.;

Mullah Ahmed Jan Akhund, Minister of Water and Electricity;

Eng. Mohammad Homayoon, Deputy Minister of Water and Electricity;

Maulavi Saiduddine Sayyed, Vice-Minister of Work and Social Affairs;

Maulavi Abdul Jabbar, Governor of Baghlan Province;

Maulavi Nurullah Nuri, Governor of Balkh Province; Head of Northern Zone;

Muhammad Islam, Governor of Bamiyan Province;

Mullah Janan, Governor of Fariab;

Mullah Dost Mohammad, Governor of Ghazni Province;

Maulavi Khair Mohammad Khaikhwah, Governor of Herat Province;

Maulavi Abdul Bari, Governor of Helmand Province;

Maulavi Waliijan, Governor of Jawzjan Province;

Mullah M. Hasan Rahmani, Governor of Kandahar Province;

Mullah Manan Nyazi, Governor of Kabul Province;

Maulavi A. Wahed Shafiq, Deputy Governor of Kabul Province;

Alhaj Mullah Sadudin Sayed, Mayor of Kabul City;

Maulavi Shafiqullah Mohammadi, Governor of Khost Province;

Maulavi Nazar Mohammad, Governor of Kunduz Province;

M. Eshaq, Governor of Laghman Province;

Maulavi Zia-ur-Rahman Madani, Governor of Logar Province;

Maulavi Hamsudin, Governor of Wardak Province;
Maulavi A. Kabir, Governor of Nangarhar Province;
Mullah M. Rasul, Governor of Nimroz Province;
Maulavi Tawana, Governor of Paktia Province;
Mullah M. Shafiq, Governor of Samangan Province;
Maulavi Aminullah Amin, Governor of Saripul Province;
Maulavi Abdulhai Salek, Governor of Urouzgan Province;
Maulavi Ahmad Jan, Governor of Zabol Province;
Noor Mohammad Saqib, Chief Justice of Supreme Court;
Maulavi Sanani, Head of Dar-ul-Efta;
Maulavi Samiullah Muazen, Deputy of High Court;
Maulavi Shahabuddin Delawar, Deputy of High Court;
Abdul Rahman Agha, Chief Justice of Military Court;
Mullah Mustasaed, Head of Academy of Sciences;
Maulavi Esmatullah Asem, SG of Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS);
Maulavi Qalamuddin, Head of Olympic Committee;
Abdul Salam Zaef, Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan;
Abdul Hakim Mujahid, Taliban envoy to the United Nations;
General Rahmatullah Safi, Taliban representative in Europe;
Mullah Hamidullah, Head of Ariana Afghan Airlines;
Alhaj Mullah Sadruddin, Mayor of Kabul City;
Amir Khan Muttaqi, Taliban representative in UN-led talks;
Mr Jan Mohmmad Madani, Charge d'Affaires, Taliban Embassy, Abu Dhabi;
Mr Shamsalah Kmalzada, Second Secretary, Taliban Embassy, Abu Dhabi;
Mr Azizirahman, Third Secretary, Taliban Embassy, Abu Dhabi;
Mr Mawlawi Abdul Manan, Commercial Attache, Taliban Embassy, Abu Dhabi;
Malawi Abdul Wahab, Taliban Chargé d'Affaires in Riyadh,

Taliban "Embassy", Islamabad

Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef (Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary)

Habibullah Fauzi (First Secretary/Deputy Head of Mission)

Mohammad Sohail Shaheen (Second Secretary)

Mohammad Sarwar Siddiqmal (Third Secretary)

Mullah Mohammad Zahid (Third Secretary)

General Abdul Qadeer (Military Attache)

Maulavi Nazirullah Anafi (Commercial Attache)

Maulavi Abdul Ghafar Qurishi (Repatriation Attache)

Mohammad Daud (Administrative Attache)

Taliban "Consulate General", Peshawar

Maulavi Najibullah (Consul General)

Qari Abdul Wali (First Secretary)

Syed Allamuddin (Second Secretary)

Maulavi Akhtar Mohammad (Education Attache)

Alhaj Maulavi Mohammad Saddiq (Trade Representative)

Taliban "Consulate General", Karachi

Maulavi Rahamatullah Kakazada (Consul General)

Mufti Mohammad Aleem Noorani (First Secretary)

Haji Abdul Ghafar Shenwary (Third Secretary)

Maulavi Gul Ahmad Hakimi (Commercial Attache)

Taliban "Consulate General", Quetta

Maulavi Abduliah Murad (Consul General)

Maulavi Abdul Haly Aazem (First Secretary)

Maulavi Hamdullah (Repatriation Attache)

Information supplied by the Afghan Government

AFGHANISTAN

COUNTRY REPORT

OCTOBER 2003

Country Information & Policy Unit

REFERENCES TO SOURCE MATERIAL

Part I

Part II

Part III

ANNEX G: REFERENCES TO SOURCE MATERIAL

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