

Country Reports on Terrorism 2013

AFGHANISTAN

Overview: Although responsibility for security in Afghanistan has transitioned from U.S. and international forces to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the United States remains committed to continued political, diplomatic, and economic engagement in Afghanistan as a strategic partner. U.S. forces retain the capacity to conduct counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, but increasingly these operations were being carried out in conjunction with Afghan units or solely by Afghan units. In 2013, the United States fully supported Afghan efforts to professionalize and modernize the security forces and will continue to train, advise, and assist the Afghan forces in these efforts. The Government of Afghanistan's response to the increase of insider attacks in 2012 led to new procedures to vet and train security force personnel, which likely contributed to a dramatic reduction in the number of insider attacks in 2013.

2013 Terrorist Incidents: In 2013, insurgents conducted a significant number of large vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attacks, targeting Coalition Forces (CF) bases, military convoys, and Afghan government buildings, mostly in southern and eastern Afghanistan, including Kabul. Insurgents across Afghanistan used a variety of tactics to target Afghan security personnel and CF in major cities and rural areas, seeking to expand their territorial influence and further disrupt civil governance. In major cities, attacks were often well-coordinated and complex, with the intention of garnering media attention; in rural areas, they targeted the ANSF. Insurgents carried out several targeted assassinations of provincial Afghan leaders. As in previous years, a greater number of attacks occurred during the summer months. Helmand, Kandahar, Ghazni, and Wardak represented the most dangerous provinces for Afghan security personnel and CF.

High-profile attacks included:

- On January 16, insurgents conducted a complex attack against the Afghan Intelligence Headquarters in Kabul city, killing 14 and wounding 32.
- On January 26, a suicide bomber killed 10 policemen and injured 19 other security personnel and civilians in the northeastern Afghan city of Kunduz. Among the victims were the city's counterterrorism and traffic police chiefs.
- On February 26, a group of 17 Afghan Local Police (ALP) recruits were shot to death after being drugged by Taliban infiltrators.
- On March 13, a suicide bomber detonated his vest at a sports event in Imam Sahib District, Kunduz Province which resulted in the death of the seven spectators, including the District Chief of Police, and the wounding of five other civilians.
- On April 3, a group of militants detonated a suicide VBIED outside a judicial building in Farah City, followed by an assault on the Farah Court Building by heavily-armed suicide bombers in an attempt to free accused Taliban fighters standing trial. The attack resulted in the deaths of 34 civilians, including 12 members of the security forces, along with nine insurgents. More than 100 others were injured.

- On April 6, a suicide bomber detonated a VBIED near FOB Smart in Zabul. The attack resulted in deaths of five Americans including three U.S. soldiers and a State Department diplomat. An additional 15 personnel were also injured.
- On May 16, a suicide VBIED targeted a NATO convoy on Route Crimson in Kabul city, killing six U.S. personnel.
- On May 24, a suicide attack on an International Organization for Migration (IOM) compound followed by a gun battle killed five and wounded 14, including IOM staff.
- On June 3, a suicide bomber targeting a joint U.S. and Afghan Local Police dismounted patrol in Samkani District, Paktia Province detonated his explosive-packed motorcycle killing two U.S. soldiers, an Afghan police officer, and 10 children from a nearby school. At least twenty others were injured by the blast.
- On June 11, two suicide bombers detonated VBIEDs in front of Afghanistan's Supreme Court building in a heavily fortified area of Kabul. The attack, which targeted buses with court employees, killed at least 17 people and left dozens more injured.
- On June 25, a group of eight Taliban fighters wearing American uniforms cleared two security check points to enter a heavily-restricted area in Kabul to assault the Presidential Palace and nearby U.S. Embassy facilities. Seven Embassy local guards were killed, as well as all eight Taliban fighters.
- On August 3, a suicide bomber detonated his vest outside the Indian Consulate in Jalalabad killing nine children studying in an adjacent mosque, and wounding an additional 23 persons in the area, including students. The three attackers involved were also killed.
- On August 30, a suicide attack at a mosque in Qarlugh Village in Kunduz resulted in the death of the District Governor, his body guard, and 10 civilians attending a memorial service. An additional 22 locals were wounded.
- On September 13, suicide bombers detonated a large VBIED at the entrance to the main gate of the U.S. Consulate in Herat. Shortly after, a second blast occurred when an explosives-laden van detonated. Additional suicide bombers then breached the outer perimeter and opened fire on security forces inside, but were killed in the ensuing gunfight. Eight U.S. Consulate Herat local national guards were killed in this attack.
- On October 18, insurgents conducted a suicide VBIED attack outside of Green Village in Kabul city. The attack killed two American citizens and wounded six.
- On November 16, a suicide bomber in a VBIED detonated his explosives-laden vehicle at a security checkpoint in the vicinity of the Afghan Loya Jirga (a traditional assembly of tribal elders and national and provincial leaders) site in Kabul. At least 10 people were killed and as many as 20 injured.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Afghan Attorney General's Office investigates and prosecutes violations of the laws on crimes against the internal and external security of the state (1976 and 1987), violations of the Law on Combat Against Terrorist Offences (2008), and the Law on Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives (2005), including laws that prohibit membership in terrorist or insurgent groups as well as laws that forbid violent acts committed against the state, hostage taking, murder, and the use of explosives against military forces and state infrastructure. The Antiterrorism Prosecution Department handled a total of 4005 cases in 2013 on both the primary and appellate levels.

The current Afghan Penal Code, enacted in 1976, has gaps, a lack of definitions, disproportionate mandatory fines and sentences, and strict minimum imprisonments that result in overcrowded prisons. The President of Afghanistan has issued a decree requiring the Ministry of Justice to reorganize and consolidate the penal code. That work has been undertaken by the Criminal Law Reform Working Group (CLRWG), chaired by the Minister of Justice, and staffed by various international and Afghan partners, including the United States. The CLRWG is actively discussing how the new penal code will address Sharia law, gender-related crimes, crimes involving children, and compliance with international obligations regarding human rights and other international treaties to which Afghanistan is a party.

Although the draft Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) was pending in Parliament at year's end, it is important to note that several provisions within the draft CPC continued to be problematic. In particular, the Ministry of Justice inserted new provisions restricting the testimony of family members against the accused.

The Law on the Structure and Jurisdiction of the Attorney General's Office was enacted in October 2013, and codified the structure and funding of the existing Antiterrorism Protection Directorate in the Attorney General's Office, permitting the investigation and prosecution of terrorist and national security cases using internationally accepted methods and evidentiary rules.

Under the current structure, the ANSF has demonstrated an adequate capacity to conduct counterterrorism operations, in part due to contributions from the international community and pressure from international partners. The Governments of Afghanistan and the United States investigated a variety of criminal acts, including kidnappings and conspiracy to commit terrorist acts. On several occasions, U.S. law enforcement bodies assisted the Ministry of Interior, the National Directorate of Security, and other Afghan authorities, which enabled them to take actions to disrupt and dismantle terrorist operations and prosecute terrorist suspects.

Afghanistan continued to process travelers on entry and departure at major points of entry with the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES). With U.S. support, Afghan authorities continued to expand PISCES installations at additional locations. With assistance from United States Central Command, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security mentor and support Afghan law enforcement bodies in interdicting illegal narcotics and arms; the proceeds from smuggling enterprises often support terrorist and insurgent groups. Afghanistan remained an important partner nation in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, which continued to focus on building broader, self-sustaining Afghan security force capacity to protect national leadership, government facilities, and diplomatic facilities, and to improve Afghan security force agencies' coordination and cooperation in response to terrorism-related crisis incidents. In addition to a suite of tactical response courses, the ATA program provided instructor development and mentorship to Afghan officers to build and institutionalize a sustained capacity in antiterrorism skills, so they could share lessons learned with law enforcement colleagues tasked with counterterrorism response.

In May, the U.S. Homeland Security Investigations Attaché to Embassy Kabul and the World Customs Organization (WCO) conducted a counter-improvised explosive device training

seminar in support of its Global Shield program for Afghan law enforcement officers. The Global Shield course provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of risk assessment, targeting, identification of precursor chemicals, basic investigative techniques, and Afghan prosecution procedures. Throughout 2013, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) training led to an increased number of seizures of illicit materials by Afghan counternarcotics and counterterrorism police forces.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Afghanistan is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. In June 2012, Afghanistan was publicly identified by FATF as a jurisdiction with strategic anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) deficiencies. The Central Bank of Afghanistan confirmed by letter the government's high-level commitment to implement an action plan to address these deficiencies. In October 2013, the FATF noted key deficiencies that had not yet been addressed, including: adequately criminalizing money laundering and terrorist financing; establishing and implementing an adequate legal framework for identifying, tracing and freezing terrorist assets; implementing an adequate AML/CFT supervisory and oversight program for all financial sectors; establishing and implementing adequate procedures for the confiscation of assets related to money laundering; establishing a fully operational and effectively functioning financial intelligence unit; and establishing and implementing effective controls for cross-border cash transactions.

In addition to the problems FATF identified, the vast narcotics trafficking trade and bulk cash smuggling have been significant sources of revenue for terrorist groups. Foreign terrorist organizations were operating in Afghanistan and neighboring countries and both fundraised and sent funds from Afghanistan.

Terrorist finance investigations in Afghanistan have continued to be hampered by a weak or non-existent legal and regulatory regime, coupled with lack of capacity and political will.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2014 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume 2, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>.

Regional and International Cooperation: Afghanistan consistently emphasized the need to strengthen joint cooperation to fight terrorism and violent extremism in a variety of bilateral and multilateral fora. Notable among such meetings were the regular discussions of the U.S.-Afghanistan-Pakistan Core Group; the Istanbul Process; and meetings of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and other bodies.

Afghanistan shares the lead on the Counterterrorism Confidence Building Measure (CBM) of the Istanbul Process, working closely with Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. In August 2013, the CBM Regional Technical Group met to discuss IED Precursors in Abu Dhabi and identified strategies to work together with Pakistan to help eliminate the shipment of precursors over the border into Afghanistan.

Countering Radicalization to Violence and Violent Extremism: Afghan government programs to counter violent extremism continued through increased engagement with religious communities. According to most estimates, over 90 percent of Afghan mosques and madrassas, operated independently of government oversight, with some promoting a violent extremist ideology. The Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), as well as the Department of Islamic Education at the Ministry of Education, continued efforts to register more mosques and madrassas with limited success. The MoHRA also disseminated peaceful messages in its Friday sermons to both its affiliated mosques and some non-registered ones. The National Ulema Council, a quasi-governmental body of religious scholars established by President Karzai in 2002, became more vocal in condemning suicide attacks as un-Islamic.

The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) continued to reintegrate low- and mid-level insurgents back into their communities. The APRP is a National Priority Program of the Afghan government, is managed by the High Peace Council (HPC), and executed at the national level by the Joint Secretariat (JS). The HPC and JS work with the Provincial Peace committees and Provincial Joint Secretariat teams to effectively execute the program at the provincial level. By joining the program, the former fighter makes the commitment to renounce violence and sever all ties with the insurgency, and to abide by the Constitution of Afghanistan. This includes accepting the Government of Afghanistan's laws on women's rights. Since its inception, the APRP has successfully reintegrated over 7,400 former combatants across Afghanistan.