

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES OF THE UNION  
POLICY DEPARTMENT

# ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN



## COUNTRY BRIEFING

### Abstract

On 20 September 2011 the former Afghan president and head of the government's peace council Burhanuddin Rabbani was killed by a Taliban suicide bomber. The murder was a strong demonstration of Taliban opposition to peace talks, and as the latest in a string of high-profile assassinations will increase the apprehension of ordinary Afghans about their future as the insurgency gathers pace.

This assassination contributes to make more uncertain the outcome of the conference which will be held in Bonn next December. Foreign ministers from over 90 countries will, together with the Afghan government, discuss and provide advice on the future of the country. In particular the meeting is expected to review progress since 2001 and to discuss the kind of political process needed to make the country stable, plans for managing the period once NATO-led troops withdraw in 2014, and what shape engagement by the international community will take after that date.

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**AUTHOR:**

Sandro D'Angelo  
(with the contribution of Agathe Fadier and Adrian Shahbaz, trainees)  
Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union  
Policy Department  
WIB 06 M 087  
rue Wiertz 60  
B-1047 Brussels

Feedback to [sandro.dangelo@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:sandro.dangelo@europarl.europa.eu) is welcome

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**ABOUT THE EDITOR**

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## 2 POLITICAL SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

### 2.1 The Post-Taliban Transition

Afghanistan is an Islamic republic with a strong presidential system and a bicameral legislature. Since December 2001, the country has been governed by a series of national bodies headed by Hamid Karzai, the current President. Following the 11 September 2001 terror attacks, the UN sponsored a conference of prominent exiles and national figures in the German city of Bonn. The ensuing 'Bonn Agreement' established the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA), a 30-member organisation headed by Mr Karzai. On 11 June 2002, representatives from various political, cultural, and religious groups met in Kabul for a *loya jirga* (a Pashto term meaning 'grand assembly') in which the Transitional Afghan Authority (TAA) was officially formed, again under the chairmanship of Mr Karzai. Mohammed Zahir Shah, the former *Shah* or King of Afghanistan from 1933-73, was proclaimed Honorary Chairman of the National Assembly but, despite internal calls for his leadership, withdrew himself from any further role under international pressure.

The Afghan constitution was adopted by consensus of the *Constitutional Loya Jirga* on 5 January 2004. Over 500 delegates, most of whom were elected by local caucuses, attended the *loya jirga*. Afghanistan first post-Taliban elections were initially scheduled for June 2004, but were later delayed due to security concerns. Presidential elections were finally held in October 2004, with parliamentary elections following one year later.

### 2.2 Presidency

Hamid Karzai was elected to his second five-year term as president in November 2009. He has held the post since December 2004, after Afghanistan's first democratic elections since the repressive Taliban regime. Mr Karzai is Pashtun, Afghanistan's largest ethnic group based around the country's southern borders with Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> He is the head of Kandahar's Popolzai tribe, a prominent tribe from which Afghanistan's most famous emperor, Ahmad Shah Durrani (1722-73), was also based. At the start of the US-led military intervention in Afghanistan, Mr Karzai was said to have led Pashtun efforts to topple the Taliban.

Presidential duties include determining the general policy direction of the country (with parliamentary approval), acting as Commander in Chief of the armed forces, appointing ministers, the attorney general, head of the Central Bank, and Supreme Court justices, all with the approval of the National Assembly. Under the constitution, the president must choose two vice-presidents as running mates during political campaigns. In the interests of national unity, Mr Karzai selected a Tajik and Hazara to serve respectfully as his first and second vice-presidents.

### 2.3 National Assembly

The National Assembly is divided into two houses. Members of lower house, the *Wolesi Jirga* (House of People), are elected for five-year terms by proportional representation. Constitutionally, 64 seats are allocated to women and a further 10 to the *Kuchi* nomad population. The upper house, known as the

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<sup>1</sup> According to 2010 figures from the CIA World Factbook and the Pakistani Government Census, there are 13.46 million Pashtuns in Afghanistan (estimated at 42per cent of the total population) and 35.64 million in Pakistan (15per cent of the total).

*Meshrano Jirga* (House of Elders), is made up of representatives from the provincial councils (whose members receive a four-year term) and the district councils (three years), with the remaining one-third of members appointed by the president for a five-year term. Presidential appointees are selected from experts and experienced personalities, including two members from the handicapped community and a further two from nomadic tribes. Half of the total presidential appointees must be women.

The National Assembly may ratify, modify or reject laws or legislative decrees. In addition, it must approve social, cultural, economic and technological development programmes, as well as the state budget. Individually, the Wolesi Jirga may initiate a no-confidence vote against particular ministers, as well as proceedings against the president for treason or crimes against humanity. The accusation must then be confirmed by two-thirds of the Loya Jirga.

Though it is not a part of the National Assembly, the Loya Jirga is codified in the constitution as "the highest manifestation of the will of the people of Afghanistan." It consists of members of the National Assembly and the presidents of the provincial and district assemblies. Ministers, members of the Supreme Court, and the Attorney General participate, though without voting rights. The Loya Jirga is convened to address matters of utmost national importance. As such, its involvement is necessary on issues relating to national sovereignty, constitutional amendments, and the impeachment of the president. Decisions are implemented after a majority vote.

Regionally, Afghanistan is composed of 34 provinces, each with a governor appointed by the president. The provinces, as well as the 398 districts, are governed by elected councils.

## **2.4 Election Controversy and Inter-Institutional Disputes**

Elections in Afghanistan have been consistently marred by violence, intimidation, and ethnic tension. Prior to the 2010 parliamentary elections, President Karzai issued a presidential decree modifying the country's election law. The decree gave the president full authority to appoint all five commissioners of the Electoral Complaints Commission (EEC) and further obscured the role of the Independent Election Commission (IEC). In addition, it significantly increased the amount of money needed to deposit in order to register as a presidential or parliamentary candidate. One month later, on 31 March 2010, the Wolesi Jirga issued a strong rejection of the decree. However, its efforts to block the law were blocked by the Meshrano Jirga, a body largely composed of presidential appointees.

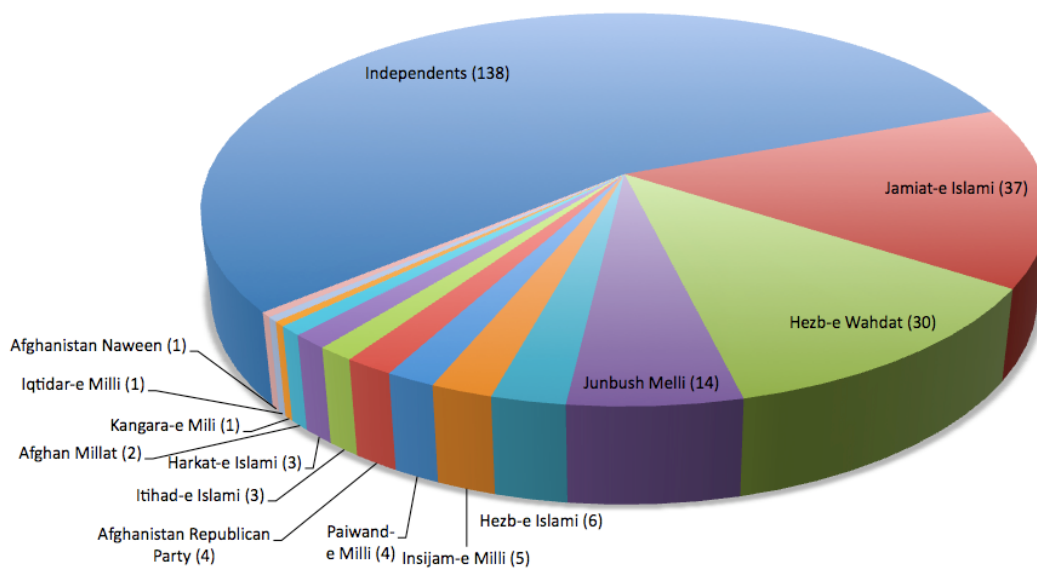
Despite widespread concerns over the legitimacy of its outcome, the government of Afghanistan went ahead with parliamentary elections on 18 September 2010. Contrary to previous elections, formal party endorsements were allowed, though the majority of candidates ran as independents. There were a reported 300 attacks and 24 deaths on the day. Fifteen percent of the country's 6,835 polling stations did not open out of security concerns. Nonetheless, the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) reported voter turnout at 45 per cent of the country's 9.2 million registered voters.

Shortly after the elections, the IEC rejected 1.3 million ballots (around one-quarter of the total amount cast) and the EEC disqualified 21 winning candidates for fraud. Acting on recommendations from the EEC, the Attorney General also indicted 14 senior election officials. In a reaction to the spiralling chaos, President Karzai pushed the Supreme Court to form a special tribunal to investigate election results. The Special Election Court is composed of five members, each appointed by Mr Karzai. Once the tribunal was established, its members proclaimed the right to annul the election results outright. The Constitutional Oversight Commission (COC), itself with an ambiguous role, rejected the tribunal's mandate as illegal.

On 19 January 2011, upon recommendation of the special tribunal, President Karzai announced he would delay the inauguration of the parliament for one month in order to allow the tribunal to consider outstanding complaints. However, the day after, more than two hundred parliamentarians declared they would inaugurate the body with or without the president. One week after announcing the delay, President Karzai officially inaugurated the parliament. It was reported that the president struck a deal with parliamentarians whereby all parties agreed to respect the decisions of the special tribunal in the future. However, on 12 February 2011, the Wolesi Jirga issued a strong call to disband the tribunal.

## 2.5 Latest Election Results

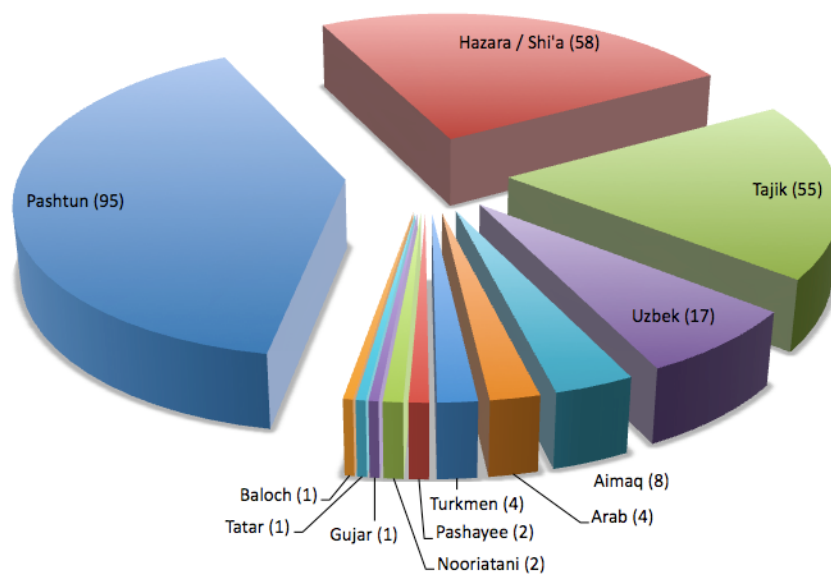
### Composition of Wolesi Jirga, by Political Affiliation



After the IEC confirmed the final election results, it was shown that over 60 per cent of incoming parliamentarians were new members. President Karzai saw his number of core supporters reduced while opposition forces, notably Dr Abdullah's Coalition for Hope and Change and Mr Rabbani's Jamiat Islami, experienced a positive increase in their numbers. Pashtuns, Mr Karzai's support base, performed surprisingly poor in the elections. The Taliban demanded a boycott of the elections and issued a threat against any Afghan who participated in voting or candidacy. As a result, many Pashtuns in the country's southeastern regions, where the Taliban continues to enjoy a strong influence, did not vote out of security fears. This was most apparent in the province of Ghazni, where Hazara candidates won all 11 parliamentary seats, taking 5 seats away from Pashtun candidates.



## Composition of Wolesi Jirga, by Ethnicity



Representatives from the Hazara community, traditionally Afghanistan's most discriminated ethnic group composing 8 per cent of the country's population, now holds around 23 per cent of seats in the Wolesi Jirga. In comparison, Pashtun representatives saw their numbers fall from 120 in the previous parliament to around 95 in the current one. This roughly translates to a representation of 38 per cent in the Wolesi Jirga, a smaller figure than the estimated 42 per cent of the total Afghan population.

Afghans tend to prioritise their tribal, ethnic, or regional affiliations above their ideological differences when voting in elections and engaging in political life. However, it is crucial to note that ethnic groups are by no means cohesive blocs of similar ideologies or voting patterns. Within the Hazara community, for example, disputes between Abdul Karim Khalili and Mohammed Mohaqiq have split the Hizb-e Wahdat political movement into smaller, splinter organisations. Whereas Mr Khalili's position as vice-president ensures his pro-Karzai stance, Mr Mohaqiq has stood in opposition to the government, allying himself with Yunus Qanuni and the main opposition alliance.

On 27 February, Abdul Raouf Ibrahimy, an Uzbek with a relatively low political profile, was selected as Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga. The Speaker of the Meshrano Jirga, Fazl Hadi Muslimyar, is a key ally of Mr Karzai.

## 2.6 Latest Political Developments

The lower house of parliament (*Wolesi Jirga*) has been experiencing an impasse since its inauguration in January 2011 because of accusations of massive fraud in the September 2010 election. But there has been a bitter debate over which politicians were involved in those misdeeds, and which entity should be charged with the investigation.

A special tribunal set up by Afghan President Hamid Karzai issued a ruling in June, calling for 62 lawmakers to be disqualified for fraud - one quarter of the 249-seat assembly. Later on in August, President Karzai announced the dissolution of the special court he had established to investigate poll fraud in last September's parliamentary elections after critics accused him of using it to reshape the parliament more to his liking.



The Afghan president issued a decree giving the Independent Election Commission the final say on election complaints. Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission has called for the replacement of nine lawmakers after reviewing voter fraud allegations that have paralyzed the Afghan parliament for almost a year. The commission chairman Fazel Ahmad Manawi said the nine unseated lawmakers will be replaced by nine new lawmakers, including a powerful former militia leader in northern Afghanistan, Gul Mohammad Pahlawan.

However, more than half of Afghanistan's lawmakers started boycotting parliament denouncing the commission's decision to replace nine MPs as illegal. The members of parliament who have joined the boycott say they do not recognize the court, and see it as a tool for the president to meddle in the legislature's make-up. The uncertainty over the fate of the parliament is undermining an already weakened institution at a critical time, with violence at record levels and the withdrawal of foreign combat troops set to be complete by the end of 2014.

## 2.7 Ethno-Political Climate

Regional and ethnic rivalries are endemic to Afghanistan's political climate, brought on by decades of mutual distrust and war. Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, the Pashtuns, have dominated the country's leadership for centuries.<sup>2</sup> The large Pashtun community is divided into two main groups: the Durrani Pashtuns of the south, and the Ghilzai Pashtuns of the east. From Soviet occupation onwards, Pashtun elements of the *mujahedin* (Islamic resistance fighters) enjoyed extensive support from neighbouring Pakistan, home to an even larger Pashtun community.<sup>3</sup>

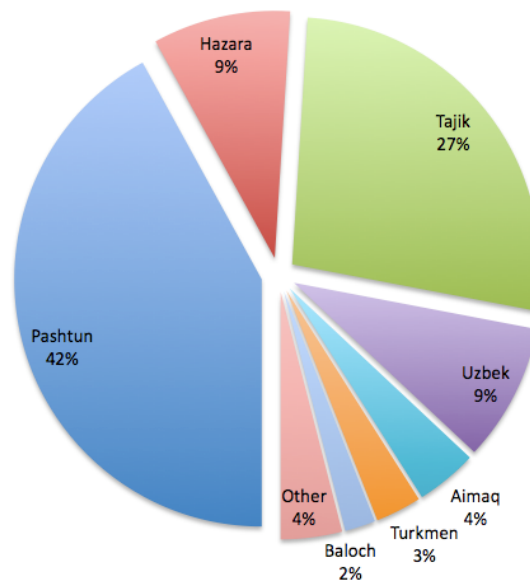
With the fall of the Soviet-linked Najibullah Ahmedzai in 1992, *mujahedin* leaders from the Jamiat Islami formed a government led by Mr Rabbani, a prominent Tajik. However, an assault on Kabul by the warlord Gulbuddin Hikmatyar sparked years of civil war and infighting. Many Pashtuns, disillusioned with the violence, left Afghanistan to study in religious seminaries (*madrassas*) in Pakistan. Supported by Pakistan, these religious students, or *talibs*, formed the *Taliban* and peacefully took control of Kandahar.

Fleeing Kabul in 1996, members of the Jamiat Islami (notably Ahmed Shah Massoud, Bismullah Khan and Mr Rabbani) organised a resistance movement against the Taliban, known as the Northern Alliance. During a decade of violence, the country's strongest Uzbek, Hazara, and even some Durrani Pashtuns built shaky alliances with the Northern Alliance to form the United Front. Mr Massoud resisted Taliban rule up until the days before 11 September, when the now-mythical figure was assassinated by Taliban infiltrators posing as journalists. The Northern Alliance went on to play a crucial role in fighting the Taliban during the US-led invasion starting December 2001. Current President Hamid Karzai (a Durrani Pashtun) led an opposition movement while exiled in Quetta, Pakistan, and was instrumental in securing local support in expelling the Taliban from his hometown of Kandahar.

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of Burhanuddin Rabbani, a Tajik who served as president from 1992-96.

<sup>3</sup> During negotiations between the British Colonial Government of India and the Afghan King in 1893, the Pashtun homeland of 'Pashtunistan' (long ruled by the Afghans) was divided into respective British and Afghan spheres of influence. The Durand Line, as it is referred to, separating the two lands now serves as the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan after the latter gained independence. However, Afghanistan has subsequently disputed this controversial border and, on these grounds, was the only country to vote against Pakistan's admission into the United Nations. Afghanistan still does not recognise the border.

### Ethnic Composition of Afghan Population (29.84 million, total)



Violent confrontations between the country's ethnicities have been rare in recent years, with most disputes moved to the political arena. Officials from the Tajik community failed in their bid to incorporate a prime minister into the political system, aiming to counter Pashtun dominance. In a two-round election system, the chances of a non-Pashtun presidential candidate securing the post are very slim.

In the current political configuration, President Karzai's government is largely dominated by Pashtun figures from the country's southern regions. The Wolesi Jirga is the principal political instrument for checking Pashtun dominance in the executive. The Hazara Shi'as have benefitted from selective Pashtun boycotts of elections in forming a relatively cohesive group. Tajiks have prominent positions in Afghan National Army and the National Directorate for Security (NDS, Afghanistan's intelligence service).

## 3 SECURITY CHALLENGES

### 3.1 Insurgency and the Taliban

The Taliban that ruled Afghanistan from 1996-2001 has been pushed underground and into the southern Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. The organisation is headquartered in Quetta, Pakistan, and referred to as the Quetta Shura Council (QSC). It continues to be led by the reclusive Islamic cleric and former *mujahedin*, Mullah Omar. Estimates put the number of remaining Taliban in Afghanistan at more than 20,000. There is also a growing Taliban movement within Pakistan, known as Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Other notable insurgents include factions led by former *mujahedin* commander Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and former Taliban minister Jalaludin Haqqani. Hikmatyar, a former US ally against the Soviets, heads a 1,000-strong force known as Hizb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HIG). HIG operations target the northern and eastern areas around Kabul. Haqqani, commanding 2,500 insurgents known as the 'Haqqani Network',

was a former Minister of Tribal Affairs under the Taliban. His power base is around the Afghan city of Khost in the east, along the Pakistani border.

### 3.2 Reintegration and Reconciliation<sup>4</sup>

In an effort to achieve a political solution to the ongoing conflict, the Afghan government has pursued a “reintegration and reconciliation” programme. The international community has formally endorsed President Karzai’s plan to reintegrate former insurgent fighters into society at the July 2010 Kabul Conference; however, Mr Karzai’s efforts to seek reconciliation with insurgent leaders has been met with much scepticism.

President Karzai sponsored a Peace Jirga from 2-4 June 2010 in which around 1,600 delegates from across the country discussed possible methods for ending the insurgency and entering into peace negotiations with more moderate elements of the Taliban. For its part, the Taliban boycotted the event under the pretence that it would only enter peace talks after all ISAF troops had left Afghan territory. Notably, the Taliban demanded the departure of all foreign troops and a new “Islamic” constitution. Nonetheless, President Karzai made notable overtures to the Taliban and invited them to lay down their arms and join the government. Following the Peace Jirga, Mr Karzai established the High Peace Council (HPC) as a means of engaging with members of the Taliban, predominantly in the regions along the Pakistani border. The HPC is chaired by Burhanuddin Rabbani<sup>5</sup>, leader of *Jamiat Islami* and former president of Afghanistan prior to the Taliban coup.

While polls have shown that the majority of Afghans are in favour of negotiating some sort of political solution with the Taliban, some Afghans remain vehemently opposed to the government’s reconciliation programme. On 5 May, more than ten thousand people gathered in Kabul to protest against the Taliban and voiced concerns over any Pakistani involvement in peace talks. The event was organised by Mr Amrullah Saleh, the former Afghan intelligence chief who was dismissed by President Karzai over his refusal to support the reconciliation plans. Leading opposition figure Dr Abdullah Abdullah also participated in the event.

Any reintegration of former Taliban fighters would reshape the country’s political and military landscape, resulting in a large influx of Pashtun figures into positions of influence. Afghans affiliated to the Northern Alliance have fought long and hard against the Taliban and are loathe to seeing the violent extremists reintegrated into Afghan society. There are reports that Northern Alliance commanders are considering reactivating their militias in preparation for a potential civil war against pro-Taliban elements in the south. Mr Saleh has even suggested the Northern Alliance should seek greater military cooperation with India as a means of countering Pakistan, largely suspected of continuing to arm and support the Taliban from both within and outside its own borders.

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<sup>4</sup> For further details on the reconciliation process see in the policy briefing [http://www.expo.ep.parl.union.eu/expo/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/podp/documents/Regions\\_and\\_countries/Asia/afghanistan\\_post\\_bin\\_laden\\_2011.pdf](http://www.expo.ep.parl.union.eu/expo/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/podp/documents/Regions_and_countries/Asia/afghanistan_post_bin_laden_2011.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Burhanuddin Rabbani was assassinated on 20 September 2011 by a suicide bomber. He had been heading a government peace council set up to build contacts with the Taliban.

Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative on the killing of the head of Afghanistan's High Peace Council [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/124687.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/124687.pdf)

### 3.3 International Mission and Transition to Afghan Authorities

Since December 2001, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has operated in Afghanistan in an effort to secure and stabilise the country in order that reconstruction may go ahead. ISAF was mandated under UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1386. Initially, ISAF was limited to 5,000 troops in the area surrounding Kabul; at present, there are over 132,000 ISAF troops spread around the country. Forty-eight nations contribute to ISAF, with the United States providing over 68 per cent of combat troops to the mission.

ISAF/NATO efforts centre on security, reconstruction, and governance. A comprehensive campaign to train the Afghan National Security Forces in order to ease the burden of transition takes place under NATO's Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A). US training programmes run under the Combined Security Transitional Command Afghanistan (CSTC-A), whereas the EU programme falls under the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL). In addition, ISAF Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and Police OMLTs are embedded in the ANA and ANP, respectively, in order to provide training and supervise operations. Other elements of the ISAF mandate relate to the disarmament of illegally armed groups, the supplying of equipment to ANSF, the safeguarding of weapons depots, and the provision of humanitarian and relief assistance. ISAF also operates 28 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan, joint civilian-military operations aiming to promote local governance and socio-economic development. The ISAF mandate was also recently expanded to include counter-narcotic strategies, under which NATO intelligence is shared with ANSF.

First at the Kabul Conference, and later at the NATO Lisbon Conference in 2010, ISAF nations agreed to a conditions-based timetable for the gradual withdrawal of troops. Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), comprising of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), will progressively take up the responsibility for combat operations and providing general security, with a view of a complete transition by the end of 2014.<sup>6</sup> Under the timetable, ISAF troop withdrawals are scheduled to commence in July 2011, though prominent military commanders have insisted that any troop withdrawal will be a piecemeal process heavily conditioned by facts on the ground. The stated objective for the next phase of ISAF operations is for ANSF to be "capable of tackling existing and new security challenges, with continued support from ISAF." Indeed, NATO and the Afghan government signed a *Declaration on an Enduring Partnership*, under which it was agreed that the two parties would continue close military cooperation beyond the current ISAF mission.

ISAF military commanders have been adamant that the transition to ANSF responsibility for security will be conditions-based, not calendar-driven. ISAF will gradually shift to a supporting role, rather than withdrawal. Indeed, NATO troops could remain in Afghanistan in a training and supporting capacity long after 2014, though under the request of the Afghan government, NATO has made it clear that it does not seek establish a permanent military base in the country, nor will it use its forces to attack neighbouring countries.

### 3.4 Afghan National Security Forces

Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) consist mainly of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). The ANA was largely built from scratch after the international intervention in

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<sup>6</sup> For further details on the international military drawdown see in the policy briefing [http://www.expo.ep.parl.union.eu/expo/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/podp/documents/Regions\\_and\\_countries/Asia/afghanistan\\_post\\_bin\\_laden\\_2011.pdf](http://www.expo.ep.parl.union.eu/expo/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/podp/documents/Regions_and_countries/Asia/afghanistan_post_bin_laden_2011.pdf)

2001. It was initially dominated by Tajiks from the Northern Alliance, which prompted a boycott from Pashtun soldiers in the south. Following a push to integrate Pashtuns into the army, its composition largely mirrors the ethnic makeup of the country. However, a disproportionate number of ANA Pashtuns are of the Ghilzai tribe of eastern Afghanistan. Durrani Pashtuns, based around Kandahar, are important to the stability of the south of the country and their recruitment would bring much needed legitimacy to the ANA in the region. The ANA currently numbers around 150,000 troops, with 2,000 more trained every month<sup>7</sup>.

While the ANA has undergone sufficient criticism, the ANP is in a much more difficult state. The national police force suffers from rampant corruption, a high desertion rate, illiteracy, and prevalent drug use among members. For these reasons, ISAF has begun other initiatives aimed at securing local community at a more grassroots level, including the Afghan Provincial Protection Programme (AP3) and the Afghan Local Police (ALP). Still, recruitment for the ANP has surpassed targets and stands at 120,000.

Afghanistan also has a small Afghan Air Force (AAF), consisting of 46 aircraft and 3,000 staff, including 400 pilots. The AAF is based at Baghram Air Base.

## 4 HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2010 the country's human rights record remained poor. Human rights problems included extrajudicial killings, torture, poor prison conditions, official impunity, prolonged pre-trial detention, trafficking in persons, abuse of worker rights and restrictions on freedom of the press. Particularly critical areas included women's rights, children's rights and minority groups' rights.

### 4.1 International Commitments and Human Rights Institutions

Afghanistan has signed and ratified several of the major international and human rights conventions and thus remains legally bound by them. Among Afghanistan's commitments are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the International Convention on the Rights on the Child and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By contrast, Afghanistan is not part of the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspect of International Child Abduction.

Regarding the death penalty, Afghanistan has not ratified the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of capital punishment. According to the 2011 Amnesty International Report on Afghanistan, at least 100 people were sentenced to death, had their sentences confirmed by the Supreme Court and were awaiting consideration of their clemency appeals by the President. On 24 October 2010, President Hamid Karzai ordered the judiciary to review all death row cases.

The 2004 Afghan Constitution asserts that men and women "*have equal rights and duties before the law and forbids any kind of "discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan."* It grants all accused the right of innocence until proven guilty and outlaws the use of torture. The constitution grants freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom to form political parties, provided that these do not "*contravene the Holy religion of Islam and the principles and values enshrined*" in the

<sup>7</sup> For further details on the Afghan National Army's ethnic composition see in the policy briefing [http://www.expo.ep.parl.union.eu/expo/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/podp/documents/Regions\\_and\\_countries/Asia/afghanistan\\_post\\_bin\\_laden\\_2011.pdf](http://www.expo.ep.parl.union.eu/expo/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/podp/documents/Regions_and_countries/Asia/afghanistan_post_bin_laden_2011.pdf)

constitution. Parties may not be based on affiliation with foreign forces, on tribalism, or on religious sectarianism. Citizens also have the freedom of peaceful assembly, so long as it is for *"legitimate and peaceful purposes."* The right to private property is also codified. Healthcare and education up to university level is offered free of charge by the state. The state is also given the task of eliminating *"traditions contrary to the principles of the sacred religion of Islam."* Under the constitution, Islam is the state religion although other religious groups are free to exercise their beliefs. However, rejection of Islam by a citizen born unto Muslim parents is illegal and punishable by death. The constitution codifies Afghanistan's commitment to observing the UN charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to preventing terrorism, *"the cultivation and smuggling of narcotics, and the production and use of intoxicants."*

Regarding the domestic human rights institutions, the Bonn Agreement of 2001 has established the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) as a national institution to protect and promote human rights and to investigate human rights abuses and war crimes. The Afghan Constitution of 2004 has reinforced the legal basis of the AIHRC.

## 4.2 Women's Rights

Women's rights in Afghanistan have been consistently suppressed in the last three decades. Under different rulers such as the Mujahedeen and the Taliban in the later part of the century, women have struggled to gain many key freedoms and remain subjugated in what is primarily a patriarchal society. After the war, women's rights have been set as a main priority. The new Constitution promises equal rights for men and women. Women are permitted to work outside the home, to engage in political activity and the Constitution requires each political party to nominate a certain number of female candidates (Article 22). Afghanistan has ratified the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

**Access to education** has been one of the top priorities addressed by the government. Under the Taliban, the majority of girls' schools were closed and gross enrolment fell from 32 per cent to 4 per cent. As a result, only 6 per cent of Afghan women aged 25 or older have ever received formal education. Despite the progress, obstacles to girls' education are multiples - including cultural pressures, early forced marriage and perceived need for girls to work at home.

**Violence against women.** In August 2009, the *Law on Elimination of violence against women (EVAW)* was enacted by the Afghan government and provided a formal legal basis to fight traditions and practices that cause violence against women. The law criminalizes rape, battery or beating, forced or underage marriage, 'baah' (the giving of a female relative to another family to settle debt or dispute), humiliation, intimidation and the refusal of food. The situation remains nevertheless quite challenging. Human Rights Watch reported that 87.2 per cent of women had experienced at least one form of physical, sexual or psychological violence and forced marriage in their lifetimes, both inside and outside the home. The lack of sufficient implementation of the law has been underlined by both local and international observers. Indeed, police response to domestic violence is limited, complaints are rarely investigated and crimes are almost never prosecuted. In case they came to court, the accused are often exonerated or punished lightly. In addition, men accused of rape often claimed the victim agreed to consensual sex, which results, according to a certain interpretation of Sharia law, (although uncodified in Afghan law), in an adultery charge against the victim punishable by stoning to death or 100 lashes. According to Human Rights Watch, in 2010 more than 70 per cent of marriages were forced and despite laws banning the practice, a majority of brides were younger than the legal marriage age of 16 (or 15 with approval of a guardian and court). The UN Commissioner for Human



Rights (UNHCR) noted that only 5 per cent of marriages were registered, leaving forced marriage outside legal control. During International Women's Day in March 2011, both President Karzai and officials from the UN affirmed their support for more effective implementation of the EAW law.

**Women in public life** regularly come under threat (including female members of the parliament). In the last several years, prominent women in Afghan public life have been murdered and their killers have not been brought to justice. Regarding the **inclusion of women in the reconciliation process** women account for 20 per cent of the June Consultative Peace Jirga. However, there is no guarantee in the inclusion of women at decision making levels in the implementation bodies for either reintegration or reconciliation, such as the High Level Peace Council or Joint Secretariat for Peace, Reconciliation and Reintegration Programs. In April 2010, the Minister of Economy, Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, a prominent Hezb-i-Islami leader, reportedly stated that women would have to sacrifice their interest for the sake of peace. Indeed, little reassurance has been given to women that are concerned about the risk of reintegration and reconciliation.

It should be noted that, despite the progress made in the improvement of the situation of women, some decisions made by the government over the last two years have been seen as a regression in the progress of the protection of women's rights in Afghanistan and have been highly criticized by NGOs and the international community. In late March 2009, President Karzai signed into law the internationally condemned "*Shia Personal status Laws*" which governs family and marital issues for 20 per cent of the population who are Shia Muslim. Articles in the law of particular concern include the condoning of apparent spousal rape (in Article 132), child marriage and imposing *purdah* on married Afghan women. More recently, in February 2011, the Afghan government has proposed changes to the regulation of women's shelters. According to the new legislation, the government will take control of women's shelters from the local Afghan women's NGOs that have founded and run them and transfer that control to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). In addition, women will have to plead their case before an admission panel of government employees and undergo medical examinations in order to prove they are not guilty of adultery or prostitution. Finally, if a woman's family comes to claim her, she must be handed over. On 20 February 2011, the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, has called on the Afghan Government to support organizations which run shelters for abused women, instead of trying to take them over.

Overall, women still continue to face pervasive HR violations while remaining largely uninformed about their rights under the law. Discrimination is particularly acute in rural areas where denial of educational opportunities, limited employment options, and continuing security threats continue to impede the ability of many women to improve their situation.

### 4.3 Children's Rights

In January 2011, the Afghan Government signed an agreement in which the country committed to protecting **children affected by armed conflict** and to preventing the recruitment of children. In a recent report on child and armed conflict in Afghanistan presented in mid-February to the Security Council, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon urged the government to ensure the adequate resources are allocated for effective implementation of an action plan, including the introduction of legislation aimed at criminalizing the recruitment of children in armed conflict. Between 1st September 2008 and 1st August 2010, 1795 children were injured or killed due to conflict-related violence. Furthermore, 568 children were injured or killed because of landmines and other explosive remnants of war during the reporting period. Children continue to be detained in international military detention facilities in contravention of international law.



**Child abuse** is endemic throughout the country. It includes general neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, abandonment and confined **forced labour** to pay off family debt. Although it is against the law, corporal punishment in schools, rehabilitation centres and other public institutions remain common.

**Sexual violence against children** continues to be vastly underreported and concealed in Afghan society. NGOs have noted that most child victims are abused by extended family members. Child sexual abuse both against girls and boys is not clearly defined as a crime in Afghan law and perpetrators of such violence are rarely held accountable.

According to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled, the greatest numbers of internally-displaced persons due to the conflict were children. NGOs estimate that there are 37,000 children in urban areas. Street children have little or no access to government services. Overall, the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled noted that more than **5 million children live in need of humanitarian assistance**.

#### **4.4 Minority Rights**

Ethnic tensions between Pashtun and non-Pashtun groups still result in conflict and occasional killings. Social **discrimination against minority groups** continued along class, race and religious lines. In 2010, the UNCHR reported that Hindus, Sikhs, and Shiite Muslims - particularly those from the Hazara ethnic group - faced official obstacles and discrimination from the Sunni Muslim majority, in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labour, physical abuse and detention.

**Religious freedom** has improved since the fall of the Taliban government, but it is still hampered by violence and harassment aimed at members of minority religious groups. The Constitution established Islam as the official religion. Blasphemy and apostasy by Muslims are considered capital crimes. A 2007 court ruling found the minority Baha'i faith to be a form of blasphemy, jeopardizing the legal status of that community. While faiths other than Islam are permitted, non-Muslim proselytizing is strongly discouraged. According to the 2010 International Religious Freedom report, the respect for religious freedom deteriorated particularly for Christian groups and individuals. According to the Amnesty International Annual Report 2011, people converted to religions other than Islam were prosecuted by the Afghan judiciary. Three Afghans who converted to Christianity were arrested and detained while faith-based NGOs accused of proselytizing were forced to temporarily suspend their activities. In October 2010, a person was arrested from converting to Christianity from Islam. A primary court in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif threatened him for apostasy if he refused to recant.

The situation of **persons with disabilities** is another difficult issue in Afghanistan. Apart from other groups of disabled persons, years of armed conflict have resulted in thousands of war victims who have become disabled due to gunshots or explosions. According to different organizations, the number of mobility-impaired persons is estimated at 800,000 in Afghanistan. In many cases, these people find themselves relegated to the margin of society. The Constitution prohibits any kind of discrimination against citizens and requires the state to assist disabilities and to protect their rights, specifically their rights to healthcare and financial protection. The Constitution also requires the state to adopt measures to reintegrate and ensure the active participation in society of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled provides financial support to 80,000 individuals with disabilities and accords special treatment to families of those killed in war.

In the Meshrano Jirga, two of the presidentially appointed seats are reserved for persons with disabilities.

## **5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION**

Three decades of armed conflict have exacerbated poverty and impeded efforts geared to its reduction. As a result, Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2010, 36 per cent of the population lived in absolute poverty and about the same amount were slightly situated above the poverty line. Poverty prevents 2/3 of the population from basic goods (the water supply reaches only 23 per cent of Afghans) and services such as access to health or education.

Despite 10 years of international engagement in Afghanistan and an increase of donor aid, socio-economic indicators have deteriorated over the last few years. Since 2004, the number of people living below the poverty threshold has increased by 130 per cent. Afghanistan's ranking in the UNDP Human Development Index has descended from 173 in 2003 to 181 (out of 182 countries). Overall, Afghanistan's development indicators compare poorly with neighboring countries.

### **5.1 Child and Maternal Health**

Despite limited progress, Afghanistan has the 2nd highest maternal mortality rate and the 3rd lowest global ranking for child mortality. UNICEF ranked the country the worst of 202 countries in terms of maternal, infant and child mortality in 2009. According to the Health Ministry, 1/6 children under the age of 5 dies as a result of common but preventable diseases (such as tuberculosis or diarrhea) and malnutrition, and one woman dies every five hours from pregnancy-related complications.

Improving the health of birthing mothers and reducing the death rate of newborn children is one of the five top priorities for the UN in Afghanistan in 2011. The country is committed to reducing maternal mortality to 800 per 100,000 live births by 2015 and to 400 by 2020 according to Afghanistan's Fifth Millennium Development Goal. However, according to Peter Graaff, (Country Representative of the UN World Health Organization, WHO), despite the positive trend, progress is slow. Some progress has been achieved (-23 per cent infant mortality and -26 per cent child mortality since 2002) through a rapid expansion of healthcare services and enhanced immunization campaigns over the past few years. Nevertheless, 85 per cent of the population has access to health facilities within 1 hour of travel (68 per cent on those on foot). In addition, it should be noted that progress is most prominent in urban areas. Life expectancy is only 44 years for both men and women.

### **5.2 Education**

Afghanistan has made progress in increasing basic education. However, the literacy gap left by 30 years of conflict is far from being closed. While 6.3 million children benefit from education services, 5 million still face the incapacity to go to school. In total, only 24 per cent of the country's 15 year olds can read and write. Only 12.6 per cent of women more than 15 years old are literate. The gap between rural and urban areas is highly visible with only 20 per cent literacy in rural areas. The figures drop by 6 per cent for nomadic people.

In the early years after the fall of the Taliban, education was a top priority for the Afghan government and international donors. The "Back to School Campaign", a joint UN-Afghan government initiative

launched in 2002 has made enormous gains in increasing the child school enrolment by nearly 7 fold, from approximately 900,000 in 2000 to 6.7 million in 2009. Donors have contributed approximately USD 1.9 billion to rebuilding the education system since 2001, including building schools, hiring teachers and developing curricula.

However, in 2006 efforts to improve education in Afghanistan began slowing down. Today, many schools do not have the infrastructure needed to provide a quality education. Data from the Ministry of Education shows that 47 per cent of schools in Afghanistan still have no permanent buildings. This is even more pronounced in rural areas.

Education is mandatory up to secondary level (4 years for primary school and 3 years for secondary) and the law provides for free education up to and including the college level. However, enrolment significantly drops at secondary and post-primary education.

Economic factors and the poor security environment are some of the major obstacles for education. According to the Human Rights Watch office in Afghanistan, the Taliban and other insurgent groups continued to target school teachers and students. The Ministry of Education reported that between March and October 2010, 20 schools were attacked using explosives or arson, and insurgents killed 126 students. Schools for girls over 10 years old are the most popular targets.

Female education is facing significant obstacles in Afghanistan yet there have been enormous gains since 2001. According to UNESCO, about 37 per cent of more than 7 million students enrolled in schools across the country are girls – an accomplishment when looking back ten years ago when there was nearly zero female enrolment, but a reminder that more than half of girls remain absent from classrooms.

## 6 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

### 6.1 Economic situation

Afghanistan's economy is recovering from decades of conflict. The economy has improved significantly since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 largely because of the infusion of international assistance, the recovery of the agricultural sector, and service sector growth.

According to the IMF, **growth in real GDP** (excluding opium production) is estimated at around 22.5 per cent in 2009/2010. The growth has been mainly driven by strong performance in the country's often volatile agricultural sector and increased spending by the government and donors.

Projections for 2011 remain cautious, though the outlook is generally favourable with GDP expected to increase by 8.5-9 per cent. Growth will continue to be driven by strong investment in construction due to increases in donor spending and strong performance in private consumption, itself a result of Afghanistan's security economy which generates demand for goods and services, equipment and operations and maintenance of the national army.

The Afghan Central Bank's prudent monetary policy limited **inflation** to 3 per cent in 2009/2010, a decrease from an average of 9 per cent average in 2008/2009. However inflation is expected to increase to 5 per cent in 2011 and throughout the coming years thanks to rapid economic expansion and supply constraints. Bad weather conditions in neighbouring countries sometime prop up essential food prices (such as wheat, beef and sugar). It should be noted that only a small increase in food prices can have a dramatic impact on the Afghan population. A 10 per cent increase in the price of wheat could push as many as 377,000 Afghans into poverty.

In 2010, the exchange rate policy has led to the **appreciation of the Afghani**, the national currency, against major world currencies (US dollar and euro). As a result, Afghan exports as a share of GDP have fallen from 24 per cent in 2005-2006 to 15 per cent in 2009-2010. Nevertheless, the IMF has confirmed that the currency is not overvalued. A strong Afghani could exacerbate the current trade gap.

A new macro economic risk has emerged in the **domestic banking sector**. In September 2010, the biggest private bank, KabulBank, almost collapsed after having seen its capital shrink from over USD 1bn to USD 120 million. KabulBank was the holder of a lucrative government contract to pay the salaries of 250,000 civil servants and security personnel. The near failure of KabulBank has been a major shock for an already weak economy. However, the Afghan government has refused to apply the IMF's recommendation that KabulBank enter into receivership - a move the international lending institution hopes will prevent the collapse of the economy - arguing that such an approach may cause further distress to the banking system. In addition, no criminal investigations have been launched against KabulBank's stakeholders; most of them are politically connected, including President Hamid Karzai's brother, Mahmoud Karzai.

The subsequent management of the issue has jeopardised the **IMF's future support programme**. Indeed, on 25 September 2010, Afghanistan's three year USD 120 million programme under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (renamed Extended Credit Facility, ECF) came to an end, and discussions are currently under way for a new IMF-supported programme. After a visit in Kabul in early February, IMF officials said that the only way it will continue its assistance is if KabulBank is swiftly liquidated. **European donors** have also decided to put pressure on the government. In early March 2011, the British Department for International Development opted to freeze USD 137.6 million in contributions to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund, the main conduit for international assistance to Afghanistan. Other major European donors are now also considering following the UK's lead. Despite its impressive growth<sup>8</sup>, Afghanistan's banking sector has been under-regulated for years with the majority of banks posting very low ratings<sup>9</sup>. However, though most of the cash flowing through Afghan banks consists of taxpayers dollars drawn from NATO countries, international donors have never shown much interest in pushing for genuine reform. The KabulBank crisis has changed the situation, forcing the government to clean up Afghanistan's banking system.

On a positive note, **Afghanistan's fiscal position** is considered to be improving. Its fiscal sustainability ratio, which measures domestic revenues to operating expenditures, has improved from 38 per cent in 2002/2003 to 78 per cent 2009/2010. This progress has been driven in part by improvements in tax revenue collection which accounted for 8.9 per cent of GDP in 2010 surpassing the government's target of 7.4 per cent. The increase has come after improvements in tax and customs administration. The introduction of a mandatory pre-payment of a 2 per cent business receipts tax (BRT) at border crossings made a significant contribution to sales tax collection and improvements in the implementation of fuel import taxes, all of which have contributed to a rise in customs revenues by 53 per cent on last year. This overall trend in greater tax revenue collection is expected to continue into 2011 with tax revenue estimated to increase by as much as 25 per cent by

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<sup>8</sup> At the start of the U.S. military intervention in 2001, Afghanistan's banking sector has been under-regulated for years with the vast majority of banks posting very low ratings. When Kabul Bank scandal first broke in September 2010, 17 commercial banks were operating in the country with total assets valued at roughly USD 2.6 bn.

<sup>9</sup> On an industry standard scale on 1 to 5 where a rating of five is the lowest, five of Afghanistan's banks were reported to be rated at four in 2009 IMF report, indicating a troubling imbalance between capital, asset quality, management performance, earnings and liquidity.

the end of the year. However, despite these improvements, the government remains dependant on foreign aid to support its budget and is expected to remain so for at least the next ten years.

## 6.2 Sectors of Economic Activity

**Agriculture** plays an important role in the Afghan economy. It contributes 32.6 per cent of GDP. Weather continues to be an important factor in determining the level of production. Within the sector, dried fruits and seeds are now surpassing carpets as Afghanistan's largest export accounting for half of total export for the year 2009-2010. However, official agriculture production for 2011 could also be affected by the conversion of land from cereal to opium (see section 4).

**Industrial production**, which contributes to 28.2 per cent of GDP (10.4 and 17.4 per cent for construction and manufacturing respectively) has recently benefited from the construction of a transmission link from Uzbekistan to the Afghan capital, Kabul, and the rehabilitation of hydroelectric projects at Mahipar and Kajaki. However, infrastructure construction more generally remains burdened with high security costs due to the risk of attacks from insurgents. In December 2010, 111 of such attacks were reported on infrastructure projects, whose sustainability is under threat as a result. **Services** contribute to 39.2 per cent of GDP. The country's communication sector has been the most buoyant, expanding rapidly in recent years, with mobile telephone subscriptions increasing from 13 million in 2009 to 19 million in 2010. Recent meetings between Afghanistan and its donors have emphasised the provision of basic services, such as education and electricity. There is likely to be growing emphasis on the need to move Afghanistan's public finances on to a more sustainable long-term path.

Looking to the future, engines for economic growth appear to centre on the **mining sector**. Afghanistan's well documented potential in mineral resources, estimated at an on-the-ground value of US\$1 trillion, remains the country's greatest prospect for development. However at present, the contribution of mining to GDP is marginal standing at less than 0.3 per cent of GDP. In order to redress this under capacity, the government has taken a number of steps recently to foster private investment such as adopting modern mining laws and regulations as well as establishing a mining and hydrocarbons inspectorate and conducting a modern geological survey of the country.

**Private business** remains underdeveloped in Afghanistan, and the country continues to have the lowest rank amongst neighbouring countries of South Asia in the World Bank's Ease Doing Business Index 2010. The reform process remains slow in key areas such as land registration where delays and competing claims provide a major obstacle to business, a point underlined by the World Bank survey which highlighted that it takes around 250 days to register property in Afghanistan in comparison to 50 days in Pakistan, 37 in Tajikistan and 36 in Iran.

About 35 per cent of the population is unemployed. The **unemployment rate** is higher for young people. The youth unemployment is a crucial challenge for the country for its security implications. Indeed, insurgents benefit from the situation by offering monetary incentives to youth to fight in some parts of the country. Another important matter of concern is the under utilization of female labour which is rarely acknowledged. Indeed, women comprise 65 per cent of the agricultural workforce in rural areas but are almost never remunerated for their work.

Overall, Afghanistan remains one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. As of 2010, the nation's GDP is USD 29.81 billion and the GDP per capita is USD 1,000.

## 6.3 External trade

Afghanistan runs an **open trade system**, is an **observer to the WTO** and has **applied for full membership of the WTO** on 10 April 2003. The first working party meeting on Afghanistan's accession to the WTO took place on 31 January 2011.

However, despite having extensive natural resources, including gas, oil and valuable minerals, Afghanistan's exports remained limited. The country exports mainly primary products, mostly of agricultural origin and carpets.

Afghanistan's **largest trading partners** are Pakistan, United States, India, Iran and Russia. It should be noted that Afghanistan has been subject to informal blockages by Pakistan and Iran for the past few months. Pakistan has failed to implement the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade agreement (APTTA) signed in October 2010 which was designed to allow Afghanistan to export goods to and import goods from India through Pakistan. Meanwhile, in December 2010, Iran blocked fuel supplies to Afghanistan that were being transported from Russia, Turkmenistan and Iraq. The blockage halted 2,500 trucks and led to a 70 per cent increase in fuel prices in Afghanistan in January, putting severe pressure on Afghans, who use more fuel for heating and lighting during the winter. There were anti-Iranian protests in several Afghan provinces and the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) has accused neighbouring countries of encouraging the economic siege of the country for their own benefit. This sentiment persists after an agreement was reached in early 2011. Indeed, Afghan-Iranian Trade remains hugely unbalanced.

The country ran a merchandise **trade deficit** of US\$6.9bn in 2009/2010. Exports as a share of GDP have fallen from 24% in 2005/2006 to 15% in 2009/2010, leading to a current account deficit which now stands at half the country's yearly output and is financially dependent on grants in order to be balanced. A strong Afghani, the national currency, which appreciated against the dollar and euro during the fiscal year 2010, could exacerbate the current trade gap.

Finally, Afghanistan's economy remains dependant on international aid. In 2010, international pledges to support Afghani reached US\$8.9 billion, although not all of that has come in.

## 7 OPIUM IN AFGHANISTAN

### 7.1 Facts and figures

Afghanistan is the source of more than 90 per cent of the world's illicit opium production. According to the UNDOC it is also the main supplier of heroin to markets in the European Union and the Russian Federation. Through internationally-led counternarcotics efforts, the level of opium production has dropped by 23 per cent since its peak in 2007. However, the situation remains critical.

Opium has been an enduring feature of Afghanistan's political economy. Marginal until the Soviet invasion, opium production in Afghanistan has grown primarily in the context of the war economy of the 1990s. In 1999, 18 provinces in Afghanistan led by the Taliban produced about 75 per cent of the opium in the world. After 2001, when the Taliban was driven out of the country, the level of production continued to increase especially in the impoverished countryside. In 2006, 21 of the 34 provinces were producing 97 per cent of the world supply of opium estimated at a pre export value of €14 billion and equivalent to nearly 50 per cent of the country's GDP.

Production in Afghanistan dropped by more than a third over three years from a record high of 193,000 hectares in 2007 to 123,000 hectares in 2009 and a drop of almost 50 per cent in 2010. In addition, the cultivated areas have decreased and are now concentrated in the south and the west of the country. 20 provinces had obtained the status of "poppy-free" province in 2009 (against 13 in



2007) and 5 more should get it in 2010. However, the situation is far from being resolved. According to a UNDOC report, in 2009, the gross value of potential exports of opium amounted to 3.4 billion USD, or 26 per cent of GDP, while 3.4 million Afghans have reported being involved in trafficking.

It should also be added that Afghanistan is becoming one of the most important world producers of cannabis, a trend that has had significant repercussions not only for economic and social development, but for public health as well. The number of Afghan drug users has increased significantly over recent years, and according to the latest UN report, 1 million people (8 per cent of the population) suffer from addiction. According to statements by Antonio Maria Costa, Executive director of UNDOC, the number of users of opium has increased by 53 per cent over the past 5 years, along with the number of people using heroin which is up by 140 per cent.

The latest UNDOC report released in December 2010 (UNDOC winter rapid assessment), projected a stable cultivation of opium poppy in Afghanistan in 2011 with a possible decrease in production. However, predictions are difficult to evaluate because many factors impact the level of opium production and trafficking.

## 7.2 Other Factors

**Poverty** remains the key factor that enables the industry to persist especially in the countryside where opium cultivation is often the only means to survive. Agro-ecological conditions determine the production as well and recent declines in production can be explained by poor weather conditions. Similarly, in recent years the decline in production was helped by diseases that have ravaged major opium crop in Afghanistan. Market forces have also played a major role in farmers' decisions against cultivating opium. In the southwest 1/4 of the farmers cited low prices as the main reason for not growing opium last year. Therefore, the increase in prices in 2010 could result in an increase in production. Afghanistan's Minister for Counter-Narcotics, Ibrahim Azhar, said that prices of opium crop increased by 48 per cent in 2010. In addition, the price of licit crops like wheat is falling (down 43 per cent) faster than the price of opium (down 6 per cent).

However, relative price trends are not the only explanatory factors. **Good governance and territorial control** are vital factors to uphold the law. Indeed, the UNDOC report highlighted the direct correlation between insecurity, lack of agricultural aid and opium cultivation. An estimated 90% of villages with very poor security conditions are involved in opium cultivation, while those targeted by anti-poppy awareness campaigns are significantly less likely to grow opium poppy and only 7% of cultivation occur in villages unaffected by violence.

Lastly, another major factor that helps sustain the industry is **corruption**. Contrary to popular belief, the Taliban do not benefit the most from the profits generated by trade in narcotics but rather government officials, police and local and regional intermediaries. According to the Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior, a growing number of officials continue to collude with criminal networks to protect profits made through the opium trade, while UNAMA (the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) has reported that President Karzai has failed to remove officials accused of being leading drug traffickers from government positions in the south.

## 7.3 Counter-Narcotic Strategies

The US and the international community have spent between USD 1.1 billion from 2009 to 2011 in financing measures to fight against drugs without any impact on production and trafficking. To reduce production, the number of traffickers and the level of consumption in a sustainable way, the Afghan government has established a strategy based on four priorities (prohibition and repression, development of alternative activities, drug treatment and development of capabilities and institutions at central and local levels) and eight pillars of action. A multitude of actors are involved in



the fight against narcotics (including the US, UK, but also UNDOC and NGOs). Rural development programs are at the core of the strategy. International donors have disbursed up to \$12 million in development funds to governors in provinces that became poppy-free.

Despite these efforts, results remain mixed. The radical means employed in poppy eradication campaigns (often conducted using chemical products) have been controversial and have had some negative effects, including on environment. The cultivation of poppies is a means of subsistence for many farmers. Therefore a radical method is unsuitable, since it is the economic system that needs to change gradually. One of the most efficient and necessary strategies consists in enabling farmers to develop alternative crops. This strategy has proven successful in other countries, such as Pakistan and Thailand.

Counter-narcotic strategies have thus evolved in this direction. For instance, the US have recently announced that it is changing its strategy from eradication of crops to a broader focus involving interdiction and alternative agriculture. The plan is constituted by three parts: public awareness, prevention on poppy cultivation, and finally eradication, while farmers are offered help in planting alternative crops.

The EU strategy is also moving in that direction. According to the report of the EP<sup>10</sup>, a process of gradual elimination of poppy cultivation could be envisaged for Afghanistan at a cost of 100 million Euros a year by dedicating 10 per cent of annual aid that the EU pays over a period of five years.

Overall it appears necessary to rethink the strategy of fighting against drugs towards a comprehensive approach, assuming a model of global economic development without which it will not be possible to achieve security and stability in the region.

## 8 EU-AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS

The European Union has a presence in Afghanistan since the mid 1980s, with a European Commission support office in Kabul followed by the opening of an ECHO office in 1993. Both offices had moved to, and operated over the border from Peshawar during the Taliban period.

Active EU engagement in Afghanistan has been reinforced after the fall of Taliban regime in 2001. In December 2001, the Council appointed an **EU Special Representative (EUSR)** and at the same time the decision to set up a **Delegation of the European Commission to Afghanistan** was taken. The delegation in Kabul was set up on 22 February immediately after the establishment of the Interim Transitional Authority.

Following the Bonn Agreement the EU deepened its political dialogue with the Government of Afghanistan. On 16 November 2005, the first **EU Afghanistan Joint Declaration** was signed in Strasbourg establishing comprehensive framework for the EU-Afghanistan relationship. The Declaration outlines increased co-operation, based on Afghan ownership, across a range of areas. It also establishes a regular political dialogue, with annual meetings at Ministerial level and reaffirms the EU's long term commitment to Afghanistan. The first formal EU-Afghanistan Ministerial meeting was held on 31 January 2006.

The Afghanistan Compact launched at the **London Conference in January 2006**, provides the political framework for cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community for the current 5 year period.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201101/20110119ATT11992/20110119ATT11992EN.pdf>

At the **Paris Conference on 12 June 2008**, the Afghanistan's National Development Strategy was adopted. The EU's assistance reflects the priorities set out in the ANDS, including support for justice and law and order; combating narcotics production; and assisting on health sector.

In **October 2009, the External Relation Council adopted the EU Action Plan for Pakistan and Afghanistan**, which states that the insecurity in Afghanistan cannot be addressed by military means alone but that the aim should be the creation of framework for stability by developing effective state institutions, improving governance, the rule of law and human rights and fighting corruption, which requires a responsive and responsible Afghan government. The EU Action Plan states that the EU commitment must be long term and predictable, supporting Afghanistan in becoming an effective and accountable state that becomes progressively more capable of managing its own security and of delivering services to its people.

At the **Kabul conference on 20 July 2010**, HR/VP Catherine Ashton presented plans for continued EU engagement in Afghanistan stressing the priority areas which include sub-national governance; reform of the justice and police sectors; and human rights. The EU reiterated its full support to the peace and reconciliation process. Ahead of the conference HR/VP Ashton said: *"The EU is keeping its promises to Afghanistan. We have a multi-annual commitment and will take steps to further align this assistance with the Afghan Government's priorities"*, but stressed that *"Afghanistan's problems cannot be solved without stronger governance and respect for rule of law"*. On the margins of the Kabul conference, she also met with President Karzai and Foreign Minister Rassoul, as well as with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and attended a meeting with women's organisations.

The next international conference on Afghanistan will take place in Bonn in December 2011 ten years after the first Bonn conference on 5 December 2001 which laid the foundations of the present political system in Afghanistan.

## **8.1 EU actors in Afghanistan**

### **➤ EU Special Representative/Head of EU delegation<sup>11</sup>**

From July 2002 to July 2008 the position as EU Special Representative for Afghanistan was held by Mr Francesc Vendrell. Following the departure of Mr Vendrell, Ambassador Ettore Francesco Sequi headed the office until 1 April 2010. Since the ratification of the Lisbon treaty the two offices are headed by Ambassador Ušackas who is both the head of the Delegation of the European Union and the European Union Special Representative to Afghanistan. The main focus of the work of the EUSRA is on the implementation of the Bonn agreement, following developments in the political and security sector and monitoring and reporting on human rights and gender issues.

### **➤ European Union Police mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan)<sup>12</sup>**

The European Union launched the Police mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL AFGHANISTAN) in June 2007. EUPOL represents approximately 300 International personnel and 170 local personnel deployed in 16 Afghan provinces. 19 EU Member States plus Canada, Croatia, New Zealand and Norway contribute to the Mission. Mr Kai Vittrup is the Head of the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan. He was appointed in October 2008. On 18 May 2010, the Council of the EU has extended the mission for a period of 3 years, until 31 May 2013. EUPOL Afghanistan aims to contribute to the establishment under Afghan ownership of sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements, which will ensure appropriate interaction with the wider criminal justice system. EUPOL offers special expertise

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<sup>11</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/index_en.htm)

<sup>12</sup> <http://81.17.241.206/>

in civilian policing methods and addresses the strategic reform of the Afghan Police. The mission uses mentoring and training to improve the performance of the Police in Afghanistan.

➤ **EU participation in the ISAF mission<sup>13</sup>**

The European Union member states have committed a number important of troops to Afghanistan under the auspices of the NATO-led ISAF mission<sup>14</sup>. Over half of the ISAF troops are coming from 27 member states. Some of this military activity has taken the form of Special Forces operations against the Taliban, and participation in the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Member states are also responsible for the operation of 11 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) around the country. Three EU member states, Germany, Italy and the UK, have also been appointed lead nations in the areas of policing, justice, and counter-narcotics respectively.

## 8.2 EU aid to Afghanistan<sup>15</sup>

The European Union (EU) is one of the major donors providing official development and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Between 2002 and end 2010 the EU committed more than €2 billion assistance to Afghanistan, including € 345.2 million in humanitarian assistance. By end 2010, the EU had disbursed €1.83 billion, i.e. 90%. New support programmes of a total value of €190 million are being prepared for commitment in 2011.

The **EC's legal and strategic framework for bilateral cooperation** includes a Country Strategy Paper (CSP), and a Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP), both agreed with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. These are implemented through Annual Action Programmes (AAP) and Financing Agreements signed with the Ministry of Finance.

The first CSP and MIP (2003-2006) promoted stability and poverty reduction by supporting, mainly, rural development, food security, governance, infrastructure and health. The total budget allocated under the MIP2007-2010 was €610 million. In 2009, a special additional allocation of €35 million was made to support the 2009 and 2010 elections.

The **Country Strategy Paper for Afghanistan 2007-2013** sets out the EC's commitment to Afghanistan until 2013. It has been drafted against a background of an evolving political and economic scene. It identifies three focal areas: rural development<sup>16</sup>; governance<sup>17</sup> and health, and three non-focal ones: social protection; mine action; and regional co-operation.

The **MIP 2011- 2013** was finalized after the Kabul conference of July 2010 in consultation with the partners<sup>18</sup>. It was approved in November 2010 after having been the subject of the democratic scrutiny of the EU Member States and the European Parliament. The indicative financial allocation for 2011– 2013 is €600 million over a period of three years. This means an increase of over 30% of the yearly allocation compared to the previous four-year period covered by the MIP 2007-2010.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.isaf.nato.int/>

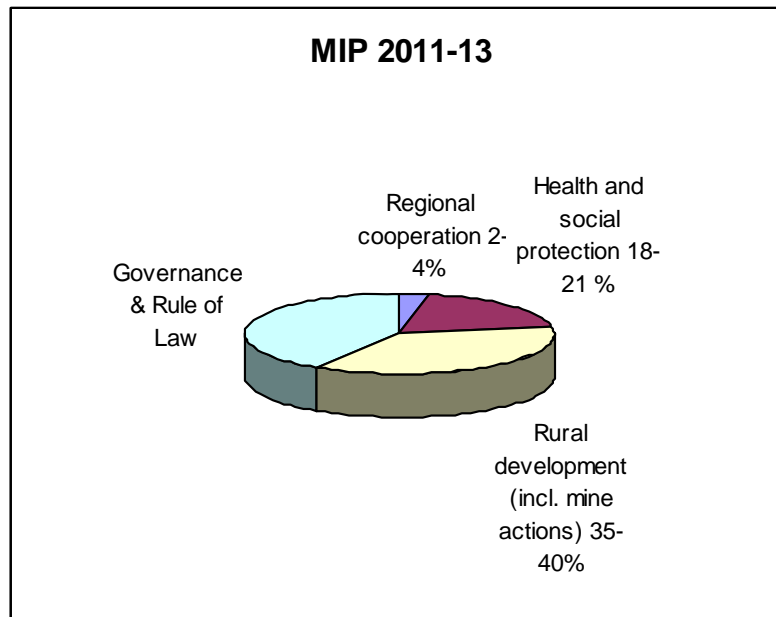
<sup>14</sup> The International Security Assembly Force (ISAF) is a NATO led security mission in Afghanistan established by the UN Security Council on 20 December 2001 by Resolution 1386 as envisaged by Bonn Agreement. Initially in charge to secure Kabul, ISAF was expanded in four main stages over the whole of the country in October 2003.

<sup>15</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/index_en.htm)

<sup>16</sup> Including the following sub-sectors: river basin management, animal health, horticulture and seeds industry, environment, data and surveys, rural development - infrastructure.

<sup>17</sup> Including the following sub-sectors: Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, Law and Order Trust Fund, Customs and Border Management, Public Administration Reform, Sub-national Governance, Justice, Elections.

<sup>18</sup> A mid-term review of the CSP was carried out in 2009 and 2010 involving broad consultations with representatives of the Afghan Parliament, local and international civil society, the Government of Afghanistan and other donors.



Finally, in addition to bilateral cooperation under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) Afghanistan benefits from **European regional programmes** for Asia, in particular the Aid for Uprooted People programme, as well as from support through **thematic programmes** such as the Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

**The 2010 Annual Action Programme** covers two of the three focal sectors set out in the CSP 2007-2013, namely Rural Development and Health, and one non focal sector, Regional Cooperation. Sub-national governance has been integrated in the proposed rural development programme. The total budget represents 170 million euro. The AAP 2011 will include actions in the sector of governance for a total budget of around € 200 million.

### 8.3 European Parliament

The European Parliament adopted its latest resolution on Afghanistan on 16 December 2010<sup>19</sup>. The text stressed the need for the EU and its allies to acknowledge continuous deterioration in security and the socio-economic situation in the country, despite almost a decade of international involvement, and to understand the need to get the Afghans fully involved in the exit strategy. Based on these premises, the resolution calls for a new EU strategy to be put in place with four main topics:

- **Improving the coordination of international aid.** The resolution notes that international aid has been ineffective because too much of it has been channelled through different international organizations, banks, NGOs with a waste of resources. According to the resolution, the civil-military channels should be abandoned while "impartial humanitarian bodies" made responsible for assistance. In addition, the resolution condemns the excesses in outsourcing security to the private sectors leading to more corruption. Finally, the EU and MS should review the effectiveness of its assistance. At the same time, Afghan needs to address corruption.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0490+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

- **Fine-tuning the EU role and involvement of Afghan players in the peace process.** The resolution calls for a political solution necessary to fight against progress of the counterinsurgency strategy with a key role played by regional partners. Negotiations with the Taliban should lead to a settlement with full respect for Human Rights, an end to Al Qaeda's activities and an elimination of opium poppy cultivation.

- **Improving the quality of police training.** The resolution notes that the police training has been poor due to poor recruitments standards and misplaced insistence on "quick impact" as well as the illiteracy and drug abuse among police. According to the resolution the EU should launch a large scale training programme by EUPOL and NATO/ISAF (specifically by expanding significantly the number of police trainers, extending EUPOL's role to basic training across the country, merging EU MS bilateral missions with that of the EU) and linking this to the establishment of a functioning justice sector.

- **Fighting for the elimination of opium cultivation.** According to the resolution, the Elimination of cultivation through alternative development should be pursued through a 5-year plan and the establishment of a new dedicated agency to be created with its own budget and staff. Some 10% of the EU's annual aid, i.e. €100m should be set aside for this and for the development of alternative crops. Afghan-led manual eradication is accepted as part of the overall law enforcement strategy. Finally, close cooperation between EU and RF, as main recipients of Afghan opium production, is advocated.

### ***EP- National Assembly of Afghanistan relations***

The third (and last) Inter parliamentary meeting with the Wolesi Jirga was organised on February 2009, in Brussels. The main areas discussed were: Afghanistan and its relations with neighbouring countries, the preparation of the presidential elections, the assistance given to the country by the international community, good governance, rule of law, respect for fundamental freedoms, the fight against corruption, the problem of production and trafficking in narcotics and the place of women in Afghan society. During the meeting, a Joint Declaration was signed that stressed the need to reinforce the political dialogue between the EP and the Afghan Parliament.

#### Reminder:

The EP Delegation for relations with Afghanistan was set up on 11 April 2007 and is made up of 14 members and 9 substitutes. However, the relations of the European Parliament with Afghanistan at the parliamentary level already started in 2005. The first ad-hoc Delegation of the European Parliament to Afghanistan on July 2005 had as objective to deepen the understanding of the political situation in the view of the first parliamentary elections, held on 18 September 2005. With that occasion, an elections observation mission of the European Parliament was sent to Kabul. The next interparliamentary contact, a visit of an Afghan Delegation, led by Mr Muhammad Yunus QANONI, the Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga, took place on December 2006, in Strasbourg.

In the framework of the newly established EP standing delegation for relations with Afghanistan, Interparliamentary meetings between the EP and the Wolesi Jirga, the Lower House of the Afghan Assembly, have been held on a regular basis. The first Afghan parliamentary visit to Brussels was organised on November 2007 and it was headed by Mr Mohammad Arif Noorzai, Deputy Speaker of Wolesi Jirga.

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**APPENDIX 1 - CURRENT GOVERNMENT**

<b>President:</b>	Hamid Karzai
<b>Vice-president:</b>	Mohammad Qasim Fahim
<b>Vice-president:</b>	Mohammad Karim Khalili
<b>Senior Minister:</b>	Hedayat Amin Arsala
<b>Minister of Agriculture and Food:</b>	Mohammed Asef Rahimi
<b>Minister of Borders and Tribal Affairs:</b>	Assadullah Khalid
<b>Minister of Commerce and Industry:</b>	Anwarul Haq Ahadi
<b>Minister of Communications:</b>	Amirzai Sangeen (acting)
<b>Minister of Counter-narcotics:</b>	Zarar Ahmad Moqbel
<b>Minister of Information and Culture:</b>	Sayed Makhdum Rahin
<b>Minister of Defence:</b>	General Abdul Rahim Wardak
<b>Minister of Economy:</b>	Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal
<b>Minister of Education:</b>	Ghulam Farooq Wardak
<b>Minister of Energy and Water:</b>	General Mohammad Ismail Khan (acting)
<b>Minister of Finance:</b>	Omar Zakhilwal
<b>Minister of Foreign Affairs:</b>	Zalmai Rasul
<b>Minister of Health:</b>	Suraiya Dalil (acting)
<b>Minister of Higher Education:</b>	Mohammad Sarwar Danish (acting)
<b>Minister of Haj and Religious Affairs:</b>	Mohammad Yousuf Neyazi
<b>Minister of the Interior:</b>	General Besmillah Khan Mohammadi
<b>Minister of Justice:</b>	Habibullah Ghaleb
<b>Minister of Martyrs and the Disabled, Social Affairs and Labour:</b>	Amina Afzali
<b>Minister of Mines:</b>	Wahidollah Shahrani
<b>Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs:</b>	Mohammed Anwar Jegdalek
<b>Minister of Public Works:</b>	Abdul Qudus Hamidi
<b>Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development:</b>	Jarullah Mansoori

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<b>Minister of Refugees Affairs and Repatriation:</b>	Jamayer Anwari
<b>Minister of Transport and Aviation:</b>	Daud Ali Najafi (acting)
<b>Minister of Urban Development:</b>	Sultan Hussain (acting)
<b>Minister for Women's Affairs:</b>	Husn Banu Ghazanfar (acting)

## APPENDIX 2 - KEY POLITICAL AND MILITARY FIGURES

1. Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004-present)
  - Ethnic Pashtun. Head of Popalzai tribe of Kandahar, from which former emperor Ahmed Shah Durrani was based. Pro-Western, educated in India. After brief stint as deputy foreign minister in post-Soviet 1992 government, exiled to Quetta (PAK) during Taliban rule. Re-elected in 2009, after the country's first post-Taliban elections in 2004. Had been previously selected to head the Afghan Interim Authority at the UN-sponsored 2001 Bonn Conference on Afghanistan.
2. Mohammed Qasim Fahim, First Vice President
  - Ethnic Tajik. Former Defence Minister from 2001-04, widely suspected of human rights violations and corruption. Chief of staff of the Northern Alliance under the heroic figure of Ahmad Shah Massoud. Following Massoud's assassination by the Taliban, was made minister of defence of the Alliance and even today retains command of the militia. Brother, Abdul Hussain Fahim, has close business ties to Mahmoud Karzai, brother of President Hamid Karzai.
3. Karim Khalili, Second Vice President
  - Ethnic Hazara and minority Shi'a Muslim. Holds cautious ties to Iran. Head of Hizb-i-Wahdat (Unity) Party since 1995, nominal head of Hazaraia and Bamian provinces post-2001. Member of anti-Karzai United National Front (UNF), until brought into Karzai government as running mate and vice president.
4. Yunus Qanuni, Head of New Afghanistan Party (Afghanistan-e-Naween)
  - Ethnic Tajik. Former political advisor to Massoud, represented North Alliance at Bonn Conference. Initially made Interior Minister, but subsequently demoted to Education Minister. Former speaker of Wolesi Jirga, lower house of parliament (2005-2010). Ran against Karzai in 2004 presidential elections, placing second.
5. Burhanuddin Rabbani, Head of Islamic Society (Jamiat-i-Islami)
  - Ethnic Tajik. Former religious professor and nominal head of Islamist Society since 1972. Fled to Pakistan after Soviet coup in 1974. President of Afghanistan (1992-1996) during post-Soviet, pre-Taliban rule. Had been recognised by UN as de jure president during Taliban years and in November 2001 briefly proclaimed himself president until Bonn Conference. He was killed at his home by a suicide attacker on 20 September 2011.
6. Abdullah Abdullah, Head of Coalition for Change and Hope
  - Mixed Tajik and Pashtun ethnicity. Commonly known as 'Dr Abdullah,' a professionally-trained ophthalmologist and close advisor / friend to Ahmad Shah Massoud. Served as foreign minister (2001-2005) and ran as an independent during 2009 presidential election. Placed second and, days before the second round run-off, withdrew in protest of widespread allegations of fraud against his opponent, Mr Karzai. Formed 'Coalition for Change and Hope' in 2010, a loose collection of opposition figures which secured more than 90 seats in the 2010 parliamentary elections.
7. Gul Agha Sherzai, Governor of Nangarhar province
  - Ethnic Pashtun. Prominent political and military figure in the south. Former governor of Kandahar province (1992-94, 2001-03). Potential presidential candidate, withdrew from 2010 elections following negotiations with Karzai.
8. Atta Mohammed Noor, Governor of Balkh province
  - Ethnic Tajik. Former Northern Alliance commander and open supporter of Dr Abdullah's 2009 candidacy. Has garnered praise for his effective governance of the Balkh province, populated mostly by Uzbeks and home to the vibrant city of Mazar-i-Sharif.
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9. **Ahmad Wali Karzai, Head of Kandahar Provincial Council**
  - Ethnic Pashtun. Eldest brother of President Hamid Karzai. Retains ultimate power in the region, in part due to President Karzai's policy of frequently rotating Kandahar's governorship in order to prevent any other figure from gaining local loyalty. He was assassinated in Kandahar on 11 July 2011.
10. **Malalai Joya, Prominent female opposition figure**
  - Highly-influential opposition figure, 'most famous woman in Afghanistan'. Elected to Wolesi Jirga in 2005 from Farah province, winning second highest number of votes there. Suspended from Wolesi Jirga in March 2007 for accusing members of being unfit for service. Has survived numerous assassinations attempts and an attack by her colleagues in. Gained international attention for 2003 speech in Loya Jirga against warlords and drug smugglers. Outspoken critic of Karzai government and NATO, particularly in its political support for former warlords.
11. **Abdul Rashid Dostum, Prominent Uzbek warlord**
  - Ethnic Uzbek. Former communist military commander during years of Soviet influence, until defection to Northern Alliance in 1992. Turned on Massoud and Rabbani in 1994, joining with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Hizb-i-Wahdat. Head of Jombesh-i-Milli, former faction of Northern Alliance and chief rival of Atta Mohammed Nour and Jamiat-i-Islami. Led the recapture of Mazar-i-Sharif in November 2001, appointed deputy minister of defence in interim government. Military advisor to Karzai from 2003-2005, later chief of staff from 2005-2007. Joined anti-Karzai UNF in 2007, but gave his support to Karzai in 2009. Highly-distrusted figure in Afghan politics.
12. **Ismail Khan, Acting Minister of Energy**
  - Ethnic Tajik and Shi'a Muslim with links to Iran. Led resistance against Soviets and Taliban from western regions. Member of Jamiat-i-Islami. Former governor of Herat province (1992-1995). Consolidated peace, trade, and liberal society in Herat, until driven from power by Taliban with help of General Dostum in 1995. Fled to Iran and, on his return, imprisoned by Taliban until escape in 2000. Commands an Iranian-armed force of 15,000, formally part of Afghan military though uncontrolled by Karzai. Having initially joined UNF, was then incorporated into Karzai administration as minister of energy, though rejected by parliament.
13. **Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Radical military figure**
  - Ethnic Pashtun from northern Kunduz province. Prominent military leader and former mujahideen commander. Ties to religious radicalism and penchant for military coups. Extensive network with Pakistani Islamic party and retired Pakistani intelligence officers. Expelled from Iran in 2002, where he was in exile. Classified as 'Specially Designated Global Terrorist' by USA and survived assassination attempt in 2002. Has since held reconciliation talks with Karzai government and UN. Support base in Shamshatoo refugee camp in northwest Pakistan. Leads Hizb-i-Islami, radical Islamic party traditionally backed by Pakistan. Former prime minister (1993-94, 1996), highly controversial figure.
14. **Mullah Mohammed Omar, Former leader of Taliban and head of Quetta Shura Council**
  - Former mujahideen fighter and Islamic student. Self-declared leader of Afghanistan during Taliban rule. Reclusive and anti-Western leader based in Quetta. Strong support base in tribal areas of Pakistan.
15. **Jalaluddin Haqqani, Head of 'Haqqani' Network'**
  - Prominent Islamic scholar and military commander. Close links to Taliban regime but refused ministerial positions while they held power. Dislikes Mullah Omar and mainstream Taliban organisation. Commands the 'Haqqani Network' of radical militants in eastern border region. Increasingly responsible for more sophisticated attacks on civilians and NATO alike.