

Afghanistan: Extremism & Terrorism

On August 6, 2023, Hibatullah Akhundzada, the supreme leader of the de facto Taliban government in Afghanistan, decreed that cross-border attacks are considered “haram” and therefore forbidden under Islam. The decree, which was first discussed during a mid-July three-day discussion between Taliban authorities and Pakistani officials, intends to decrease the number of attacks carried out by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), on Pakistani soil. The Taliban continued their bilateral talks tour on July 30, when they met with U.S. officials in Doha, Qatar. The talks discussed the current state of Afghanistan in the two years since the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul. During the two-day discussion, U.S. officials expressed concern over the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the urgency at which the Taliban should support rather than suppress humanitarian assistance programs such as the United Nations. The U.S. delegates further appealed to the Taliban to reverse the repressive policies against girls, women, and minorities that have been enacted within the past two years. The Taliban further claimed they were committed to not allowing terror groups to use Afghan territory to carry out attacks that would threaten the U.S. and its allies. (Sources: [Voice of America](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Arab News](#))

In June 2023, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that following the Taliban’s takeover in of Kabul in August 2021, 1,095 civilians have been killed and 2,679 have been wounded in bombings and other violence. The majority of the deaths were caused by suicide bombings targeting busy public spaces, such as mosques, education centers, and markets. Of the casualties, 1,700 were attributed to attacks perpetrated by ISIS-K. Among ISIS-K’s most notorious attacks include the August 2021 suicide bombing at Kabul airport that killed at least 170, including 13 U.S. service members, and wounded 40 others. The assailant, a senior operative of ISIS-K remains unnamed, but the Taliban reportedly killed the individual sometime around April 2023. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#), [Arab News](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#))

According to the United Nations, almost 34 million Afghans are living below the poverty line, a figure that has doubled since the Taliban’s 2021 takeover. After the U.S. withdrew from the country, foreign subsidies and aid programs were drastically cut. In December 2022, Taliban officials barred female staff from working in schools and announced that adult women can no longer visit mosques, attend religious seminars, or work for NGOs. Although claimed to be temporary, the ruling group never lifted a similar “temporary” measure during their first rule in the 1990s. The de facto government is headed by acting Prime Minister Abdul Kabir Mohammad Jan (a.k.a. Abdul Kabir), the U.N.-designated and current deputy prime minister for political affairs. Kabir served as prime minister of the first Taliban government and has plotted deadly bombings, facilitated drug trafficking, and even took part in the peace negotiations between the U.S. and the Taliban in 2020. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Agence France Presse](#), [Associated Press](#), [Agence France Presse](#), [Associated Press](#), [Voice of America](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [Voice of America](#))

Despite U.S. military withdrawal in August 2021, on July 31, 2022, a CIA drone strike in Kabul killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri who was reportedly staying in a house belonging to a top aide to senior Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani. It was the first U.S. drone strike in Afghanistan since the U.S.’s withdrawal. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#))

Overview

Afghanistan has a tumultuous history of uprisings against the government, guerilla warfare, and foreign occupation dating back to the 19th century. The Soviet invasion and Afghan civil war in the 1980s and early 1990s brought thousands of Islamic fighters into the country, including al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden used Afghanistan as a base of operations from which to build his [al-Qaeda](#) network. He built alliances between al-Qaeda and local militants, and later the Taliban, to provide al-Qaeda protection from Afghan authorities and other hostile forces. The Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in 1996, capitalizing on the country’s decentralized government control after the civil war. Al-Qaeda continued to use Afghanistan as a base until the United States dislodged the Taliban in 2001. Al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters fought alongside each other against the U.S.-led coalition, leading then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair to declare in November 2001 that the groups had “virtually merged.” A leaked 2011 Joint Task Force Guantanamo report described a “unification” between al-Qaeda and the Taliban. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Taliban](#), Ahmed Rashid, p. 22, 90, [CNN](#), [Weekly Standard](#))

After being driven from the government in 2001 before reclaiming control of Afghanistan in August 2021, Taliban insurgents claimed responsibility for deadly bombings and other terror attacks across the country targeting foreign embassies and NATO’s headquarters, as well as Afghan security forces. The Taliban also coordinated with the [Haqqani network](#) and al-Qaeda. In September 2015, the Taliban began capturing territory for the first time since it was removed from power. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Bloomberg News](#), [New York Times](#))

Afghan security worked with international forces to build and maintain the country’s security infrastructure and combat extremist groups. NATO ended its 13-year combat mission in Afghanistan in December 2014 but continued to support Afghan security forces. Then-U.S. President Barack

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Obama announced in 2015 that U.S. troops would remain in Afghanistan at least through the end of his presidency in 2017 to assist Afghan security in combating the Taliban, ISIS, and other violent extremists. Former President Donald Trump set a deadline of May 1, 2021, to withdraw U.S. forces from the country. His successor, President Joe Biden, pledged to withdraw U.S. forces by September 11, 2021, but completed full military withdrawal by August 30, 2021. Despite Afghan successes against the insurgency, the Taliban continued their bloody rebellion, eventually retaking full control of Afghanistan by August 2021. (Sources: [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Bloomberg News](#), [CNBC](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#))

The country, once again under the control of the de facto Taliban government, now faces intensified violent insurgencies by [ISIS](#). According to the United Nations, between August 2021 and May 2023, 1,095 civilians have been killed and 2,679 have been wounded in bombings and other violence since the Taliban's takeover. The majority of the casualties were due to targeted attacks perpetuated by ISIS Khorasan Province, or ISIS-K, Afghanistan's local ISIS network. (Sources: [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#))

ISIS has declared Afghanistan and Pakistan to be a singular region called the Khorasan Province. ISIS-K has carried out multiple high-casualty suicide bombings and other attacks in the country, including a July 2016 double suicide bombing that killed more than 80 people and the August 2021 suicide bombing that killed at least 170, including 13 U.S. service members, and wounded 40 others. Following the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, ISIS-K has intensified their operations throughout the country to threaten the Taliban's control of Afghanistan. The majority of Afghan extremist groups have rejected ISIS, according to the U.S. State Department. The Taliban in particular have rejected ISIS's encroachment into their territory, and the two groups have violently clashed. (Sources: [NBC News](#), [CNN](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Diplomat](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

Radicalization and Foreign Fighters

Radicalization

Several extremist organizations operate in Afghanistan. A 2015 study by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) found extensive activity by extremist and Islamist groups within the schools. According to AREU researcher Ali Mohammad Ali, in 2015, Islamist groups such as [Hizb ut-Tahrir](#), [Jamiat-e-Islah](#), and [Tehrik-e-Islami](#) recruited teachers who then recruited students. (Sources: [CTC Sentinel](#), [Tolo News](#))

Prior to the Taliban's 2021 takeover of the country, Afghan authorities cited the proliferation of unregistered mosques and madrassas (Islamic religious schools) as a cause of radicalization in the country. The Afghan government required mosques to register with the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education. However, only about a third of the country's 160,000 mosques and only two-thirds of all madrassas in 2015 were registered. Unregistered madrassas in neighboring Pakistan were also cited as a source of militancy in Afghanistan. Accordingly, more than 5,000 Afghans reportedly studied in the Balochistan region of Pakistan alone, and Afghan and U.S. intelligence asserted that the Afghan Taliban exerted control over unregistered madrassas in Pakistan. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Voice of America](#), [Rawa News](#))

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has criticized Pakistan for not confronting radicalization within its borders, and accused Pakistani radicals of being responsible for the flow of foreign fighters into Afghanistan. According to Karzai, the 1980s war to drive out Soviet forces from Afghanistan allowed religious radicalization to flourish in Afghanistan. Islamic fighters equated "jihad" with Afghan liberation, he said. "Extremism and terrorism was one of the most important tools" used to undermine Afghan society after the Soviet withdrawal, according to Karzai. The former president has called for "sincere cooperation" between the United States, Russia, China, India, and Iran as the only way to stop the spread of extremism. (Sources: [Afghanistan Times](#), [Afghanistan Times](#))

Soviet-Afghan War and Afghan Civil War

The Soviet-Afghan war began in December 1979 and lasted until February 1989. The communist People's Democratic Party took control of the Afghan government during an April 1978 coup and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. That December, the communist government signed a treaty with the Soviet Union, which led the Soviet Union to provide large amounts of military aid to Afghanistan the following year. Multiple Islamic resistance groups—calling themselves *mujahideen*, warriors—began to fight against the Soviet-backed government. Pakistan-based fighters fought to capture territory in Afghanistan and encouraged Afghan soldiers to defect. In September 1979, the Soviet-backed Afghan government requested Soviet troops to help combat the growing Islamic insurgency. That December, Soviet forces arrived in Afghanistan to bolster Afghan forces. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#))

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In the first half of 1980, the Soviet Union moved 80,000 troops into Afghanistan to fight the mujahideen, which were then receiving military and financial aid from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. In 1982, the U.N. General Assembly called for the USSR to withdraw from Afghanistan. The United States also increased its arms supply to the mujahideen to fight the U.S. Cold War enemy. For example, in 1986, the United States provided the insurgents with Stinger missiles with which to shoot down Soviet helicopters. (Source: [BBC News](#))

The Afghan conflict attracted Islamic fighters from around the world. Among them was Osama bin Laden, who arrived in Afghanistan in the early 1980s to finance and support the mujahideen—as well as directly participate in the fighting—against the Soviets. In 1984, bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam set up guesthouses in Pakistan to host incoming foreign fighters on their way to Afghanistan. Bin Laden also reportedly financed training camps in northern Pakistan near the Afghan border for Islamic foreign fighters going to Afghanistan. As many as 20,000 foreign fighters passed through bin Laden’s network, according to media estimates. Bin Laden reportedly spent \$25,000 a month to subsidize the fighters. Bin Laden reportedly described Afghanistan as where he “set up my first camp where these volunteers were trained by Pakistani and American officers.” (Sources: [PBS](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#))

By 1985, more than 5 million Afghans had been displaced, and many sought refuge in Iran and Pakistan. That year, the various mujahideen factions assembled in Pakistan to form an alliance against Soviet forces. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#))

The Soviet Union began withdrawing troops in 1988 after signing a peace accord with the United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Soviet forces completed their withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989. More than one million Afghans and 13,000 Soviet troops died during the 10-year war. The Afghan civil war, however, continued until the 1992 overthrow of formerly Soviet-backed Afghan President Mohammed Najibullah. Control of Afghanistan was divided between the mujahideen forces. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [PBS](#), [PBS](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

Bin Laden and other Arab and Muslim fighters from the Afghan war returned to their home countries emboldened by their perceived triumph over the Soviet forces. The “myth of the superpower was destroyed,” Bin Laden reportedly said. Bin Laden believed that the support network he had built to funnel fighters into the Afghan jihad could serve another purpose. The network reportedly kept a database of foreign fighters coming to Afghanistan in order to alert their families in case of their death. That database became an early recruitment tool for al-Qaeda. In August 1988, bin Laden and eight others met in Peshawar, Pakistan, to create al-Qaeda’s advisory council, membership requirements, and pledge of allegiance. In a 1995 interview with a French journalist, bin Laden said, “I discovered that it was not enough to fight in Afghanistan, but that we had to fight on all fronts against Communism or Western oppression. The urgent thing was Communism, but the next target was America.” (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Intelwire](#))

Taliban

The [Taliban](#) (Pashto for “students”) are the jihadist insurgent group operating in Afghanistan against the current Western-backed government. The Taliban are the predominant umbrella group for the Afghan insurgency, including the semi-autonomous Haqqani network. (The Taliban’s offspring across the border, the Pakistani Taliban, share the ideology and objectives of its namesake but operate independently and focus on overthrowing the Pakistani government.) January 2018 estimates by Afghan and U.S. officials gauged that the Taliban included at least 60,000 fighters. These forces have allowed the Taliban to remain a credible fighting force with the ability to win and hold territory. (Sources: [NBC News](#), [Voice of America](#), [CNBC](#))

The Taliban were founded in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in 1994 by Mullah Mohammed Omar. The group soon absorbed more than 15,000 students and clerics from western Pakistan and began implementing sharia in Afghan territory. By the end of 1994, the Taliban had complete control over Kandahar and Helmand province, the center of opium cultivation. During this time, Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency secretly funneled money to the Taliban in Afghanistan. (Sources: [New Yorker](#), [The Looming Tower](#), Lawrence Wright, p. 259, [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

Between 1995 and 1996, the Taliban gained public support in Kandahar and expand into other regions of Afghanistan. On April 4, 1996, Omar declared himself emir ul-momineen, “commander of the faithful”—the legitimate spiritual leader of Muslims in Afghanistan. After seizing the Afghan capital of Kabul in September 1996 and cementing their control of Afghanistan’s government, the Taliban announced their aims to impose order, disarm the Afghan population (especially rival ethnic groups), enforce sharia, and defend the Islamic character of the “Emirate of Afghanistan.” The Taliban banned most sporting events and forms of entertainment, from poetry and music to kites. They closed all girls’ schools and prohibited women from appearing in public except under strict supervision by a male relative. Even when women were in their respective homes, the windows were painted black to prevent passersby from glimpsing women in their private quarters. (Sources: [The Looming Tower](#), Lawrence Wright, p. 259, [SF Gate](#), [BBC News](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Taliban](#), Ahmed Rashid, p. 22, 90)

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After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, U.S. President George W. Bush demanded that the Taliban turn over all al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan; release all imprisoned foreign nationals; protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers; immediately close every terrorist training camp, and hand over every terrorist and their supporters; and give the United States full access to terrorist training camps for inspection. After the Taliban refused U.S. demands, the United States and United Kingdom launched airstrikes to dislodge the Taliban from power. British Prime Minister Tony Blair said the Taliban and al-Qaeda had “effectively merged.” (Sources: [Telegraph](#), [CNN](#), [Telegraph](#), [Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), [Weekly Standard](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [U.S. Department of Defense](#))

The U.S.-led coalition forced the Taliban to relinquish its control on Afghan territory and the government. Between late 2001 and early 2002, approximately 30,000 Taliban fighters were killed. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared the end of “major combat activity” in Afghanistan in May 2003. Afghanistan held its first democratic presidential elections after the fall of the Taliban in October 2004, electing the U.S.-backed Hamid Karzai, who had been Afghanistan’s transitional leader since December 2001. (Sources: [Telegraph](#), [CNN](#), [Telegraph](#), [Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [U.S. Department of Defense](#), [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#))

The Taliban have since operated as an insurgent force in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, attempting to expel NATO forces from Afghanistan and defeat the democratically-elected Afghan government. Attacks on Afghanistan’s security forces have increased as Western forces have begun to withdraw from the country in recent years. As government authority has weakened, Taliban forces have sought to fill the vacuum. The Taliban captured the northern Afghan city of Kunduz in September 2015. It was the first major city to fall into Taliban hands since the United States deposed the Taliban government in 2001. By December 2015, vast swathes of Helmand Province had fallen back under Taliban control. U.S. Special Operations forces responded by covertly committing additional ground troops and air support to halt this advance. Helmand politician and television commentator Toofan Waziri told the *New York Times* that the U.S. presence has helped rally Afghan forces against the Taliban. Nonetheless, the Taliban remain in control of parts of Helmand Province and maintained a shadow government there. As of August 2016, the Taliban controlled four of Helmand’s 14 districts, while the Afghan government reportedly believed that only two of Helmand’s districts were securely under its control. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Long War Journal](#), [Bloomberg News](#), [CBS News](#))

In January 2018, the BBC estimated that the Taliban threatened 70 percent of Afghanistan and fully controlled 14 Afghan districts, or 4 percent of the country. The BBC further estimated that the Taliban “have an active and open physical presence” in an additional 263 districts, or 66 percent of Afghanistan. That same month, Bill Roggio of the Long War Journal estimated that the group controlled 45 percent of Afghanistan. In October 2017, the U.S.-led coalition estimated that the Taliban controlled 44 percent of Afghanistan. All of the estimates represented a significant increase from September 2016 when the group reportedly controlled just 10 percent of the country. On May 1, 2019, U.S. military command in Afghanistan reported that they would discontinue monitoring how many people and districts the government and insurgents controlled as the assessments “limited decision-making value” for commanders. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [NBC News](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [New York Times](#))

January 2018 estimates by Afghan and U.S. officials gauged that the Taliban included at least 60,000 fighters, up from 2014 U.S. estimates of 20,000 fighters. The quality of these new recruits, however, may not be of the same caliber as the Taliban’s older fighters. The Taliban has even allegedly resorted to luring children into their ranks with sweets and then training them to become suicide bombers. The U.S. government does not release official numbers of the Taliban’s ranks. (Sources: [NBC News](#), [Voice of America](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [YNet News](#))

The United States remains entrenched in the fight against Taliban forces, which, as of August 2021, has cost the United States more than \$2 trillion since 2001. In July 2016, U.S. President Barack Obama announced that more than 8,000 U.S. troops would remain in Afghanistan through the end of his term in 2017. The president cited Afghanistan’s “precarious” security situation as necessitating continued U.S. involvement. Obama had also recently adjusted the U.S. rules of engagement to allow troops to directly confront the Taliban, in addition to training Afghan forces. President Donald Trump raised U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan to 14,000 by the end of 2017. The Taliban has demanded direct negotiations with the United States on ending the conflict in Afghanistan and the Taliban’s future role. In January 2018, Trump rejected future peace talks with the Taliban. That July, however, the Trump administration ordered U.S. diplomats to pursue direct negotiations with the Taliban. That month, U.S. and Taliban officials met to begin discussions on peace talks to end the war in Afghanistan with the understanding that the Taliban and Afghan government should lead the process. The Qatari government agreed to mediate between the Taliban and the Afghan government. On July 8 and 9, 2019, Qatar and Germany sponsored a two-day intra-Afghan meeting in Doha where Afghan leaders and Taliban representatives could have an informal forum to discuss Afghanistan’s future. The “ice-breaker” talks proved promising, with representatives from both sides calling for a “roadmap for peace” to reduce civilian casualties to zero. By August 2019, the United States and Taliban had reached a framework agreement that included a U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and intra-Afghan negotiations from the Taliban. (Sources: [Forbes](#), [Reuters](#), [Military Times](#), [Bloomberg News](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

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According to a 2012 leaked NATO report, Pakistan's ISI provided funding and training to the Taliban both in their takeover of Afghanistan in the 1990s and after the 2001 U.S. invasion. The report—based on 27,000 interrogations of 4,000 captured Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other foreign fighters—alleged that senior Taliban officials maintain homes in Pakistan close to ISI headquarters, and “Pakistan’s manipulation of the Taliban senior leadership continues unabatedly.” Admiral Mike Mullen, former chair of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, credited Pakistan’s support of the Taliban to the infiltration of the religious right in the Pakistani army and Pakistan’s desire to expand its regional influence through “proxies.” In response to the NATO report, Pakistan denied interference in Afghanistan. (Sources: [Time](#), [Brookings Institution](#))

Since the rise of ISIS, the Taliban have emphasized preserving pan-Islamic unity. Following al-Qaeda’s example, the Taliban have advised ISIS to “avoid extremism” that risks splintering the violent Islamist movement across the broader Middle East. Deceased Taliban leader [Mullah Mohammed Omar](#) in particular reaffirmed the Taliban’s priority of establishing a unified Islamist movement to expel the “far enemy” (the Western powers). Omar referred to ISIS leader [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](#) as a “fake caliph” who “just wanted to dominate what has so far been achieved by the real jihadists of Islam after three decades of jihad. A pledge of allegiance to him is ‘haram.’” Despite these warnings, hundreds of Taliban members have purportedly joined ISIS’s Pakistani branch. (Sources: [National Review](#), [Rudaw](#), [NBC News](#))

In April 2017, U.S. General John Nicholson, who commands U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said the U.S. military had received reports that Russia is arming the Taliban. Other U.S. military officials corroborated the reports and said that Russia had increased its supply of small arms to the Taliban in the past 18 months. Russia denied the allegations. A Taliban video released in late July 2017 claimed that the Russian government has provided the terrorist group with snipers, heavy machine guns, and other weapons. Nicholson has previously criticized Russia for providing “legitimacy” to the Taliban. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Daily Mail](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#))

Afghan security officials have claimed to possess evidence that both Russia and Iran are providing financial, military, and material support to the Taliban. According to Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, chief of Afghanistan’s National Directorate of Security, Iran and Russia have both increased their ties to the Taliban under the guise of fighting ISIS. Iran has supported the Taliban since 2006, according to the U.S. State Department. A 2012 U.S. Department of Defense report to Congress stated that Iran’s support was part of a “grand strategy” to challenge U.S. influence. A May 2016 U.S. drone strike killed Taliban leader [Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour](#) in Pakistan shortly after he crossed the border from Iran. Mansour had made multiple trips to Iran because of “ongoing battle obligations, according to Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid. In July 2018, the Afghan government reported that Taliban forces have admitted to receiving training in Iran. According to Taliban sources, Iran provided the training on the condition that the Taliban increase its attacks on American and NATO forces. (Sources: [Times](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Long War Journal](#), [Federation of American Scientists](#), [Pakistan Forward](#))

The Taliban have also targeted Afghanistan’s healthcare workers, particularly those distributing vaccines. The United Nations and other international aid groups have launched multiple vaccination drives in Afghanistan against polio, COVID-19, and other diseases, but healthcare workers have come under attack by militants, spurred by the Taliban’s anti-vaccine propaganda. In June 2020, The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) warned health workers were increasingly at risk of attack. UNAMA recorded 12 acts of violence against health workers between March 11 and May 23, 2020, eight of which were attributed to the Taliban. The Taliban have condemned vaccination campaigns as Western conspiracies to both sterilize Muslim children and spy on militants. As such, the Taliban have banned door-to-door vaccination campaigns in areas under their control. The Taliban point to a fake hepatitis vaccination campaign the CIA used to track al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. In Afghanistan in June 2021, gunmen killed five vaccination workers in one day in a series of coordinated attacks. The Taliban denied responsibility but continue to promote propaganda that encourages future attacks. (Sources: [Deutsche Welle](#), [Associated Press](#))

U.S.-Taliban February 2020 Peace Agreement and U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan

On February 29, 2020, following an agreed seven-day reduction in violence, U.S. and Taliban representatives met in Doha, Qatar, where they signed an agreement necessitating the eventual full withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. The United States agreed to draw its forces down from 13,000 to 8,600 in the next three to four months, with the remaining U.S. forces withdrawing in 14 months. In exchange, the Taliban agreed to renounce al-Qaeda and prevent al-Qaeda and other groups from using Afghanistan as a base for terrorism against the United States. The Taliban also agreed to negotiate a permanent ceasefire with other Afghan militants and the Afghan government. The U.S. troop drawdown is dependent on the Taliban maintaining its commitments. The agreement also called for permanent ceasefire and power-sharing talks that March between Afghan militant groups as well as between the Taliban and the Afghan government. After Afghan forces killed a senior al-Qaeda leader in Afghanistan’s Ghazni province in October 2020 and a senior regional leader in Farah province the following November, Afghan officials accused the Taliban of continuing to harbor al-Qaeda. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Voice of America](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Reuters](#))

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Given the Taliban-U.S. agreement, there were reports on June 9, 2020, that a group of Taliban militants broke off from the mainstream Taliban to form the Hezb-e Walayat-e Islami (Party of Islamic Guardianship) in defiance of the peace negotiations. According to an Afghan intelligence official, the group has yet to be “officially announced,” but it is alleged that the group has close ties to Iran—a country which the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency reported in November 2019 as having provided financial, political, training, and military support to the Taliban. Members of the splinter group include radical Taliban commanders and members of other Taliban factions. Despite the formation of Hezb-e Walayat-e Islami, the Taliban has begun to put together an agenda for negotiations with the Afghan government. Sediq Sediqi, a spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani, claims the president would like for the talks to commence in July 2020. (Sources: [Radio Free Europe](#), [Military Times](#))

The Taliban and the Afghan government conducted limited negotiations via video conferencing in March 2020. On March 25, the Taliban announced the Afghan government had agreed to an initial prisoner release, while Afghanistan’s National Security Council said face-to-face discussions would soon begin. The Afghan government announced the formation of a negotiating team for talks with the Taliban the following day. On March 30, the government canceled the release of 100 Taliban prisoners scheduled for the following day after the deaths of at least 28 Afghan security personnel in multiple attacks over the preceding two days. The government blamed the Taliban for the attacks, though the group did not immediately claim responsibility. By early May, the Afghan government had released 933 Taliban prisoners in exchange for dozens of captive Afghan security personnel. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#), [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#))

Because of ongoing negotiations between the Taliban and the United States, NATO’s Resolute Support mission stopped releasing data on the number of Taliban attacks. According to a Resolute Support assessment, the Taliban refrained from attacking coalition forces in March 2020 but increased attacks on Afghan forces. On April 30, 2020, the U.S. Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) released a quarterly assessment that called Taliban attacks in March “above seasonal norms.” The Afghan National Security Council found that the Taliban had carried out an average of 55 attacks per day since March 1. According to the council, the Taliban has continued its “campaign of terror against Afghans” and done nothing for peace. U.S. military leaders called on the Taliban to reduce attacks or face a response. In late April 2020, the Taliban rejected calls from the Afghan government for a ceasefire during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. However, on May 23, 2020, the Taliban announced a three day Eid ceasefire to which the Afghan government reciprocated. In the SIGAR quarterly report released on July 30, 2021, it was reported that the Taliban controlled more than 210 districts by July 21, 2021. (Sources: [NBC News](#), [Washington Post](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [SIGAR](#))

The global pandemic caused by COVID-19 has also affected Afghan-Taliban relations. Afghanistan had recorded more than 4,400 cases of the virus by the beginning of May 2020. On May 1, the Taliban accused the Afghan government of intentionally spreading the coronavirus in the country’s prisons in order to pressure the militant group in negotiations. In early May, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission accused the Taliban of hijacking five truckloads of food aid sent by Turkmenistan amid the pandemic. (Sources: [Anadolu Agency](#), [NPR](#))

Despite initiatives by both the Afghan government and the Taliban to commence conditional peace negotiations, on June 22, 2020, the National Security Council reported that the Taliban killed at least 291 Afghan security personnel and wounded 550 others in the previous week—the “deadliest” week of the entire Afghan war. Despite the increase in violence, Ghani claimed he would continue with a Taliban prisoner release—about an additional 2,000 Taliban inmates on top of the already freed 3,000—a condition the Afghan government had to satisfy in order to begin peace negotiations with the Taliban. (Source: [Gandhara](#))

On July 8, 2020, Afghan authorities reported that they would not follow through with the release of over 600 Taliban prisoners deemed “too dangerous.” However, under the conditions of the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban peace deal, Kabul pledged to release over 5,000 Taliban prisoners in exchange for 1,000 Afghan security force captives. According to Javid Faisal, the spokesman for the National Security Council, the prisoners the Taliban asked to be released still had “serious criminal cases” against them. Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, claimed the criminal cases against the specific prisoners were fabricated, but Faisal stated that the Afghan government will continue with the release of other Taliban prisoners, but only those considered not as significant of a threat. (Source: [Military.com](#))

On January 15, 2021, the United States drew down its forces to approximately 2,500, a 19-year low. A series of attacks struck Afghanistan that month as the United States and NATO reviewed plans to withdraw their forces from the country by May. On January 31, the European Union, NATO, and several Western embassies accused the Taliban for the majority of recent violence. According to Afghan security officials that month, hundreds of Taliban fighters released in 2020 under the U.S. agreement have since been re-arrested. In early February 2021, Afghan Vice President Amrullah Saleh accused the Taliban of failing to uphold its commitments under its agreement with the United States. Later in the month, U.S. officials accused the Taliban of responsibility for the majority of recent violence in Afghanistan. A February 2021 U.S. Department of Defense report also found the Taliban were maintaining their links to al-Qaeda. Russia’s presidential envoy to Afghanistan, Zamir?Kabulov, instead blamed the United States for perpetuating the violence by breaching its deal with the Taliban. According to Kabulov, the Taliban were “flawlessly” adhering

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to the 2020 agreement with the United States. That same month, the Taliban reportedly ordered followers not to provide shelter to or include foreign nationals in their ranks. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [Stars and Stripes](#), [France 24](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [U.S. Department of Defense](#), [Voice of America](#), [Voice of America](#))

Between March 16 and March 17, 2021, the United States carried out 48 hours of airstrikes against Taliban targets after the Taliban were “actively attacking and maneuvering on” Afghan troops, according to the U.S. military. The Taliban condemned the strikes as a violation of the Doha agreement and denied the Taliban members targeted in the strikes were involved in fighting. That same week, representatives of the Afghan government, Taliban, United States, Pakistan, China, and Russia met in Moscow to discuss a reduction in violence. After the meeting, the United States, Russia, China, and Pakistan issued a joint call for a reduction in violence and for the Taliban to forgo its spring offensive. The following day, the Taliban warned of a “reaction” if the United States did not adhere to its May 1 deadline to withdraw from Afghanistan. The Taliban refused to commit to refraining from a spring offensive. On March 19, the Taliban and the Afghan government agreed to accelerate peace talks. The Taliban claimed they, not the United States, proposed a three-month reduction in violence earlier in the month to “create a conducive atmosphere” for negotiations. According to the U.S. Director of National Intelligence’s annual threat assessment, released April 9, 2021, the Taliban are “likely to make gains on the battlefield, and the Afghan Government will struggle to hold the Taliban at bay if the coalition withdraws support.” (Sources: [Stars and Stripes](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Voice of America](#), [U.S. Director of National Intelligence](#))

On April 14, U.S. President Joe Biden confirmed he would not meet the May 1 deadline set by his predecessor. Instead, Biden said the United States would begin to drawdown its troops on May 1 and complete the withdrawal by September 11, 2021. The Taliban responded that the United States must hold to the May 1 deadline or “problems will certainly be compounded and those whom failed to comply with the agreement will be held liable.” The Taliban also announced they would not attend a planned peace conference in Turkey that week. On May 1, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid posted to Twitter that “this violation in principle has opened the way” for the Taliban “to take every counter-action it deems appropriate against the occupying forces.” In the first week of May, the Taliban launched multiple attacks against Afghan forces, killing dozens. On May 9, the Taliban announced a three-day ceasefire for the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#))

The United States began withdrawing its remaining forces from Afghanistan on May 1. As of April 2021, the 20-year-long war in Afghanistan had cost the lives of 66,000 to 69,000 Afghan troops. According to the United Nations, 2.7 million Afghans fled the country, while 4 million were displaced. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, 2,442 U.S. troops have been killed and 20,666 wounded in the war since 2001. More than 3,800 U.S. private security contractors are estimated to have been killed. According to the website iCasualties, 1,144 personnel from the 40-nation NATO coalition that trained Afghan forces over the years have also been killed. In 2020 alone, the war had displaced 404,100 people in Afghanistan, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). As of May 21, 2021, about 100,000 Afghans had been displaced since the beginning of the year. According to Afghanistan’s Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, thousands of Afghans have fled their homes in Helmand, Kandahar, Baghlan, and Laghman provinces after the United States began its withdrawal, due to escalating violence and fear of a Taliban resurgence. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [Voice of America](#))

Despite the U.S. withdrawal, the Taliban continued their violent campaign in Afghanistan against Afghan security forces. In the month and a half after the United States began its withdrawal on May 1, the Taliban captured at least 27 districts across Afghanistan. Further, the group has maintained its ties with al-Qaeda in contravention of its agreement with the United States. A May 2021 report to the U.N. Security Council by an Afghanistan monitoring team concluded the “Taliban’s messaging remains uncompromising, and it shows no sign of reducing the level of violence in Afghanistan to facilitate peace negotiations....” The monitoring team also reported continuing ties between the Taliban and al-Qaeda. (Sources: [United Nations](#), [Deutsche Welle](#))

In June 2021, the Taliban captured Afghan border crossings with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The Taliban pledged to keep the crossings operational while collecting millions of dollars annually in customs fees. The Taliban praised their advances as “manifest victory and triumph” and promised recent advances “will be the beginning of the end of the ills birthed by occupation.” In early July, the United States withdrew from the Bagram airbase, where U.S. forces had been stationed for almost 20 years. By July 2, the Taliban had seized more than one-third of Afghanistan’s 407 districts, many of them reportedly since the April announcement of impending U.S. withdrawal. The Taliban captured more than 80 districts between the beginning of May and the end of June. The Taliban reportedly captured 15 districts between July 2 and July 4 alone. U.S. military officials have warned of the potential for a new Afghan civil war. A U.S. intelligence assessment in June 2021 estimated Afghanistan could collapse six months after the completion of the U.S. withdrawal. On August 6, 2021, Taliban fighters seized control of Zaranj, the capital of Nimruz province, southwestern Afghanistan. The seizure of Zaranj, a provincial capital, represents the strengthening of the group’s military offensive as they originally confined their fighting to the country’s rural areas. By taking Zaranj, the Taliban has demonstrated the group has the military capabilities of taking control of other cities. (Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street](#)

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Journal, Washington Post)

Despite the Taliban's ongoing attacks throughout the country, the insurgent group has tried to implement itself as a legitimate military force and political group. On July 7, 2021, a high-level Taliban political committee, along with Afghan government representatives, met with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif in Tehran. Zarif stated Iran "is ready to assist the dialogue process between the existing factions in Afghanistan." Although Iran is a Shiite Muslim country, the hardline Sunni Muslim Taliban has opened communication with their former foe in an effort to repair the political and economic damage in Afghanistan resulting from decades of war and conflict. On July 28, Chinese officials—including China's foreign minister, Wang Yi—and Taliban leaders meet in Tianjin, northeastern China, launching two days of talks to discuss possible avenues for peace in Afghanistan. Yi called the group a "pivotal military and political force," but urged the militant group to "hold high the banner of peace talks." Among some of the promises made, Yi was able to persuade the Taliban to not allow fighters to use Afghan territory as a base to carry out attacks inside China. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#))

Beginning on August 6, 2021, Taliban fighters seized control of at least nine major cities across Afghanistan, including Zaranj, the capital of the southwestern Nimruz province. Zaranj was the first provincial capital seized by the Taliban since the withdrawal of foreign forces began that May. On August 7, the Taliban captured Sheberghan, capital of Jowzjan province, and claimed they captured the entire province. On August 8, the Taliban captured the provincial capitals of Sar-i-Pul, Kunduz, and Takhar provinces. On August 10, 2021, Taliban forces captured Pul-i-Khumri, capital of Baghlan province, after besieging the city for several months. The Taliban also captured Farah province's eponymous provincial capital and Badakhshan province's capital of Faizabad, raising the group's victories to nine captured cities within five days. Residents of Farah reported little shooting as the Taliban took control. On August 10, the Taliban also released an audio recording of military leader Mohammad Yaqoob ordering Taliban forces not to harm Afghan forces and government officials in territories they capture. The Taliban agreed not to harm any government officials who surrender. By August 13, the Taliban controlled 17 of Afghanistan's 34 provincial capitals and more than two-thirds of the country. By mid-August 2021, the Taliban claimed to have taken control of half of Afghanistan's districts since May. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Long War Journal](#), [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#))

As the Taliban gained control of major Afghan cities in August, U.S. intelligence officials estimated the Taliban could capture Kabul within 90 days. U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad warned the Taliban against pursuing a military victory in Afghanistan. He also warned that the international community would not recognize a future Taliban government. The U.S. and British embassies in Afghanistan advised their respective citizens to leave the country because of the worsening security situation. On August 12, the United States began sending a force of more than 3,000 troops to aid the evacuation of most of its embassy in Kabul. U.S. negotiators also urged the Taliban not to target the U.S. embassy if a future Taliban government would ever want to receive foreign aid. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby declared it was ultimately up to the Afghans to defend their country from the Taliban and other threats. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#), [CBS News](#))

Taliban's August 2021 Takeover of Afghanistan

On August 15, 2021, Ghani fled Afghanistan and thousands of Afghans poured into Kabul's airport as Taliban fighters entered the city. By the morning of August 16, the American flag was lowered and removed from the U.S. Embassy and all U.S. personnel were transferred to Kabul's airport for evacuation. The Taliban laid siege to the presidential palace and took complete control of Kabul by August 16, after which the Taliban declared the war in Afghanistan had ended. Taliban political office spokesman Mohammad Naeem said the insurgents would soon reveal the country's new government. He claimed the Taliban did not want to live in isolation and wanted to have peaceful international relations. The Taliban also claimed they would respect women's rights and protect foreigners and Afghans. The United States, Britain, France, Japan, and more than 55 other Western countries issued a joint statement calling for all Afghans and international citizens in Afghanistan who wanted to leave to be allowed to depart. As of August 19, 2021, Abdul Ghani Baradar, a veteran Taliban official, is reportedly set to be the president of the new Taliban government. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [The Hill](#), [The Times](#))

On August 16, 2021, U.S. President Joe Biden announced that despite the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, U.S. troops will only remain on the ground for a short and focused mission—to ensure the safe and secure evacuation of U.S. citizens, personnel, allies, and vulnerable Afghans. The president, however, communicated that if the Taliban interfered with evacuation efforts, the U.S. would forcefully retaliate against the militant group. Ultimately, Biden stood firm in his decision to withdraw from the 20-year war, stating that the U.S. mission in Afghanistan was solely intended for counterterrorism purposes and not for nation building. U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price reiterated Biden's position and also announced that the perimeter of Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport is now secured by the U.S. military. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [France 24](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Associated Press](#))

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Intent on portraying a more “moderate” image, on August 17, a member of the Taliban’s media team, Mawlawi Abdulhaq Hemad, was interviewed by Beheshta Arghand, a female presenter on Tolo News. Although the group has given interviews with female correspondents on international news outlets, the group rarely grants interviews to female journalists within the country. However, the Taliban has claimed that it would take on a more “moderate” approach in their ruling of the country, and that women are allowed to have roles in public life but in the context of “Islamic law.” The same day, Enamullah Samangani, a Taliban official, announced a general “amnesty” for all in Afghanistan to return to work. Another Taliban official, Zabihullah Mujahid, also announced that the Taliban wanted private media to “remain independent” and that the insurgents would not seek revenge against Afghans who worked with the former government or foreign forces. These statements have not mitigated the fears of Afghans worried about reprisal killings. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [NBC News](#), [Associated Press](#))

According to a U.N. document, immediately following the takeover, the Taliban have intensified a search for people who they believe worked for U.S. and NATO forces. The insurgents have threatened to kill or arrest the family members of people who worked with U.S. and British forces if they cannot find them, contradicting former claims that the insurgents would not carry out reprisal killings. According to media sources, Taliban death squads have reportedly marked the doors of prominent women who had a role in the development of civil society in Afghanistan. The Taliban continues to reassure Afghans that they will bring peace and security throughout the country. However, on August 25, 2021, Taliban official Mujahid announced that women in Afghanistan needed to stay at home as the Taliban’s “security forces are not trained in how to deal with women.” Mujahid claims a proper security system will be enforced to eventually guarantee the safety of women, but did not elaborate on the specifics of that system. On November 1, 2021, human rights organization Human Rights Watch revealed that Taliban members ruling Afghanistan’s provinces were given a manual featuring far stricter rules and restrictions against women than the policies pioneered by Taliban leaders in Kabul. The manual, which was established by the Taliban’s Ministry of Vice and Virtue, is a departure from the Taliban’s more “moderate” approach to governance and features abusive and discriminatory policies against women and other marginalized groups. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [The Sun](#), [BBC News](#), [Independent](#))

Following the Taliban’s takeover, protests broke out throughout the country, with the Taliban moving quickly to suppress dissent. On August 18, anti-Taliban protests erupted in Jalalabad, leading to the death of three and injuring more than a dozen others. On August 19, the protests spread to Kabul and Nangarhar province. That same day, the Taliban imposed a 24-hour curfew after breaking up a protest in Khost province. Afghan women later took to the streets of Kabul on September 4 to demand equal rights and the ability to participate in government. The protestors were confronted by Taliban guards who allegedly hit women with electric tasers, rifle butts, metal clubs, and tools. The Taliban prevented the women from marching onto the presidential palace, claiming they would use tear gas on the protestors. The women-led protests continued on September 7 and 8, with Taliban leaders using violence to disperse protestors. The Taliban allegedly detained and beat several Afghan journalists who were covering the protests. Sirajuddin Haqqani, the minister of the interior of the Taliban’s government, later states that protests would be illegal unless their slogans, venue and timing are approved in advance by authorities. The Taliban has been vocal about the restrictions surrounding education for women. Following the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul, Abdul Baqi Haqqani—the then-suspected contender for minister of higher education of the Taliban government—appeared at a news conference on August 31, 2021. Haqqani stated that women would be allowed to study at universities under Taliban rule, but classrooms would be segregated by gender and Islamic dress would be mandatory. Haqqani stated, “the people of Afghanistan will continue their higher education in the light of Sharia law in safety without being in a mixed male and female environment.” Following his appointment as acting minister for higher education of the Taliban government, Haqqani later reiterated this restriction at a news conference on September 12 in Kabul, further claiming that only female teachers would be allowed to teach female students. Additionally, Haqqani claimed Taliban officials would conduct a curriculum review, which media sources believe will be in line with the group’s fundamentalist Islamist code. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Post](#), [Washington Post](#), [Voice of America](#))

Despite the Taliban’s previous stance on evacuations following the August 31st deadline, on August 29, the United States and 97 other countries announced that they had reached an agreement with the Taliban to allow evacuations of all foreign nationals and any Afghan citizen with travel authorization after the August 31 deadline. Although Sher Mohammed Abas Stanekzai, the Taliban’s chief negotiator, stated on August 27 that the Taliban would not stop people from leaving the country, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said that although the Taliban is “allowing for safe passage...[the U.S.] is not just going to take their word for it.” (Source: [Axios](#))

A minute before midnight on August 30, 2021, the last U.S. troops flew out of Kabul, ending a 20-year war that took the lives of 2,500 American troops and 240,000 Afghans and cost about \$2 trillion. By the evening of August 30, 123,000 people were evacuated from Kabul. Close to 100 Americans and tens of thousands who helped the U.S. government still remain in the country. Before departing, U.S. troops destroyed more than 70 aircraft, dozens of armored vehicles, and disabled air defenses that were used to counteract jihadist attacks in the country. The final withdrawal of U.S. troops was not a celebration of a more secure Afghanistan, but marked the beginning of a new Taliban regime. (Source: [Reuters](#))

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On September 7, 2021, the Taliban officially announced the appointments within its caretaker government. At the helm of the movement is Haibatullah Akhundzada, who will serve as supreme leader. Mullah Muhammad Hassan was named the acting prime minister, with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi named deputy prime ministers. The top security post was given to Sirajuddin Haqqani, who will serve as acting minister of the interior, a role in which he will have extensive authority over policing and legal matters. Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob, who is the oldest son of Taliban founder Mullah Muhammad Omar, is named the acting defense minister. The government is exclusively male, with many positions filled with veterans from their hardline movement in the early nineties. Shortly after the appointments were made, on September 14, 2021, rumors emerged that deputy prime minister Abdul Ghani Baradar was allegedly injured following disputes between the Taliban and the Haqqani network—the U.S. designated, and allegedly more radical, branch of the Taliban. Baradar quickly refuted those claims in a television interview on September 15, while also denying any internal disagreements. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#))

On September 24, 2021, Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, the Taliban official in charge of prisons, was reported saying that extreme punishments such as executions and amputations will resume in Afghanistan. Although Turabi claimed those punishments would not be carried out publicly, on September 25, the Taliban hanged four dead bodies for public display throughout Herat, western Afghanistan. Taliban officials claimed the four were caught in a kidnapping on September 24, before being killed by police. According to the Taliban, the aim of hanging the bodies for public display was to alert “all criminals that they are not safe.” (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [BBC News](#))

The Taliban takeover has worsened Afghanistan’s already struggling economy through the imposition of international sanctions on the Taliban government. The United States seized almost \$9.5 billion in assets belonging to the Afghan central bank after the Taliban’s takeover. On November 17, 2021, U.N. Special Representative Deborah Lyons warned 60 percent of Afghanistan’s 38 million people faced food insecurity and Afghanistan was “on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe.” That same day, Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi issued an open letter to the U.S. Congress to release Afghanistan’s assets. Promising the United Nations would do all it could to ensure funds are not diverted to the Taliban, Lyons called on the international community to urgently “find a way to provide financial support to health care workers in state hospitals, staff in food security programs, and, yes, eventually to teachers provided that girls right to education is emphatically met.” On December 12, Muttaqi told the Associated Press the Taliban want good relations with all countries, including the United States. Muttaqi said the Taliban are committed in principle to education and jobs for girls and women. He also called on the United States and other countries to release up to \$10 billion in Afghan assets that were frozen after the Taliban takeover in August. Muttaqi’s announcement followed a December 3 decree by Akhundzada on women’s rights and banning child marriages. According to that proclamation: “A woman is not a property, but a noble and free human being; no one can give her to anyone in exchange of for peace deal or to end animosity.” He also declared “no one can force a woman to marry by coercion or pressure.” Women’s rights activists lamented the proclamation did not mention education or jobs for women. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Associated Press](#), [CBS News](#))

Although vowing to protect the human rights of girls and women, on December 21, 2022, the Taliban announced a total ban on the education of girls and women. Along with banning education for girls and women, Taliban officials also barred female staff from working in schools and announced that adult women can no longer visit mosques or attend religious seminaries. While the Taliban claimed the ban would be temporary, the ruling group implemented a similar “temporary” measure during their first rule in the 1990s, and of which they never lifted. On April 18, 2023, the United Nations asserted that it was ready to pull out of Afghanistan in May if the Taliban does not relent and let local women work for the organization. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Associated Press](#), [Voice of America](#))

Despite the Taliban’s continued statements on not providing safe haven to terror groups in Afghanistan, on May 30, 2022, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team at the United Nations reported that Pakistan-based terror groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) maintain training camps in some provinces of Afghanistan. Reportedly, some of those camps are directly under Taliban control. According to the report JeM maintains eight training camps in Nangarhar, and that LeT—which has previously provided finance and training expertise to Taliban operations—maintains three camps in Kunar and Nangarhar. Additionally, the report stated that Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) constitutes the largest component of foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan, with troops numbering around several thousand. Other groups in Afghanistan, with around a few hundred troops each, include the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and Jamaat Ansarullah. Additionally, media sources reported that Qari Fasihuddin—an ethnic Tajik commander who is currently serving as the Taliban’s chief of army staff—allegedly gave control of five districts in Badakhshan, northern Afghanistan, to Mahdi Arsalon, the commander of Jamaat Ansarullah. (Source: [The Hindu](#), [Long War Journal](#), [United Nations Digital Library](#))

As the Taliban sought to assert itself as a credible regime, on December 1, 2022, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) announced that they have asked the Taliban to hold a “credible investigation” into reports of extrajudicial killings in northern Daikundi province. Requests for the investigation transpired following a November 25 attack in which Taliban forces reportedly attacked Siwak Shibar village and killed nine people, including three children. The province is home to many ethnic Hazara—a minority group in Afghanistan that has historically

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been persecuted by the Taliban—leading media sources and international organizations to suspect the Taliban were targeting the Hazara in the attack. However, the Taliban claim the Daikundi attack was a gunfight between Taliban forces and suspected armed rebels. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Gandhara](#))

The Taliban has not made a consistent effort in delivering the “moderate” reforms they promised in August 2021. On April 19, 2023, Hibatullah Akhundzada, the supreme leader of the Taliban, asserted that through the strict implementation of sharia law, he seeks to achieve “the religious and moral reform of the [Afghan] society.” Akhundzada’s announcement came a day after the United Nations deputy secretary-general, Amina Mohammed, announced that the organization is planning on arranging a conference to discuss the recognition of the Taliban. According to the United Nations, almost 34 million Afghans are living below the poverty line, a figure that has doubled since the Taliban’s 2021 takeover of Kabul. After the U.S. withdrew from the country, foreign subsidies and aid programs were drastically cut. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Agence France Presse](#), [Associated Press](#))

The Taliban has made efforts to assure regional partners of their commitment to bar terror groups from operating within Afghanistan. On May 7, 2023, Taliban and Chinese delegates met in Islamabad, Pakistan for the 5th China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers’ Dialogue to encourage multilateral cooperation in regional security, trade, transit, and counterterrorism activity. The Taliban subsequently signed an agreement claiming they would not allow foreign terrorist groups to use Afghan soil to launch attacks against foreign countries. However, regional scholars remain skeptical of the Taliban’s promise as the group previously agreed to and failed to comply with similar conditions in the U.S.-Taliban peace agreement of February 2020. (Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Long War Journal](#))

Bilateral talks between the U.S. and the Taliban have not ceased, on July 30, 2023, U.S. officials and Taliban representatives met in Doha to discuss economic issues, security, and women’s rights. The two-day long talks, which were the first official engagement between the U.S. and the Taliban since their takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, are not a legitimization or recognition of the Taliban government, but rather the U.S.’s attempt to improve and guarantee human rights for the Afghan people, particularly girls and women. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Radio Free Europe](#))

Following the two-day talks, on August 6, 2023, Hibatullah Akhundzada, the supreme leader of the de facto Taliban government in Afghanistan, decreed that cross-border attacks are considered “haram” and therefore forbidden under Islam. The decree, which was preliminarily discussed during a July 2023 bilateral talk between Taliban authorities and Pakistani officials, intends to decrease the number of attacks carried out by the TTP, on Pakistani soil. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Arab News](#))

Al-Qaeda

[Al-Qaeda](#) has been operating in Afghanistan for more than two decades, during which time the terror group maintained close ties with the Taliban. Osama bin Laden swore allegiance to deceased Taliban leader [Mullah Mohammed Omar](#) in 1996. In August 2015, al-Qaeda leader [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#) swore allegiance to [Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour](#), the now-deceased Taliban leader who replaced Omar after his death in 2013. After Mansour’s death, al-Zawahiri pledged allegiance to his replacement, [Mullah Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada](#). In August 2016, al-Zawahiri issued a call for Afghans to reject ISIS, which “seeks to split the ranks of the mujahideen” in Afghanistan, and support the Taliban. (Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [Long War Journal](#))

Al-Qaeda’s central command, which includes al-Zawahiri and his top aides, has traditionally been headquartered in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al-Qaeda established several training camps in Afghanistan, including the sprawling Tarnak Farms, where Osama bin Laden allegedly plotted the 9/11 attacks. The CIA recorded footage of al-Qaeda fighters conducting military drills and firing at targets, as well as of bin Laden within the walled confines of Tarnak Farms. Al-Qaeda’s Afghanistan training camps have hosted notable terrorists such as Sahim Alwan, one of the “Lackawanna Six” from Buffalo, New York, who were convicted of supporting al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda maintained its training camps in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the 2001 U.S. invasion. In May 2009, U.S. and Afghan forces discovered several training camps in Afghanistan’s Baghran district in the Helmand Province that were used by al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. In August 2015, the United States bombed two al-Qaeda camps in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar. One of the camps encompassed nearly 30 square miles. (Sources: [MI5](#), [NBC News](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Weekly Standard](#), [Long War Journal](#), [Long War Journal](#))

After fighting in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, bin Laden returned to his native Saudi Arabia in 1989 following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia revoked bin Laden’s citizenship and expelled him in 1991. The Taliban provided a safe haven for al-Qaeda insurgents in Afghanistan prior to the September 11, 2001, terror attacks. In May 1996, bin Laden returned to Afghanistan. During a meeting that October with Taliban leader Mullah Omar, bin Laden pledged “unconditional support and financial backing” in exchange for the Taliban’s protection. That same year, bin Laden established al-Qaeda’s 55th Arab Brigade to fight alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan. Leaked memos from the U.S. military Joint

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Task Force Guantanamo (JTF) describe the brigade as bin Laden’s “primary battle formation supporting Taliban objectives.” According to the JTF, bin Laden remained “closely in the command and control of the brigade.” (Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [CNN](#), *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, Steve Coll, p. 9, [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Institute for Middle Eastern Democracy](#), [Guardian](#), [Weekly Standard](#))

After the 1998 al-Qaeda attacks on U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, the United States launched cruise missiles at suspected al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan. Following the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, al-Qaeda and the Taliban fled to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, where both organizations began to regroup and retool. After coalition forces destroyed the 55th Arab Brigade in late 2001, bin Laden and al-Qaeda rebuilt the organization as Lashkar al Zil, “the Shadow Army,” recruiting from jihadist groups in Pakistan to fight against Pakistani forces there and against coalition forces in Afghanistan. According to U.S. intelligence in 2009, Lashkar al Zil had been “instrumental” in Taliban victories in eastern and southern Afghanistan. Lashkar al Zil’s activities have decreased since the death of the group’s leader, Ilyas Kashmiri, in a June 2011 U.S. drone strike, but the group remains active. (Sources: [PBS](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Weekly Standard](#), [Long War Journal](#), [BBC News](#), [Jamestown Foundation](#))

Al-Qaeda maintained a close relationship with the Taliban following the U.S. invasion. A U.S. intelligence report from Guantanamo Bay acquired by journalists Bill Roggio and Thomas Joscelyn described “a newly-conceived ‘unification’ of Al Qaeda and Taliban forces within Afghanistan.” The same report indicated that Mullah Omar and bin Laden “envisioned this new coalition” during a meeting in Pakistan in early spring 2003. Guantanamo detainee Haroon al Afghan reported an August 2006 meeting during which commanders of the Taliban and al-Qaeda “decided to increase terrorist operations in the Kapisa, Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar provinces, including suicide bombings, mines, and assassinations.” (Source: [Weekly Standard](#))

In an October 2010 letter, bin Laden ordered al-Qaeda operatives to relocate to Afghanistan’s eastern provinces because of U.S. airstrikes in Pakistan. U.S. forces have killed several high-level al-Qaeda commanders in Afghanistan since. For example, a December 2013 airstrike in Nangarhar killed two al-Qaeda military commanders, along with members of the Pakistani Taliban and Afghan Taliban. An October 2014 airstrike killed al-Qaeda leader Abu Bara al-Kuwaiti while he was at the home of al-Qaeda commander Abdul Samad Khanjari, who was also the Taliban’s shadow governor for the Achin district in Nangarhar. (Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [Long War Journal](#))

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the men who eventually created [al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula \(AQAP\)](#) in 2009—[Nasir al-Wuhayshi](#), [Said al-Shihri](#), [Qasim al-Raymi](#), and [Mohamed al-Awfi](#)—traveled to Afghanistan and spent time at al-Qaeda-sponsored training camps. Al-Wuhayshi served as Osama bin Laden’s personal secretary in Afghanistan between 1998 until about late 2001, when the two were separated during the U.S.-led Battle of Tora Bora. U.S. forces captured al-Shihri in Afghanistan in 2001 and transferred him to Guantanamo Bay. Al-Awfi was sent to Guantanamo Bay in 2002 and released to Saudi Arabia’s custody in 2007 to undergo deradicalization. After helping found AQAP, al-Awfi returned to Saudi Arabia, where he remained as of 2010, providing intelligence on al-Qaeda from a Saudi prison. Al-Raymi took over AQAP in June 2015 after al-Wuhayshi died in a U.S. drone strike. (Sources: [CTC Sentinel](#), [New York Times](#), [USA Today](#), [BBC News](#))

[Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent \(AQIS\)](#) also maintains a presence in Afghanistan. AQIS was founded in September 2014 at the behest of al-Zawahiri, who appointed [Asim Omar](#) as emir of the new affiliate. The affiliate allegedly operates in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Burma, Bangladesh, and Kashmir. Al-Zawahiri stated that AQIS seeks to “rescue” the subcontinent’s Muslim population from “injustice, oppression, persecution, and suffering.” Harakat-ul-Mujahidden, a Pakistani Islamist terrorist organization long linked to al-Qaeda and now to AQIS, reportedly operates training camps in Afghanistan. A joint U.S.-Afghan mission in October 2015 destroyed an AQIS training camp in the Kandahar Province and killed dozens of trainees. (Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [Long War Journal](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

A January 2021 memorandum from the U.S. Department of the Treasury warned that al-Qaeda gained strength in Afghanistan in 2020 while continuing to operate with the Taliban’s protection. According to the report, senior Haqqani network figures have discussed forming a new joint unit of armed fighters in cooperation with and funded by al-Qaeda. In April 2021, two al-Qaeda operatives gave an exclusive interview to CNN and promised the terror network would wage “war on all fronts” against the United States after it withdraws from Afghanistan “unless they are expelled from the rest of the Islamic world.” A May 2021 U.N. report concluded the Taliban maintained strong ties to al-Qaeda. The U.N. monitoring team behind the report concluded it is “impossible to assess with confidence that the Taliban will live up to its commitment to suppress any future” al-Qaeda threat in Afghanistan. In June 2021, U.S. military leaders voiced concern that a full U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan by September 2021 could enable al-Qaeda and other militants to regroup in the country and pose a threat to the United States within two years. (Sources: [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [CNN](#), [United Nations](#), [Reuters](#))

On July 31, 2022, a CIA drone strike killed al-Zawahiri in Kabul’s Sherpoor area. It was the first U.S. drone strike in Afghanistan since the U.S. withdrawal in August 2021. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid condemned the strike as a violation of “international principles.” According to

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U.S. President Joe Biden, al-Zawahiri had been staying in the house that had been targeted. The house reportedly belonged to a top aide to senior Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani. Biden confirmed the strike on August 1, declaring al-Zawahiri “is no more.” Following al-Zawahiri’s death, a former Afghan government official told CNN he had heard al-Qaeda No. 2 Saif al-Adel had already left Iran for Afghanistan. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [CNN](#))

According to a report released by the U.N. Security Council in June 2023, al-Qaeda reportedly maintains training camps inside Afghanistan. The camps are located in five provinces including Helmand, Zabul, Nangarhar, Nuristan, and the Badghis regions. Al-Qaeda has also reportedly established “safe houses in Farah, Helmand, Herat, and Kabul.” (Sources: [United Nations Security Council](#), [Long War Journal](#))

ISIS

In January 2015, [ISIS](#) declared Afghanistan and Pakistan to be one region called the Khorasan Province (Wilayat Khorasan or ISIS-K). That same month, a group of Afghan and Pakistani militants released a video in which they pledged allegiance to ISIS and promised to increase their domestic operations. The militants introduced Hafez Sayed Khan Orakzai—a commander in the Pakistani Taliban who pledged allegiance to ISIS in October 2014—as their regional leader. In April 2015, ISIS claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in Jalalabad, its first major attack in Afghanistan. Since then, ISIS has increasingly targeted Shiite targets in Afghanistan. ISIS suicide bombers attacked a July 2016 demonstration by the predominately Shiite Hazara minority group, killing 80. And ISIS attacked two Shiite sites in October 2016, on the Shiite holy day of Ashura, killing more than 30 people. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [NBC News](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Diplomat](#), [Reuters](#), [Deutsche Welle](#))

According to an April 2019 assessment by an unnamed senior U.S. intelligence official, ISIS-K poses the top threat for so-called spectacular attacks on the United States. According to that official, ISIS-K has been emboldened by its success in Afghanistan and has targeted its recruitment at college graduates who have been unable to find employment. Another U.S. intelligence official told CNN that ISIS-K is using social media to establish contacts within the United States and is capable of striking within the country. According to retired U.S. Central Command commander General Joseph Votel, ISIS-K requires complete eradication because its fighters are ideologically committed. (Sources: [USA Today](#), [CNN](#))

ISIS fighters in Afghanistan have also used the country as a launching pad for attacks on neighboring Pakistan. After a February 17, 2016, ISIS suicide bombing killed at least 83 people in Pakistan, the Pakistani government blamed Jamaat-ur-Ahrar (JuA) for the attack. JuA is a faction of the Taliban that reportedly also has links to ISIS. Pakistani officials accused the Afghan government of allowing JuA to operate freely in Afghanistan and responded by launching overnight raids into Afghanistan, reportedly destroying a JuA training camp. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Nation](#), [BBC News](#))

In 2016, ISIS operated in only one Afghan province, Nangarhar. A September 2017 U.N. report revealed that ISIS had expanded its presence in Afghanistan to all of the country’s seven provinces. (Source: [Voice of America](#))

On July 11, 2017, a U.S. airstrike killed ISIS Khorasan leader [Abu Sayed](#) in the group’s headquarters in Kunar province. He was the third ISIS-Khorasan leader to be killed within a year. Previous ISIS leader Abdul Hasib was killed in a joint U.S.-Afghan operation in Afghanistan’s Nangarhar province on April 27, 2017. His predecessor Hafiz Saeed Khan was killed in a July 2016 U.S. drone strike. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#))

There were approximately 1,300 ISIS fighters in Afghanistan as of September 2016, according to General John Nicholson, the highest ranking U.S. military commander in the country. Nicholson said on September 23, 2016, that ISIS leaders in Syria provide the Afghanistan fighters with money, guidance, and communications support. According to Nicholson, ISIS’s fighters are largely former members of the Pakistan Taliban and primarily based in Afghanistan’s Nangarhar region. On January 3, 2017, Najibullah Mani, head of the Interior Ministry’s Counterterrorism Department, said ISIS is active in “at least 11” of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. As of March 1, 2017, U.S.-backed Afghan forces had reduced the number of ISIS fighters in the country to approximately 700, according to the U.S. military. (Sources: [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [Voice of America](#))

Afghan media reported in December 2015 that ISIS had launched a Pashto-language radio station in Afghanistan called Voice of the Caliphate, which reportedly broadcasted anti-government and anti-Taliban messages. The Afghan government shut down the station later that month, but the station returned soon after using alternate frequencies. U.S. airstrikes reportedly destroyed the eastern Afghanistan broadcasting station in February 2016. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Long War Journal](#), [Fox News](#))

According to the U.S. State Department, the majority of the extremist groups active in Afghanistan have shunned the ISIS affiliate. The exception is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which operates in northern Afghanistan near Uzbekistan as well as along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The group broke its alliance with the Taliban to ally with ISIS’s Khorasan Province in August 2015. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#))

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As a result of ISIS's encroachment on its territory, the Taliban have become more direct in opposing ISIS. The two terrorist groups have violently clashed on several occasions. In June 2015, the Taliban's deputy leader [Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour](#) sent a missive to al-Baghdadi, warning ISIS's caliph that "jihad against the Americans and their allies [in Afghanistan] must be conducted under one flag and one leadership." ISIS and the Taliban reportedly agreed to a ceasefire in eastern Afghanistan in early August 2016, according to media reports. (Sources: [Diplomat](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

ISIS claimed a July 31, 2017, attack on the Iraqi embassy in Kabul, as well as an attack the following day on a Shiite mosque in Herat. The attacks came three weeks after U.S.-backed Iraqi forces recaptured the Iraq's second city of Mosul from ISIS, prompting Afghan security officials to question whether ISIS was increasing its activity in Afghanistan in response to its losses in Iraq. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#))

On May 30, 2019, a suicide bomber targeted the Marshal Fahim National Defense University in Kabul. At least six people were killed and another six were wounded. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack stating its fighters attacked "trainees in the Afghan army." It is suspected that ISIS is increasing its presence in Afghanistan as the U.S. and the Taliban are in the process of brokering a peace deal. On August 1, 2019, ISIS released a video of its members publicly beheading a member of the Taliban. According to the Middle East Media Research Institute, "ISIS considers Taliban members to be apostates who can thus be lawfully killed." ISIS claimed responsibility for a March 25, 2020, attack on a Sikh temple in Kabul that killed at least 25. (Sources: [Defense Post](#), [Washington Times](#), [Reuters](#))

In the first half of 2020, ISIS claimed responsibility for a spate of attacks in Afghanistan. On March 6, ISIS gunmen killed 32 and wounded 58 at a memorial in Kabul. ISIS militants launched a rocket attack on Afghanistan's presidential palace on March 9. Another ISIS attack on a Sikh temple in Kabul, on March 25, killed at least 25. On May 11, Afghan forces arrested ISIS-K leader Zia-ul Haq, a.k.a. Shaikh Abu Omer al-Khorasani. ISIS-K reportedly had as few as 1,000 fighters at this point. Following Khorasani's arrest, the Afghan ISIS affiliate installed new leadership and renewed its focus on localized and lone-wolf attacks throughout the rest of 2020. In June 2020, Shahab al-Muhajir took over leadership of ISIS-K, which has since sought to recruit disaffected Taliban members and other militants. In early 2021, U.S. military officials in Afghanistan warned that ISIS-K remained a threat. That January, Afghan security said it had foiled an ISIS plot to assassinate U.S. Charge d'Affaires in Kabul Ross Wilson. As of July 2023, the U.N. has reported that ISIS-K boasts a troop size of 6,000 members and remains the "most serious terrorist threat" for Afghanistan and the region. Al-Muhajir was reportedly killed by Taliban security forces in June 2023, but the U.N. has yet to confirm his death. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Guardian](#), [Newsweek](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [Voice of America](#), [Hindu](#), [Voice of America](#), [United Nations](#))

Following the Taliban's takeover of the Afghan government on August 15, 2021, and ahead of the impending full withdrawal of U.S. military forces by August 31, on August 22, 2021, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan announced that ISIS posed a significant threat to Americans in Afghanistan. According to reports from U.S. intelligence and military officials, as the Biden administration attempts to evacuate American citizens and U.S. personnel from Afghanistan, ISIS will likely seek to exploit the security vacuum in the country and plot attacks against American targets. On August 26, an ISIS-K suicide bomber—who possessed 20 pounds of explosives packed with ball bearings—detonated himself outside of Abbey Gate, Kabul International Airport. According to media reports, as many as 170 people and 13 U.S. service members were killed, with an additional 200 wounded. The Taliban condemn the attack, later launching an investigation into the perpetrators. That evening, ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement released by its Amaq News Agency on their Telegram channel. On August 27, Marine General Kenneth "Frank" McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command told reporters that U.S. troops in Kabul are preparing for more ISIS attacks. U.S. forces are allegedly sharing information with Taliban fighters stationed outside of Kabul's airport in anticipation of future ISIS attacks that could include car bombs or rocket fire. That same day, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby announced that the Taliban had released "thousands" of ISIS-K militants from U.S. prisons in Afghanistan following their takeover of the country. Kirby did not reveal how many prisoners remain at Bagram Air Base. On February 4, 2022, U.S. military officials briefed reporters on the results of an investigation into the ISIS-K bombing at Abbey Gate. The investigation, led by Brigadier General Lance Curtis, interviewed more than 130 people and spanned five countries over three and a half months. The investigation found that none of the casualties were injured or killed by gunfire, contradicting previous claims that casualties were a result of both a suicide bomber and ISIS-K gunmen. According to media sources, the report also determined that a single suicide bomber carried out the attack alone (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Telegraph](#), [NBC News](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Reuters](#), [Washington Post](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [Independent](#), [Business Insider](#), [U.S. Central Command](#), [New York Times](#), [C-SPAN](#), [Associated Press](#))

On April 25, 2023, media sources reported that Taliban fighters in Afghanistan killed the militant responsible for carrying out the August 2021 suicide bombing at Kabul airport. The explosion killed at least 170, including 13 U.S. service members, and wounded 40 others. The assailant, a senior operative of ISIS-K remains unnamed, however, the Taliban reportedly killed the individual in the last few weeks. Further details of the operations, including where and when the event took place, also remain classified. (Source: [Wall Street Journal](#))

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Following the ISIS-K attacks outside of the Kabul airport, on the evening of August 27, 2021, the U.S. military carried out a drone strike in Nangarhar, targeting and killing two “high profile” ISIS-K targets. According to Kirby, the targets were “ISIS-K planners and facilitators.” Another ISIS-K member was wounded in the attack. On August 29, U.S. forces conducted an airstrike against an ISIS-K target in Kabul. The strike targeted a vehicle that, according to U.S. Central Command spokesperson, Navy Captain Bill Urban, posed “an imminent threat” to Kabul airport. The vehicle allegedly contained substantial amounts of explosive material. The driver, a suspected suicide bomber was killed in the attack. According to media sources, ten civilians were also killed in the attack. On September 17, the Pentagon acknowledged that the drone strike was a tragic mistake. Following an inquiry conducted by the U.S. military’s Central Command, the alleged explosives in the vehicle were most likely water bottles, and a second explosion in a Kabul neighborhood was most likely due to a propane or gas tank. The driver of the vehicle, Zemari Ahmadi, was a longtime worker for a U.S. aid group and had no connection to ISIS-K. Ahmadi had a quick interaction with some people in an alleged ISIS safe house, which military analysts falsely concluded was a direct connection to the militant group. (Sources: [CNN](#), [NBC News](#), [New York Times](#))

Although the Taliban has asserted that they will take on defeating ISIS-K themselves, ISIS-K has continued to carry out high casualty attacks throughout the country. On October 3, 2021, a suicide bomber launched an attack outside of the Eidgah mosque in Kabul, targeting a funeral service that was held for the mother of Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid. The blast killed at least five. ISIS-K released a statement in a Telegram post that one of their fighters managed to evade security forces at the funeral and detonate his explosive belt. That evening, Taliban government forces launched an operation north of Kabul to target and neutralize an ISIS-K cell. The ISIS-K cell was neutralized after an explosives-packed car blew up and destroyed the building the militants were hiding in. On October 8, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive at the Shiite Sayed Abad mosque in Kunduz, northern Afghanistan which killed 43 people and injured more than 140 others. In another similar attack on October 15, 2021, a group of ISIS-K suicide bombers detonated explosives at the Imam Barga mosque in Kandahar during Friday prayers. (Sources: [NPR](#), [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [CBS](#), [Reuters](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#))

Given increasing insecurity in the country, on October 31, 2021, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that some former members of Afghanistan’s U.S.-trained intelligence service and elite military units have enlisted with ISIS-K. The defectors, while not yet a large group, could provide ISIS-K with expertise such as intelligence-gathering and warfare techniques that could further weaken the Taliban’s hold on the country. According to Rahmatullah Nabil, the former head of Afghanistan’s spy agency, ISIS-K appeals to former Afghan security and defense forces who see no other viable option of resisting the Taliban. Only a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of former Afghan republic intelligence officers, soldiers, and police personnel returned to work under Taliban supervision, but the vast majority fear retribution for their previous work in resisting the Taliban. ISIS-K allegedly provides not only security against the Taliban, but also offers significant amounts of cash to new members. (Source: [Wall Street Journal](#))

Further threatening the Taliban’s hold on Afghanistan, on November 1, 2021, U.S. officials confirmed that a newly formed anti-Taliban group has “received authorization to officially open” in America. The anti-Taliban National Resistance Front (NRF) seeks to resist the Taliban’s rule in Afghanistan and has ambitions to expand its activities throughout the globe. The NRF—which is formed of U.S.-trained Afghan security forces and is led by Ahmad Massoud—has reportedly set up bases in mountainous parts of Panjshir Valley, a predominantly ethnic Tajik province. Massoud’s father, Ahmad Shah Massoud, was the former Northern Alliance leader who resisted Taliban rule in the 1990s. (Source: [Voice of America](#))

According to the United Nations, ISIS carried out 60 attacks in Afghanistan in 2020. On November 17, 2021, U.N. Special Representative Deborah Lyons told the U.N. Security Council ISIS-K had to date carried out 334 attacks in Afghanistan that year while establishing a presence in every Afghan province. According to Lyons, the Taliban have been unable to stop ISIS-K’s growth. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#))

As of November 2021, ISIS reportedly had between 2,000 and 3,500 fighters in Afghanistan. The Taliban have pledged to defeat ISIS, which has continued to carry out attacks across Afghanistan and threaten the Taliban’s security hold over the country. Since seizing power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban have increased offensive military strikes against ISIS-K targets around Afghanistan. (Sources: [Agence France-Presse](#), [Washington Post](#))

Haqqani Network

The [Haqqani network](#) is a militant Islamist group operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is affiliated with the Afghan Taliban but operates independently from the organization and has a more diffuse command structure. It originated in the late 1970s but rose to prominence in the resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. After the 1989 Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, [Jalaluddin Haqqani](#) formed an alliance with the Taliban and supported the growth of al-Qaeda. When the Taliban violently assumed de facto control of Afghanistan in 1996, the group appointed Haqqani as minister of tribal affairs. Ever since, the Haqqani network has been subsumed under the larger Taliban, although the Haqqanis preserve distinct command and control. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Asia Times Online](#), [Institute for the Study of War](#))

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The Haqqani network seeks to establish an Islamic state in Pakistan and Afghanistan and build a caliphate under Islamic law. Like the Taliban, the Haqqani network endorses an austere and radical interpretation of sharia (Islamic law), positing that Muslims must aspire to live in accordance with the actions of the Salaf, the first generation of Muslim leaders after the Prophet Muhammad. (Source: [Economist](#))

Since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001, the Haqqani network has been a lethal and sophisticated arm of the Afghan insurgency against the Western-backed government in Kabul. Although it has cooperated with and even praised al-Qaeda, the Haqqani network focus is regional, not global like al-Qaeda's. Indeed, according to declassified U.S. intelligence, the Haqqanis enjoyed close ties with the United States from the time of anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s until September 11, 2001. (Sources: [Christian Science Monitor](#), [Economist](#))

Haqqani fighters first acquired battlefield experience during the Soviet occupation in the 1980s. Members later honed their combat capabilities through cooperation with al-Qaeda and the Taliban, especially after 2001. For a period, the Haqqani network was regarded by both the U.S. and Afghan governments as the most dangerous outfit operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. By 2011, Haqqani operations accounted for 10 percent of attacks on coalition forces and about 15 percent of casualties. Since 2011, the group has sustained heavy casualties from the Pakistani military as well as from U.S. drone strikes, but it remains a formidable fighting force in the region. (Sources: [Foreign Policy](#), [Heritage Foundation](#))

In September 2011, senior U.S. military officer Mike Mullen told a Senate panel that the Haqqani network "acts as a veritable arms of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI)." According to Mullen, Haqqani militants had ISI support for an attack on the U.S. embassy and NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul earlier that month. Pakistan, however, denied that it works with militant groups. (Source: [BBC News](#))

Hezb-i-Islami

Hezb-i-Islami is reportedly the second largest insurgent faction in Afghanistan after the Taliban. It was created in the late 1970s by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to fight against the Soviets. After the withdrawal of Soviet forces, Hekmatyar gained a reputation for firing hundreds of rockets at civilian targets during Afghanistan's civil war as Islamist groups fought for control of the country. Hekmatyar's attacks killed thousands of civilians, earning him the nickname "the Butcher of Kabul." (Sources: [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Voice of America](#))

Following the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban government, Hezb-i-Islami split into a political wing that worked with the government, and a militant wing led by Hekmatyar. The militant faction launched numerous attacks against coalition forces. For example, a May 2013 Hezb-i-Islami suicide bombing in Kabul killed 16 people, including six U.S. military advisers. A spokesman for the group said that Hezb-i-Islami decided to increase its attacks after it realized "that American invaders have the devil intention of staying in Afghanistan." Kabul University political scientist Tahir Hashimi told the *New York Times* that the group's main goal "was to make sure that whichever side wins the war, Hezb-i-Islami would be part of it." (Sources: [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Voice of America](#), [New York Times](#))

Hezb-i-Islami signed a draft treaty with the Afghan government on September 22, 2016. The final agreement grants Hekmatyar amnesty and stipulates that the Afghan government will lobby international actors to lift sanctions on the group. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Voice of America](#))

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization based primarily in Uzbekistan and northern Afghanistan. The group's leadership largely operates in northern Afghanistan near Uzbekistan as well as along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. According to the U.S. State Department, the IMU has ties to al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and the Pakistani Taliban. When the IMU emerged in 1998, it sought to overthrow Uzbekistan's communist President Islam Karimov. Following a violent crackdown by Karimov, the IMU expanded into Afghanistan in 1999 and reportedly shifted its focus from central Asia to an "international jihadism," according to a regional expert cited by the *Wall Street Journal*. The Taliban government granted the IMU safe haven in Afghanistan in exchange for foreign fighters, according to the Institute for the Study of War. The IMU fought alongside the Taliban after the 2001 U.S. invasion. Following heavy losses to coalition forces, the IMU reorganized in Pakistan. The IMU also clashed with local tribesmen, resulting in IMU fighters moving to Afghanistan. In 2009, NATO reported an increase in IMU foreign fighters in Afghanistan. IMU leaders "have integrated themselves into the Taliban's shadow government in Afghanistan's northern provinces," according to the U.S. State Department. The group has also carried out attacks on international forces in Afghanistan, such as an October 15, 2011, suicide attack on a U.S.-led Provincial Reconstruction Team, killing two Afghan civilians. In April 2015, the IMU released a video reportedly of the beheading of an Afghan soldier. The IMU threatened in the video to also behead members of Afghanistan's Shiite Hazara minority. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Institute for the Study of War](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

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[IMU leaders] have integrated themselves into the Taliban’s shadow government in Afghanistan’s northern provinces. U.S. State Department

In early August 2015, the IMU released a statement declaring that the Taliban cannot be trusted because they concealed the death of their leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar. The IMU also accused the Taliban of collaborating with Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence. A few days later, the group pledged allegiance to ISIS and declared itself part of its caliphate. According to IMU leader Usmon Ghazi, the IMU is no longer “just a movement, we are a state.” He further said that IMU fighters should be considered ISIS fighters from Khorasan, referring to ISIS’s branch in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In June 2016, an IMU breakaway faction—continuing to call itself the IMU—disavowed ISIS and reasserted its loyalty to the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other jihadist groups in the region. According to the statement, the IMU fractured after the 2015 declaration of loyalty to ISIS. The pro-Taliban IMU faction pledged to “continue its Islamic activities with the grace of Allah against the enemies of religion and stand shoulder to shoulder with [believers] and Muslim brothers of Afghanistan.” (Sources: [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [Long War Journal](#))

Foreign Fighters

Since the 1980s, Afghanistan has been a destination for foreign fighters. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have set up training camps for foreign fighters to fight either against the Soviet occupation or the U.S. coalition. These fighters reportedly sometimes go on to other conflicts. According to the Soufan Group, some 50 Afghans were fighting in Syria as of January 2015. (Sources: [The Soufan Group](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Washington Post](#))

Since the 2001 fall of the Taliban government, foreign fighters have continued to arrive in Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taliban and other militant groups. According to Afghan officials, foreign fighters are entering Afghanistan from Pakistan, Chechnya, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Gul Muhammad Bedar, the deputy governor of Afghanistan’s Badakhshan province, told Al Jazeera that 400 foreign fighters and their families have joined some 100 Afghan Taliban fighters, and they are “spreading rapidly.” In April 2015, media reported that hundreds of Pakistani jihadists were fleeing into Afghanistan to escape a government crackdown. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Washington Post](#))

Major Extremist and Terrorist Incidents

Extremist groups operating in Afghanistan employ tactics such as suicide bombings, kidnappings, beheadings, and targeted assassinations. These attacks target the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces as well as civilians, government infrastructure, and foreigners. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

A February 2021 report by the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) noted a “sharp rise” in civilian casualties in Afghanistan since peace negotiations began in September 2020. The report recorded 8,820 civilian casualties (3,035 deaths and 5,785 injuries) in 2020, about 15 percent less than in 2019. The report credited the decrease to a decline in suicide attacks and fewer casualties from international military forces. Nevertheless, the United Nations noted a “worrying rise” in targeted killings of approximately 45 percent from 2019. The report blamed “anti-Government elements” for about 62 percent of Afghanistan’s civilian casualties in 2020, while pro-Government forces were responsible for about 25 percent casualties. The report attributed the remaining 13 percent of casualties to crossfire and other incidents. On March 12, 2021, the U.N. Security Council condemned an “alarming” increase in attacks on civilians in Afghanistan since September 2020. (Sources: [United Nations](#), [United Nations](#))

Between January and March 2018, the United Nations recorded 2,258 civilian casualties in Afghanistan, a near record level, according to the organization. Casualties included 763 deaths and 1,495 injuries. The report by the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan showed suicide bombings and gun attacks had doubled over the same period in 2017. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

In November 2018, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani announced that 28,529 Afghan soldiers had been killed since 2015, representing an average of 25 per day. According to Ghani, 58 Americans were killed during the same period. In July 2018, UNAMA reported that 1,692 civilians were killed in Afghanistan between January 1 and June 30, 2018. UNAMA found that anti-government forces were responsible for 67 percent (1,127 deaths and 2,286 injuries) of the casualties. The organization attributed 42 percent of the casualties to the Taliban, 18 percent to ISIS, and 7 percent to unidentified attackers. According to UNAMA, suicide and other complex attacks were responsible for 1,413 casualties (28 percent), marking a 22 percent increase from the same period in 2017. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

According to UNAMA’s 2017 Annual Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Afghanistan, 3,438 Afghan civilians were killed and 7,015 were wounded in 2017. The 10,453 casualties represent a 9 percent decrease from 2016. The investigation attributed 42 percent of the casualties to the Taliban, 10 percent to ISIS, and 13 percent to other militants and anti-government forces. The remaining casualties were attributed

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to Afghan security forces (16 percent), international military forces (2 percent), other pro-government armed groups (1 percent), and crossfire between government and anti-government forces (11 percent). Suicide bombings and improvised explosive devices were the largest cause of casualties in 2017. (Sources: [U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#), [U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#))

On July 26, 2021, UNAMA reported that more women and children were killed and wounded in the first half of 2021 than in the same period of any year since 2009. According to the report, there have been 5,183 civilian casualties—of which 1,659 were deaths—since January 2021. (Sources: [UNAMA](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

Taliban Takeover in the 1990s

By 1994, the mujahideen had “carved [Kandahar, Afghanistan] and neighboring districts into criminal fiefs,” according to journalist Steve Coll. The Taliban emerged as a singular, armed force in Kandahar, Afghanistan, with Mullah [Mohammed Omar](#) as their leader. The group soon absorbed over 15,000 students and clerics from western Pakistan and began implementing sharia. By the end of 1994, the Taliban had complete control over Kandahar and Helmand province, the center of opium cultivation. (Sources: [New Yorker](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

Taliban forces began a bloody offensive in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of most NATO troops in December 2014.

In September 1996, Taliban fighters captured Kabul, driving out the controlling mujahideen forces. The Taliban implemented a hardline version of sharia based on Hanafi Islamic jurisprudence, implementing Islamic punishments such as public executions, amputations, and stoning. In August 1998, Taliban forces captured the city of Mazar in northwest Afghanistan, slaughtering 5,000 to 6,000 people. Human Rights Watch noted that during the seizure of the city, Taliban troops shot at “anything that [moves],” specially targeting members of the Persian-speaking Shiite Hazara ethnic community. Among the dead were 10 Iranian diplomats and a journalist. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [The Looming Tower](#), Lawrence Wright, p. 261, [Human Rights Watch](#))

Taliban Insurgency

The U.S.-led coalition had deposed the Taliban by December 2001, and the terror group’s leadership fled to neighboring Pakistan. Between late 2001 and early 2002, the coalition reportedly killed, wounded, or captured an estimated 30,000 Taliban fighters. The remaining fighters fled to Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) or reintegrated into Afghan society. Taliban fighters in the FATA eventually form [Tahrik-e Taliban](#), the Pakistani Taliban, in 2007. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [RAND Corporation](#))

Taliban fighters in Afghanistan began to reorganize in May 2003. A renewed Taliban insurgency emerged in April 2006 with an uptick in suicide bombings and the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Afghan, Canadian, and British troops responded in May and June 2006 with Operation Mountain Thrust, which sought to degrade the Taliban in southern and eastern Afghanistan and resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 Taliban fighters. The Taliban committed numerous suicide bombings and attacks on Afghan and U.S. forces. For example, on February 27, 2007, a Taliban suicide bomber blew up a checkpoint at Bagram Air Base during a visit by U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, killing 20 and injuring 20 more. In February 2008, a Taliban suicide bomber killed more than 80 and injured 50 at a dogfight near Kandahar. At the time, the attack was the deadliest in Afghanistan since 2001. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [RAND Corporation](#), [CNN](#), [New Yorker](#), [USA Today](#), [BBC News](#), [Der Spiegel](#), [Washington Post](#))

In September 2011, Taliban suicide bombers attacked the home of former Afghanistan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, killing him and four other members of Afghanistan’s High Peace Council. On September 13, 2011, Taliban gunmen attacked the U.S. embassy and NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul, killing three police officers and one civilian. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told CNN that the Taliban are targeting “the U.S. Embassy, governmental organizations and other foreign organizations.” U.S. and Afghan officials later said the Haqqani network was most likely behind the attack with support from Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Agency. (Sources: [Telegraph](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#))

Taliban forces began a bloody offensive in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of most NATO troops in December 2014. On September 28, 2015, the Taliban took control of the northern Afghan city of Kunduz. It was the first major city to fall into Taliban hands since the group was forcibly deposed in 2001. The Taliban then battled Afghan and U.S. forces for control of Afghan territory. By March 2017, Taliban forces reportedly controlled up to 43 percent of Afghanistan. The Taliban’s influence continued to increase, and an October 2018 report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) found that the Taliban controlled more territory in Afghanistan than it had at any point since 2001.

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SIGAR reported that the Afghan government controlled or influenced only 55.5 percent of Afghanistan, the lowest level reported since 2015, when the government controlled 72 percent. Further documenting the Taliban's increased influence, an October 2018 study by the Long War Journal estimated that 9 percent of Afghanistan's population lived in areas controlled by the Taliban, while 41 percent lived in areas contested by the Taliban. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Long War Journal](#), [CNN](#), [SIGAR](#))

The Taliban also targeted Afghan media, announcing in October 2015 said that the group would begin targeting Afghanistan's two largest television networks in response to media reports on violent Taliban activities, which the Taliban called a "clear, shameless example of propaganda by these satanic networks." According to the statement, the Taliban would treat the networks "as military objectives because of their disrespectful and hostile actions toward the Afghan mujahid nation." In January 2016, a Taliban suicide bomber drove into a minibus carrying employees of Tolo TV, Afghanistan's largest television network. The attack during rush hour killed seven and wounded at least 25. A Taliban spokesman promised more attacks unless Tolo TV apologized for its "malicious acts" to the Taliban, to the Afghan people, "and especially to the residents of Kunduz." (Source: [New York Times](#))

Both ISIS and the Taliban shared the goal of upending the internationally recognized Afghan government. In 2018, militants launched several attacks on campaign rallies and voter registration drives ahead of the country's parliamentary elections that October. The Taliban denounced the elections as an "American-led process" that legitimizes foreign occupation and warned people to stay away from schools used as voting centers. Security forces recorded 120 hand grenade or improvised explosives attacks in the days prior to the October 20, 2018, parliamentary elections. Nonetheless, more than 4 million Afghans voted in the elections. The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan recorded at least 56 people killed and 370 wounded during the October voting period. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#), [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#), [CNN](#), [UNAMA](#))

Capture of Bowe Bergdahl

On June 30, 2009, the Taliban took U.S. soldier Private Bowe Bergdahl hostage. Days after his capture, a senior U.S. military official said that Bergdahl was captured by low-level insurgents and then purportedly "sold" to members of the Taliban-aligned Haqqani network. On July 18, 2009, the Taliban released a 28-minute video on the Internet in which Bergdahl said he was scared and wished to return home. The Taliban alleged that Bergdahl was drunk and off base at the time of his capture, but U.S. officials refuted that claim, stating, "The Taliban are known for lying and what they are claiming (is) not true." Bergdahl is promoted to sergeant while held in captivity. (Sources: [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [Guardian](#))

On May 31, 2014, the United States exchanged Bergdahl for five Taliban militants held at Guantanamo Bay. The United States transferred the detainees to Qatar, where they would receive a one-year travel ban. On October 16, 2017, Bergdahl pled guilty to desertion and misbehavior in front of the enemy. On November 4, 2017, Bergdahl was dishonorably discharged but avoided a prison sentence. A military court reduced his rank to private and fined him \$1,000. (Sources: [Hill](#), [New York Times](#), [Fox News](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#))

- **July 28, 2023:** Following the Taliban-mandated nationwide closure of beauty salons, dozens of Afghan women demonstrate against the ban. According to the Taliban, not only does Islam forbid the services of salons, but those services also present financial obstacles for grooms and their families during wedding festivities. In response to the protests, security forces used fire hoses, stun guns and shot their guns into the air. No casualties are reported. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **June 8, 2023:** ISIS-K militants detonate an explosive at a mosque in Badakhshan, northern Afghanistan. The explosion kills 11 and wounds 30 others. The explosion occurred during a funeral for one of the Taliban's provincial governors. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **June 6, 2023:** Taliban security forces launch an intelligence-led operation, targeting Shahab al-Muhajir, the emir of ISIS-K, in Kunar. Al-Muhajir, along with six other militants, is killed in an ensuing raid. Al-Mujahir led ISIS-K since June 2020. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **May 23, 2023:** According to a report released by the United Nations Security Council, the relationship between the Taliban and TTP remains "strong and symbiotic." Accordingly, the report further mentions that although the Taliban has attempted to reduce the influence of ISIS-K, the Taliban has not delivered on the counterterrorism provisions mandated by the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement. The report claims that terrorist groups maintain safe haven in Afghanistan as there is evidence that al-Qaeda is rebuilding operational capability, and the TTP continue to launch attacks into Pakistan. Source: [United Nations Security Council](#)
- **May 17, 2023:** Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid announces that Abdul Kabir Mohammad Jan (a.k.a. Abdul Kabir), the U.N. designated and current deputy prime minister for political affairs, will temporarily fulfill the duties of prime minister of the Taliban government. The incumbent, Mohammad Hasan Akhund is reportedly unwell and is undergoing treatment. In 2001, Kabir served as the acting prime minister for the Taliban government right before the collapse of the group's first reign. During his tenure with the Taliban, Kabir has plotted deadly bombings, facilitated drug trafficking, and even took part in the peace negotiations between the U.S. and the Taliban in 2020. Source: [Voice of America](#)

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- **May 7, 2023:** Taliban and Chinese delegates meet in Islamabad, Pakistan for the 5th China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue to encourage multilateral cooperation in regional security, trade, transit, and counterterrorism activity. The Taliban subsequently sign an agreement claiming they will not allow foreign terrorist groups to use Afghan soil to launch attacks against foreign countries. Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Long War Journal](#)
- **April 25, 2023:** Media sources report that in the past few weeks, Taliban fighters in Afghanistan killed the militant responsible for carrying out the August 2021 suicide bombing at Kabul airport. The assailant, a senior ISIS-K operative, remains unnamed. Further details of the operations, including where and when the event took place, also remain classified. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **March 27, 2023:** An assailant detonates a bomb near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul, Afghanistan. The blast kills six and injures at least 12. Guards were able to identify and kill the assailant before he reached the ministry. ISIS-K is suspected of being responsible for the attack. Source: [CBS News](#)
- **March 11, 2023:** ISIS-K detonates a bomb at a cultural center in Balkh Province, northern Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least one and injures eight others. Source: [Radio Free Europe](#)
- **March 9, 2023:** An ISIS-K suicide bomber sneaks his way into the office of Mohammad Dawood Muzammil, the governor of Balkh Province, Afghanistan. The assailant detonates a bomb, killing the governor and another. Two other people are wounded in the explosion. Muzammil was a vocal critic of ISIS. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **February 27, 2023:** Taliban security forces launch a raid in Kabul, killing two senior members of ISIS. Among the two killed was Qari Fateh, the regional ISIS intelligence and operations chief. Source: [Radio Free Europe](#)
- Taliban security forces launch an operation in Kabul, killing three ISIS members. Among the members killed was senior leader, Ijaz Amin Ahingar. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **January 28, 2023:** Taj Mir Jawad, the deputy minister of intelligence in the Taliban's government and a leader within the Haqqani Network, admits on live television that he directed the January 28, 2018, suicide attack in Kabul that killed more than 100. Source: [Long War Journal](#)
- **January 11, 2023:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive at the main entrance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul, reportedly targeting the Taliban. The explosion kills 20 and injures an unidentified number of others. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **January 1, 2023:** A bomb explodes near a checkpoint at Kabul's military airport, killing and wounding "several" people, according to Afghanistan's Taliban government. The Taliban-run Interior Ministry does not further clarify the casualties. ISIS claims responsibility on January 3 and identifies the attacker as Abdul Jabbar, who also participated in a December 12, 2022, attack on a Kabul hotel. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **December 26, 2022:** A car bomb near the regional police headquarters in Faizabad in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province kills at least three, including regional security chief Abdulhaq Abu Omar. ISIS claims responsibility. In a statement released through its Amaq news agency, ISIS claims it had closely followed Abu Omar prior to the attack. Abu Omar is reportedly the highest-ranking Taliban security official killed since the Taliban seized power in August 2021. Source: [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)
- **December 20, 2022:** The Taliban releases two Americans who had been detained in Afghanistan. One of the Americans was reportedly Ivor Shearer, a filmmaker who had been detained since August. According to Ned Price, the U.S. State Department spokesman, the release was not part of a prisoner exchange and was instead carried out by the Taliban as a "good-will gesture." Source: [New York Times](#)
- **December 12, 2022:** ISIS-K gunmen attack the Longan Hotel in Kabul's Shahr-e-Naw neighborhood, killing at least three and wounding at least 18 others. The hotel is popular with Chinese nationals in Kabul. Multiple blasts reportedly accompanied the gunfire. According to the Taliban, only two foreigners were injured in the attack but at least five Chinese nationals are wounded, according to other sources. The attackers reportedly booked a room in the hotel and smuggled in explosives ahead of the attack. ISIS-K claims responsibility and claims it had killed or wounded 30 security force members and Chinese citizens. It is the first ISIS attack on Chinese interests in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power in August 2021. After the attack, China calls on its citizens to leave Afghanistan. Sources: [CBS News](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **December 11, 2022:** The Taliban open fire at a border crossing with Pakistan. The gunfire kills six civilians and injures more than a dozen others in what the Pakistani military calls "unprovoked and indiscriminate fire." The clash reportedly occurred after Afghan forces tried to cut part of the fence on the border between the two countries. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **December 6, 2022:** A roadside bomb detonates, striking a bus carrying petroleum company employees in Balkh province, northern Afghanistan. The explosion kills seven and injures six others. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **December 2, 2022:** ISIS militants open fire on Pakistan's embassy in Kabul. The attack wounds a security guard. Pakistan's Foreign Office claims the attack had been aimed at the head of mission, Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizamani. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **November 30, 2022:** An explosive detonates at the Al Jihad Madrassa in Aybak, Samangan province. The explosion kills 10 and wounds a number of others. The madrassa was a religious school for boys set up by local Taliban officials. Although no group claims responsibility for the bombing, ISIS-K has carried out similar attacks in recent months. Source: [Washington Post](#)

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- **November 25, 2022:** Taliban forces reportedly attack Siwak Shibar village and kill nine people, including three children. The province is home to many ethnic Hazara—a minority group in Afghanistan that has historically been persecuted by the Taliban—leading media sources and international organizations to suspect the Taliban were targeting the Hazara in the attack. Source: [Gandhara](#)
- **October 5, 2022:** A suspected ISIS suicide bomber detonates an explosive at the Interior Ministry in Kabul. The explosion kills at least four and injures 25 others. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **September 30, 2022 - October 2, 2022:** On September 30, a suspected ISIS-K suicide bomber detonates an explosive at a Kabul, Afghanistan, tutoring center. The assailant reportedly targeted the center as it was in a neighborhood with a significant population of Hazara. The explosion kills 53, of which most were ethnic Hazaras. On October 2, dozens of Hazara women take to the Kabul streets to demonstrate against the bombing. Upon the start of the protests, the Taliban open fire and use physical violence on the protestors to halt the protests. Source: [Guardian](#)
- **September 19, 2022:** The Taliban free American engineer Mark Frerichs in exchange for Bashir Noorzai, a Taliban-linked Afghan tribal leader who had been detained by the United States since 2005. Frerichs was abducted in 2020 while working in Afghanistan. Noorzai was sentenced to life in prison in the U.S. on charges of smuggling more than \$50 million worth of heroin into the United States and Europe. U.S. President Joe Biden granted clemency to Noorzai following pressure from families of Americans detained by hostile governments. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **September 5, 2022:** A suicide bomber targets the Russian embassy in Kabul. The explosion kills two employees and four Afghan civilians and also injures 10 others. The blast is the first attack on a diplomatic mission in the country since the Taliban seized power in August 2021. ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 2, 2022:** An explosive detonates outside a Sunni mosque in Herat, western Afghanistan. The blast kills 18 and injures at least 23 others, including Mujib Rahman Ansari, a high-profile pro-Taliban cleric. No group claims responsibility for the attack. While ISIS-K regularly carries out mosque bombings, their attacks generally target Shiite communities. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **July 29, 2022:** A grenade kills two and wounds 13 at a cricket match at the Kabul International Cricket Stadium. The match pauses for clean-up and then resumes. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)
- **June 26, 2022:** Taliban fighters carry out a night raid on a family home in Ghor province. The raid, which is allegedly launched in the search of a former security official, leads to the death of six Hazara people. The attack is reportedly a wider pattern of unlawful targeted killings of who the Taliban consider enemies—particularly minority groups and those associated with the former Afghan government. Source: [Amnesty International](#)
- **June 18, 2022:** Seven gunmen attack a Sikh temple in Kabul, killing at least two and wounding seven. The gunmen detonate a car bomb outside the temple before throwing grenades at security guards at the entrance and storming inside. There are no casualties reported from the car bomb. All seven gunmen are killed in an ensuing standoff with security forces. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack, calling it “an act of support for the Messenger of Allah.” Sources: [CNN](#), [France 24](#)
- **May 25, 2022:** ISIS-K militants detonate three bombs in Mazar-i-Sharif, northern Afghanistan. The bombs, which were attached to minibuses in different parts of the city, kills 10 people and injures 15 others. That same day, a bomb detonated inside a mosque in Kabul. The explosion killed between two and five people and injured between 10 and 22 others. No group immediately claims responsibility for the mosque attack which targeted the country’s minority Shiite Muslims. Sources: [Defense Post](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **May 13, 2022:** A bomb detonates at a mosque in Kabul. The explosion injures three. Source: [La Prensa](#)
- **April 29, 2022:** A bomb detonates at the Khalifa Sahib Mosque in Kabul. The explosion kills more than 50 and wounded around 78 others. No group immediately claims responsibility for the attack, but ISIS-K has carried out similar attacks in the area. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **April 22, 2022:** An explosion occurs at the Khanaqa-e-Malwai Sikandar mosque in Kunduz. The blast kills more than 30 and wounds dozens of others. No group immediately claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 21, 2022:** ISIS-K militants carry out a series of bombings that target Afghanistan’s minority Shiite Muslims. The deadliest of three bombings occurs at a Shiite mosque in northern Mazar-i-Sharif. The explosion kills 12 and injures as many as 40 others. In Kabul, a roadside bomb explodes near a boy’s school, injuring two. A third bomb detonates in Kunduz, and 11 mechanics working for the Taliban are injured. On April 22, ISIS-K released a statement claiming the explosive device that devastated Mazar-i-Sharif’s Sai Doken mosque was hidden in a bag left inside among scores of worshippers. As they knelt in prayer, it exploded. On April 22, the Taliban arrest Abdul Hamid Sangaryar, a key operative of ISIS-K who reportedly played a key role in planning the attacks. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [The National](#)
- **January 22, 2022:** An explosive attached to a minivan detonates in Herat, western Afghanistan. The explosion kills at least seven and wounds nine others. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack the next day. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **December 10, 2021:** A bomb explodes on a minibus in Kabul’s largely Shiite district of Dasht-e-Barchi, killing two. A second explosion in the area wounds one. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **December 1, 2021:** Border clashes erupt between Taliban and Iranian forces. There are no casualties reported. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid issues a statement that “a misunderstanding at the local level” caused the conflict near the Afghan border province of Nimruz, but the situation is under control and the Taliban issued “necessary instructions” to prevent another misunderstanding. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **November 17, 2021:** A car bomb in Kabul’s Dasht-e Barchi neighborhood kills at least one and wounds six.

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- A second explosion is reported later in Kabul's Karte 3 area. ISIS claims responsibility for both explosions. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **November 15, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to a vehicle explodes in the Kota-e Sangi district of Kabul, wounding at least two people. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but the bombing is similar an ISIS-claimed bombing two days earlier. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
 - **November 15, 2021:** An explosion is set off in western Kabul. There are no casualties reported. The Taliban launch an offensive against suspected ISIS hideouts in Afghanistan. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
 - **November 13, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to a minibus in the Kabul suburb of Dasht-e Barchi kills at least one and wounds at least four. The neighborhood is largely populated by the Hazara minority. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)
 - **November 12, 2021:** A bomb explodes during Friday prayers at a Sunni mosque in Trali in Afghanistan's Nangahar province, wounding at least 15. ISIS is suspected. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **November 3, 2021:** A child unknowingly brings an unexploded mortar home in Kunduz where the device detonates, killing nine members of a single family. Source: [National](#)
 - **November 2, 2021:** Gunmen and at least one suicide bomber attack a Kabul military hospital, killing at least 25 and wounding more than a dozen. An explosives-filled car outside the hospital also explodes. The attack targets the 400-bed Sardar Daud Khan hospital, which treats both soldiers for the former government and Taliban fighters. Gunmen reportedly enter a ward filled with wounded Taliban fighters and shoot them in their beds. ISIS-K claims responsibility. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **October 29, 2021:** Gunmen claiming to be Taliban enforcers open fire at a wedding reception in Nangarhar province after demanding guests stop playing music. The gunmen kill three and wound 10 others. Following the attack, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denies the men were associated with the Islamist movement, and that two of the assailants have been arrested, while the other escaped. Mujahid declares two of the gunmen have been arrested while the third is being pursued. He promises they will be dealt with according to sharia. Source: [Daily Mail](#)
 - **October 15, 2021:** A group of suicide bombers detonate explosives at the Imam Barga mosque in Kandahar during Friday prayers. The explosion, which targeted Kandahar's largest Shiite mosque, kills 47 and wounds another 68. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the attack. Sources: [NPR](#), [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **October 8, 2021:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive at the Shiite Sayed Abad mosque in Kunduz, northern Afghanistan. At least 43 people are killed and more than 140 are injured. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the attack. In a statement claiming responsibility for the attack, ISIS-K reported that the attacker belonged to the Uighur community—an ethnic minority group that has been regularly oppressed by the Chinese government. Chinese officials have previously raised concerns that Afghanistan could potentially become a safe haven for Uighur militants seeking to attack Chinese government interests due to the systemic oppression of the Uighurs in western China. Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **October 5, 2021:** A former employee of the British embassy in Kabul is badly beaten at his home by unidentified assailants. The victim does not issue a police report as he suspects the assailants were affiliated with the Taliban. Source: [Guardian](#)
 - **October 3, 2021:** A bomb detonates outside of the Eidgah mosque in Kabul. The blast targets a funeral service that was held for the mother of Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid. At least five people are killed in the attack. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the blast, stating in a Telegram post that one of their fighters managed to evade security forces at the funeral and detonate his explosive belt. That evening, Taliban government forces launch an operation north of Kabul to target and neutralize an ISIS-K cell. According to media reports, Taliban government forces clash with ISIS-K fighters for three hours before an explosives-packed car explodes and kills all the ISIS-K fighters in a building they were hiding in. Sources: [CNN](#), [CBS](#), [Reuters](#)
 - **September 22, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen ambush a security checkpoint in Ghawchak district, Jalalabad. The attack kills three, including two members of the Taliban. Source: [Hindustan Times](#)
 - **September 18, 2021 - September 19, 2021:** A series of explosive devices detonate around the city of Jalalabad over two days. According to on-the-ground sources, the explosions kill at least three people and injure about 20 others. Of a total of six explosions during the weekend, one attack targeted a Taliban vehicle that killed one child and injured two others, including a Taliban member. ISIS-K claims responsibility for the explosions, claiming that more than 35 Taliban members were killed or wounded. The attacks targeted Taliban members as ISIS-K opposes the Taliban as they consider the government to not be extreme enough. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Washington Post](#)
 - **September 7, 2021 - September 8, 2021:** Afghan women continue their protests in the streets of Kabul, with Taliban leaders using violence to disperse protestors. The Taliban also detains and beats several Afghan journalists who were covering the protests. Sirajuddin Haqqani, the minister of the interior of the Taliban's government, later states that protests would be illegal unless their slogans, venue and timing are approved in advance by authorities. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
 - **September 4, 2021:** Afghan women take to the streets of Kabul to demand equal rights and the ability to participate in government. The protestors are confronted by Taliban guards who allegedly hit women with electric tasers, rifle butts, metal clubs, and tools. The Taliban prevents the women from marching onto the presidential palace, claiming they would use tear gas on the protestors. Sources: [New York Times](#), [CNN](#)
 - **August 31, 2021:** Taliban fighters clash with a Taliban opposition group in Panjshir valley, north of Kabul. The clash wounds two members of the National Resistance Forces (NRF), an anti-Taliban group that is loyal to local leader Ahmad Massoud. The NRF kill at least seven Taliban fighters and injure a similar number. The Panjshir is the only province holding out against the Taliban, but

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on September 7, the Taliban claims total control of the Panjshir valley. Massoud did not concede, but announced via Twitter that the resistance would continue in the Panjshir. Sources: [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Al Jazeera](#)

- **August 30, 2021:** A convoy of 300 Taliban fighters enter Khidr district and kill at least 11 former members of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).
The victims all belonged to the Hazara community, an ethnic minority that has been subject to oppression and violence from the Taliban for decades. Although the Taliban denied the killings, Raihana Azad, a former member of parliament for the province, verified the killings. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **August 27, 2021:** After outlawing music and women’s voices on television and radio in Kandahar, the Taliban shoot dead an Afghan folk singer in Andarab, north of Kabul.
The singer, Fawad Andarabi, was killed after music was called “un-Islamic” by Taliban leaders. Sources: [The Times](#), [The Times](#)
- **August 26, 2021:** A suicide bomber—who possessed 20 pounds of explosives packed with ball bearings—detonates himself outside of Kabul International Airport, near Abbey Gate.
According to media reports, as many as 170 people and 13 U.S. service members were killed, with an additional 200 wounded. That evening, ISIS-K issues an official statement in which the group claims responsibility for the attack. Sources: [Telegraph](#), [NBC News](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [U.S. News](#)
- **August 23, 2021:** An unidentified assailant opens fire on Afghan security forces at Kabul airport.
The attack kills one soldier and wounds several others. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **August 19, 2021:** Anti-Taliban protests spread to Kabul, where Afghan protesters wave their national flag in demonstrations across the city.
The Taliban quickly move to suppress dissent. Another protest in Nangarhar province results in the injury of one person. In Khost province, the Taliban impose a 24-hour curfew after breaking up another protest. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **August 18, 2021:** Anti-Taliban protests erupt in Jalalabad, to which Taliban militants open fire on participants.
The shooting occurs after local residents attempt to install Afghanistan’s national flag at a square in Jalalabad. Three people are killed and more than a dozen are injured in the standoff. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **August 18, 2021:** The Taliban release around 5,000 prisoners from Badam Bagh and Pul-e-Charkhi jails in Kabul.
Among the released were Taliban and al-Qaeda members. Source: [OpIndia](#)
- **August 15, 2021 - August 16, 2021:** On August 15, Ghani flees Afghanistan and thousands of Afghans pour into Kabul’s airport as Taliban fighters enter the city.
By the morning of August 16, the American flag is lowered and removed from the U.S. Embassy and all U.S. citizens and personnel are transferred to Kabul’s airport for evacuation. The Taliban lay siege to the presidential palace and take complete control of Kabul by August 16, after which the Taliban declare the war in Afghanistan has ended. Taliban political office spokesman Mohammad Naeem says the insurgents will soon reveal the country’s new government. He claims the Taliban do not want to live in isolation and want to have peaceful international relations. The Taliban also claim they will respect women’s rights and protect foreigners and Afghans. The United States, Britain, France, Japan, and more than 55 other Western countries issue a joint statement calling for all Afghans and international citizens in Afghanistan who want to leave to be allowed to depart. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **August 13, 2021:** The Taliban capture Kandahar and Herat, Afghanistan’s second- and third-largest cities respectively.
In Herat, the Taliban capture famed local militia commander Ismail Khan. The Taliban agree not to harm any government officials who surrender. The current and former governors of Herat, the National Directorate of Security chief, the deputy interior minister, and an Afghan Army Corps commander join the Taliban after they capture Herat. The Taliban also capture Lashkar Gah, capital of Helmand province, and Qalat, capital of Zabol province. Officials of Tirin Kot, capital of Uruzgan province, surrender to the Taliban. The Taliban also capture Feroz Koh, capital of Ghor province in western Afghanistan, and Pul-e-Alam, the provincial capital of Logar Province, which is located south of Kabul. As of August 13, the Taliban control 17 of Afghanistan’s 34 provincial capitals and more than two-thirds of the country. Only three major Afghan cities—Kabul, Jalalabad, and Mazar-i-Sharif—reportedly remain under government control. U.S. negotiators urge the Taliban not to target the U.S. embassy if a future Taliban government ever wants to receive foreign aid. Sources: [Fox News](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#)
- **August 12, 2021:** The Taliban capture the eponymous capital of Ghazni province, approximately 80 miles southwest of Kabul.
The government continues to hold two military bases outside the city. Government forces continue to fight the Taliban in Lashkar Gah. U.S. officials announce the evacuation of most personnel from its embassy in Kabul and send more than 3,000 military forces to aid in the evacuation. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [NBC News](#), [CBS News](#)
- **August 11, 2021:** The Taliban continue offensives against government forces in Herat, Lashkar Gah, and Kandahar.
A Taliban suicide bomber destroys Lashkar Gah’s police headquarters. The Taliban capture the headquarters of the Afghan National Army’s 217th Corps at Kunduz airport. The Taliban capture the headquarters of the Afghan National Army’s 217th Corps at Kunduz airport. The Taliban also capture the airport in Farah province. The Taliban issue a statement denying their offensive is harming civilians or uprooting them from their homes. Spurred by Taliban gains, Ghani replaces the Afghan army chief. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#), [Voice of America](#)
- **August 10, 2021:** The Taliban capture Pul-i-Khumri, capital of Baghlan province, after besieging the city for several months.
The Taliban also capture Farah province’s eponymous provincial capital and Badakhshan province’s capital of Faizabad, raising the group’s victories to nine cities within five days. Residents of Farah report little shooting as the Taliban take control. The Taliban surround Mazar-i-Sharif, capital of Balkh province and a major economic center of Afghanistan. The Taliban isolate Mazar-i-Sharif on the ground from Kabul. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 9, 2021:** Taliban fighters capture Aybak, capital of the northern province of Samangan.

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According to reports from residents, the Taliban face little resistance. Afghan government officials and security personnel retreat to the south. The Taliban release hundreds of prisoners from the city's jail. Fighting continues between the Taliban and government forces in Baghlan and Mazar-i-Sharif. Source: [New York Times](#)

- **August 8, 2021:** Taliban forces capture Taliqan, the capital of Takhar province. The Taliban capture Taliqan's police headquarters and the provincial governor's office. Security forces retreat to the nearby Farkhar district, but several are ambushed by the Taliban along the way. In Kunduz province, the Taliban capture Kunduz city. The Taliban also take control of the provincial capital of Sar-i-Pul. Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#)
- **August 7, 2021:** Taliban forces capture Sheberghan, capital of Jowzjan province, after a 24-hour battle. Government forces and officials retreat to the airport on the city's outskirts, where they prepare to defend themselves. The Taliban issue a statement that they have taken control of the city and thus the province. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **August 7, 2021:** An explosion in Kabul kills an Afghan air force pilot. The Taliban claim responsibility. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **August 6, 2021:** The Taliban kill Dawa Khan Minapal, the head of the Afghan government's media and information center, in Kabul. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **August 6, 2021:** Taliban fighters seize control of Zaranj, the capital of Nimruz province, southwestern Afghanistan. It is the first provincial capital seized by the Taliban since the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Originally confined to the country's rural areas, the group's military offensive has shifted toward the country's largest cities, with Zaranj being the first significant seizure. Source: [Washington Post](#)
- **August 3, 2021:** A suicide car bomber and gunmen target the home of acting defense minister Bismillah Khan Mohammadi in Kabul. Although Mohammadi was not at home at the time of the attack, the explosion kills eight and wounds 20 others. The Taliban claim responsibility for the attack, calling it "the beginning of retaliatory operations against the core officials of the Kabul administration." Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Washington Post](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **July 30, 2021:** Militants attack the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) compound in Herat, western Afghanistan. The assailants used rocket-propelled grenades and guns. Although the assailants were unidentified, the attack occurred hours after Taliban fighters penetrated deep into Herat city, clashing with Afghan security forces. No U.N. personnel were hurt in the attack. However, in Kabul, Taliban militants target and assassinate Dawa Kha Menapal, a senior government official who oversaw operations for local and foreign media. Sources: [Guardian](#), [Washington Post](#)
- **July 27, 2021:** The Taliban launch five attacks throughout the country. In Kapisa, Taliban militants ambush a security outpost in Nijrab district, killing four pro-government militia members and two civilians. In Laghman, the Taliban carry out two attacks, one in Alingar district where they kill two soldiers and two police officers, and in Mehtarlam, Taliban militants storm a civilian home killing three and wounding three others. In Baghlan, the Taliban attack a convoy of former parliament members, killing four militia members and wounding six others. In Faryab, the Taliban attack a security outpost in Pashtun Kot, killing one civilian and injuring three security forces. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 19, 2021:** The Taliban kill nine civilians in Ghazni province after they refused to help the militants loot a local market as well as relocate the bodies of dead fighters. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 16, 2021:** Reuters journalist Danish Siddiqui is killed while covering a clash between Afghan security forces and Taliban fighters at the main market area of Spin Boldak, near Pakistan. Along with Siddiqui, a senior Afghan officer is also killed in Taliban crossfire. According to Reuters, the Taliban had seized Spin Boldak, the second-largest crossing on the border with Pakistan, on July 14. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **July 14, 2021:** The Taliban launch two attacks in Malistan and Kandahar. In Malistan, 20 civilians are killed and an additional nine are beheaded by the terror group. In Kandahar, the Taliban clash with Afghan security forces, killing eight and wounding 41 others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 7, 2021:** The Taliban ambush Qala-e-Naw, northwestern Afghanistan. In an effort to overtake the city, the militants release dozens of prisoners from Badghis provincial jail. Qala-e-New is the latest siege in the Taliban's offensive, with the militant group seizing at least 150 of Afghanistan's 400 districts since U.S. and international forces began withdrawing from the country in May. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 2, 2021 - July 4, 2021:** The Taliban reportedly captured 15 districts across Afghanistan. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **June 30, 2021:** The Taliban capture Afghan border crossings with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The Taliban pledge to keep the crossings operational while collecting millions of dollars annually in customs fees. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **June 17, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack the Zinda Jan district in Herat province, killing one and wounding three in several hours of fighting with Afghan forces. The Afghan military eventually repels the attack. At least 20 Taliban fighters are killed and 17 wounded, according to a provincial government statement. Afghan media reports heavy fighting with the Taliban in at least 80 districts across the country in the past 24 hours killed at least 90 members of the Afghan security forces and more than 100 Taliban fighters. Sources: [Xinhua](#), [Tolo News](#)
- **June 16, 2021:** Afghan forces confront Taliban fighters in the Dawlat Abad district of Faryab province. The Taliban previously seized the district a week earlier. At least 24 Afghan commandos and five police officers are killed in the fighting. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 15, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen kill five vaccination workers in one day in a series of coordinated attacks in eastern Afghanistan.

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The Taliban deny responsibility. Sources: [Deutsche Welle](#), [United Nations](#)

- **June 12, 2021:** Magnetic bombs attached to two minivans explode in Kabul, killing at least seven and wounding six altogether. The two attacks take place two kilometers away from each other. The second bombing takes place in front of the Muhammad Ali Jinnah hospital, killing one and wounding four. ISIS claims responsibility for the attacks targeting “disbeliever Shiites.” Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **June 12, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack security outposts in the Ghor province, killing at least 19 and wounding 12. The Taliban claim they inflicted “heavy casualties.” Source: [Anadolu Agency](#)
- **June 10, 2021:** The Taliban detonate a Humvee packed with explosives targeting an army base in Pul-i-Khumri, Baghlan province. The blast kills six and injures 10 others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 8, 2021:** ISIS militants attack a British-American charity in Baghlan province. The attack kills at least 10 and injures 16 others. The charity, HALO Trust, clears land mines in the country. The militants allegedly sought to target the Hazaras, a persecuted Shiite minority. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **June 6, 2021:** The Taliban launches an attack on a complex in Shahrak district, Ghor province. The militant group detonates a car bomb after the attack. The attack and explosion kills nine and injures seven. Taliban militants launch a similar attack on police headquarters in Qaisar district, Faryab province and Balkh district, Balkh province. The attack and car bomb in Qaisar kills 28 security forces, while the attack and explosion kills 19 and injures 69 others in Balkh district. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 4, 2021:** The Taliban launch 10 attacks throughout the country. The attacks kill over 50 people and wound 22 others. The largest attack, on the Farsi district center in Herat province, kills 11 and injures seven. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 3, 2021:** The Taliban attack a military base in Dara-e-Suf Bala. The attack kills seven and injures four. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 1, 2021:** Two bombs explode in two separate areas of a mostly Hazara neighborhood in Kabul, killing at least 10 and wounding at least 12 others. A third bomb damages an electrical grid station in northern Kabul. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **May 29, 2021 - May 30, 2021:** On May 29, a minivan of university lecturers strikes a roadside bomb and students in Kapisa province, killing at least four and wounding 11. ISIS claims responsibility, calling the victims “Shiite apostates.” Overnight, Taliban fighters attack a government checkpoint in the Tagab district in Kapisa province. A mortar shell strikes a civilian house, killing at least seven and wounding at least four others. The Taliban and Afghan police accuse each other of responsibility for firing the mortar. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **May 27, 2021:** A bomb in Kapisa province’s capital, Mahmoud Raqi, kills at least three. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 26, 2021:** In Farah province, the Taliban kill a female employee of Farah prison while she is traveling through Taliban-controlled territory. In Takhar province, the Taliban attack security outposts in Taliqan, killing one member of a pro-government militia and wounding one. Taliban fighters attack the center of the Sholgara district in Balkh province, killing one soldier and wounding another before security forces push them back. In Faryab province, the Taliban fire a mortar in Qaisar district, killing four and wounding eight. In Takhar province, the Taliban ambush security forces in the Yangi Qala district, killing three pro-government militia members. In Badghis province, the Taliban ambush and kill five NDS officers in Qala-e-Naw. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 26, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen kill two NDS officers in Kabul. The gunmen escape. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 25, 2021:** An unknown group fires a mortar, striking a house in the Baraki Barak district of Logar province and killing four. Unidentified gunmen kill a civilian and a police officer in Sayed Khel district in Parwan province. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 25, 2021:** The Taliban attack a security outpost in Jowzjan province’s Aqcha district, killing six pro-government militia members during 24 hours of fighting. The Taliban place roadside bombs along the highway. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 24, 2021:** In Nangarhar province, the Taliban attack security outposts in Achin district, killing four and wounding six. Taliban fighters attack security outposts in Baghlan province’s Baghlan-e-Markazi district, killing three soldiers were killed. The Taliban take control of the outposts after Afghan security forces retreat. In Badakhshan province, the Taliban kill two pro-government militia members and wound seven others in an attack in the Yaftal-e-Bala district. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 24, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to a police vehicle explodes in the Bagrami district of Kabul province, killing one officer and wounding another. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 23, 2021 - May 24, 2021:** Taliban fighters clash with Afghan soldiers in Mihtarlam, capital of Laghman province. The Taliban claim to capture 37 security checkpoints around the city. The Afghan military claims to kill at least 50 Taliban fighters overnight. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **May 23, 2021:** Taliban fighters ambush a group of Afghan soldiers in the Imam Sahib district of Kunduz province, killing one and wounding two. Other soldiers escape after hours of fighting. In Badakhshan province, the Taliban attack security outposts in the Wardoj district center, killing two soldiers and wounding six others. Security forces force the Taliban to retreat. In Takhar province, the Taliban kill an NDS officer while on his way home in Hazar Smuch district. In Logar province, the Taliban kill two NDS officers patrolling in the Mohammad Agha district. Taliban

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- fighters attack a security outpost in Laghman province's Mehtarlam, killing one. In Badakhshan province, the Taliban attack a pro-government militia commander's house in Darayem district, killing six, including the commander. The Taliban seize the militia's equipment. In Herat province, a Taliban sniper kills two pro-government militia members and wounds another in Chesht-e-Sharif district. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 23, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen attack a house in Khanabad district in Kunduz province, killing four and wounding three. The attackers escape. In Kandahar province, unidentified gunmen on a motorcycle kill a police officer in Kandahar city before escaping. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 22, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Baghlan province's Gozargah-e-Noor district, killing eight and wounding 10. In Badghis province, the Taliban attack an army outpost in Qadis district, killing one. A Taliban mortar strikes a market in the Nahrin district in Baghlan province, killing two and wounding four. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 22, 2021:** A rocket strikes a house in Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, killing three children and wounding two others. In Faryab province, a Humvee strikes a roadside bomb in Almar district, killing three soldiers and a pro-government militia member. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 21, 2021:** A Taliban mortar strikes a house in Taliqan in Takhar province, killing an 8-year-old child and wounding another child and a woman. In Zabul province, Taliban fighters clash with Afghan security forces, killing five police officers. In Kapisa province, the Taliban attack a pro-government militia in Tagab district, killing two and wounding four. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 20, 2021:** Taliban gunmen attack Pul-e-Alam in Logar province, killing a police officer and wounding another. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 20, 2021:** In Logar's provincial capital of Sheberghan, a magnetic bomb attached to a private vehicle kills a military prosecutor. A roadside bomb in Firoz Koh in Ghor province kills three, including two children. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 19, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack security checkpoints in Qalat in Zabul province, killing six police officers and wounding three others. In Ghor province, Taliban fighters kill three Hazara civilians traveling from Ghor to Herat province. In Herat province, Taliban gunmen kill a police officer in Obey district. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 19, 2021:** A roadside bomb in Firoz Koh in Ghor province kills two and wounds one. A mortar strikes a home in Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, killing one. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 18, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to an NDS vehicle in Zazai Maidan district in Khost province kills an NDS officer. In Herat province, a mortar strikes a home in Obey district, killing a 16-year-old boy. Provincial officials blame the Taliban, but the family claims Afghan security forces fired the mortar. A roadside bomb kills two police officers in Ghor province's Firoz Koh. In Jalalabad, a roadside bomb strikes a police vehicle, killing one and wounding one. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 18, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack the center of Faizabad district in Jowzjan province, killing three police officers and wounding four others. Security forces repel the Taliban. In Kunduz province, the Taliban kill two soldiers outside of their military base in Chardara district. The Taliban attack a police chief's home in Kunduz's Imam Sahib district, killing two security officers and wounding nine. The Taliban also blow up two bridges in the area. In Baghlan province, Taliban fighters clash with security forces in Baghlan-e-Markazi district, killing three and wounding four. In Herat province's Koshk-e-Kobatsnagi district, a Taliban fighter kills a police officer and then escapes. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 17, 2021:** Unknown gunmen in Khost kill four, including a child, returning from a religious ceremony. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 17, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack security outposts in Pashton Kot district in Faryab province, killing one. Security forces eventually repel the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 16, 2021:** A rocket kills three and wounds six in Baraki Barak district in Khost province. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 16, 2021:** The Taliban attack a security outpost in Khost province's Mohammad Agha district, killing five pro-government militia members. The Taliban are pushed back after several hours. In Badghis province's Moqor district, a Taliban sniper kills a police officer. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 16, 2021:** A roadside bomb kills three and wounds three others in Ghazni province's Khwaja Omiri district. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 15, 2021:** Taliban militants in Herat province's Adraskan district shoot and kill a woman accused of adultery. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 15, 2021:** A bomb targeting a police vehicle in Kabul's Sarobi district kills an officer and wounds two civilians. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 14, 2021:** A roadside bomb in Balk province's Balkh district kills two soldiers attempting to defuse it. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 14, 2021:** Taliban fighters ambush an army convoy in Tagab district in Kapisa province, killing one and wounding three. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 14, 2021:** A bomb explodes in a mosque during Eid al-Fitre prayers in Shakardara district in Kabul province, killing 12 and wounding 15. The Taliban condemn the attack, which takes place during a three-day ceasefire. ISIS claims responsibility the following day over Telegram. Sources: [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **May 13, 2021:** A bomb explodes in the Fourth Police District of Kunduz city, killing two, including a child, and wounding 14.

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- In Kandahar province's Maiwand district, a roadside bomb kills five and wounds four. The fatalities include three children. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 12, 2021:** A civilian vehicle is hit by a roadside bomb in Nangarhar province's Shirzad district, kill three and wounding three others. In Herat province, unknown gunmen kill a customs employee. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 11, 2021:** Taliban fighters clash with Afghan security forces in Wardak province's Nirkh district. The security forces surrender to the Taliban, which take control of the district. In Badghis province, Taliban gunmen kill a police officer in Ab-Kamari district. In Badakhshan province, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Jurm district, killing six pro-government militia members and wounding three others. The Taliban capture the outpost after three hours. Taliban fighters attack the home of a pro-government militia member in Takhar province's Rustaq district, killing him and his daughter. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 11, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen ambush a vehicle in Khost province's Tani district, killing four before escaping. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 10, 2021:** The Taliban attack a security outpost in Jowzjan province's Aqcha district, killing two pro-government militia members and wounding one. In Firoz Koh in Ghor province, a police officer kills four of his fellow officers at a police outpost. The attacker seizes weapons from the outpost and joins the Taliban. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 10, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen kill a former police spokesman and a police officer in Pul-e-Alam in Logar province. In Parwan province's Jabal Saraj district, a roadside bomb strikes a minivan, killing two and wounding nine. A second bomb explodes when a crowd gather to provide aid, wounding five. Later in the day in Shahr-e-Safa in Zabul province, twin bombs blow up a bus, killing 11 and wounding 25. Sources: [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **May 9, 2021:** Taliban gunmen kill a police officer in Herat province's Golran district. The shooter escapes. In Baghlan province's Baghlan-e-Markazi district, the Taliban attack a security outpost, killing one and wounding two before they are pushed back. In Baghlan's Dahan-e-Ghori district, Taliban fighters attack a police headquarters and a government building, killing six and wounding 20. The Taliban carry out three attacks in Pul-e-Alam in Logar province. Taliban fighters ambush an NDS vehicle, killing four. Taliban gunmen kill a branch manager of Da Afghanistan Bank while at a gas station. Taliban fighters ambush and kill the head of Logar province's economy ministry. In Herat province, Taliban fighters attack the center of Obeh district, killing one soldier. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 9, 2021:** Two militia groups clash in Herat city, killing a civilian and a militia member. Five others are wounded. A car bomb explodes at a security checkpoint in Farah city, killing two soldiers and wounding five others. A roadside bomb strikes a Humvee in Faryab province's Almar district, killing five soldiers and wounding two others. A roadside bomb strikes a police chief's vehicle in Ghazni province's Khwaja Omari district, killing him. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 8, 2021:** A car bomb explodes outside of the Sayed Al-Shuhada school in Kabul's predominantly Shiite Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood. Two more bombs explode as students evacuate the school. At least 90 people are killed and 240 are wounded. The Taliban denies responsibility. The neighborhood is largely populated by Afghanistan's Hazara minority. ISIS has targeted the Hazara community in the past, though it does not immediately claim responsibility for the school bombings. Sources: [CNN](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **May 6, 2021:** Taliban gunmen kill the Kharwar district police chief while he is inspecting security outposts in Pul-e-Alam in Logar province. In Jowzjan province, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Jowzjan province's Qosh Tapa district, killing five and wounding three. In Wardak province, a Taliban sniper kills the commander of a support battalion in the Nerkh district. In Takhar province, the Taliban attack Darqad district, killing one soldier and wounding four. In Ghazni province, Taliban fighters attack and capture a security outpost and a military base in Ghazni city, capturing eight soldiers who surrendered at the outpost. At the base, six soldiers are killed, 12 security forces are taken prisoner, and six others are wounded. The Taliban attack three outposts in the Noh Borja and Char Borja villages of Ghazni's Khwaja Omari district, killing four police officers and two pro-government militia members. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 6, 2021:** The Taliban attack in Farsi district in Herat province, killing one soldier and wounding two others. In Baghlan province, Taliban fighters attack and capture six military bases and seven outposts in the Shahr-e-Kohna area of Baghlan-e-Markazi district, killing one pro-government militia member and wounding two others. Approximately 100 security forces surrender during the attacks. In Faryab province, the Taliban attack a security outpost in the Pashtun Kot district, killing three police officers and wounding two. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 6, 2021:** In Kunduz province, Taliban fighters ambush security forces on patrol in the Tot Mazar area of Imam Sahib district, killing one and wounding two. Taliban fighters attack a battalion headquarters in the Third Police District of Kunduz city, killing eight and wounding two. Local officials claim 13 Taliban fighters are also killed in the attack. The Taliban attack a security outpost in Kunduz's First Police District, killing one. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 6, 2021:** A rocket strikes a house in the Bolan area of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, killing two and wounding three. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 5, 2021:** A vehicle strikes a roadside bomb in the Tormai village of Ghazni province's Khwaja Omari district, killing two. In Kabul, a bus carrying a medical team from Panjshir province strikes a roadside bomb, killing one and wounding three. The Taliban deny responsibility. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 5, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack two members of the National Director of Security patrolling the Joi Yak area of Pul-e-Alam in Logar province, killing one and wounding one. The Taliban attack and capture a security outpost in Taliqan in Takhar province, killing eight pro-government militia members and capturing one. A Taliban attack on Takhar province's Darqad district kills two three members of the security forces and wounds three. In Paktika
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- province, Taliban forces attack security outposts in Sarawza district. The district police is killed and three of his bodyguards are wounded by a roadside bomb as police reinforcements move into Sarawza. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 4, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack and capture a security outpost in the Faizabad district of Jowzjan province, killing four pro-government militia members and wounding three.
In Helmand province, the Taliban attack and capture a military base and a security outpost in Greshk district, killing four and capturing weapons. In Kapisa province, the Taliban kill a police officer in his home in the Second Police District of Mahmood Raqi. In Baghlan province, a Taliban attack on a company headquarters in Baghlan-e-Markazi district kills nine soldiers. The Taliban capture 16 soldiers, though one escapes. The Taliban also capture weapons and ammunition. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 4, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to a police vehicle in Uruzgan province's provincial capital of Tarin Kot kills a police officers and wounds a civilian.
Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 3, 2021:** A Taliban sniper kills a pro-government militia commander in Murdian district in Jowzjan province.
In Paktia province, the Taliban attack security outposts in the province capital of Gardez, killing five and wounding 12. In Helman province, the Taliban attack security outposts between Nawa district and Lashkar Gah, killing four. Police abandon the posts. Taliban fighters attack a military base in Farah province's Balabouluk district, killing 20 soldiers. The Taliban blow up the base using a tunnel dug underneath it. In Baghlan province, the Taliban attack and capture a security outpost in the Nahring district, killing four and wounding four. In Herat province's Farsi district, the Taliban engage security forces in a six-hour battle, killing eight and wounding four. The Taliban detonate two car bombs during the fighting. In Helmand province, Taliban forces capture at least 18 security outposts around Lashkar Gah, leaving at least 18 killed or wounded. A joint Afghan-U.S. airstrike stops the Taliban advance. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 3, 2021:** A bomb explodes near a school in Farah province, wounding at least 21.
In Takhar province, a bomb kills a pro-government militia commander and wounds two others. The Taliban claim responsibility for the attack in Takhar. Source: [Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **May 2, 2021:** Taliban fighters kill two constructions workers on their way home in Faryab province's Gorziwan district.
In Badghis province, a Taliban sniper kills a soldier and a civilian and wounds another civilian in Jawand district. In Kabul province's Khaldar village, Taliban militants kill the deputy of an army company in Bagram prison. In Badakhshan province, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Warduj district, killing eight members of the territorial army and wounding four others. The Taliban also burn down a wood bridge to block security forces' movements and then ambush a group of security forces attempting to extinguish the fire, killing four. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 2, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to the vehicle of a border soldier kills him in the Kohsan district in Herat province.
Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 1, 2021:** An Afghan military Humvee strikes a roadside bomb in Kunduz province, killing three and wounding three others.
Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **May 1, 2021:** The Taliban fire a rocket at Kandahar Airfield, where U.S. and NATO forces are dismantling their base.
The U.S. military launches an airstrike on a Taliban position in response. Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in the Second Police District of Pul-i-Khumri in Baghlan province, killing two and wounding two. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **May 1, 2021 - June 29, 2021:** The Taliban capture more than 80 districts across Afghanistan.
Source: [Long War Journal](#)
 - **April 30, 2021:** An explosives-filled truck blows up outside of a guesthouse in Pul-e Alam, capital of Logar province, killing at least 21 and wounding 90.
Most of the casualties are high school students. The guesthouse belongs to the family of a prominent Afghan senator who had been recently killed by the Taliban. The explosion occurs the night before a May 1 deadline for the United States to withdraw from Afghanistan, raising suspicions that the Taliban are responsible. The government blames the Taliban, though there is no immediate claim of responsibility. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#)
 - **April 30, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack an Afghan military base in Ghazni province, capturing 25 soldiers.
Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **April 29, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen kill a former member of a pro-government militia in Maimana district of Faryab province.
In the Naq Abad village of Jowzjan province, a roadside bomb blows up the vehicle of and kills a pro-government militia member. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **April 29, 2021:** A Taliban sniper kills a police officer in Imam Sahib district in Kunduz province.
Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **April 29, 2021:** Taliban gunmen open fire on a group of people leaving a mosque in Khinjan district of Baghlan province, killing seven. Police kill two Taliban fighters and wound three others. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **April 28, 2021:** A roadside bomb kills three traffic police officers in the Deh Qazi area of Charikar, the provincial capital of Parwan province. Separately, unidentified gunmen kill a pro-government militia commander in Jurm district in Badakhshan province. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **April 28, 2021:** Taliban gunmen kill a police officer outside of the provincial hospital in Firoz Koh, the provincial capital of Ghor province.
In Logar province's Baraki Barak district, Taliban fighters attack the governor's office, killing four soldiers and wounding seven others. At least five Taliban fighters are also reportedly killed. In Herat province, Taliban fighters attack the police headquarters in Obeh district, killing a civilian and wounding four others. A Taliban drone targets a border army outpost in the Ay Khanom port in Takhar province, killing three soldiers and wounding two others. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **April 27, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen kill a police officer in Kandahar city.

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The attackers escape. In Nangarhar province's Lalpur district, unidentified gunmen kill five civilians and wound three others. Source: [New York Times](#)

- **April 27, 2021:** Taliban fighters ambush a vehicle belonging to the National Directorate of Security in Kabul's Paghman district, killing one and wounding two.
Separately, the Taliban attack kill a police officer and wound another in attacks on security outposts in Faryab's Qaisar district. Two Taliban fighters are also reportedly killed. In Herat province, Taliban fighters attack a police outpost in Obeh district, killing one civilian and wounding four others in the crossfire. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 26, 2021:** A roadside bomb in the Chergo area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province kills a child.
In Herat province, a Humvee strikes a roadside bomb in Shindand district, killing five commandos and wounding three soldiers. Unknown gunmen kill a police officer in the Poshta-e-eidgah village in Ghor province. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 25, 2021:** A roadside bomb explodes in Wazhgona village in the Ghor province, killing one civilian.
In Paktia province, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Wazi Khwa district, killing the district police chief. In Helmand province, a military vehicle hits a roadside bomb in Maiwand district, killing five police officers and wounding three others, including the district police chief of Zari district. A roadside bomb in Herat province's Golran district kills the former district governor of Golran district and three security forces. Five other security force members are wounded. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 25, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Sayed Abad district in Wardak province from inside local houses.
Security forces fire a mortar in the direction of the attack, killing a father and his two sons, and wounding his wife and two other sons. In Logar province, Taliban forces attack a civil order forces unit in the Muhammad Agha district, killing six and wounding five. Taliban fighters attack the village of Maidan-e-Barrakhanah in Ghor province, killing two pro-government militia members. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 24, 2021:** The Taliban shoot and kill a soldier in the village of Kohna Qala in Kunduz province.
In Parwan province, the Taliban kill a police officer on his way to work in Charikar. A Taliban roadside bomb blows up a van in Ghazni's Andar district, killing four and wounding two. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 24, 2021:** A roadside bomb in Pul-e-Alam kills three soldiers.
In Kabul, unidentified gunmen kill a private university lecturer. Unidentified gunmen kill four police officers in Kabul province's Paghman district. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 23, 2021:** Taliban gunmen attack security forces in Kunduz province's Imam Sahib district, killing one and taking another prisoner.
In Ghazni province, Taliban forces attack a security outpost in Ghazni city, killing five police officers and wounding four others. Four officers are taken prisoner. After a night of fighting, the Taliban capture the outpost and seize its equipment and weapons. In Takhar province, a Taliban drone attacks a security outpost in Bangi district, killing seven pro-government militia members. In Herat province, Taliban gunmen kill two soldiers walking to their outpost in Koshk-e-Robatsangi district. A rickshaw hits a Taliban roadside bomb in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province, killing four and wounding three. In Nangarhar province, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Pacheragam district, killing two and wounding three. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 23, 2021:** A roadside bomb kills three members of the public protection force in Jalalabad in Nangarhar province.
A roadside bomb in Ghazni province's Nawa district kills three police officers and wounds three members of the security forces. Among the fatalities is the police chief of the Nawa district, who was transferring the body of the police chief of Deh Yak district killed by a Taliban roadside bomb a few days earlier. Afghan security vehicle strikes a roadside bomb in Jalalabad, killing one security member and one civilian and wounding one. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 21, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack a police outpost in Wardak province's Jalrez district.
The Taliban behead five officers after they surrender. In Ghor province, Taliban fighters attack the village of Kotal-e-Shiniya, killing four members of the Hazara minority. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 20, 2021:** A car bomb in Herat's Ghoryan district kills three members of a pro-government militia and wounds two others.
Militants attack security forces in the area after the explosion, wounding at least 15 civilians. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 20, 2021:** The Taliban attack a security outpost in Badakshan province's Zibak district, killing eight police officers and wounding two others.
The militants seize the post's weapons and equipment. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 19, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to a military vehicle in the Behsud district of Nangarhar province kills three.
In Kandahar province's Kandahar city, a magnetic bomb attached to the vehicle of a police commander kills the commander and wounds a passerby. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 19, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack the Baghlan-e-Markazi district of Baghlan province, killing two police officers and wounding six others.
In Ghor province, Taliban fighters ambush pro-government militia members in the Zai Hosain village, killing two. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 17, 2021:** Taliban fighters fire three mortars at a bazaar in Balkh province's Balkh district, killing two and wounding two.
In Baghlan province, the Taliban attack a security outpost in Pul-i-Khumri, killing six and wounding four. The Taliban capture the outpost along with its equipment and weapons. In Takhar province, the Taliban attack a security outpost in the provincial capital, killing four and wounding five. A Taliban infiltrator kills three police officers in the village of Sanjidak in Badghis province. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 16, 2021:** The Taliban attack a security outpost in Ghazni province's Deh Yak district, killing five.
The Taliban capture the outpost. The air force bombs the outpost as the Taliban are transferring equipment, killing seven militants. In Takhar province, a member of a pro-government militia kills three other militia members in Dasht-e-Qala district and then flees to join the Taliban, taking the outposts weapons with him. Taliban gunmen attack two pro-government militia members in Faryab province, killing one and wounding the other. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 15, 2021:** The Taliban set off a car bomb at a military base in Zabul province's Shajoe district and then attack the base.

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The fighting lasts several hours and kills 10 Afghan soldiers. In Kunduz province, the Taliban attack a security outpost in the Imam Sahib district, killing six and wounding three. The Taliban capture a military vehicle. Source: [New York Times](#)

- **April 14, 2021:** Suspected Taliban militants attack a security post in Badghis's Muqur district, killing four and wounding five. Separately, the Taliban fire mortars at an Afghan army tank in Anardara district of Farah province, killing six. Sources: [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#)
- **April 13, 2021:** A suicide car bomb kills at least three and wounds 24 in Farah city, the capital of Farah province. Separately, unidentified militants attack a police checkpoint in Baghlan province's Daha-e Ghori district, killing at least five officers and wounding four others. Taliban forces attack a security post in Badghis province's Laman, killing one and wounding two. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Twitter](#)
- **April 12, 2021:** Taliban insurgents attack an army checkpoint in Balkh province, killing five soldiers and wounding two others. Five soldiers are reportedly captured. Seven militants are also killed. The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Twitter](#)
- **April 10, 2021:** Suspected Taliban forces attack the Suzma Qala district of Sar-i-Pul province, killing three Afghan security force members and wounding 11 others. Source: [Twitter](#)
- **April 8, 2021:** The Taliban attack a military base in the village of Mousa-Abad in Herat province's Ghoryan District, killing eight soldiers and taking 11 others prisoner. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 8, 2021:** A bomb in a rickshaw kills one in Kandahar. In Herat province, unidentified gunmen kill one and wound one. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 7, 2021:** The Taliban attack a security outpost in Puli-Khumri city, killing four and wounding three. In Badghis province, Taliban gunmen kill a police officer in Qadis district. Taliban militants attack a security outpost in Herat's Pashtun Zarghun district, killing three members of a pro-government militia. Five militia members are captured and another is reported missing after the attack. Taliban forces attack a military convoy in Baghlan province's Dahan-e-Ghori district, killing five and wounding four. The Taliban attack a military base in Baghlan province's Eshkamish district, killing one and wounding four. The Taliban attack the Khwaja Band Kashan village in Takhar province's Ishkamish district, killing five police officers and wounding eight others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 7, 2021:** Unknown gunmen shoot and kill Mohammad Ismail Sahak, the director of the National Statistics Office, in Kabul's Paghman district. In Kandahar, two mortar shells strike the governor's office, and two others strike the shrine of General Abdul Raziq Khan. There are no injuries reported. On the same day, a roadside bomb kills at least two and wounds 18 in Jalalabad. Unknown gunmen also kill a police officer in Herat province's Karokh district. Sources: [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#), [Xinhua](#), [New York Times](#)
- **April 6, 2021:** Unknown gunmen kill a police officer and wound another in Kabul's Paghman district. A roadside bomb kills at least four and wounds 14 aboard a bus in the Chopan area of the Kandahar-Herat highway. Taliban gunmen attack a security post in Nangarhar province, killing four policemen. The Taliban claim they attacked two security posts and killed six police officers. Sources: [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#)
- **April 5, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen shoot and kill a police officer in Kandahar. Source: [Twitter](#)
- **April 4, 2021:** A car bombing in Kabul's Paghman district kills at least three Afghan security force members and wounds 12 others. The Taliban claim responsibility, claiming the attack killed or wounded at least 45 Afghan security force members. The Taliban also warn that continued airstrikes against the group violate an agreement with the United States. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **April 4, 2021:** Taliban fighters clash with Afghan soldiers in Badghis's Qadis district, wounding five officers. Afghan officials claim three Taliban fighters were also killed and two wounded, but the Taliban claim only two of their fighters were killed. Source: [Twitter](#)
- **April 4, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack a security post on the Helmand-Kandahar highway, killing at least 11 security forces and capturing 13 others. Source: [Twitter](#)
- **April 4, 2021:** An explosives-filled Humvee in Helmand's Nawi district kills two policemen and wounds eight others at a security post. Officials blame the Taliban. Source: [Twitter](#)
- **April 3, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack a security post in Herat province, killing at least four Afghan soldiers and wounding three. At least six soldiers are captured. The Taliban claim they killed 10 soldiers and captured seven. Unidentified gunmen in Takhar province's Taloqan city kill a member of the Takhar Provincial Council. Sources: [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#)
- **April 1, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen shoot and kill a female police officer in Jalalabad. Separately, an explosion at a police checkpoint in Herat province kills two and wounds two. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **March 31, 2021:** Taliban forces fire rockets at Forward Operating Base Chapman, a classified US military installation in eastern Afghanistan, wounding seven civilians outside the base. A second barrage damages a water tower, but no U.S. injuries are reported. Source: [CNN](#)
- **March 31, 2021:** An Afghan military vehicle strikes a roadside bomb in Sar-i-Pul province, killing two and wounding two. A bomb attached to the vehicle of prominent religious scholar Mawlavi Abdul Samad Mohammadi in Taleqan, the capital of Takhar province, kills Mohammadi and wounds three others. Mohammadi was the head of the province's Ulema Council. A remotely detonated bomb inside a cart kills two and wounds 16 in Balkh province. Separately, Taliban fighters ambush a military convoy on a highway linking Logar and Paktia provinces, killing an army officer. The Taliban claim responsibility for the highway attack but do not comment on the bombings. Sources: [Tolo News](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)

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- **March 30, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen shoot and kill three women administering polio vaccines in Jalalabad. The Taliban deny responsibility. Unidentified gunmen kill two in Hese Dowom-e-Kohistan district in Kapisa province. One of the casualties is a member of the National Directorate of Security. Sources: [Guardian](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Tolo News](#)
- **March 28, 2021:** A car bomb kills two and wounds four at a security outpost in the Mahajir Bazar area of Helmand province. Unidentified gunmen kill a policeman in Kandahar. Explosions in Laghman, Khost, and Paktia provinces kill three security force members and wound 22 others, including 14 civilians. A bomb targets a security vehicle in Paktia province, wounding four. A police vehicle strikes a roadside bomb in Laghman province, killing three officers. Sources: [Tolo News](#), [Tolo News](#), [Xinhua](#)
- **March 27, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen kill an Afghan Air Force member in Kabul. Unidentified gunmen kill a prosecutor in Khost. That night, Taliban fighters attack Dahan-e-Dara dam in Faryab province, killing two security guards and wounding one. Source: [Tolo News](#)
- **March 26, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack a police position in Lashkar Gah, killing at least three and wounding at least two. At least 15 Taliban fighters are also killed in the attack. According to Afghan news reports, at least 15 police officers are killed in the attack, including the police chief of Sangin district. Source: [Tolo News](#)
- **March 25, 2021:** A car bomb in Gereshk district in Helmand province kills three army members and wounds five. A police vehicle strikes a roadside bomb in Kandahar province, killing three. In Kapisa, Taliban fighters kill the father of a member of the Afghan army's special unit and take his brother hostage. Fighting between security forces and the Taliban in Balkh province's Chaharbolak district kills a child. Source: [Tolo News](#)
- **March 24, 2021:** An explosives-filled truck detonates on a bridge in Arghandab, Afghanistan, damaging the bridge. There are no reported casualties. Local authorities blame the Taliban, but the group does not comment on the attack. Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Kujran district's Lakhtonghai village in Kandahar, killing one and wounding five. Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Ghorghori area of Khachrod district, killing four and wounding four others. Afghan forces repel the attackers. The Taliban attack a security outpost in the Joy Bigum village of Imam Sahib district, killing one border soldier and wounding two others. A Taliban sniper kills a border soldier at a security outpost in the village of Pul-e-Khishti village in Imam Sahib district. A mortar strikes a home in Badghis province, killing a woman and two children. Sources: [Tolo News](#), [New York Times](#)
- **March 23, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack Qaisar district in Faryab province. The Afghan air force provides support to Afghan security, but gunship mistakenly strikes a security outpost, killing a pro-government militia member and wounding two. The Taliban attack a security outpost in the Sayed Abad area of Sar-i-Pul city, killing a police officer and wounding another. In Daikundi province, two soldiers are killed when a roadside bomb hits their vehicle in the Gizab district. Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in the village of Khazak Tegab Robot in Badghis province's Aab Kamari District, killing four police officers and wounding another. Two Taliban fighters are also reportedly killed in the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 22, 2021:** Taliban fighters attack security outposts in the Tangi Qaraqul and Sof-e-Kariz areas of Kujran District in Daikundi province, killing one police officer and wounding another. The Taliban attack a security outpost in the Pashiman Darea area of Dahna-e-Ghori district in Baghlan province. The Taliban ambush two Humvees of reinforcements, hitting one with an RPG and blowing up the other with a roadside bomb. Altogether, six police officers are killed and five soldiers are wounded in the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 21, 2021:** An employee of the National Directorate of Security is shot and killed in the village of Du Aab in Herat province's Farsi district. Also in Herat, a roadside bomb kills seven border soldiers in the village of Chehel Dokhtaran in Kushk-e-Robat Sangi district. Taliban fighters kill a police officer in Qaisar district of Faryah province. A roadside bomb in the village of Tajikan in Kabul province kills five. Taliban fighters attack Dasht-e-Qala district in Takhar province, killing one and wounding one. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 20, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen shoot and kill a provincial council member in Gardiz in Paktia province. Two police officers protecting the council member are wounded. A magnetic bomb attached to his car in the village of Asheqan kills Mohammad Rafiq Alam, the governor of Taywara district in Ghor province. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 19, 2021:** Taliban fighters capture three villages in Tahar province. Afghan forces recapture the area, but six pro-government militia members are killed and 10 are wounded. At least 12 Taliban fighters are also reportedly killed. Separately, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Pul-i-Khumri, killing five soldiers and wounding five others. In Baghlan province, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Gozargah-e-Noor district, killing two soldiers and wounding one. Six Taliban fighters are also reportedly killed. The Taliban attack two outposts in Shirin Tagab district, killing one soldier and wounding another. In Faryab province, The Taliban shoot and kill a soldier, his sister, and his niece, in Gorziwan district. Also, in Faryab, Taliban gunmen shoot and kill two in Gorziwan's Sarchakan village. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 18, 2021:** A bus carrying government employees hits a roadside bomb in Kabul, killing four and wounding nine. The attack comes as representatives of the Afghan government, Taliban, United States, Pakistan, China, and Russia meet in Moscow to discuss a reduction in violence. Unidentified gunmen on a motorcycle shoot and kill a local police commander a district council member in Kandahar. In Balkh province, Taliban forces attack the home of a pro-government militia commander in Abdulgan village, killing seven and wounding two. In Badakhshan province, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in Baharak district, killing two and wounding six. A roadside bomb in Jalalabad kills two and wounds eight. A magnetic bomb attached to a bus kills four civil servants and wounds nine others. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#)
- **March 17, 2021:** A rocket strikes an Afghan military helicopter during takeoff in Maidan Wardak province, killing nine. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **March 16, 2021:** Gunmen open fire on a university minibus in Baghlan province's Puli Khomri, killing a student and the driver.

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- Six others are wounded. The Taliban deny responsibility. Separately, militants attack a police outpost on the Pashdan Dam in Herat province, killing three and wounding four. Authorities blame the Taliban, which does not comment on the attack. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **March 15, 2021:** A bomb explodes near a minibus in Kabul, killing four and wounding at least 11. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
 - **March 14, 2021:** Two vehicles bombed in separate districts in Kabul, killing three and wounding 12. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **March 12, 2021:** A car bomb explodes near a police station in Herat, killing at least seven and wounding at least 53. The bomb also destroys several houses and shops. Local officials blame the Taliban, but the group does not claim credit. The United Nations condemns an “alarming” increase in attacks in Afghanistan targeting civilians. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **March 7, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen attack a female police officer in Lashkar Gah, wounding her and killing her husband, also a police officer. The gunmen allegedly targeted the female officer, who is the former head of female police in the province. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **March 6, 2021:** A suicide car bomber attacks a convoy in Lashkar Gah belonging to Sayed Mahmood Agha, the Afghan intelligence directorate’s chief prosecutor, killing Agha and a bodyguard and wounding eight others. Separately, Taliban militants attack a police checkpoint in Balkh province, killing at least eight and wounding six. Five Taliban fighters are also reportedly killed in the clash. The Taliban claim responsibility and allege their fighters killed 12 policemen. The Taliban also deny any Taliban casualties. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
 - **March 4, 2021:** A roadside bomb kills a female doctor in Jalabad. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **March 2, 2021:** In two coordinated attacks, gunmen shoot and kill three female journalists—21-year-old Mursal Wahidi, 21-year-old Sadia Sadat, and 20-year-old Shahnaz Raufi—walking home from work in Jalalabad. President Ashraf Ghani blames the killings on the Taliban and an atmosphere of violence the group promotes. The Taliban deny responsibility. ISIS soon after claims responsibility. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Washington Post](#)
 - **February 21, 2021:** A roadside bomb in Kabul targets a police car and kills two, including a child. Five civilians, including children, are wounded. A bomb in a market in Helmand province kills one and wounds 15 others. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **February 20, 2021:** Two magnetic bombs attached to cars in Kabul kill three and wound two. Later in the day, a third magnetic bomb targets and destroys a police car in Kabul, killing two officers. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#)
 - **February 18, 2021:** A magnetic bomb attached to a car kills two university professors in Kabul. One of the professors, Mubasher Muslimyar, had previously been arrested and then released on suspicion on spreading ISIS propaganda. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **February 11, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen attack a U.N. convoy in the Surobi district of Kabul, killing at least five members of an Afghan security team escorting the convoy. No members of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan are injured. Afghan officials suspect the Taliban, which deny responsibility. Separately, three explosions in Kunar province kill at least three and wound two. In Nangarhar province, another three explosions kill at least two and wound five. Unidentified gunmen shoot and wound a journalist for Pajhwok News, Qotbuddin Kohi, in Faryab province. Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Reuters](#)
 - **February 10, 2021:** Three explosions across Kabul kill at least two and wound three others. Among the dead is a district police chief who had reportedly sought to crack down on increasing violence in the city. A fourth explosion later in the day causes no casualties. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **February 9, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen open fire on a vehicle carrying government employees in Kabul, killing four. In eastern Kabul, a roadside bomb hits a foreign affairs ministry vehicle, killing one. The Taliban deny responsibility for both attacks. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **February 6, 2021:** An explosion in a store in Kabul collapses the building and kills at least two and wounds four. The casualties are members of the Sikh minority, raising suspicion that ISIS is responsible as it had previously targeted the Sikh community. Separately, a magnetic bomb attached to a police car in Kabul kills one officer. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **February 4, 2021 - February 5, 2021:** On February 4, militants attack an Afghan army outpost in Faryab province, killing five soldiers and taking others hostage. Afghan officials blame the Taliban. On February 5, Taliban fighters launch a predawn raid on a security outpost in the Khan Abad district in Kunduz province, killing at least 16 government troops. The militants also allegedly capture two soldiers. Source: [Voice of America](#)
 - **February 2, 2021:** Three bombings kill at least three people and wounded seven others in Kabul. All three bombings result from magnetic bombs. The Taliban denies responsibility. Also, that day, an explosion targeting a military vehicle in Jalalabad kills one soldier and wounds two. An explosion in Parwan province kills one. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **January 30, 2021:** A suicide bomber drives an explosives-filled vehicle into an Afghan military base in Nangarhar, killing at least eight. According to the deputy head of Nangarhar’s provincial council, the attack kills 15 soldiers and wounds five. The Taliban claim responsibility. Separately, two roadside bombs explode in Kabul, but do not cause any casualties. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)
 - **January 17, 2021:** Gunmen ambush and kill female two Supreme Court judges in Kabul. The Taliban deny responsibility. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **January 10, 2021:** A roadside bomb kills three people and wounds one in Kabul. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
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- **January 7, 2021:** A suicide car bomb explodes near a military base in Tirin Kot, the capital of the Uruzgan province, killing at least six security personnel.
That night, Taliban fighters attack a military checkpoint in Kunduz, killing at least 12 security personnel. Approximately 10 security members were missing after the attack and were suspected of being captured by the Taliban. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Urdu Point](#)
 - **January 6, 2021:** An attack in Helmand Province's Lashkar Gah kills at least five civilians and wounds five others.
Officials are unsure whether the attack was caused by an airstrike or another type of assault. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **December 27, 2020:** Gunmen kill at least two in the provincial capital of Ghazni province.
The Taliban abduct at least 20 civilians in an area of Ghazni province under full Taliban control. A Taliban spokesman tells German media they are working on the issue. Source: [German Press Agency](#)
 - **December 25, 2020:** An Afghan military vehicle strikes a roadside bomb in Balkh province, killing at least two Afghan army officers and wounding two others.
An army spokesman blames the Taliban. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **December 23, 2020:** A bomb attached to a vehicle kills one and wounds two others in Kabul.
Separately, unidentified gunmen in Kabul shoot and kill Mohammad Yousuf Rasheed, the head of an independent Afghan elections watchdog, and wound his driver. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **December 22, 2020:** A magnetic bomb attached to a vehicle kills at least five, including three doctors, in Kabul.
ISIS claims responsibility. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **December 21, 2020:** Freelance photographer Rahmatullah Nikzad is shot dead outside his home in Ghazni.
The United States accuses the Taliban of responsibility, which the Taliban deny. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Voice of America](#)
 - **December 19, 2020:** A car bomb in Kabul kills at least nine and wounds approximately 20 others.
President Ashraf Ghani says the Taliban should stop violence against civilians and accept a ceasefire, but he does not directly blame the Taliban for the attack. Separately, rockets target a U.S. airbase in Afghanistan. There are no casualties reported. ISIS claims responsibility for the rocket attack. In Helmand province, a suicide car bomber attempts to attack an army checkpoint but is shot and killed before he can detonate his explosives. Two soldiers are wounded in the attempted assault. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **December 18, 2020:** A bomb placed in a rickshaw kills at least 15 and wounds 20 others at a Quran recitation ceremony in Ghazni province.
Eleven of the victims killed are children. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **December 16, 2020:** A police officer and a government intelligence officer are killed by two separate magnetic bombs attached to the cars in Kabul.
The Taliban are suspected. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **December 15, 2020:** A magnetic bomb attached to the car of Kabul province Deputy Governor Mahbubullah Mohibi kills Mohibi and his secretary and wounds two bodyguards.
Later in the day, a magnetic bomb kills Abdul Rahman Atshan, the provincial council deputy chief of Ghor Province, and wounds another person in the car. The Taliban are suspected. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **December 13, 2020:** A magnetic bomb attached to an armored vehicle in Kabul kills at least two and wounds two others.
Separately, a government prosecutor is shot dead in Kabul. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for either attack. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **December 12, 2020:** Three Katyusha rockets strike Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport while others strike residential areas in Kabul, killing at least one and wounding one.
ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency and claims it fired 10 Katyusha rockets toward the airport. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **December 10, 2020:** Gunmen shoot and kill television journalist Malala Maiwand and her driver in Jalalabad.
ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Voice of America](#)
 - **December 7, 2020:** A car bomb near the Daman district police headquarters in Kandahar province wounds at least 35.
Source: [Voice of America](#)
 - **November 29, 2020:** An attacker detonates an explosives-filled military vehicle on an Afghan army base, killing at least 31 and wounding 24.
Separately that day, a bombing in Zabul province targeting the convoy of Haji Ata Jan Haqbayan, head of Zabul's provincial council, kills at least three and wounds 12. Haqbayan sustains minor injuries. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)
 - **November 21, 2020:** A barrage of rockets strike the center of Kabul, killing at least eight and wounding more than 24 others.
ISIS claims responsibility. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **November 14, 2020:** Taliban militants attack army posts in the Khawaja Ghar district of Takhar province, killing at least five soldiers and wounding five others.
The Taliban also suffer casualties, according to Afghan officials. Source: [Xinhua](#)
 - **November 13, 2020:** A suicide car bomb explodes at the western entry gate of Kabul, killing at least three soldiers and wounding four others.
Authorities suspect the Taliban. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **November 12, 2020:** Taliban militants attack a government security checkpoint in Kunduz province, killing five soldiers and wounding two others.
The Afghan Defense Ministry claims 10 Taliban fighters are killed in the skirmish. Separately, radio journalist Elyas Dayee is killed and three others are wounded when a bomb attached to the bottom of Dayee's car explodes in Lashkar Gah in Helmand province. Authorities suspect the Taliban. Dayee is the second journalist to be killed in less than a week. Human Rights Watch condemns "increased threats and attacks on the media by the Taliban." Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **November 9, 2020:** A roadside mine in the Pul-e-Charkhi area of Kabul wounds two civilians.
Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
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- **November 8, 2020:** A suicide bomber blows up a car at a police base in the Maiwand district in Kandahar province, killing at least four and wounding approximately 40 others.
Officials suspect the Taliban. Militants fire mortars at Ghazni province’s capital city, killing at least eight, including five children, and wounding at least five. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **November 7, 2020:** A bomb attached to the car of Afghan television journalist Yama Siawash kills Siawash and two others in Kabul. Afghan officials blame the Haqqani network but ISIS claims responsibility. In April 2021, Afghan authorities arrest a Taliban cell that admits to killing Siawash and carrying out multiple other bombings. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Washington Post](#), [La Prensa Latina Media](#)
- **November 2, 2020:** ISIS-affiliated gunmen storm Kabul University, killing at least 22 and wounding another 22 others.
The gunmen take hostages and exchange fire with security forces for more than five hours. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack, stating that it had targeted a “graduation gathering for judges and investigators of the apostate Afghan government.” Source: [Guardian](#)
- **November 1, 2020:** An explosion at the governor’s compound in Kunduz province kills at least four soldiers and wounds at least eight others while the soldiers are playing volleyball at the compound’s guesthouse.
Afghan officials suspect the Taliban used a drone to conduct the strike but do not confirm the cause of the explosion. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 24, 2020:** A suicide bomber detonates explosives hidden in his vest near an educational center in Kabul.
The explosion kills at 40 and wounds at least 70 others. The district of the attack, Dasht-e-Barchi, is a Shiite-dominated area. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 23, 2020:** The Taliban attack a military base in Delaram District.
The attack kills 26 and five others are taken prisoner. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 21, 2020:** The Taliban ambush a unit of national police and police forces in Baharak District.
At least 34 security personnel are killed, and eight others are injured. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **October 17, 2020:** The Taliban ambush security outposts in Imam Sahib District.
The attacks kill at least eight and wound two others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 10, 2020:** The Taliban carries out simultaneous attacks in Nawa and Nadali districts in Lashkar Gah.
The attacks kill at least two officers. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 5, 2020:** A suicide bomber targets the convoy of a provincial governor in Laghman province, eastern Afghanistan.
The attack kills eight and injures at least 38 others. No group claims responsibility for the attack, but both the Taliban and ISIS are active in the area. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **October 3, 2020:** A suicide bomber targets a mosque in Nangarhar district.
The attack injures at least 38 people. No group claims responsibility for the attack, but both the Taliban and ISIS are active in the area. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **October 1, 2020:** A suicide bomber targets a checkpoint in Nahri Sarah district, southern Afghanistan.
The attack kills at least nine and injures four others. No group claims responsibility for the attack, but the Taliban is active in the area. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **September 27, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a security outpost in Bala Baluk district.
The attack kills eight and the eight police officers are taken prisoner. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 20, 2020:** Taliban militants ambush a security checkpoint in Uruzgan.
The attack kills at least 24 members of the Afghan security forces. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **September 9, 2020:** The Taliban detonate a bomb that targets Amrullah Saleh, Afghanistan’s senior vice president and opponent of the Taliban, and his vehicle in Kabul.
Saleh survives the attack, but 10 civilians are killed and 15 others are wounded. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)
- **August 3, 2020:** The Taliban ambush a vehicle carrying police forces in Khost City.
The attack kills six and wounds one other. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 25, 2020:** A car packed with explosives detonates close to a commando unit in Balkh District.
The attack kills 10 and wounds 65 others. The Taliban claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 22, 2020:** The Taliban clashes with the Afghan security forces in Khwaja Bahauddin District.
The attack kills nine pro-government members and injures three others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 18, 2020:** Two unidentified assailants launch more than a dozen rockets from two vehicles in Kabul.
The attack wounds at least 10. Afghan police arrest two suspects. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **August 14, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a military base in the Malarghi area connecting Kunduz to Takhar province.
The attack kills nine and wounds five others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 4, 2020:** Taliban members ambush a convoy transporting a former member of the provincial council.
The attack kills 12. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 30, 2020:** A car bomb detonates in eastern Afghanistan, hours before a three-day ceasefire was to be implemented or the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha.
The attack kills at least 18 people, including Afghan security forces personnel. No group claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **July 21, 2020:** Taliban members ambush police officers in Takhtapol District.
The insider attack kills 14. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 16, 2020:** The Taliban attacks the center of Dawlat Abad District.
The attack kills eight pro-government militia members and wounds at least another 18. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 14, 2020:** The United States closes five military bases in Afghanistan per the conditions of the U.S.-Taliban agreement.

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The deal, signed in February, saw the U.S. promise to withdraw all U.S. forces from the bases in the first 135 days of the deal. The evacuated bases were located in Helmand, Uruzgan, Paktika, and Laghman provinces. The larger bases—Bagram and Kandahar Airfield—located in Kabul and south Afghanistan remain open. Source: [Fox News](#)

- **July 13, 2020:** Taliban fighters ambush security forces following a car bomb blast at a government compound in Samangan, northern Afghanistan.
The attack kills at least 11 people and wounds over 43 others. The attack was launched close to one of the offices of the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Afghanistan’s main intelligence agency. According to local officials, the Taliban also ambush three other security force checkpoints in Badakhshan, Kunduz, and Parwan. Between the three attacks, 25 people are killed. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **July 8, 2020:** A suicide bomber rams a truck filled with explosives into the Shah Walikot police station.
The attack kills three police officers and wounds 20 others. The Taliban claims responsibility for the attack. Sources: [Anadolu Agency](#), [MENAFN](#)
- **July 7, 2020:** A suicide car bomber targets an Afghan police convoy in Kewa, Nangarhar province.
The attack kills four police officers and wounds 11 others. No group claims responsibility for the attack but the Taliban and ISIS are active in the region. Source: [ABC News](#)
- **July 2, 2020:** The Taliban attack security outposts in Khogyani District.
The attack kills two soldiers and wounds 11 others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 1, 2020:** The Taliban ambushes security outposts in Naziyan district.
The attack kills three soldiers and wounds five others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 29, 2020:** The Taliban attack Afghan forces in Kalata Nazar village.
The attack kills three and wounds one other. In Qazi, the Taliban attack a security outpost. The ambush kills four police officers and wounds two others. In Faryab province, the Taliban shoot and kill the police chief of Khwaja Sabz Posh and one other soldier. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 26, 2020:** American intelligence officials report that an unidentified Russian military intelligence unit secretly offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants to kill coalition forces in Afghanistan, including American troops.
The Russian unit has been linked to attacks and covert operations meant to destabilize the West. According to American intelligence officials, successful attacks carried out by militants were provided with rewards from the Russian intelligence unit. Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Taliban, denied that the insurgents have “any such relations with any intelligence agency” and called the report an attempt to defame the Taliban. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 23, 2020:** The Taliban launch overnight raids in Ghazni province.
The raids kill at least 14 security personnel and wound at least eight others. Source: [Gandhara](#)
- **June 17, 2020:** The Taliban attacks two military bases in Aqcha District.
The attack kills 16, wounds five others, and results in the kidnapping of one other. In Kunduz City, a Taliban Red Unit attacks a security outpost. The attack kills seven and wounds three others. In Zurmat District, a mother and her two children are killed when their vehicle collides with a roadside bomb planted by the Taliban. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 15, 2020:** The Taliban ambush four villages—Akhundzada, Norkhil, Payendakhil and Jangali—in Tagab District.
The attacks kill 14 and wound 22 others. In Deh Yak District, the Taliban capture a security outpost and detonate a roadside bomb. The ambush and explosion kills 15 security forces and wounds nine others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 12, 2020:** The Taliban attack a village in Pasaban District.
The attack kills seven security officials and wounds one other. In Khosan District, Taliban insurgents attack a security outpost, killing five and wounding six others. In Kabul, the Taliban detonate explosives hidden in a mosque, killing the imam and three others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 9, 2020:** Taliban militants detonate a bomb that strikes a vehicle carrying a district chief and four pro-government militiamen in Mazar-I-Sharif, Northern Afghanistan.
The attack kills five. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **June 2, 2020:** A bomb detonates at a popular mosque in Kabul’s Green Zone.
The attack kills two and wounds two others. No group claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **June 1, 2020:** A roadside bomb detonates in northern Afghanistan.
The attack kills seven. Afghan authorities suspect the Taliban was behind the attack. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **May 31, 2020:** A roadside bomb detonates in Kabul.
The bomb targeted a bus carrying employees of Khrushid TV. The attack kills two and wounds four. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack, claiming Khrushid TV is a station “loyal to the Afghan apostate government.” Source: [Stars and Stripes](#)
- **May 28, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a security outpost in Siah Gird District, Parwan Province.
The attack kills seven, wounds one, and results in the kidnapping of two others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 26, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a security convoy in Shanky District, Zabul Province.
The attack kills three and wounds one other. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 22, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a security outpost in Faiz Abad.
The attack kills five and wounds seven others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 21, 2020:** The Taliban ambush a bus in Shajoe, Zabul province.
The attack kills three passengers. In Shah-Tigh, Goh province, Taliban militants attack a security outpost. The ambush kills one officer and wounds another. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 20, 2020:** Taliban militants attack a security outpost in the Lala Gozar village of Khowaja Bahawuddin District.
The attack kills nine pro-government militia members and wounds six others. Source: [New York Times](#)

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- **May 19, 2020:** Gunmen open fire outside of a mosque in Kalezay village, Charikar. The attack kills 12 people and wounds six others. Although the government claims the Taliban is responsible for the attack, the insurgents allege the attack was actually the government's doing. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 18, 2020:** An explosives-filled Humvee detonates at an Afghan intelligence agency installation in Ghazni province, killing at least seven people and wounded 40. The Taliban claim responsibility. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **May 14, 2020:** An explosives-filled truck detonates near a military court in the eastern city of Gardez, killing at least five and wounding at least 14. The Taliban claim responsibility, calling the attack retaliation for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani blaming the group for a May 12 attack on a maternity hospital in Kabul that killed at least 24. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **May 12, 2020:** Three militants wearing police uniforms attack Dasht-e-Barchi Hospital in Kabul and besiege the maternity hospital for five hours until they are killed by security forces. At least 80 women and infants are evacuated from the hospital. At least 24 people, including two newborn babies, are killed. The Taliban deny responsibility and condemn the attack. U.S. officials blame ISIS. Separately, a suicide bomber kills 32 people and wounds more than 60 at the funeral of local pro-government militia commander and former warlord in Nangarhar province's Khewa district. A remotely detonated bomb in a market in Khost kills a child and wounds 10 people. ISIS claims responsibility for both attacks. Sources: [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **May 11, 2020:** Four bombs in northern Kabul wound four. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **May 10, 2020:** Militants attack an Afghan army outpost in Laghman province, killing six soldiers and wounding five. In all, at least 27 soldiers are killed in attacks on military outposts in eastern Afghanistan. The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **May 9, 2020:** On May 9, a gunman kills three returning home from evening prayers in Patakia province. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **May 7, 2020:** A rocket strikes a power station in Kabul and two roadside bombs detonate. There are no reported casualties from either attack. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **May 3, 2020:** Suspected Taliban militants throw a hand grenade into a mosque in the Khayerkot district of the southeastern Paktika province, wounding at least 20. Separately, a truck bomb at a military center in Helmand province kills at least five and wounds seven. The following day, the Taliban claim responsibility for the Helmand attack and claim the bombing killed and wounded dozens. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)
- **April 21, 2020:** Suspected Taliban militants attack a security checkpoint at the Mes Aynak Copper Mine in eastern Logar province, killing at least eight members of the Afghan security forces. Militants also attack multiple checkpoints in Sar-i-Pul province, killing 11 and wounding 19. The Taliban also capture one of the checkpoints. A roadside bomb kills at least four in Ghazni province. The Afghan government blames the Taliban for all the attacks, though the group does not immediately claim responsibility. Source: [France 24](#)
- **April 19, 2020:** Suspected Taliban militants ambush Khwaja Ghor district, opening fire on security personnel. At least 19 security personnel are killed. In northern Balkh province, the Taliban ambush security forces, killing seven and injuring one child. In western Badghis province, the Taliban attack an army checkpoint, killing three soldiers and wounding 10. Sources: [The Hindu](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **April 16, 2020:** The Taliban ambushes security outposts in Charkh District, Logar Province. The attack kills 13 soldiers and injures one other. That same day, the Taliban shoot and kill two police officers, one in Pul-e-Malan and the other in Tagob-Esmail. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 15, 2020:** In an insider job, a cook poisons five police officers at a security outpost in Imam Saheb. He seizes weapons, equipment and a military vehicle before fleeing to join the Taliban. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 12, 2020:** The Taliban ambush a vehicle belonging to an officer of the National Directorate of Security in Gardez City. The attack kills three, including the officer. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 7, 2020 - April 8, 2020:** On April 7, the Taliban ambushes security forces in Sholgara, northern Balkh province. The attackers took seven civilians hostage during the ambush, killing them the next day. Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)
- **April 7, 2020 - April 8, 2020:** Taliban officials walk out of peace talks with the Afghan government. According to Suhail Shaheen, the spokesman for the Taliban's Qatar office, the first face-to-face discussions with the government were "fruitless" as the talks broke down over a prisoner swap that was previously agreed upon between the U.S. and the Taliban in February 2020. The Taliban allegedly wanted the release of 15 commanders involved in what the Afghan government considered big attacks. However, Kabul did not agree to the conditions, and instead sought to release 400 low-threat Taliban prisoners in exchange for a reduction in violence from the jihadist camp. On April 8, Javid Faisal, spokesman for Afghanistan's Office of the National Security Council, announced that the Afghan government will release 100 Taliban prisoners in an effort to keep the peace talks moving forward. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Anadolu Agency](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **April 7, 2020:** Taliban rebels storm the headquarters of Baharak district. However, Afghan security forces are able to repel the attack, killing three militants, including Taliban commander Qari Ansarullah Gajar. Gajar's death will likely affect Taliban operations in Takhar and surrounding areas. Sources: [Xinhua](#), [Telangana Today](#)
- **April 4, 2020:** Afghan forces arrest Abdullah Orokzai, a.k.a. Aslam Farooqi, the leader of ISIS-K. Nineteen other militants are arrested, including two high-ranking members. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)

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- **April 2, 2020:** The Taliban attack security outposts in Karistan, Moqor district. Six security forces are killed. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **March 29, 2020 - March 30, 2020:** Militants kill at least 28 members of the Afghan security forces in multiple attacks. On March 29, an attack on a military checkpoint in the Arghandab district in the southern Zabol province kills at least six. Separately, militants attack a checkpoint in the Baghlan province, killing at least five and wounding six others. Militants also storm a police compound in the Takhar province, killing at least 13. On March 30, a sticky bomb attached to a vehicle in Kabul kills at least four. Authorities blame the Taliban for the attacks, but the group does not immediately claim responsibility. As a result of the attacks, the Afghan government cancels the release of 100 Taliban prisoners that had been scheduled for March 31 as part of peace negotiations with the Taliban. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#), [Reuters](#)
 - **March 25, 2020:** Gunmen throw grenades and shoot indiscriminately during an attack on a Sikh temple in Kabul, killing at least 25 and wounding at least eight. The gunmen take up to 200 hostages during a six-hour standoff with security forces, who eventually kill all three attackers. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack. Sources: [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Guardian](#)
 - **March 9, 2020:** ISIS launches a rocket attack during president elect Ashraf Ghani's Inauguration ceremony. The assailants launched five missiles to target the presidential palace. It is unclear if there were any casualties, despite claims from ISIS's official news agency claiming an "injury was delivered." Source: [Newsweek](#)
 - **March 6, 2020:** Two gunmen open fire on a crowded event in Kabul. The attack kills 32 and injures at least 58 others. The event commemorated the life of an ethnic Hazara leader who was killed by Taliban militants in 1995. ISIS-K, ISIS's branch in Afghanistan, claimed responsibility for the attack. The Hazara are a minority Shiite Muslim group who are frequently targeted by both ISIS and the Taliban. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **March 5, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a security outpost in Sharesafa. The attack kills six and wounds others. Also that day, the Taliban ambush the Makhmal Kocha area of Imam Sahib District. The attack kills six. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **March 4, 2020:** The Taliban attack a military base in Kunduz city. The attack kills 15 soldiers. That same day, they attack a security outpost in the Niche area of Tarin Kot. The attack kills nine. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **March 2, 2020:** The Taliban carry out eight different attacks in Faryab, Kandahar, Wardak, Helmand, Herat, Paktia, and Badghis Provinces. In each attack, the assailants ambush a security outpost. In total, the attacks kill nine. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **February 24, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a pro-government checkpoint in Balkh's Chahar Kint district. The attack killed at least six and wounds another five. Source: [Radio Free Europe](#)
 - **February 20, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a local outpost in Khwaja Ghar District. The attack kills four police officers. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **February 17, 2020:** The Taliban ambush a security outpost in Kunduz. The attack kills 15 soldiers and wounds three others. Also in Kunduz, the Taliban launch a mortar attack. The attack kills one and wounds eight others. Also that day, the Taliban shoot and kill one pro-government militia member in Faryab province and two members of the security forces in Jowzjan province. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **February 16, 2020:** The Taliban ambush a security checkpoint in Kunduz. According to Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, the attack kills 19 people. However, the Afghan defense ministry puts the death toll at five. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **February 14, 2020:** The U.S. government and the Taliban meet in Munich, Germany, where they agree on the first step of a peace deal that could end the 18-year long Afghan war. U.S. and Taliban officials agree to a reduction in violence over a seven-day period, with the U.S. military monitoring the progress of the violence reduction. If the reduction in violence is successful, the negotiations will enter into the next stage which will include talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government and a reduction in the 13,000 U.S. troops that are currently stationed in the country. However, the peace process faces a new obstacle in the face of Ashraf Ghani's second term win as the president of Afghanistan. The Taliban have been vocal in their rejection of Ghani's win and have consistently announced their rejection of any Afghan government supported by the U.S. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Newsweek](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Washington Post](#)
 - **February 11, 2020:** A suicide attacker detonates an explosive in Kabul. The attack kills six and wounds 13 others. No group claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **February 8, 2020:** In an insider attack, an assailant dressed in an Afghan army uniform opens fire in Nangarhar province. The attack kills two U.S. soldiers, Sgt. Javier Jaguar Gutierrez and Sgt. Antonio Rey Rodriguez, and wounds six others. No group claims responsibility for the attack, but U.S. and Afghan forces have been fighting both Taliban and ISIS fighters in the area. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#)
 - **February 3, 2020:** The Taliban ambushes a pro-government militia commander in Sar-i-Pul City. The attack kills six and wounds three others. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **February 2, 2020:** The Taliban attacks a security outpost in Ali Abad District. The attack kills five and wounds three others. Security forces eventually repel the insurgents. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **January 29, 2020:** The Taliban ambush security checkpoints in Dasht-e Archi district, northern Kunduz province. At least 13 Afghan security forces are killed and at least 12 others are injured in the overnight assault. Government forces eventually repel the insurgents. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
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- **January 27, 2020:** A U.S. Air Force jet crashes in Ghazni province, eastern Afghanistan. Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, later releases a statement claiming “an aircraft of American occupiers has crashed in Ghazni province,” and that “lots” of U.S. service members were killed. However, the next day, the U.S. military confirmed that two casualties were recovered from the wreckage. The circumstances around the crash are still unclear as some versions of Mujahid’s statement claimed the plane crashed while another stated that the jihadist group brought down the aircraft. The crash site is in territory controlled by the Taliban. Colonel Sonny Leggett, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, later confirms that “while the cause of [the] crash is under investigation, there are no indications the crash was caused by enemy fire.” Although the Taliban claims to have shot down the aircraft, the Taliban often takes credit for attacks that will legitimize their role as a viable threat to military forces. Adding to the confusion around the crash, Iranian news and social media reports have framed the crash as retaliation for the death of Major General Qasem Soleimani, the former leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Quds Force, who was killed in an American drone strike weeks earlier. Iranian reports also went so far as to falsely identifying a C.I.A. official who had been killed in the crash. The U.S. military was quick to negate these claims. The U.S. Air Force uses the jet that crashed as a flying command and communications hub, according to CBS News. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [The Hill](#), [CBS News](#), [Business Insider](#), [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#)
- **January 23, 2020:** The Taliban attack a security outpost in Baghlan-e-Markazi District. The attack kills five security forces and wounds seven others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **January 16, 2020:** A Taliban red unit attacks a security outpost in Nawabad-e-Andarabiha village of Khan Abad District. The attack kills 11 and wounds two others. Police officers eventually repel the insurgents. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **January 11, 2020:** A vehicle carrying U.S. troops hits a roadside bomb in southern Kandahar. The attack kills two U.S. service members—Staff Sergeant Ian McLaughlin and Private First Class Miguel Villalon—and injures two others. The Taliban claims responsibility for the attack. Sources: [CBS News](#), [CBS News](#)
- **January 9, 2020:** Resolute Support, NATO’s mission in Afghanistan, launches a drone attack in Herat Province. The attack kills Mullah Nangyalay, a top Taliban splinter-group commander. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **January 1, 2020:** The Taliban attacks security outposts in Dash-e-Arch District, Kunduz Province. The attack kills 14 and injures two others. Also on the 1st, the Taliban attack Belcheragh District center in Faryab, Province. The attack kills five security forces and wounds two others. Also in Balk province on the same day, the Taliban attack a security outpost on the Balk-Jowzjan highway. The attack kills nine officers. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **December 30, 2019:** Three separate attacks occur in Jowzjan, Faryab and Helmand Provinces. In the first, Taliban militants violently clash with Afghan forces in the Abad outpost in Faizabad District. The attack kills 14 security forces. The second attack occurs when a bomb detonates in Khwaja Sabz Posh District. The explosion kills two, with no group claiming responsibility for the bomb. In the third attack, the Taliban attacks a government vehicle in the Qala-e-Rig village of Zendah Jan District. The attack kills one and wounds two others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **December 29, 2019:** A Taliban red unit attacks a security outpost in Khowaja Bahauddin District. The attack kills 17 militia members and wounds four others. Also on the 29th, the Taliban attacks a military base in the Balghali area of Sar-i-Pul Province. A roadside bomb hits a Humvee and kills two soldiers and wounds three others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **December 28, 2019:** The Taliban detonate explosives under an army checkpoint before ambushing soldiers in Sangin, Helmand Province. The attack kills sixteen and injures at least six others. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Voice of America](#)
- **December 26, 2019:** An explosives-filled Humvee detonates at a military base in Pul-e-Bangala area of Balk District. The attack kills 20 security forces and wounds six others. No group claims responsibility for the attack. Also on the 26th in Uruzgan Province, an explosives-laden motorcycle detonates near a vehicle belonging to the health director of Uruzgan. The attack kills three and injures three others. No group claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **December 25, 2019:** Taliban militants intercept a convoy of vehicles on a highway in Farah Province. The insurgents kidnap 27 peace activists from the organization People’s Peace Movement. The activists planned to travel throughout Farah to call for peace and ceasefire among Afghanistan’s rival sides. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **December 24, 2019:** Taliban insurgents enter a military base in Dawlat Abad District, Balk Province. In the suspected insider attack, the insurgents then burn an army container, killing 16 soldiers. They also hold six soldiers hostage. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)
- **December 23, 2019:** Taliban insurgents target U.S. and Afghan soldiers in northern Kunduz province with an improvised explosive device. The attack kills one U.S. service member, Sgt. First Class Michael J. Goble, and wounds two others. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid announces that the Taliban was responsible for the attack via Whatsapp, while also attaching photos of an ID belonging to the U.S. Army sergeant and blood-soaked clothing. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#)
- **December 13, 2019:** A roadside bomb detonates in Jaghatu District. The explosion kills ten and injures six others. No group claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **December 11, 2019:** Two suicide bombers and five gunmen target an under-construction medical facility near Bagram Air Base, an American base north of Kabul. The explosion kills two and wounds more than 70. The Taliban claim responsibility for the attack. Source: [CBS News](#)
- **December 10, 2019:** The Taliban ambushes the funeral of an Afghan government employee in Jawzjan province. The militants abduct as many as 45 elderly family members of the deceased. The Taliban have consistently warned people not to attend the funerals of anyone working with the Kabul government. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **December 9, 2019:** A suicide car bomb detonates in southern Helmand province.

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The attack kills five soldiers and wounds at least four others. The attacker was shot and killed before reaching his intended target—a checkpoint for an Afghan national army compound—at which point the vehicle exploded. The Taliban immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Source: [Associated Press](#)

- **December 7, 2019:** Qatar hosts a new round of peace talks between the United States and the Taliban. These negotiations between the U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Afghanistan’s Taliban are the first talks between the two camps since U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the dialogue in September. Among the participants of the current talks is Anas Haqqani, one of three senior Taliban figures freed last month in exchange for kidnapped American University of Afghanistan professors—American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks. The talks will initially focus on getting a Taliban promise to reduce violence, with a permanent cease-fire being the eventual goal. Source: [Washington Post](#)
- **December 1, 2019:** The Taliban attacks security outposts on the highway connecting Kunduz to Takhar Province. The attack kills 11 soldiers and leads to the capture of five others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **November 27, 2019:** A car strikes a roadside bomb, in Imam Sahib District. At least 13 people are killed. It is suspected that the Taliban planted the bomb. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **November 20, 2019:** A Taliban Red Unit attacks a military base in the village of Arbab Khalili in Imam Sahib District. The attack kills 13 soldiers and wounding five others. Also on the 20th, a member of the Taliban infiltrates the border patrol in Atishan, Adraskan District, and shoots and kills five border soldiers. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **November 13, 2019:** A car bomb detonates in Kabul. At least 12 civilians are killed and another 20 are wounded. The GardaWorld security company—based in Montreal, Canada—was the apparent target. It is suspected that the Taliban or ISIS planted the bomb. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **November 12, 2019 - November 19, 2019:** On November 12, 2019, President Ashraf Ghani announces that Afghanistan will release two senior Taliban commanders, Haji Mali Khan and Abdul Rashid, and Anas Haqqani, a leader of the Haqqani militant group, in exchange for an American and an Australian professor who were kidnapped in 2016. The government’s decision is in the hope of securing direct talks with the Taliban. On November 19, 2019, the Taliban releases the two hostages. The Taliban describes the prisoner exchange, which they say included 10 captured Afghan soldiers, as a “goodwill and confidence-building measure that can aid the peace process.” Sources: [Reuters](#), [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **November 4, 2019:** The Taliban target security forces with a roadside bomb in the Akakhil village of Dand-e-Shahabuddin area in Pul-i-Kumri City, the provincial capital. The bomb hits a vehicle and kills 8 while wounding six others. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **November 1, 2019:** The Taliban attack the Charsiha security outpost in Khawaja Bahauddin District. The attack kills nine and wounds three. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 29, 2019:** A Taliban Red Unit attacks the Bala Hisar military base in Aqcha District, where fighting continues for three hours. The attack kills 24 security forces and wounds another 10. Five soldiers were taken prisoner. The Taliban seized equipment, four Humvees and 29 weapons before reinforcements arrived and recaptured the base. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 25, 2019:** A Taliban Red Unit attacks two security outposts in the Qorogh and Khwaja Bandkasha villages of Ishkamish District. The ambushes kill 10 security forces, including five police special forces and five pro-government militia members. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 22, 2019:** The Taliban storm a checkpoint in Ali Abad, killing at least 15 policemen and wounding another two. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **October 18, 2019:** Explosives detonate in a mosque in Deh Bala. At least 60 people are killed and another 50 are wounded. It is expected that ISIS is responsible for the attack given a history of insurgent presence in the area. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 11, 2019:** A series of explosions occur in eastern Afghanistan, ultimately wounding five people. The first explosion targets the house of Suhrah Qaderi, the head of the Nangarhar provincial council. A bodyguard was wounded. A second explosion nearby, minutes later, wounds one civilian. Several hours later, a bomb detonates outside a mosque in Jalalabad, wounding three civilians. ISIS claims responsibility for the first two attacks. No group claims responsibility for the attack on the mosque. Source: [Washington Post](#)
- **October 9, 2019:** The Afghan National Directorate of Security, Afghanistan’s intelligence service, claims that Asim Omar—the leader of AQIS—was among those killed during a joint U.S.-Afghan operation on September 23, 2019 in Helmand province that killed at least 40 people. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **October 7, 2019:** A bomb placed in a rickshaw explodes and hits a shuttle of newly recruited soldiers. The attack kills 10 people and wounds another 27. No group claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 5, 2019:** In an effort to revive U.S.-Taliban peace negotiations, Taliban officials meet with U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in Pakistan to discuss confidence-building measures that could include a possible prisoner swap or a reduction in violence. The discussions between the two sides were informal, the Taliban members said, and did not indicate the beginning of a new round of peace discussions, only that one may take place in the future. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **October 4, 2019:** A Taliban Red Unit attacks a security outpost in Telawka. The attack kills 10 soldiers. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 28, 2019:** In order to curb voter participation in the presidential election, the Taliban carries out over 68 attacks on polling stations across the country. At least 40 people are killed and over 190 are wounded in the attacks. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 26, 2019:** The Taliban attacks a security outpost in Pashton Kot District.

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The attack kills 13 public protection officers and wounds six others. That same day, the Taliban attacks a security outpost in Darzab District killing four officers and wounding five others. Also on the 26th, the Taliban attacks a security outpost in Dara-e-Suf Payan District. The ambush kills five officers and wounds five others. Source: [New York Times](#)

- **September 25, 2019:** The Taliban attacks outposts in Qaramqul District. The attack kills 13 police officers and pro-government militia members. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 24, 2019:** Unconfirmed rebels detonate a bomb next to Ashraf Ghani's campaign office in Kandahar city. The explosion kills four civilians. Also that day, the Taliban attack a local police outpost in Ali Abad District. The attack kills 10 police officers. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 23, 2019:** U.S. special operations forces backing Afghan commandos raid a building filled with dozens of al-Qaeda fighters in southern Afghanistan. The raid kills over 20 militants and wounds another 14. Source: [Fox News](#)
- **September 19, 2019:** An airstrike targets an ISIS tent in Khogyani District. The strike kills at least 31 and injures another 30. The victims were civilians and were not affiliated with ISIS. Also on the 19th, a Taliban truck bomb explodes near a hospital in Qalat, Zabol Province. The attack kills at least 20 people and injures another 95. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 17, 2019:** A suicide bomber on a motorcycle detonates outside a Presidential rally in Charikar. At least 26 people are killed and another 30 are injured. Later that day, another suicide bomber detonates outside the Ministry of Defense in Kabul. The attack kills 22 and wounds another 38. The Taliban claims responsibility for both attacks. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#)
- **September 5, 2019:** A car bomb explodes in Kabul. At least 10 people are killed and another 42 are injured. The Taliban claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 3, 2019:** Taliban militants storm Afghan forces in Zarih District. At least 35 soldiers are killed, but the Taliban does not capture the district. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **September 2, 2019:** A truck bomb explodes near Green Village, a compound that houses foreign contractors and nongovernment organizations. Exact figures are unreported, but it is suspected that at least 30 people are killed and more than 100 are wounded. The Taliban claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 31, 2019:** The Taliban attacks Kunduz City from multiple directions. The attack kills 10 security officials. Following the ambush, a suicide bomber detonates killed 10 more security forces and five civilians. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 28, 2019:** The Taliban attacks a village in Koshk-e-Robatsangi. At least 14 people are killed and nine others are wounded. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 20, 2019:** Security forces ambush Taliban militants in Darqad district. The ambush kills four militants, including Mohammad Omar, a local Taliban leader. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **August 19, 2019:** A series of bombings strike restaurants and public squares in Jalalabad on Afghanistan's 100th Independence Day. At least 66 people are wounded. No group claims responsibility for the 10 bombs, but both ISIS and the Taliban operate in the area. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **August 17, 2019:** A suicide bomber infiltrates a wedding in Kabul and detonates his bomb-laden vest. The attack kills 63 and injures 182. ISIS's Khorasan Province claims responsibility for the bombing. The attack was meant to target the Shiite community, but the fatalities included members of both Sunni and Shiite sects. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **August 16, 2019:** A bomb detonates at a mosque in southwestern Pakistan, killing Hafiz Ahmadullah, the brother of Afghan Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhunzada. At least four others were killed in the attack. The mosque served as a headquarters for a council of Taliban leaders to meet and discuss issues. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **August 16, 2019:** NATO-led aircrafts strike Ghazni province, killing six Taliban militants and injuring four others. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **August 14, 2019:** Afghan security forces ambush a group of Taliban fighters in Kunduz province. The ambush kills five militants and injures five others. The militants were trying to establish a checkpoint on a road leading to the border town of Shir Kham Port. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **August 11, 2019:** Taliban militants surrender to security forces in northern Badakhshan. Among the 15 who surrendered was Taliban commander Mullah Asho, the second in command in Badakhshan province. The same day, special forces of the National Directorate of Security raid the Kolalgo area of Zurmat District. The operation kills at least 11 civilians. Sources: [Xinhua](#), [New York Times](#)
- **August 10, 2019:** Taliban forces attack a military convoy on the highway connecting Kabul and Kandahar. During the battle, the military Humvee hits a roadside bomb, killing four soldiers in the process. Also that day, the Taliban attacks Qarqin district center where fighting ensues for five hours. One soldier and one pro-government militia member are killed in the clash, and two other members are wounded. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **August 9, 2019:** The Afghan National Police launch an operation in eastern Logar province, arresting two Taliban suspects involved in terror attacks. The suspects were using walkie-talkie radio signals to report the location and commute of government officials along the Kabul-Logar highway. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **August 7, 2019:** A suicide car bomb explodes outside of a police station in Kabul.

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The attack kills 18 and injures at least 145. The Taliban claims responsibility for the attack. The blast comes a day after the insurgents call for a boycott of the presidential election on September 28. Separately, security forces conduct raids on two Islamic State hideouts in Kabul. The raids kill five, including two militants and three members of the security forces. Sources: [Radio Free Europe](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#)

- **August 5, 2019:** A policeman in Kandahar opens fire on his colleagues. The attacker fled the scene after killing seven officers. Taliban spokesperson Qari Yusuf Ahmadi claims the attacker is a member of the Taliban. Separately, the Afghan special forces conduct airstrikes in Uruzgan, Ghazni, Paktika and Faryab provinces. At least 16 militants are killed within 24 hours. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Xinhua](#)
- **August 3, 2019:** An airstrike kills three Taliban leaders, including Mullah Abdul Bari, the shadow governor, in Farah province. It is uncertain whether the strike was conducted by the Afghan Air Force or NATO-led coalition forces. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **August 1, 2019:** ISIS releases a video of its members publicly beheading a Taliban member. According to the Middle East Media Research Institute, “ISIS considers Taliban members to be apostates who can thus be lawfully killed.” Source: [Washington Times](#)
- **July 31, 2019:** A roadside bomb tears through a bus in western Afghanistan. At least 34 people are killed and 15 are injured. It is suspected that the Taliban are behind the attack. Source: [Washington Post](#)
- **July 29, 2019:** In an insider attack, an Afghan soldier opens fire on American troops in Kandahar. Two U.S. soldiers are killed, and the perpetrator, reportedly a member of the Taliban, is wounded. Source: [BBC News](#)
- **July 28, 2019:** An unidentified number of gunmen and three suicide bombers storm the office of Amrullah Saleh, President Ashraf Ghani’s running mate. At least 20 people, including three assailants, are killed and 50 people are injured, including Saleh. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. Source: [Radio Free Europe](#)
- **July 27, 2019:** A suicide bomber attacked the Ab Band police headquarters in southeastern Ghazni Province. There were three casualties and 12 injuries. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the bombing. Sources: [Radio Free Europe](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **July 25, 2019:** The Taliban detonate a car bomb in Kabul, killing 11 civilians. On the same day, A Taliban Red Unit attacks two security bases in Ishkamish District. Thirty-seven soldiers and police officers are killed, and six officers are wounded. Afghan reinforcements later recapture both bases. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 18, 2019:** Taliban fighters detonate a car bomb outside the police headquarters in Kandahar city. At least 11 are killed and nearly 90 others are wounded. Two Taliban attackers blew themselves up and six others are shot dead. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **July 16, 2019:** Afghan commandos raid a Taliban prison near the house of the Taliban shadow governor in Aab Kamari District. Thirty-five commandos and four civilians are killed. Four civilians are taken prisoner by the insurgents. Thirty Taliban fighters are killed and another 50 are wounded. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 13, 2019:** The Taliban plant a roadside bomb in Sayedabad which strikes an American armored personnel carrier. One U.S. soldier is killed in the attack. The same day, a group of suicide bombers storm a police base in Qala-e-Naq, killing at least three security personnel and wounding eight others. The Taliban claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **July 9, 2019:** The Taliban attack and eventually capture two military bases and three security outposts in Imam Sahib District. Nine security forces are killed, and 11 are injured. 10 border force members are taken hostage. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 2, 2019 - July 3, 2019:** Taliban forces—comprised of 130 militants—capture Qosh Tepa, killing 20 security forces, including N.D.S. officers and soldiers. A day later, the Taliban ambush Darzab District, killing the head of the National Directorate of Security and five officers who fled Qosh Tepa the day before. Two others are wounded. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 1, 2019:** Five Taliban members detonate a car bomb and storm an area housing military and government buildings in Kabul. The attack leaves 105 people wounded and at least 16, including the five insurgents, dead. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [CNN](#)
- **June 30, 2019:** The Taliban attacks a military base in Kandahar. The insurgents detonate an explosive-filled Humvee and then drive a stolen police pickup truck filled with explosives into the base. The attack leaves 45 of the 60 police officers, 8 civilians, and 25 Taliban fighters dead. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 26, 2019:** Two U.S. soldiers are killed by small-arms fire during a military operation against the Taliban in southern Uruzgan province. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 11, 2019:** Afghan security forces launch clearance operations in Kohistanat, killing 16 insurgents including Abdul Bashir, the commander of the Taliban’s Red Unit Force and wounding 23 others. Two security personnel are killed and four others are injured during the operation. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **May 31, 2019:** A car bomb hits a convoy of foreign forces in Kabul. It is reported that at least four bystanders are killed, and seven are wounded, including four U.S. troops. The Taliban-sponsored attack came as a delegation of Taliban officials met Senior Afghan politicians in Moscow to discuss a possible peace process to end the almost two decade war in Afghanistan. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **May 30, 2019:** A suicide bomber targets the Marshal Fahim National Defense University in Kabul. At least six are killed and another six are wounded. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **May 28, 2019:** Taliban insurgents attack security checkpoints in western Ghor province and eastern Logar province. Eighteen are killed and seven are wounded in Ghor, while five soldiers are killed, four wounded, and four captured in Logar. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **May 27, 2019:** The Taliban captures and burns down Qashqari military base while also attacking several outposts in Sar-i-Pul City.

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During the 5-hour attack, eight security officials are killed, 29 are wounded, and three soldiers are taken prisoner by the Taliban. Source: [New York Times](#)

- **May 15, 2019:** The Afghan Ministry of the interior confirms that Mullah Khadem, a key Taliban commander, is killed in a military operation in Balkh Province. Khadem commanded over 10 insurgents in the area. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 10, 2019:** Taliban militants overrun two government outposts in Murghab. The exact number of casualties is not released, but it is reported that more than 20 Afghan soldiers are dead including several officers from an elite police unit. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 8, 2019:** Four Taliban insurgents detonate an explosive-laden vehicle and then break into American NGO Counterpart International's offices in Kabul. At least nine are killed, including the attackers, and 24 are injured. Source: [CNN](#)
- **May 5, 2019:** A suicide car bomber strikes the entrance of a police headquarters in Pul-e-Khmuri with eight gunmen rushing in after the explosion, killing 13 officers and injuring 55. The Taliban claims responsibility. The attack comes two days after President Ashraf Ghani demands an immediate cease-fire between the Taliban and government forces. Source: [Radio Free Europe](#)
- **April 27, 2019:** The Taliban attacks a security outpost in Feroz Koh City. Nine security forces are killed and five others are wounded. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **April 20, 2019:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive and a gunmen open fire on the Afghan ministry of information in Kabul. The attack kills 11—four civilians, three police officers, and all five attackers—and injures eight. Source: [BBC News](#)
- **April 14, 2019 - April 15, 2019:** On April 14, the Benafsha Girls High School in the Farah province's Tosak village is burned down by unidentified militants. Overnight on April 15, militants blow up the Nawdeh Girls High School, also in Farah province. There are no casualties in the attacks. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, though the Taliban had recently warned that it would attack girls' schools. Approximately 2,000 students attended the two schools altogether. Sources: [TOLO News](#), [Xinhua](#)
- **April 13, 2019 - April 14, 2019:** A gunman opens fire at a wedding in Khost province, killing at least five and wounding 15. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **April 13, 2019:** Taliban militants attack the city of Kunduz, killing at least six and wounding at least 50. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **April 12, 2019:** The Taliban announce the *al-Fath* ("Victory") operation, the beginning of their annual spring offensive. A Taliban statement calls on Afghan soldiers and police officers to abandon the government. Taliban militants ambush a police convoy in the Ghor province, killing at least seven and wounding three. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **April 8, 2019 - April 9, 2019:** On April 8, an explosives-laden vehicle explodes at the Bagram Air Field, killing three U.S. Marines and wounds three others. The Taliban claim responsibility. Overnight, Taliban forces raid Afghan army bases near the Pakistani border, killing at least 20 soldiers. A Taliban spokesman claims credit and claims the group also stole weapons. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **April 6, 2019:** Twin explosions in Jalalabad kill at least three and wound 20. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Also that day, suspected Taliban militants attack two security checkpoints in Sari Pul and Ghazni provinces, killing at least seven and wounding 12. The Taliban claim responsibility for the attack on Ghazni but not in Sari Pul. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **April 4, 2019:** Hundreds of Taliban fighters attack the center of Bala Murghab district in Badghis province, killing at least 30 Afghan soldiers and officers and capturing 21 others. The Afghan Air Force launches airstrikes around the district in response but Afghan officials warn that reinforcements are desperately needed. Also that day, explosives at a health facility in Pul-i-Kumri City kill one and wound 18. In the Faizabad district of the Jowzjan province, Taliban fighters launch a pre-dawn raid on a security outpost that leaves six police officers dead and one wounded. Four Taliban fighters are also reportedly killed during the fighting. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 30, 2019 - March 31, 2019:** On March 30, multiple Taliban attacks on security checkpoints across the country kill at least 30. On March 31, Taliban fighters ambush the convoy of Afghan Vice President Abdurrashid Dostum, killing two of his guards. Four Taliban militants are also reportedly killed. The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Washington Post](#)
- **March 28, 2019 - March 29, 2019:** Taliban forces attack security outposts in Badakhshan, Zabul, and Ghazni provinces, killing at least 17. The Taliban claim responsibility for all three attacks. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **March 23, 2019:** Twin explosions at an agricultural show in Lashkar Gah kill at least four and wound 31. The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **March 22, 2019:** Taliban militants attack Afghan forces in the Sangin district of Helmand province, killing at least 40. Afghan officials do not confirm the details of the attack or the death toll, but some reports claims up to 65 Afghan soldiers are killed. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 21, 2019:** Militants plant four landmines in Kabul. Three explode during celebrations of Nowruz, the Persian new year, killing at least six and wounding 23. Security forces diffuse the fourth before it explodes. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Reuters](#)
- **March 17, 2019:** Taliban forces capture 150 Afghan soldiers after forcing Afghan units in the Badghis province into neighboring Turkmenistan.

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It is the largest known capture to date of Afghan soldiers in the war against militants. The capture raises the total number of Afghan soldiers captured that week to 190. At least 16 soldiers are killed. Taliban forces largely take control of the Murghab district. Source: [New York Times](#)

- **March 15, 2019:** Militants shoot TV journalist Sultan Mahmoud Khirkhwa in the head in Khost, killing the reporter. The attackers are reportedly shot dead. ISIS claims responsibility two days later. Khirkhwa is the fourth journalist killed in Afghanistan in 2019. Source: [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)
- **March 13, 2019:** Taliban forces attack an army checkpoint in the Farah province, killing 10. At least five soldiers are reported missing after security forces repel the attack. The Taliban claim responsibility. Separately, a bomb attached to the car of Afghan journalist Nesar Ahmad Ahmadi wounds the journalist in Helmand province. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **March 7, 2019:** Militants fire mortars at a memorial service in Kabul, killing at least three and wounding 20. The service, for a Hazara leader killed by the Taliban in 1995, is attended by high-level Afghan politicians, including former President Hamid Karzai. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Service. Source: [Washington Post](#)
- **March 6, 2019:** A suicide bomber explodes at the office of the Entire Builders and Engineers construction company in Jalalabad. Four gunmen wearing suicide vests attack the site, killing 16 employees. The attackers then engage security forces in a five-hour-long gun battle who kill all of the militants. Security forces discover a nearby vehicle with suicide vests, explosives, and landmines. There are no immediate claims of responsibility and the Taliban deny responsibility. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 4, 2019:** Taliban militants attack a military base and police outpost in Kunduz province, killing 19 soldiers and police officers. Separately, Taliban militants storm the main bazaar of Yangi Qala district in the Takhar province, killing three and wounding seven. Sources: [Xinhua](#), [New York Times](#)
- **March 1, 2019:** Up to 30 Taliban militants wearing Afghan military uniforms, including at least eight suicide bombers, attack the Camp Shorab military compound in Helmand province, killing at least 40 and wounding 16. A small contingent of U.S. forces is stationed at the base to train Afghan soldiers but no U.S. citizens are injured. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
- **February 17, 2019:** Taliban gunmen open fire on a police vehicle in the Baghlan province, killing at least two civilians and wounding five others. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **February 12, 2019 - February 13, 2019:** On February 12, Taliban militants attack a security checkpoint in the Balamurghab district in the Badghis province, killing eight and wounding eight others. Later in the day, Taliban militants attack a security post in Farah city, killing four and wounding four others. A mortar strikes a house in the Takhar province, killing three and wounding eight. Source: [Xinhua](#)
- **February 6, 2019:** Taliban fighters kill seven soldiers in an attack on a military outpost in Arghandab District, Zabul Province. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **February 5, 2019:** Taliban fighters kill 30 Afghan security personnel and wound 20 more when they storm a checkpoint in the Telawaki area of Kunduz City. The Taliban also capture a security outpost and kill 11 security personnel in the Hasan Tal area of Baghlan-e-Markazi District, Baghlan Province. Sources: [Pajhwok Afghan News](#), [New York Times](#)
- **February 4, 2019:** Taliban fighters kill 10 pro-government militiamen in an attack on the village of Gola, Dara-i-Suf Payan District, Samangan Province. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **February 1, 2019:** Taliban fighters kill 17 Afghan security personnel in attacks across two provinces. The Taliban kill six soldiers in an attack on an outpost in Gorekab, Sozma Qala District, Sar-i-Pul Province. In the Baghdis Province, Taliban fighters kill one soldier and five police officers in an attack in Qades District while five soldiers are killed in an attack on the village of Morichaq, Bala Murghab District. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **January 22, 2019:** A second U.S. soldier is killed in fighting in Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan Province. Source: [CNN](#)
- **January 21, 2019:** Taliban fighters kill 126 Afghan army, special forces, and intelligence personnel in an attack on a training center of the National Directorate for Security in Maidan Wardak province, west of the capital Kabul. The attackers used a captured Humvee as a car bomb before fighting with small arms. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **January 13, 2019:** A U.S. Army Ranger is wounded in Baghdis province and dies of wounds several days later. Source: [CNN](#)
- **January 9, 2019:** Taliban militants attack multiple security positions in three separate provinces, killing a total of at least 21 police officers and wounding 23 officers. In Badghis province, militants kill six policemen. Militants also kill seven police officers in Baghlan province and eight officers in Takhar province. Taliban forces also take control of 30 villages and strategic areas, according to Afghan officials. Sources: [Xinhua](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **January 6, 2019 - January 7, 2019:** On January 6, Taliban militants conduct multiple raids in Badghis province, killing 21 soldiers and police personnel and wounding nine. Afghan security forces say they killed 15 of the attackers and wounded another 10. A Taliban spokesman claims militants killed more than 32 in the raids and seized multiple weapons. On January 7, a bomb explodes in a market in the Janikhail district of Patika province, killing at least 10 and wounding 13. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for the bombing. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **January 5, 2019:** Taliban militants kidnap 15 government employees on their way to work in Farah city, the capital of Farah province.

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The kidnappings take place on the same day that Afghan forces raid a Taliban prison and free 12 hostages. Taliban militants storm a checkpoint in the town of Nava in Kandahar province along the Pakistan border, killing at least seven border police officers. Afghan security reportedly kills 16 of the attackers. The Taliban claim responsibility over social media. Sources: [The Nation](#), [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)

- **January 2, 2019:** Taliban militants attack two security checkpoints outside of Pul-e Khumri, the capital of Baghlan province, killing at least 11 police officers and wounding two others.
Source: [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)
- **January 1, 2019:** Taliban forces launch a series of coordinated attacks that kill at least 27 members of the Afghan security forces. In the Sar-i-Pul province, three Taliban attacks on security forces kill at least 21 people and wound 25 others. In the northern Balkh province, Taliban fighters attack a security outpost, killing six and wounding seven. The militants also steal weapons and equipment. The Taliban claim responsibility for all of the attacks. Later that night, Taliban militants plant a bomb in an underground tunnel near an Afghan National Army military base in Maiwand district in Kandahar province, killing at least five and wounding six. A Taliban spokesman claims the explosion flattened the base and killed at least 40. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [Voice of America](#)
- **December 24, 2018:** Militants blow up a car outside the Ministry for Martyrs and Disabled Persons building in Kabul and then storm the building, killing at least 43 and wounding at least 27.
Security forces kill the attackers after a 10-hour-long gun battle during which the militants also take hostages. The Taliban initially deny involvement in the attack but members of the Afghan government blame the group. Sources: [UNAMA](#), [Washington Post](#), [Washington Post](#), [Washington Post](#)
- **December 11, 2018:** A suicide attack on an operational team from the National Directorate for Security outside of Kabul kills at least four and wounds six.
The Afghan government releases no other information. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **November 28, 2018:** Taliban fighters set off a car bomb outside the entrance of British private security company G4S in Kabul. The militants then attempt to storm the building. The attack leaves at least 10 dead and 19 wounded. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **November 26, 2018:** Taliban militants ambush a police convoy in the Lash-e Joveyn district of Farah province, killing at least 22.
The Afghan government provides no further details. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **November 23, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes during Friday prayers in a mosque on an Afghan army base in Khost province, killing at least 27 and wounding 79.
ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency, claiming the blast killed 50 and wounded 110. ISIS warns of further attacks. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
- **November 20, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes during a religious gathering marking the birthday of the prophet Muhammad at the Uranus Wedding Hall near Kabul, killing at least 55 and wounding at least 96.
There are no immediate claims of responsibility and the Taliban deny responsibility. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Agence France-Presse](#)
- **November 17, 2018:** Taliban militants attack a security checkpoint in the Badghis province, killing at least five and wounding three.
The militants capture one officer. The Taliban claim they also stole ammunition. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **November 9, 2018 - November 15, 2018:** At least 242 Afghan soldiers are killed in militant attacks, according to Afghan casualty reports. On November 11, Taliban militants kill an entire company of 50 elite commandos in Ghazni province. On November 15, Taliban militants attack a joint police and army outpost in the Farah province, killing at least 38. The Taliban claim they also captured weapons and vehicles from the outpost. Taliban forces launch a series of other attacks in Farah and Takhar provinces. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#), [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)
- **November 5, 2018 - November 6, 2018:** Taliban militants launch a series of nine attacks in seven provinces over a 24-hour period that kill at least 59 security personnel.
In a major attack, militants overran the Afghan Border Force battalion headquarters in Farah province, killing at least 20 and capturing other soldiers. At least 23 officers are captured. In Ghazni, the militants capture a joint police and army outpost, killing 16 officers. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **November 3, 2018:** A member of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces attacks NATO forces in Kabul, killing a U.S. National Guardsman and wounding one other.
Afghan forces immediately kill the attacker. The fatality is identified as Brent Taylor, mayor of North Ogden, Utah. Sources: [Reuters](#), [NATO](#)
- **October 31, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes outside the Pul-e-Charkhi prison outside of Kabul, killing seven and wounding five.
There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **October 29, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes near the headquarters of the Independent Election Commission in Kabul, killing at least two and wounding at least seven.
ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [TOLO News](#)
- **October 27, 2018:** A suicide car bomb explodes near a police automotive repair center in Wardak province capital Maidan Shar, killing at least six and wounding 15.
The Taliban claim responsibility. The Taliban also claim the blast killed and wounded dozens of soldiers, which local authorities refute. Sources: [Xinhua](#), [Reuters](#)
- **October 20, 2018 - October 21, 2018:** At least 38 people are killed and 130 wounded in election day violence.
Parliamentary elections are extended a second day because of technical problems and security concerns. Both the Taliban and ISIS had pledged to target the elections. The government records at least 192 security incidents, including a suicide attack at a Kabul voting station that kills at least 15 and a roadside bomb that kills at least 11 in Nangarhar. Almost one-third of polling stations are closed the first day of voting because of security concerns. The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan reports that at least 56 people are killed and 370 wounded during the voting

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period. Sources: [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#)

- **October 19, 2018:** A militant opens fire at a security meeting between Kandahar's police chief, General Abdul Raziq Achakza, and U.S. military leaders, killing Achakza and Kandahar's top intelligence official. The attack also wounds three members of the NATO coalition forces, including U.S. Brigadier General Jeffrey Smiley. U.S. soldiers shoot and kill the attacker. U.S. Army General Scott Miller, the commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, is uninjured in the attack. The Taliban claim responsibility and announce that Achakza had been the primary target. Sources: [ABC News](#), [CNN](#)
- **October 18, 2018:** A gunman wearing an Afghan army uniform opens fire at a security meeting with U.S. military officials at the governor's compound in Kandahar, killing three senior Afghan officials and wounding three Americans. Among the fatalities are the provincial police chief, provincial intelligence director, and Provincial Governor Zalmi Wessa. Security forces shoot and kill the attacker. The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Washington Post](#)
- **October 9, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes at a parliamentary campaign rally in Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, killing at least eight people and wounding 11. The candidate, Saleh Mohammad Achekzai, is among the dead. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **October 6, 2018 - October 7, 2018:** Beginning late on October 6, Taliban fighters set fire to a government building in the Sayed Abad district in the Maidan Wardak province. The militants kill 14 policemen including the district chief. The following day, militants blow up a series of bridges between Kabul and three provinces. Afghan authorities dispute the Taliban claim they overran the Sayed Abad district headquarters. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **October 2, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes at an election rally in the Nangarhar province, killing at least 13 and wounding at least 30. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Separately, Taliban militants attack a security checkpoint in the Faryab province, killing at least 10 and setting the checkpoint on fire. Taliban militants also attack a checkpoint in the Nimroz province, killing six and wounding four. Taliban militants kill at least three and wound six in an attack on a security checkpoint in the Kandahar province. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **September 23, 2018:** A Taliban prisoner at the Shar-e-Safa district jail in Zabol province seizes an assault rifle from a guard and kills at least eight police officers during an hours-long firefight that continues into the next day. The prisoner escaped, according to some reports, though it remains inconclusive. Sources: [Voice of America](#), [MENAFN](#)
- **September 13, 2018 - September 14, 2018:** Overnight Taliban attacks in the Farah province kill at least 29 police officers. Fighters also attack a security outpost in the Samangan province, killing six. A roadside bomb in the Nangahar province wounds five. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for the Samangan or Nangahar attacks but officials suspect the Taliban. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Gulf Times](#)
- **September 11, 2018:** A suicide bomber at a protest rally outside of Jalalabad kills at least 68 and wounds 165. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. The Taliban deny responsibility. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#)
- **September 9, 2018:** Police in Kabul shoot a suicide bomber before he can detonate his explosives. Hours later, a suicide bomber explodes in Kabul near a procession commemorating the 2001 death of former anti-Soviet mujahideen commander Ahmad Shah Massoud. The attack kills at least seven and wounds 25. ISIS claims responsibility but does not provide evidence of its claim. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **September 5, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes at a wrestling training center in a Shiite neighborhood of Kabul. A car bomb explodes outside the center after emergency workers and journalists arrive on the scene. The double bombing kills at least 21 and wounds 70. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [CBS News](#), [CBS News](#), [Reuters](#)
- **August 21, 2018:** Militants fire approximately 30 mortars at the presidential palace in Kabul during a presidential address marking Eid al-Adha. The attacks cause no casualties. Security forces kill four of the nine militants responsible and arrest the other five. Police blame the Taliban. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **August 20, 2018:** The Taliban officially reject a three-month ceasefire offer made a day earlier by President Ashraf Ghani. Taliban fighters ambush three buses in Kunduz and take hostage 170 passengers traveling to Kabul for the Eid al-Adha holiday. Afghan security forces rescue 149 hostages within hours of the attack. A Taliban commander tells Reuters that the remaining 21 hostages would likely be exchanged for Taliban prisoners. Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **August 16, 2018:** Gunmen and suicide bombers attack an intelligence services training facility in Kabul, wounding three. One bomber explodes while the other three are killed by security forces. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Voice of America](#)
- **August 15, 2018:** Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in the Baghlan province, killing at least 44 police officers and soldiers. A Taliban statement claims the group killed 70 Afghan soldiers and stole armored vehicles and ammunition from two checkpoints and a military base. A separate Taliban statement announced the group's withdrawal of its guarantee of protection for the International Committee of the Red Cross, citing the ICRC's failure to guarantee protections for Taliban fighters in Afghan prisons. Separately, a suicide bomber explodes at a private school in a Shiite Hazara neighborhood of Kabul, killing at least 48 and wounding 67. The Taliban deny involvement. ISIS claims responsibility the following day through its Amaq News Agency. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [NBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **August 13, 2018:** Taliban fighters attack a military base known in the Faryab province, killing 17 soldiers and wounding 19 others. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **August 10, 2018 - August 14, 2018:** Taliban fighters dressed as Afghan soldiers attack the city of Ghazni.

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The Taliban order their fighters to leave the city after five days of fighting with security forces that killed at least 200 people, though there are multiple, conflicting casualty reports. The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan estimates that up to 150 civilians were killed during the siege. At least 140 members of the security forces were killed, according to other reports. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [BBC News](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)

- **July 22, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes outside of Kabul International Airport, killing at least 20 and wounding 70. The attack occurs shortly after Afghan Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum leaves the airport after returning to the country from a year of self-imposed exile in Turkey. Dostum is not injured in the bombing. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency and claims that it killed and wounded more than 115 people in the attack. Separately, gunmen attack a mosque in the Nangarhar province, killing four and wounding three. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [CBS News](#)
- **July 19, 2018 - July 20, 2018:** Over the course of two days, Taliban fighters attack multiple security outposts in the Ghazni and Zabul provinces, killing 14 police officers and wounding 10 others. The Taliban claim to have killed 16 officers alone in attacks on security positions in Ghazni province's Qarabagh district, conflicting with official Afghan government figures. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **July 15, 2018 - July 17, 2018:** On July 15, Taliban fighters attack a police checkpoint in the Nangarhar province, killing seven. Five Taliban militants are also killed. Separately, a suicide bomber explodes outside of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in Kabul, killing at least seven. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. On the night of July 16, Taliban militants attack a police checkpoint in the Kandahar province, killing nine policemen and wounding seven. According to Afghan officials, 25 Taliban fighters are killed and 15 are wounded in the confrontation. On July 17, a suicide bomber explodes in the northern Sar-i-Pul province, killing at least 20, including 15 village elders and five Taliban commanders. There are conflicting reports regarding the exact location of the explosion. The attack comes as village leaders are meeting with Taliban officials in the area. Afghan officials blame ISIS. Sources: [CBS News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **July 11, 2018:** Gunmen attack the government's education department building in Jalalabad, killing at least 10 and wounding another 10. Authorities suspect ISIS, which claimed responsibility for two attacks in the city earlier in the month. Sources: [TOLO News](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **July 10, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes at a security checkpoint in Jalalabad, killing at least 12. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **July 1, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes in Jalalabad near a vehicle carrying members of Afghanistan's Sikh minority, killing at least 20 and wounding 20. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency. At least 13 Sikhs are among the dead, prompting community leaders to question whether there is a future for Sikhs in Afghanistan. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Times of India](#)
- **June 27, 2018 - June 28, 2018:** Taliban militants launch overnight attacks on security checkpoints in the Takhar Province, killing at least 14 border police officers and wounding two others. Six others are missing after the raids. Separate Taliban attacks leave at least 11 dead in the Logar province and at least five dead in Nangarhar province. Source: [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)
- **June 20, 2018:** Taliban fighters attack a security checkpoint in the Bala Murghab district of the Badghis province. The fighters then ambush Afghan reinforcements when they arrive at the checkpoint, altogether killing 30 soldiers and capturing the checkpoint. Separately, Taliban fighters attack another police checkpoint in the province, killing at least four. The attacks come three days after the end of Taliban-declared three-day ceasefire for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr. The Afghan government in turn declared a ceasefire that was set to expire on June 20. Afghan authorities accuse the Taliban of using the ceasefire to plan and prepare for the attacks. Nonetheless, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani extends the government ceasefire another 10 days. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **June 17, 2018:** A suicide bomber near the Nangarhar governor's compound in Jalalabad kills at least 18 and wounds at least 49. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [CNN](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **June 16, 2018:** A car bomb in Nangarhar kills at least 36 and wounds at least 65 others during a gathering of Taliban fighters and Afghan soldiers marking the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr. ISIS's affiliate in Afghanistan claims responsibility. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)
- **June 11, 2018 - June 12, 2018:** On June 11, a bombing outside Afghanistan's rural development ministry in Kabul kills 17 and wounds at least 12 others. Three suicide bombers attack the Education Ministry's office in Jalalabad, but security forces kill two of the bombers before they can detonate. The third bomber's explosives fail to detonate. There are no fatalities but 15 are wounded in the attack, which officials blame on ISIS. A bomb explodes prematurely in a house in Nangarhar's Chaparhar district, killing one and wounding 12 others. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency for the Kabul attack but does not provide evidence of its claim. The Taliban deny responsibility. Taliban fighters reportedly kill 15 Afghan soldiers and policemen in an attack on a security post in the Qal-i-Zal district of Kunduz province. Taliban fighters launch an overnight raid in the Kohistan district in the Faryab province, killing eight, including the district governor. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **June 4, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes at a gathering of 2,000 Islamic religious scholars and clerics in Kabul, killing at least 14 and wounding 17. The clerical conclave had earlier that morning issued a fatwa declaring the ongoing war in Afghanistan to be illegal and suicide bombings to be un-Islamic. The religious leaders also offered to mediate between warring factions. ISIS claims responsibility while denouncing the fatwa. Sources: [Tolo News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Washington Post](#)
- **May 30, 2018:** Ten militants belonging to a local ISIS affiliate attack the Interior Ministry in Kabul, setting off three suicide bombs.

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The attacks kill at least one police officer and wounding five others. Separately, at least three are killed and 12 are wounded when Taliban suicide bombers attack a police station in the Logar province. Source: [CBS News](#)

- **May 19, 2018:** Three explosions at the Spinghar Cricket Ground in Jalalabad in the Nangahar province kill eight and wound 45. The Taliban deny responsibility. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 15, 2018 - May 16, 2018:** Taliban militants attack the city of Farah, killing 30. The militants briefly hold the city and then abandon it early the next day after a U.S. airstrike. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **May 7, 2018 - May 9, 2018:** On May 7, Taliban forces attack a police station in Faryab in northern Afghanistan, killing or wounding at least 25 officers and kidnapping 31. On May 8, Taliban forces take control of two rural northern districts. On May 9, gunmen and suicide bombers kill at least seven and wound 17 in two separate attacks on a police station and near a bank, both in Kabul. ISIS claims responsibility for the police station attack. The Taliban claim responsibility for the attack near the bank, claiming the attack targeted the nearby Afghan intelligence agency. Nonetheless, the National Directorate for Security blames the Taliban-linked Haqqani network for both attacks. Source: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [Telegraph](#)
- **May 7, 2018:** The Afghan government releases information that insurgents had killed 252 Afghan troops and wounded approximately 400 others within the past week. Since the end of April, Afghan forces have killed about 800 insurgents and wounded 500 others, according to government officials. The officials also report that the security forces had foiled approximately 70 percent of 2,600 attacks on Afghan police and military. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **May 6, 2018:** Explosives planted in a mosque in the Khost province kill at least 17 and wound 37. Afghans were using the mosque as a voter registration center ahead of national elections. The Taliban deny responsibility. Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#)
- **April 30, 2018:** Multiple attacks across the country kill at least 46 and wound at least 65. A suicide bomber on a motor bike explodes near a security compound close to the NATO headquarters and foreign embassies in Kabul. A second bomber, disguised as a cameraman, explodes after journalists gather at the site of the first blast, killing several journalists. The dual attacks kill at least 30 and wound at least 45. ISIS's Khorasan Province claims responsibility on Telegram, crediting its "martyrs" Qaqa al-Kurdi and Khalil al-Qurshi for the attacks. ISIS does not provide further evidence of its responsibility. Separately, a car bomb explodes near a NATO convoy in Kandahar several hours later, killing 11 children and wounding 16 others, including NATO soldiers, civilians, and policemen. Five Afghan policemen are killed and four people wounded in two other attacks in the Balkh and Nangahar provinces. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for the attacks outside of Kabul. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Associated Press](#), [CNN](#)
- **April 25, 2018 - April 26, 2018:** On April 25, the Taliban announce the start of their annual spring offensive. The Taliban statement says the group will utilize "new and intricate tactics" aimed at "crushing, killing and capturing American invaders and their supporters." That night, Taliban fighters launch attack an Afghan army security post in Dashti Archi district in the Kunduz province, killing at least seven soldiers and wounding one, according to the military. At least 15 Taliban fighters are killed and 13 wounded, according to the military's account. A local hospital chief disputes the army's figures, telling the Associated Press that 13 soldiers were killed and nine were wounded. On April 26, Taliban fighters ambush a government convoy in the Logar province, killing the deputy provincial governor and his two bodyguards. The Taliban claim credit in a media statement. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **April 24, 2018:** At least 11 Afghan soldiers and police officers are killed in attacks across the country. Militants kill at least five and wound two in an attack on a security checkpoint in the Farah province. At least four local police officers are killed seven wounded in Ghazni province. The Taliban claim responsibility for both attacks. Later in the day, militants kill two policemen and wound six soldiers in an attack on a security checkpoint in Badghis province. There are no immediate claims of responsibility but authorities blame the Taliban. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **April 23, 2018:** Taliban fighters launch simultaneous attacks on police and army units in the western Badghis province, killing 18 soldiers and policemen. The Taliban claim the attack in a media statement. In a separate attack, Taliban fighters kill four policemen and wound three others during a gun battle in Farah province. Three Taliban fighters are killed and two are wounded during the two-hour gun battle. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **April 22, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes at a voter registration center in Kabul, killing at least 60 people and wounding 130. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq news agency, claiming it targeted Shiite "apostates." The attack on the polling station comes as the Afghan government prepares for overdue parliamentary elections in October. In a separate attack the same day, a roadside bomb explodes near a voter registration center in northern city of Pul-I Khumri, killing six and wounding three. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Authorities do not believe the two attacks are related. Militants kill three university students in Nangarhar province. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but authorities suspect ISIS. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **April 14, 2018 - April 15, 2018:** At least 26 security officers are killed in four attacks on government outposts in northern and eastern Afghanistan. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but government officials blame the Taliban. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 21, 2018:** A suicide bomber kills at least 29 people and wounds more than 50 others near the Sakhi shrine in Kabul as worshippers gathered to mark Nowruz, the Persian new year. ISIS claimed responsibility through its Amaq news agency. The Sakhi shrine is a popular destination for Shiites marking the new year. It is also located near Kabul University and a hospital. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#)
- **March 8, 2018 - March 9, 2018:** On March 8, Taliban fighters attack a police outpost in Ghazni province, killing four policemen.

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On March 9, a suicide bomber blows up at a police checkpoint in Kabul near a Shiite gathering, killing at least nine and wounding 18. ISIS claims responsibility. The bombing targeted Afghanistan's Hazara minority. Separately, the Taliban attack an army outpost in the Takhar province, killing 10 officers and wounding nine. Sources: [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [Washington Post](#)

- **February 28, 2018:** A group militants attack a police station, killing six officers and wounding five others. Separately, another group of militants wearing army uniforms stops a bus and kidnap 30 people, including 19 police officers. Both incidents occur in the border area between the Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for either attack, but police suspect the Taliban. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **February 24, 2018:** Taliban militants kill at least 18 soldiers in an attack on military camps in the Farah province. The Taliban also claim responsibility after two car bombs in Helmand province kill four policemen. The same day, a suicide bomber explodes outside an intelligence agency office, killing three and wounding six. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency. Source: [Washington Post](#)
- **February 21, 2018:** Taliban militants attack a police post in the Ghazni province, killing eight officers and wounding another. The Taliban also claim to capture a police officer, though the government does not confirm the claim. Later that night, militants ambush a car in Parwan province carrying four intelligence officers, killing all four. There are no immediate claims for the Parwan attack. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **February 14, 2018:** Militants kill at least 10 police officers in two separate attacks on police positions in the Farah and Faryab provinces. Afghan authorities blame the Taliban for both attacks, though the Taliban do not immediately claim responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **January 29, 2018:** Five gunmen armed with rocket-propelled grenades and automatic rifles attack the Marshal Fahim military academy in Kabul, killing 11 soldiers and wounding 15. Two of the attacks set off explosive vests while Afghan forces kill two others and capture the fifth. ISIS's Khorasan Province claims responsibility through ISIS's Amaq News Agency. The Afghan defense ministry says the attack was on an army unit guarding the academy, not the academy itself. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **January 27, 2018:** A militant drives an explosives-filled ambulance into a fortified area of Kabul home to government buildings and hospitals, killing at least 103 people and wounding 235. Investigators believe a second ambulance may have been involved but the attackers escaped. The Taliban claim responsibility for the bombing, calling the attack a warning to U.S. President Donald Trump against the U.S. "policy of aggression" in Afghanistan. The quick claim hours after the attack leads authorities to suspect the Taliban were also trying to send a message to opposing insurgents like ISIS. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [CNN](#)
- **January 24, 2018:** A suicide car bomb explodes outside the Jalalabad office of the international charity Save the Children. After the explosion, gunmen storm the aid group's office, killing at least six and wounding at least 26 during an hours-long gun battle with police. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency, claiming that it had targeted British, Swedish, and Afghan government institutions. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, Save the Children's local office is located near a Swedish aid office and the Afghan Department of Women's Affairs. Save the Children temporarily suspends its operations in Afghanistan after the attack. Also that morning, unidentified gunmen attack a police checkpoint in the Dayak district in Ghazni province, killing four Afghan policemen. Sources: [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **January 20, 2018 - January 21, 2018:** Gunmen wearing army uniforms storm the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul late on January 20 and take hotel guests hostage during a 14-hour standoff with Afghan security forces and NATO troops. At least 22 civilians are killed, according to the Afghan government, but local news outlets report the death toll is at least 43. At least 14 foreign nationals are among the fatalities. Ten others are wounded, including six security officers. The Taliban claim responsibility, but the Afghan government suspects the Haqqani Network. Also on January 20, a roadside bomb in Farah province kills the province's deputy police chief and wounds two officers. The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [BBC News](#), [CNN](#), [New York Times](#)
- **January 16, 2018:** Three mortar shells strike a bazaar in the Khwaja Sabz Push district in northern Afghanistan, killing at least five and wounding 45. There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but local officials suspect the Taliban. Source: [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#)
- **January 4, 2018:** A suicide bomber explodes in a Kabul market while security officers carry out a drug and alcohol raid. The attack kills at least 20 people and wounds 30. ISIS claims the attack through its Amaq News Agency without providing direct evidence linking it to the attack. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)
- **December 31, 2017:** An explosive attached to a motorcycle remotely detonates at a funeral of former district chief Gul Wali in Jalalabad kills at least 17 and wounds 13. Police initially believe the attack is the work of a suicide bomber before discovering the remote-control bomb. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. The Taliban deny responsibility. Sources: [Deutsche Welle](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)
- **December 28, 2017:** A suicide bomber explodes at the Tabian Social and Cultural Centre in Kabul during a commemoration of the anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The attack at the Shiite cultural center kills at least 41 and wounds 84. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq news agency. Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#)
- **December 27, 2017:** Afghan security forces intercept a suicide car bomb at a military base in Lashkar Gah in the Helmand province and prevent the car from driving onto the base. The two bombers inside blow themselves up at the gates, killing at least two soldiers and wounding 15 others. The Taliban claim responsibility. Source: [Voice of America](#)

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- **December 25, 2017:** A suicide bomber blows himself up at the entrance of Afghanistan’s National Directorate of Security in Kabul as employees arrive to work.
The attack kills at least 10 and wounds five. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [New York Post](#), [CNN](#)
- **November 16, 2017:** A suicide bomber kills at least 12 people at a gathering of the Jamiat-i-Islami party at a hotel in Kabul. Police stop the bomber at the entrance to the hotel hosting the event. ISIS claims responsibility but does not provide specific evidence linking it to the attack. The Taliban deny responsibility. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#)
- **November 13, 2017 - November 14, 2017:** Taliban units kill at least 30 police officers over the course of two days.
On November 13, Taliban fighters attack a police post in the Farah province while the officers inside are sleeping. The attackers kill eight police officers. On November 14, over the course of six hours, a Taliban unit attacks more than a dozen police checkpoints in the southern Kandahar province, killing at least 22 Afghan police officers and wounding 15 others. Security forces kill 45 of the attackers and wound 35, according to the government. The Taliban claim to have killed 43 officers and destroyed 13 armored vehicles. Afghan officials suspect the Taliban’s elite Red Unit of carrying out the attacks using night vision goggles and M-4 automatic rifles with laser pointers. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#)
- **October 23, 2017:** Taliban militants attack a security post in Kabul, killing four policemen and wounding two others.
Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **October 21, 2017:** A suicide bomber blows himself up outside the Marshal Fahim military academy in Kabul, killing at least 15 military cadets and wounding four others.
The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **October 20, 2017:** A suicide bomber explodes at the Shiite Imam Zaman Mosque in Kabul, killing at least 56 and wounding 55 others. ISIS claims responsibility. In a separate attack, militants attack a Sunni mosque in the Ghor province, killing at least 33 people. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for the second attack. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#)
- **October 17, 2017:** Taliban fighters drive two explosives-filled cars into a police training center in Gardez, the provincial capital of Paktia. Five gunmen wearing suicide belts then storm the compound, killing at least 41, including the provincial police chief. At least 158 people, mostly civilians, are wounded. Afghan security forces reportedly kill all five gunmen. In Ghazni’s Andar district, suicide bombers drive an explosives-filled Humvee into a security compound outside the provincial governor’s office. Gunmen then engage security forces in a nine-hour battle before they are repelled. At least 25 police officers and five civilians are killed, while 25 people are wounded. At least 13 of the attackers are also killed. In the Shibkho district in Farah province, gunmen attack a government compound, killing three policemen. The Taliban claim responsibility for all three attacks. Sources: [CBS News](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **September 29, 2017:** A suicide bomber disguised as a shepherd blows up outside a Shiite mosque in Kabul, killing at least five people and wounding 29 others.
ISIS claims responsibility. The attack comes two days before the Shiite holiday of Ashura. On the same day, Taliban fighters attack a police checkpoint in Bala Bluk in the Farah province, killing five. The Afghan army pushes the Taliban out of Bala Bluk after several hours. The Afghan air force destroys three Taliban vehicles, killing 20 militants trying to escape, according to police. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **September 27, 2017:** A Taliban militant drives an explosives-filled Humvee into a security checkpoint in Kandahar’s Maruf district, killing 12 Afghan soldiers and wounding four others.
The Taliban claim they held the district for several hours, stealing weapons and other resources. Afghan police push the Taliban out of the district hours later. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **August 3, 2017 - August 5, 2017:** Up to 600 militants attack Mirzawalang village in the Sar-i-Pul province, capturing the village after a 48-hour battle with the Afghan Local Police.
At least 50 people—mostly civilians—die during the fighting. Most are shot but some are beheaded, according to government sources. Ten of the attackers also reportedly die in the fighting. Afghan officials say the attack is a joint operation by the Taliban and ISIS. Villagers report the presence of foreign fighters among the attackers, claiming to hear some attackers speaking Punjabi, Uzbek, and Turkmen. The Taliban confirm they captured Mirzawalang, but deny working with ISIS or foreign fighters. A Taliban spokesman says allegations that the Taliban are working with ISIS are meant to discredit the Taliban. Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **August 2, 2017:** A suicide bomber attacks a NATO convoy in Kandahar, killing two U.S. soldiers and wounding four others.
The Taliban claim responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **August 1, 2017:** Two gunmen attack the Jawadia Shiite mosque in Herat, firing machine guns and throwing grenades at worshippers. Both attackers detonate suicide bombs. The attack kills at least 33 and wounds another 64. Both attackers are killed. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#), [CNN](#), [BBC News](#)
- **July 31, 2017:** A suicide bomber blows himself up at the gates of the Iraqi embassy in Kabul.
Gunmen then rush into the complex and engage security forces in a gun battle. Four attackers are killed. Two Afghan employees are killed and three Afghan police officers are wounded. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **July 26, 2017:** Taliban fighters attack an Afghan military base in Kandahar province, capturing the base and killing at least 26 Afghan soldiers, according to the Afghan Defense Ministry.
Other reports say at least 30 soldiers are killed. The Afghan military recaptures the base several hours later, killing or wounding at least 80 Taliban militants. The Taliban fighters steal weapons and vehicles. In a statement of responsibility, the Taliban claim they killed 74 soldiers and captured six others. Sources: [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [Reuters](#)
- **July 24, 2017:** A suicide car bombing alongside a government-owned bus kills at least 35 and wounds 40 in Kabul during rush hour.
The explosion destroys the bus and several nearby shops. The bombing takes place near the home of Hajji Mohammed Mohaqqiq, the deputy chief executive of the Afghan government. The Taliban claim responsibility and say they had targeted the Afghan intelligence service. Sources:

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Al Jazeera, Associated Press, New York Times, Reuters

- **June 30, 2017:** A pickup truck hits a roadside bomb in the eastern Nangarhar province, killing seven people. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **June 29, 2017:** Taliban fighters attack a security outpost in the western Farah province, killing at least six policemen and wounding three others. Nine Taliban fighters are killed in a three-hour gun battle, while others escape with stolen guns and ammunition. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **June 28, 2017:** Gunmen kill two police officers, sisters, in an attack on a security post in the eastern Badakhshan province. There are no immediate claims of responsibility but police suspect the Taliban. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **June 27, 2017:** Gunmen kill two policemen in an attack on a security checkpoint in Qalat, the provincial capital of Zabol province. There are no immediate claims of responsibility but police suspect the Taliban. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **June 24, 2017:** A group of Taliban gunmen attack a security checkpoint near the electricity-producing Salma Dam in the Herat province. The gunmen kill at least 10 police officers, while four attackers are also killed. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **June 22, 2017:** A car bomb outside the New Kabul Bank in Lashkar Gah targets Afghan soldiers waiting to collect their pay. At least 29 people are killed and 60 are wounded. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **June 20, 2017:** Taliban gunmen kill at least eight Afghan security guards on their way to work at the U.S. base at Bagram air field. Source: [Washington Post](#)
- **June 18, 2017:** A suicide car bomber and accompanying gunmen attack the police headquarters in the Spin Ghar region in Paktia province. Five Afghan police officers are killed and 18 people are wounded. The Taliban claim responsibility in a WhatsApp message to journalists. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **June 17, 2017:** An Afghan soldier opens fire at an Afghan army base in Mazar-i-Sharif, killing one Afghan soldier and wounding seven U.S. soldiers. The Taliban deny responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **June 6, 2017:** A bomb kills at least 10 people at a mosque in Herat. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. The Taliban deny responsibility. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **May 31, 2017:** A truck bomb explodes in the heart of Kabul's diplomatic quarter during the morning rush hour, killing at least 80 people and wounding more than 300 others. The blast occurs near the entrance of the Green Zone, which houses the U.S. military headquarters and several foreign embassies. The blast creates a massive crater and shattered windows as far as a mile away. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#)
- **May 27, 2017:** A suicide car bomber targets an Afghan military convoy guarding U.S. forces in Khost province. The bombing kills at least 18 people, mostly civilians. The Taliban claim responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **May 26, 2017:** Taliban fighters kill at least 15 soldiers in an attack on an Afghan army camp. At least 20 Taliban fighters are killed, according to the Afghan government. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **May 25, 2017:** A suicide car bomber attacks a security checkpoint in Helmand province, killing three intelligence officers and wounding four others. The Taliban claim responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **May 24, 2017:** Taliban fighters attack multiple security checkpoints in southern Afghanistan, killing at least 13 Afghan soldiers and wounding eight others. At least 20 Taliban fighters are killed, according to the Afghan government. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **May 22, 2017 - May 23, 2017:** Just before midnight on May 22, a group of militants attack an Afghan military base in Kandahar province, killing at least 10 soldiers and wounding nine. Security forces kill at least a dozen of the attackers in a firefight. The Taliban claim responsibility. Early on May 23, Taliban fighters attack a police station in Badghis province, killing at least one policeman. Police kill 11 of the attackers during a gun battle. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **May 22, 2017:** Five Afghan security personnel traveling to a funeral are killed in an ambush in the Faryab province. In Logar province, gunmen shoot and kill a deputy chief of a provincial clerical council. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for either attack. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **May 21, 2017:** Up to 1,000 Taliban fighters attack police outposts across Zabol province, killing at least 20 Afghan police officers and wounding 10 others. Dozens of Taliban fighters are also killed, according to the military. Simultaneously, the Taliban fire rockets at the provincial governor's compound in Qalat, causing no casualties but damaging the compound and a nearby police station. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)
- **May 20, 2017:** Taliban fighters attack a bank in Paktia province, killing three people. Security forces kill three of the attackers. Simultaneously, a Taliban fighter drives an explosives-filled Humvee into the gates of the provincial governor's compound in the city of Ghazni. Two Afghan security personnel and 25 Taliban fighters die in an ensuing firefight, though the Taliban claim they caused more casualties. Also that day, a German aid worker and an Afghan guard are killed in an attack on a house in Kabul, while a Finnish national is kidnapped. The three work for Swedish aid group Operation Mercy. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for the attack on the aid workers, but police suspect the Taliban. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)
- **May 19, 2017:** An American military convoy north of Kabul strikes a roadside bomb. The U.S. military says there are no casualties despite witness reports.

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- The Taliban claim credit and claim several U.S. casualties. Later in the day, at least 11 civilians, including five children, are killed when their vehicle strikes an improvised explosive device in the road. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **May 17, 2017:** A suicide attack on state-run the Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA) broadcasting station in Jalalabad kills at least five people and wounds 24. Three other assailants are killed in a gun battle with security forces. ISIS claims responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **May 3, 2017:** A suicide car bomb targets a NATO convoy near a National Defence Security checkpoint in Kabul, killing at least eight Afghan civilians and wounding 28 others, including three American soldiers. The checkpoint is in close proximity to the U.S. embassy and a NATO compound. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Washington Post](#)
 - **April 24, 2017:** Suspected Taliban militants explode a car bomb at the gates of the Camp Chapman U.S.-operated base in the eastern province of Khost. Several Afghan casualties are reported but the U.S. Army does not immediately release details. The attack coincides with a visit by U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis to Afghanistan. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **April 20, 2017:** A group of 10 Taliban fighters dressed as Afghan military in two army trucks mounted with machine guns drive onto an Afghan military base in the northern Balkh province. Armed with M16 rifles, the militants attack unarmed soldiers who were leaving the base's mosque after Friday prayers. Some of the attackers blow themselves up during the assault. At least 170 soldiers die in the attack, but official expect the death toll to climb to 200. It is the deadliest attack on Afghan forces by the Taliban since the 2001 ouster of the Taliban government. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)
 - **April 12, 2017:** A suicide bomber explodes in Kabul near the Administrative Office of the President and the ministries of defense and finance, killing five people and wounding 10 others. ISIS claims responsibility. ISIS also claims that the bomber detonated at the "second checkpoint of the presidential building in Kabul." Source: [CNN](#)
 - **March 20, 2017:** A suicide car bomb kills at least six Afghan intelligence officers at a checkpoint near Lashkar Gah in Afghanistan's Helmand province. Seven other officers are wounded. Five insurgents are killed in an ensuing gun battle with security forces. The Taliban claims responsibility. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#)
 - **March 17, 2017:** A suicide car bomb kills one Afghan soldier at a military base in Afghanistan's Khost province. Four gunmen attack the base after the bombing but are killed by the Afghan army. The Taliban claims responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **March 8, 2017:** Four ISIS militants wearing white medical coats and armed with guns and grenades attack the Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan Hospital in Kabul after a suicide bomber blows up the military hospital's gates. Two of the attackers reportedly detonate explosive vests inside the hospital. The attack kills at least 30 people and wounds more than 50. Afghan security forces retake the hospital after a seven-hour fight. Shortly after, ISIS's Amaq news agency claims the attack and shares photos of the siege on the messaging service Telegram. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **March 1, 2017:** Taliban militants detonate a car bomb near a police station in Kabul. Gunmen then attack a police station and barricade themselves inside for several hours until they are neutralized, according to the Afghan government. Soon after the car bomb, two militants attack an office of the National Directorate for Security east of Kabul. One blows himself up and the other is shot and killed. The attacks kills 15 people, including 11 civilians, and wound 50. The Taliban immediately claims responsibility for both attacks, claiming they killed dozens. In the northern Baghlan province, Taliban gunmen seize the Tala wa Barfak district and kill four Afghan security officers. The Taliban also claims to capture light and heavy weaponry. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **February 28, 2017:** Taliban fighters attack a police guard post in Lashkar Gah, killing 11 police officers. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **February 24, 2017:** Taliban fighters ambush police commanders leaving a mosque in Sardar village in Zawzjan province, killing 10 officers and an officer's wife. Four of the attackers are killed and another six are wounded in the ensuing gun battle. After the attack, the Taliban claims responsibility and claims it has captured the village. Sources: [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **February 22, 2017:** A remotely detonated motorcycle bomb at a market in Paktika province, killing three people. There are no immediate claims of responsibility but authorities suspect the Taliban. In a separate incident, Taliban fighters ambush a military convoy in Kapisa province. During the ensuing fight between the attackers and military, a mortar strikes a nearby house, killing four people. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **February 15, 2017:** Gunmen kidnap 52 farmers in the northern province of Jowzjan. Police blame the Taliban but there are no immediate claims of responsibility or demands. In a separate incident, Taliban fighters attack a village in Faryab province, killing five people. The Taliban take control of the village. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
 - **February 11, 2017:** A car bomb kills eight people in Lashkar Gah, capital of Helmand province, a day after coalition airstrikes kill at least 26 civilians in the province. The car bomb also wounds 19. The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [CNN](#), [CNN](#)
 - **February 8, 2017:** Gunmen kill six Afghan International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workers in Jowzjan province. Authorities believe two missing Red Cross workers may have been taken hostage. Authorities suspect ISIS. The Taliban denied responsibility. The ICRC announced a temporary hold on its work in Afghanistan in response. Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **February 7, 2017:** A suicide bomber kills 21 people at the Afghan Supreme Court building in Kabul.

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Another 41 people are wounded. ISIS claimed responsibility the following day. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Tolo News](#)

- **January 10, 2017:** A string of suicide bombings in three Afghan cities kill at least 50 people and wound dozens. A suicide bomber in Helmand province's Lashkar Gah kills at least seven people and wounds nine. Police say the bombing targeted a guesthouse used by Afghanistan's main intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security (NDS). Authorities also find and diffuse an explosives-filled car nearby. Hours later, twin suicide bombings near Afghanistan's parliament in Kabul kill 32 people and wound 70. Later in the day, a bomb in Kandahar targets the provincial governor's office during a visit by a United Arab Emirates delegation. The attack kills 11 people and wounds 17. Five UAE diplomats are killed. The Taliban claim responsibility for the Kabul and Lashkar Gah bombings but credit the Kandahar bombing to an "internal local rivalry." The Taliban say their target in Kabul was a minibus carrying NDS staff. Juma al-Kaabi, the UAE's ambassador to Afghanistan, dies from his wounds a month later. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **January 3, 2017:** Taliban gunmen kill at least four police officers in an ambush in the northeastern Badakhshan province. According to provincial council member Ahmad Bashir Musamum, seven officers are killed in the attack. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **December 21, 2016 - December 22, 2016:** Three Taliban gunmen armed with grenades attack the Kabul home of Member of Parliament Mir Wali, killing eight people and wounding six others. Wali and his wife are wounded, while two of their grandchildren are among the dead. The gunmen hold 18 people hostage for 10 hours until police kill the attackers. The Taliban release a statement claiming they attacked Wali's home because of an "important gathering of security officials" there. Source: [BBC News](#)
- **December 19, 2016:** Gunmen stop a two-car International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) convoy traveling to Kunduz province in northern Afghanistan. The gunmen take a Spanish ICRC worker hostage and release the Afghan ICRC employees. There were no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **December 19, 2016:** The Taliban releases a propaganda video featuring American citizen Caitlan Coleman and her Canadian husband, Joshua Boyle, who were kidnapped while hiking in Afghanistan in 2013. In the video, Coleman begs President Barack Obama to "just give the offenders something so they and you can save face and we can leave the region permanently." They also ask President-elect Donald Trump to be "merciful to [the Taliban's] people and God willing they will release us." The video also featured the couple's two children. According to a Taliban statement, Coleman was pregnant when she was kidnapped and gave birth to both children after she and her husband converted to Islam in captivity. In response to the video, Canada called for the couple's unconditional release. Sources: [NBC News](#), [NBC News](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **December 17, 2016:** Gunmen kill six female women and their driver on their way to Kandahar Airport. The women are employees of the foreign security firm Olive Group and had been responsible for security checks for female passengers at the airport. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **November 21, 2016:** A suicide bomber at a Shiite mosque in Kabul kills 32 people and wounds at least 70 during the Shiite ceremony of Arbaeen. ISIS claims responsibility but does not reveal the bomber's identity. Sources: [Fox News](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#)
- **November 16, 2016:** A suicide bomber on a motorcycle targets a minibus in Kabul carrying members of a security unit responsible for protecting senior Afghan officials. The attack kills two of the security service members and four civilian bystanders, and wounds 10. ISIS's Khorasan Province claims responsibility. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **November 12, 2016:** A Taliban suicide bomber dressed as a day laborer blows up at the U.S. base Bagram Air Field just north of Kabul. The attack kills four Americans and wounds 16 U.S. service members and a Polish soldier. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **November 10, 2016:** A Taliban suicide bomber rams a truck into the Mazur Hotel in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif. The hotel is used by German diplomats as their consulate. The truck bombing is followed by gunfire and an explosion inside the hotel. The attack kills at least six people and wounds 120. The Taliban claim the attack is in retaliation for coalition airstrikes in Kunduz a week before. According to Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, the attackers were sent "with a mission to destroy the German consulate general and kill whoever they found there." Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#)
- **October 31, 2016:** A suicide bomber explodes during a meeting of tribal elders at a house in the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar, killing four people and wounding seven, according to the Afghan government. Nangarhar is reportedly ISIS's main stronghold in Afghanistan. ISIS claims responsibility for killing 15 "apostates" during the attack. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **October 12, 2016:** An explosion outside a Shiite mosque in the northern Afghan province of Balkh kills at least 14 people and wounds 24 others during an Ashura celebration. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Deutsche Welle](#)
- **October 11, 2016:** Taliban fighters ambush a police position in Chah-e-Anjir, killing about 100 police officers and soldiers. Taliban fighters reportedly capture at least 22 armored Humvees, dozens of trucks, and hundreds of rifles. In a separate attack later in the evening, gunmen disguised as police officers attack the Shiite shrine Kart-e-Sakhi in Kabul, killing at least 18, including a policeman, and wounding 36 others during an celebration of the Shiite festival of Ashura. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **September 5, 2016 - September 6, 2016:** A bomb explodes near the Afghan Defense Ministry in Kabul. After security forces gather at the site, a suicide bomber wearing a military uniform explodes. The attack kills at least 35 people, including a district police chief and five police officers. At least 91 others are wounded. Hours later, a third bomb explodes behind the Kabul bank. Following the blast, three gunmen barricade themselves near the office of the aid group Care International and a government complex. A standoff with Afghan forces ends on September 6 after security forces kill the three gunmen. Six people are wounded. The Taliban claim

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responsibility for the attacks. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Voice of America](#), [USA Today](#), [CNN](#)

- **August 24, 2016:** A car bomb explodes outside the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul. Gunmen then open fire on the American University campus after the explosion, killing at least 13 people: seven students, a professor, two security guards, and three security forces personnel. At least 14 others are reportedly wounded. Afghan forces kill two gunmen, while a third assailant dies in the car bomb explosion. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [Fox News](#), [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#)
- **August 15, 2016:** A bomb attached to a military vehicle explodes outside the U.S. embassy in Kabul, wounding two people. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Fox News](#)
- **August 9, 2016:** A bomb kills at least two people and wounds 15 at the main market in the commercial city of Mazar-i-Sharif near the Uzbekistan border. Local police blame a suicide bomber while the Ministry of Interior says the bomb was hidden in a shopping cart. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **August 7, 2016:** Unidentified militants kidnap an American and an Australian in western Kabul. Both men are lecturers at the American University of Afghanistan. Source: [CNN](#)
- **August 1, 2016:** A truck bomb explodes outside a hotel compound used by foreign service contractors in Kabul. The Taliban claim responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **July 23, 2016:** Two ISIS suicide bombers kill at least 80 people and wound more than 260 during a peaceful rally in Kabul in support of the Hazara, a predominately Shiite minority group. The Taliban condemn the attack. Sources: [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#)
- **June 20, 2016:** A suicide car bomb in Kabul targets a minibus carrying guards working for the Canadian embassy, killing 14 Nepalese nationals and wounding several others. The Taliban and ISIS issue competing claims of responsibility. Sources: [NBC News](#), [CNN](#)
- **June 5, 2016:** Three Taliban gunmen attack a provincial court in Pul-i-Alam, killing seven people and wounding at least 23. Among the dead are “a number of prosecutors and judges,” according to a Taliban statement over Twitter. The Taliban claim the attack is “retaliation for the execution of six martyred Taliban fighters.” Source: [CNN](#)
- **June 1, 2016:** Five Taliban militants attack an appellate court building in Ghazni, killing a police officer and five civilians. One attacker sets off a suicide bomb at the gate, after which the other four force their way inside the court. The four militants die in the subsequent shootout with security forces before they can set off their own suicide bombs. In a separate incident, gunmen kill three aid workers from the Focus Humanitarian Assistance group in east Afghanistan. Afghan officials blame the Taliban. Sources: [CNN](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Reuters](#)
- **May 31, 2016:** Taliban gunmen kill 10 passengers and kidnap 18 more on buses headed toward the Afghan city of Kunduz. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **May 25, 2016:** A suicide bomber kills at least 10 people and wounds four on a bus carrying staff from an appeal court west of Kabul. The Taliban claim responsibility and claim the attack killed or wounded at least 22 people, contrary to numbers from Afghan authorities. Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#)
- **April 19, 2016:** A suicide bomber explodes a car outside a government security building in Kabul. A second attacker then storms the building but dies in a gun battle with security forces. The attack kills at least 64 people and wounds more than 300 others. The attack targets a government security team, though the majority of the casualties are civilians, according to Kabul police. The Taliban claim responsibility. Source: [CNN](#)
- **March 28, 2016:** Militants fire three rockets at the country’s parliament in Kabul. The Taliban claim responsibility. Sources: [NBC News](#), [New York Times](#)
- **January 20, 2016:** A suicide bomber driving an explosives-filled car drives into a minibus carrying employees of Tolo TV, Afghanistan’s largest television network. The attack during rush hour kills seven and wounds at least 25. The Taliban claim responsibility. A Taliban spokesman promises more attacks unless Tolo TV apologizes for its “malicious acts” to the Taliban, to the Afghan people, “and especially to the residents of Kunduz.” Source: [New York Times](#)
- **December 21, 2015:** A Taliban suicide bomber on a motorbike kills six U.S. soldiers patrolling on foot and wounds three others outside of the U.S. base Bagram Air Field, just north of Kabul. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **December 8, 2015:** A group of heavily armed Taliban suicide bombers wearing Afghan security uniforms assault Kandahar Air Field, leaving more than 50 dead. The attack lasts for 26 hours before the Afghan army reclaims control. Sources: [Fox News](#), [Voice of America](#), [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#)
- **November 9, 2015:** Rival Taliban factions battle in southern Afghanistan, leaving dozens dead. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **October 11, 2015 - October 14, 2015:** The Taliban storm two check points in the southern Helmand province, killing 29 Afghan border police officers. Source: [Washington Free Beacon](#)
- **September 28, 2015:** The Taliban take control of the northern Afghan city of Kunduz. It is the first major city (population: 300,000) to fall into Taliban hands since the group was forcibly deposed from Kabul in 2001. Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#)

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- **September 4, 2015:** More than 300 girls are admitted to hospitals after exposure to gas attacks in their schools in Herat, Afghanistan. The Taliban are suspected. Source: [International Business Times](#)
 - **May 14, 2015:** Taliban gunmen attack the popular Park Palace hotel in Kabul, killing 14, including an American. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **July 8, 2014:** A Taliban suicide bomber on a motorbike blows up in front of a clinic in the Bagram district, north of Kabul, killing 10 civilians, four coalition service members and two Afghan police officers. Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)
 - **March 20, 2014:** Four Taliban gunmen kill at least nine people, including children, in an attack on Kabul's Serena Hotel. The hotel is popular with foreign dignitaries and wealthy Afghans. Security forces later kill the gunmen. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **January 17, 2014:** Taliban suicide bombers blow up a restaurant that is regularly visited by Westerners in Kabul's diplomatic quarter, killing 21. Among the dead are four U.N. personnel. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
 - The Taliban attack the diplomatic quarter in Kabul. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid tells Reuters, "These attacks are the beginning of the spring offensive and we [have] planned them for months." He says that the primary targets are the German and British embassies and NATO headquarters. U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan Crocker says that the Haqqani network most likely helped the Taliban to carry out the attacks. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - After U.S. soldiers burn Qurans on February 22 at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, violent protests erupt across the country. U.S. military officials say that the Qurans contained extremist inscriptions that Taliban inmates used to communicate with one another and fuel extremism. During the riots, angry mobs scream "die, die, foreigners," among other anti-Western chants. Source: [CBS News](#)
 - **September 13, 2011:** Taliban gunmen strike the U.S. embassy and NATO's ISAF headquarters in Kabul, killing three police officers and one civilian. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid tells CNN that the Taliban are targeting "the U.S. Embassy, governmental organizations and other foreign organizations." The next day, U.S. and Afghan officials say the Haqqani network is most likely behind the attack. Sources: [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#)
 - **September 10, 2011:** A Taliban suicide bomber detonates an IED at the entrance of the Combat Outpost Sayed Abab, an ISAF base in Wardak province, Afghanistan. The bomber kills four Afghans and wounds 77 U.S. soldiers in the attack. Source: [Long War Journal](#)
 - Taliban suicide bombers attack the home of former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, killing him and four other members of Afghanistan's High Peace Council. As an ethnic Tajik, Rabbani had been selected to lead the High Peace Council, a committee established to hold peace talks with the Taliban. Sources: [Telegraph](#), [Los Angeles Times](#)
 - **August 5, 2010:** Taliban gunmen murder 10 aid workers in Badakhshan, Afghanistan. The workers include six Americans, four Afghans, one Briton and, and one German. The Taliban claim that the aid workers were "spies and Christian missionaries." Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **June 30, 2009:** The Taliban takes U.S. soldier Private Bowe Bergdahl hostage. Days after his capture, a senior U.S. military official said that Bergdahl was captured by low-level insurgents and then "sold" to members of the Taliban-aligned Haqqani network. Sources: [CNN](#), [Guardian](#)
 - **November 10, 2008:** The Taliban kidnap [New York Times](#) reporter David Rohde. Rohde escapes from captivity seven months later in June 2009. Rohde's family asserts that there was no ransom paid, or Taliban prisoners released, in exchange for Rohde's release. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **August 17, 2008 - August 18, 2008:** At least 10 Taliban suicide bombers attack the U.S. military base Camp Salerno in Bamiyan, Afghanistan. In a twin attack, approximately 100 Taliban insurgents attack and kill 10 elite French paratroopers in a district near Kabul. The [New York Times](#) reports that NATO and American military officers blame the increased Taliban insurgency on "the greater freedom of movement the militants have in Pakistan's tribal areas on the Afghan border." Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **July 7, 2008:** A suicide bomber attacks the Indian embassy in Kabul, killing 41 and injuring over 140. U.S. intelligence agencies conclude that the ISI helped plan the attack, a claim that Pakistan strongly denies. Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [New York Times](#), [Guardian](#)
 - A Taliban suicide bomber kills over 80 and injures 50 when he detonates explosives at a dogfight near Kandahar. The attack is the deadliest in Afghanistan since 2001. Source: [Washington Post](#)
 - **July 19, 2007:** Taliban insurgents kidnap 23 South Korean missionaries in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan. The Taliban kill two Korean hostages before the Taliban and the South Korean government reach a deal. The Taliban release the remaining hostages in August. As part of the deal, the South Korean government promises to withdraw its 200 troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2007 and to disallow evangelical missionaries to travel to Afghanistan. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
 - **February 27, 2007:** A Taliban suicide bomber blows up a checkpoint at Bagram Air Base while U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney is visiting, killing 20 and injuring 20 more. Cheney, who is unhurt, is the target of the attack. Source: [CNN](#)
 - A renewed Taliban insurgency emerges with an uptick in suicide bombings and the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Source: [Council on Foreign Relations](#)
 - **September 9, 2001:** Two Tunisians, reportedly sent to Afghanistan by Osama bin Laden, pose as journalists and assassinate Ahmed Shah Massoud, leader of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance in Afghanistan.
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Source: [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

- Taliban fighters decimate two massive statues of Buddha in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, with anti-aircraft weapons and tanks, prompting an international outcry from the United States, the European Union, Russia, India, and Pakistan. Sources: [Guardian](#), [The Looming Tower](#), Lawrence Wright, p. 381
- Taliban forces capture the city of Mazar in northwest Afghanistan, slaughtering 5,000 to 6,000 people. Taliban troops reportedly shoot at “anything that [moves],” specially targeting members of the Persian-speaking Shiite Hazara ethnic community. Among the dead are 10 Iranian diplomats and a journalist. Sources: [Human Rights Watch](#), [The Looming Tower](#), Lawrence Wright, p. 304
- Taliban fighters capture Kabul, driving out the mujahideen forces. The Taliban implement a hardline version of sharia based on Hanafi Islamic jurisprudence, implementing Islamic punishments such as public executions, amputations, and stoning. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [The Looming Tower](#), Lawrence Wright, p. 261
- The Taliban emerge as a singular, armed force in Kandahar, Afghanistan, with Mullah Mohammed Omar as their leader. By the end of 1994, the Taliban have complete control over Kandahar and Helmand province. Sources: [New Yorker](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#)

Domestic Counter-Extremism

Government Counter Extremism

Afghanistan lacks a “comprehensive formal national countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy,” according to the U.S. State Department. In 2016, the State Department credited Afghanistan’s Office of the National Security Council (ONSC) for beginning the process of creating a CVE strategy, while government ministries have “CVE issues incorporated in their portfolios.” The ONSC began work on a CVE strategy in late 2015. The ONSC has elicited advice and feedback from provincial leaders, while also creating an inter-ministerial working group to develop the country’s CVE strategy. The State Department has also praised the “major role” of Afghanistan’s media in countering violent extremism by highlighting the Afghan people’s criticism of terrorist tactics. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Created in March 2014, the government-supported Moderation Center of Afghanistan promotes intrafaith communication and a government-sanctioned “moderate interpretation of Islam.” Afghan Shiite and Sunni clerics traveled to Kuwait for training and then became teachers throughout Afghanistan to train other religious leaders. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

Former President Hamid Karzai created the National Ulema Council in 2002. The quasi-governmental organization includes religious scholars (“*ulema*”) working to spread moderation through Afghanistan’s religious institutions. The October 2015 National Ulema Conference in Support of Peace in Afghanistan brought together more than 500 religious scholars, including members of the council. Attendees issued a joint condemnation of recent violence and called on the government and armed opposition groups to reach an accord through peaceful negotiation. According to the State Department, Afghan leaders highlight the council’s role in “preaching peace and denouncing terrorist attacks....” (Sources: [Afghan Office of the President](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [High Peace Council](#))

Karzai also created the High Peace Council in 2010 to negotiate with the Taliban. The council held informal meetings with Taliban members on the sidelines of other events until their first direct meeting with the Taliban on July 7, 2015. Meeting participants agreed to “move forward with sincerity to ensure security and lasting peace in Afghanistan.” They also agreed to hold future meetings “on developing a mechanism to put an end to the killing and shedding the blood of innocent people.” (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [High Peace Council](#))

Afghan individuals accused of terrorism are prosecuted by Afghanistan’s Justice Center in Parwan (JCIP). In July 2015, the Office of the National Security Council granted the JCIP jurisdiction over all individuals captured on the battlefield; persons accused of terrorist crimes; influential and prominent members of the Taliban; and commanders of terrorist groups. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani expanded the JCIP’s authority in September 2015 and gave it nationwide jurisdiction, declaring it to be Afghanistan’s counterterrorism court. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

Afghanistan’s government has sought to initiate dialogue with insurgent factions. The government began negotiations with Hezb-i-Islami in March 2016 and signed a draft treaty with the group on September 22, 2016. Under the terms of the treaty the Afghan government would grant leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar amnesty and provide for his security while lobbying international actors to lift sanctions on the group. Human Right Watch criticized the treaty for not holding warlords accountable, while the United States praised the deal as “a step in bringing the conflict in Afghanistan to a peaceful end.” Afghanistan’s chief executive, Abdullah Abdullah, called on the Taliban to sign a similar treaty. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Voice of](#)

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America)

Military Counter Extremism

NATO launched the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in 2001 under a U.N. mandate to root out the Taliban and support Afghanistan's security. The mission included 130,000 troops from 51 nations at its height. ISAF officially ended combat missions in Afghanistan in December 2014 and Afghan forces took control of the country's security. Up to 17,000 NATO troops were expected to remain in Afghanistan in a supporting role as the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) assumed full responsibility for Afghanistan's security and defense. NATO launched Operation Resolute Support in January 2015 to train and assist ANDSF. By 2018, the United States had 14,000 troops in Afghanistan. That December, U.S. President Donald Trump called for a drawdown of half of the U.S. troops in Afghanistan. (Sources: [NATO](#), [Guardian](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [CNN](#))

The Afghan people will need the partnership of the world, led by the United States, for many years to come. U.S. President Barack Obama

In October 2015, then-President Barack Obama halted the drawdown of U.S. troops from the country, citing the need to prevent Afghanistan from being used as "a safe haven for terrorists to attack our nation again." Afghan security has continued to work with U.S. forces to combat domestic extremist groups such as the Taliban and ISIS. Obama announced in July 2016 that the United States would maintain a troop presence of more than 8,000 soldiers through the end of his term in 2017. According to Obama, "the Afghan people will need the partnership of the world, led by the United States, for many years to come." (Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#))

Afghanistan's security is challenged by reported shortages in military equipment and personnel. The country's air force comprises 130 aircraft, but the air force does not have enough personnel to maintain and fly them. The Afghan air force flew 22,260 missions in 2015. The air force flew almost 7,000 missions between January and May 2016, but U.S. military advisers in Afghanistan have pointed to the challenge of "human capital." In October 2016, Afghan military sources told Reuters that the Afghan security forces are losing up to 5,000 soldiers each month due to desertions or casualties, with only about 3,000 new soldiers and police recruited at the same time. As of March 2017, the Afghan military numbered approximately 300,000 soldiers. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#))

In March 2017, the Afghan government announced plans to double the country's complement of 17,000 elite special forces to combat militants such as the Taliban. As of the announcement, Afghan special forces carried out 70 percent of the country's offensive operations. The following month, U.S. General John Nicholson called for thousands more troops to support the NATO coalition during the Taliban's planned spring offensive. As of April 2017, there were 8,500 American troops in Afghanistan supporting the Afghan forces. That month, 300 U.S. Marines arrived in Afghanistan to aid Afghan forces in recapturing territory from the Taliban in Helmand province. It is reportedly the first significant Marine presence in Afghanistan since 2014. In August 2017, President Donald Trump announced that U.S. troops would remain in Afghanistan indefinitely. The following month, the U.S. government sent an additional 3,000 troops to Afghanistan. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [NPR](#), [Military Times](#), [BBC News](#))

In April 2018, the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) released a report signaling a decrease in the number of personnel in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in 2017. ANDSF includes the army, air force, and police. According to the report, the ANDSF included an estimated 296,400 personnel as of January 2018. The number represents a 10.6 percent decrease over January 2017. SIGAR also noted that the portion of the Afghan population living under the authority of the Afghan government as of January 2018 had increased to 65 percent, an increase of 1 percent from October 2017. In 2017, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani announced a plan, in conjunction with the Pentagon, to double the size of ANDSF's commando forces by 2020, from 11,700 to 23,300. According to a Pentagon report cited by the *Washington Post*, Ghani wants Afghan forces "to cover the preponderance of the population by 2020, compelling the Taliban to seek reconciliation." (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Washington Post](#))

International airstrikes targeting militants in Afghanistan have also led to civilian casualties. On February 10, 2017, U.S. and Afghan coalition forces killed at least 26 Afghan civilians during airstrikes in Helmand province. The strikes targeted "anti-government elements," according to the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. In November 2016, at least 30 civilians died in a NATO airstrike in Kunduz. NATO said the strike was to protect "friendly forces under fire." (Sources: [CNN](#), [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

On December 9, 2019, the *Washington Post* published thousands of pages of documents revealing that senior U.S. officials misrepresented the reality of the 18-year campaign in Afghanistan. According to the documents, the U.S. military achieved a quick but short-term victory over the Taliban and al-Qaeda in early 2002, and the Pentagon's focus then shifted toward Iraq. However, the Taliban returned in greater numbers. Despite troops on the ground voicing concerns about the American strategy's growing shortcomings, senior American officials almost always said that

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progress was being made. “We were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan — we didn’t know what we were doing,” Douglas Lute, a three-star Army general who served as the White House’s Afghan war czar during the Bush and Obama administrations, told government interviewers in 2015. The 2,000 pages of interviews were obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request and years of legal back-and-forth with the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, according to the *Washington Post*. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#))

ISIS

Afghan forces combated and monitored ISIS domestically with the U.S.-led international coalition. In July 2016, Afghan forces supported by the United States reportedly killed an estimated 300 ISIS fighters and several top leaders in an operation in the eastern part of the country. On April 13, 2017, U.S. forces dropped an 11-ton warhead on a series of Afghan caves allegedly used by ISIS in Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan. Afghan officials claimed the bomb killed at least 94 ISIS fighters, though the U.S. military has refused to confirm the bomb’s toll. The warhead—the GBU-43B Massive Ordnance Air Blast, nicknamed the “mother of all bombs”—was the largest non-nuclear warhead ever deployed by the United States. Afghan officials criticized the U.S. government for using the ordnance against ISIS instead of the Taliban, which eight days later killed at least 170 Afghan soldiers in its largest ever attack on an Afghan military base. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [CNN](#), [ABC News](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#))

According to the U.S. State Department, “grassroots, civilian-organized militias” previously emerged in Afghanistan to fight ISIS. These militias have at times partnered with the Afghan Security Forces. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

Following the Taliban’s takeover of the Afghan government on August 15, 2021, and ahead of the impending full withdrawal of U.S. military forces by August 31, on August 22, 2021, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan announced that ISIS posed a significant threat to Americans in Afghanistan. A few days later, on August 26, ISIS-K carried out a suicide bombing and mass shooting at Kabul’s airport, killing as many as 170 people and wounding an additional 200. In response to the attacks, on the evening of August 27, 2021, the U.S. military carried out a drone strike in Nangarhar, targeting and killing two “high profile” ISIS-K targets. According to Pentagon spokesman John Kirby, the targets were “ISIS-K planners and facilitators.” Another ISIS-K member was wounded in the attack. On August 29, U.S. forces conducted an airstrike against an ISIS-K target in Kabul. The strike targeted a vehicle that, according to U.S. Central Command spokesperson, Navy Captain Bill Urban, posed “an imminent threat” to Kabul airport. The vehicle allegedly contained substantial amounts of explosive material. The driver, a suspected suicide bomber, was killed in the airstrike. According to media sources, ten civilians were also killed. On September 17, the Pentagon acknowledged that the drone strike was a tragic mistake. Following an inquiry conducted by the U.S. military’s Central Command, the alleged explosives in the vehicle were most likely water bottles, and a second explosion in a Kabul neighborhood was most likely due to a propane or gas tank. The driver of the vehicle, Zemari Ahmadi, was a longtime worker for a U.S. aid group and had no connection to ISIS-K. Ahmadi had a quick interaction with some people in an alleged ISIS safe house, which military analysts falsely concluded was a direct connection to the militant group. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Telegraph](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Reuters](#), [Washington Post](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [Independent](#), [Business Insider](#), [CNN](#), [NBC News](#), [New York Times](#))

Taliban

The Afghan Security Forces coordinated with the United States in confronting the Taliban. According to then-U.S. State Department Deputy Spokesman Mark Toner in August 2016, the United States was committed to helping Afghanistan “build a more stable, peaceful, democratic, and prosperous future.” The United States was in “close contact and coordination with the Afghan Security Forces ... if we see opportunities to take out key leadership [of the Taliban], we’re going to strike.” (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Reuters](#))

According to U.S. General John Nicholson, the top U.S. and NATO officer in Afghanistan, Afghan forces suffered 5,000 fatalities in 2015 against the Taliban. Nicholson told Reuters in August 2016 that Afghan forces have been more aggressive in confronting the Taliban in 2016, and therefore more successful. Afghan forces have reportedly used schools in Taliban-held areas as military bases, according to Human Rights Watch. The organization accused Afghan forces of “putting children at risk and depriving thousands of an education.” (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Voice of America](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani initiated direct contact with the Taliban in July 2015 in an attempt to start a peace process. The talks collapsed later that month after the publication of the 2013 death of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar. In December 2015, Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and the United States committed to resuming peace talks with the Taliban. By June 2017, however, continuous violent attacks by the Taliban had derailed talks as the government debated whether to increase the severity of its responses. After a May 31, 2017, bombing killed more than 80

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people in Kabul, the government ordered the execution of 11 Taliban prisoners. The Taliban threatened retaliation against the Afghan judiciary and also foreign detainees. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Voice of America](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

In a bid to end the 18-year Afghanistan war, Qatar and Germany sponsored a two-day intra-Afghan meeting in Doha in July 2019. The high-profile meeting featured Afghan leaders and Taliban representatives. Around 50 Afghan politicians, activists, and journalists joined the Taliban in discussions on ways to find lasting peace in Afghanistan. As the Taliban has repeatedly refused to negotiate with the Western-backed government of Ashraf Ghani, they agreed to join the meeting on the condition that the attendees were there only in a personal capacity. The talks were informal and were not expected to result in concrete settlements or policies, but attendees were hopeful that the meeting would set the groundwork for future negotiations. (Source: [Al Jazeera](#))

The Afghan government and United States both engaged in negotiations with the Taliban to end the war that began in 2001. On February 29, 2020, U.S. and Taliban representatives signed an agreement in Qatar for a gradual U.S. troop withdrawal in exchange for the Taliban renouncing renounce al-Qaeda and agreeing to prevent al-Qaeda and other groups from using Afghanistan as a base for terrorism against the United States. The Taliban also agreed to negotiate a permanent ceasefire with other Afghan militants and the Afghan government. The Afghan government voiced immediate objections to a clause calling for a prisoner swap of 5,000 Taliban prisoners in Afghan custody for 1,000 prisoners held by the Taliban as a precondition for negotiations. The government argued that the United States did not have the authority to free Taliban prisoners from Afghan custody and that should be left to direct negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. In response, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the United States would work on confidence-building measures with the Taliban and the Afghan government. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Washington Post](#))

On May 23, 2020, the Taliban announced a three-day Eid ceasefire. The statement instructed Taliban fighters to refrain from entering government areas, and also stated that Kabul forces should not enter territories under their control. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani accepted the ceasefire, and ordered his forces to comply, also announcing plans to release up to 2,000 Taliban prisoners. Despite the ceasefire, according to Javid Faisal, a spokesman for the country's main intelligence and security office in Kabul, at least 146 civilians were killed and another 430 were wounded by the Taliban during Ramadan. Following the three-day Eid ceasefire on May 26, Faisal announced that Afghan authorities would release as many as 900 Taliban prisoners. The Afghan government also urged the Taliban to extend the Eid ceasefire. By May 2020, Kabul released about 1,000 Taliban inmates, whereas the Taliban has released about 300 Afghan security forces. On May 27, Reuters reported that two senior U.S. officials in Kabul claimed that the U.S. will significantly reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan from 13,000 to about 8,600 by early June 2020. Due to ongoing concerns regarding the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, the withdrawal was ahead of the original mid-July deadline agreed upon by the U.S. and the Taliban on February 29 in Doha, Qatar. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [The Hill](#))

On August 9, 2020, the Afghan government agreed to release 400 Taliban prisoners. The release was an attempt to pave the way for peace talks with the Taliban. The last of the prisoners were freed and put on house arrest on September 10. The released prisoners were the last in a batch of 5,000 to be freed as a condition to initiate peace talks with the Afghan government. However, among those released included Taliban members connected with a 2017 truck bombing near the German embassy in Kabul that killed more than 150 people, and members of the militant Haqqani network. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Washington Post](#))

On September 12, 2020, representatives for the Afghan government and the Taliban met in Doha, Qatar to negotiate a framework for lasting peace in the country. The peace negotiations are the first-ever talks between the two camps, having been facilitated by the U.S.-Taliban peace deal that was signed on February 29, 2020. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban's deputy leader, did not provide concrete details about the Taliban's ambitions in Afghanistan, but did state that the insurgents will participate in the negotiations with "full sincerity." Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Kabul's High Council for National Reconciliation stated that even if both sides do not agree on every detail, the hope is to create a political system based on Islamic principles that will preserve the rights of all Afghans. As of October 6, 2020, the two sides agreed to a broad code of conduct to advance peace talks. The Taliban has demanded that the Hanafi Islamic code be used to guide negotiations as well as basing the talks around the conditions of the U.S.-Taliban deal. Nonetheless, violence has escalated between the Taliban and security forces in southern Afghanistan, leading tens of thousands—estimated around 30,000—of Afghans to flee the region. On January 4, 2021, the United States accused the Taliban of responsibility for a recent wave of high-profile assassinations, while the Taliban accused the United States of continuing to launch airstrikes against the terror group despite its commitment to halt strikes under a 2020 agreement. Despite the charges, Afghan officials resumed peace talks with the Taliban on January 5, 2021. Talks broke off in April when the United States announced it would withdraw its forces by September 11—months after the May deadline agreed to by the previous Trump administration. However, on June 9, the Afghan government and Taliban negotiators met again in Doha, with limited details of the content of the meeting being reported by either side. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [NPR](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [France 24](#), [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#))

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On May 1, 2021, the United States began its phased withdrawal from Afghanistan with the goal of completing the withdrawal by that September. Shortly after the withdrawal began, the head of Central Command (CENTCOM) forces, General Frank McKenzie, said the United States would no longer provide the Afghan military with air support once the withdrawal is completed. The United States would also limit counterterrorism strikes in the country to instances when specific plans to attack the U.S. homeland or U.S. allies are discovered. (Source: [Voice of America](#))

The United States effectively ended major U.S. military operations in Afghanistan on July 2, 2021, as American troops and their western allies left their last Afghan base after two decades. Although the Taliban has intensified their offensive since the beginning of the U.S. withdrawal process in May—seizing at least 150 of Afghanistan’s 400 districts—the United States will retain some ability to conduct airstrikes if needed. However, air support for the Afghan forces will be flown in from outside of the country, from bases in Qatar or the United Arab Emirates. Additionally, 650 U.S. troops will remain in the country to protect the American Embassy in Kabul. Despite the ongoing offensive from the Taliban, the United States has no plans to reverse the withdrawal which has worried security experts in the region who estimate that the country could fall to the Taliban anywhere from six months to two years if left to their own devices. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#))

Despite the Taliban’s ongoing attacks throughout the country, the insurgent group has tried to implement itself as a legitimate military force and political group. The militant group engaged in two separate diplomatic visits to Tehran, Iran on July 7, 2021, and Tianjin, China on July 28. Both meetings, in which the high-level Taliban political committee met with the Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, were intended to catapult discussions on how to maintain peaceful recovery in Afghanistan. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#))

Nonetheless, on August 15, 2021, Taliban fighters entered Kabul. The Taliban laid siege to the presidential palace and took complete control of Kabul by August 16, after which the Taliban declared the war in Afghanistan had ended. Given the severity of the situation, the Pentagon authorized another 1,000 troops—expanding their security presence on the ground to 6,000 troops—to help evacuate U.S. citizens and all U.S. personnel. Later on August 16, U.S. President Joe Biden announced that despite the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan, U.S. troops will only remain on the ground for a short and focused mission—to ensure the safe and secure evacuation of U.S. citizens, personnel, allies, and vulnerable Afghans. The president, however, communicated that if the Taliban interfered with evacuation efforts, the U.S. would forcefully retaliate against the militant group. Ultimately, Biden stood firm in his decision to withdraw from the 20-year war, stating that the U.S. mission in Afghanistan was solely intended for counterterrorism purposes and not for nation building. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby also announced that the Pentagon was working on the logistics to get as many as 22,000 Afghan interpreters, their families, and other vulnerable Afghans into the U.S. by August 31, with refugees to be temporarily housed at Fort Bliss, Texas and Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen later stated that if U.S. troops remain in the country past the deadline of August 31, “there would be consequences. It will create mistrust between us. If they are intent on continuing the occupation it will provoke a reaction.” (Sources: [New York Times](#), [France 24](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Military Times](#), [CNN](#), [Sky News](#))

Despite the Taliban’s previous stance on evacuations following the August 31st deadline, on August 29, the United States and 97 other countries announced that they had reached an agreement with the Taliban to allow evacuations of all foreign nationals and any Afghan citizen with travel authorization after the August 31st deadline. Although Sher Mohammed Abas Stanekzai, the Taliban’s chief negotiator, stated on August 27 that the Taliban would not stop people from leaving the country, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan believes that although the Taliban is “allowing for safe passage...[the U.S.] is not just going to take their word for it.” (Sources: [Axios](#), [Reuters](#))

A minute before midnight on August 30, 2021, the last of U.S. troops flew out of Kabul, ending a 20-year war that took the lives of 2,500 troops and 240,000 Afghans and cost the U.S. about \$2 trillion. In the past two weeks, 123,000 people were evacuated from Kabul, with close to 100 Americans, and tens of thousands who helped the U.S., still remaining in the country. Before departing, U.S. troops destroyed more than 70 aircraft, dozens of armored vehicles, and disabled air defenses that were used to counteract jihadist attacks in the country. The final withdrawal of U.S. troops was not a celebration of a more secure Afghanistan, but marked the beginning of a new Taliban regime, an outcome the U.S. sought to prevent. (Source: [Reuters](#))

On October 9 and 10, 2021, a U.S. delegation met with senior Taliban representatives in Doha, Qatar. The U.S. delegation focused on security, terrorism concerns, and the guarantee of human rights and meaningful participation of all Afghans in Afghan society. Additionally, the United States reiterated the concern for safe passage for U.S. citizens and Afghan partners still seeking to leave the country. Despite refusing to provide political recognition to the self-imposed government, the U.S. agreed to provide humanitarian aid that will go “directly to the Afghan people.” Although the talks were also meant to touch on containing extremist groups in Afghanistan—particularly ISIS-K—Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen told the Associated Press that, the Taliban is “able to tackle Daesh independently.” (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Guardian](#), [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#))

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Taliban Counterterrorism Operations

Since seizing power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban have increased offensive military strikes against ISIS-K targets around Afghanistan. Pakistan has since reportedly supplied the Taliban with intelligence and technical support to fight ISIS-K. That October, a senior Taliban leader told the *Washington Post* Pakistan was aiding the Taliban in monitoring phone and Internet communications, as well as passing the Taliban raw intelligence. In November 2021, the Taliban began conducting background checks to purge ISIS infiltrators from the Afghan military. On November 15, 2021, the Taliban announced the launch of Operation IS, a crackdown on suspected ISIS hideouts in Afghanistan. That month, the Taliban deployed more than 1,300 fighters to Nangahar province to disrupt ISIS-K operations. (Sources: [Bloomberg](#), [Washington Post](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Defense Post](#), [Washington Post](#))

International Counter-Extremism

International Organizations

Afghanistan has “consistently emphasized the need to strengthen joint cooperation to fight terrorism and violent extremism in a variety of bilateral and multilateral fora,” according to the U.S. State Department. In December 2015, Afghanistan participated in the Heart of Asia Conference in Pakistan. In May 2015, Afghanistan, the United Nations, and Tajikistan organized the “Sharing of Experiences on Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia for Heart of Asia Countries.” (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

Afghanistan has belonged to the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering since April 2006. In June 2014, the Financial Action Task Force warned Afghanistan that it risked being placed on a list of “high-risk and non-cooperative jurisdictions” if it did not enact anti-money laundering and terror-financing legislation. The Afghan government amended its laws in 2015 to increase cross-border declarations for the physical transportation of cash and negotiable instruments, according to the State Department. In 2016, Afghanistan froze the assets of individuals and entities designated under U.N. Security Council resolutions 1267 and 1988, which related to ISIS, al-Qaeda, and related groups. In 2017, Afghanistan was removed from the FATF blacklist after committing to crack down on banking crimes. Afghanistan further demonstrated its commitment to combating money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism through annual meetings conducted by the High Level Coordination Commission on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing. The commission met for four years until March 2021, where they discussed how to achieve specific objectives and implement the recommendations of the FATF. Although it appears that Afghanistan has remained a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering as of 2023, it is uncertain if the Taliban has participated in the annual meetings or workshops held by the organization since the movement’s takeover of Kabul in 2021. However, the Egmont Group, a united body of financial intelligence units of multiple countries, immediately suspended Afghanistan’s decade long membership on August 31, 2021. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.N. Security Council](#), [U.N. Security Council](#), [Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering](#), [Egmont Group](#), [Tolo News](#), [Da Afghanistan Bank](#))

China’s Role in Countering Terrorism in Afghanistan

On June 20, 2019, China hosted a Taliban delegation in an effort to promote peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. China’s Xinjiang region shares a short border with Afghanistan, and it is suspected that the talks were held in part to prevent Islamist extremists from recruiting or operating in the mostly Muslim Xinjiang. Furthermore, on July 11 and 12, 2019, the United States, Russia, China, and Pakistan held talks in Beijing to call on the Taliban to immediately agree to a ceasefire and to direct negotiations with the Afghan government. Pakistan’s inclusion in the Beijing talks was considered pivotal as Islamabad has active, albeit clandestine, channels in negotiating with the Taliban. A Taliban delegation met with Chinese officials in Beijing on September 23, 2019, to discuss peace efforts in Afghanistan. The Taliban’s nine-member delegation traveled to Beijing and met Deng Xijun, China’s special representative for Afghanistan, said Suhail Shaheen, the Afghan group’s spokesman in Qatar. On July 28, Chinese officials—including China’s foreign minister, Wang Yi—and Taliban leaders meet in Tianjin, northeastern China, launching two days of talks to discuss possible avenues for peace in Afghanistan. Yi called the group a “pivotal military and political force,” but urged the militant group to “hold high the banner of peace talks.” Among some of the promises made, Yi was able to persuade the Taliban to not allow fighters to use Afghan territory as a base to carry out attacks inside China. China was one of the few countries that was quick to warmly receive the Taliban’s new regime. On August 30, 2021, Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen stated in an interview that he believes China can play a “constructive and positive” role in reconstruction and economic development of Afghanistan. Additionally, Shaheen reiterated that the Taliban would keep to their commitment of keeping Afghanistan from being a staging ground for terrorists. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Radio Free Europe](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#))

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, [New York Times](#), [South China Morning Post](#))

Cooperation with India

The leaders of Afghanistan and India agreed in late August 2016 to continue working together to “overcome terror and extremism” facing their countries. India is one of the largest donors to Afghanistan’s reconstruction efforts, having invested approximately \$2 billion since 2001. According to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Afghanistan “continues to be challenged by externally sponsored instruments and entities of violence and terror.” Indian officials are reportedly concerned about Pakistani militants crossing the border into Afghanistan to carry out terrorist attacks.

(Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [Diplomat](#), [Bakhtar News Agency](#))

Regional Security in Central Asia

Following the Taliban’s offensive beginning in July 2021, the Taliban has assured their neighbors in Central Asia that they will strive to keep war and conflict within Afghanistan’s borders. The Taliban has not fired on or threatened Central Asian forces on their borders as they are seemingly promoting a diplomatic approach that respects the territorial integrity of the countries, albeit possibly to prevent its Central Asian neighbors from actively interfering with the new government. (Source: [United States Institute of Peace](#))

On May 4, 2022, media sources reported that Uzbekistan initiated talks with the Taliban on a range of issues given their shared border, history, and culture. However, Ismatulla Irgashev, the special representative to Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, maintained that the Central Asian country would refrain from formally recognizing the Taliban’s interim government as to not alienate the United States and other Western powers who have sought to isolate Afghanistan with asset seizures and other sanctions. Following the Taliban’s August 2021 takeover of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan has become a key hub for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the country. Despite thawing relations between Tashkent and the Taliban, Daniel Rosenblum, the U.S. ambassador to Uzbekistan, has stated that Uzbekistan remains concerned about terrorism in Afghanistan given that a growing number of terror groups continue to operate in the country. Additionally, according to the Soufan Center, Tashkent’s primary interest with the Taliban is to ensure the interim government does not provide safe haven to anti-Tashkent Islamist extremist groups, particularly the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) which has been affiliated with ISIS-K since 2015. Despite Tashkent’s concerns regarding IMU activity, Taliban officials have claimed the situation on the border “is normal and nothing to worry about.” Uzbekistan’s increased engagement with the Taliban was initiated following ISIS-K claims that they had carried out a rocket attack on Uzbekistan from across the Afghanistan border on April 18, 2022. Despite ISIS-K’s claims of firing 10 rockets at an Uzbek military base, Uzbek authorities have not yet commented on the claims and the Taliban has denied the attack occurred at all. (Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Soufan Center](#))

Cooperation with Pakistan

On May 18, 2022, the Taliban hosted peace talks between Pakistan’s Tehrik-i Taliban (TTP) and the Pakistani government in Kabul. Members of the TTP agreed to extend a ceasefire with the Pakistani government until May 30. The TTP’s spokesman, Mohammad Khurasani, stated that the group agreed to extend the ceasefire, which originally began on May 10, at the request of a group of Pakistani tribal elders. According to media sources, Islamabad demanded that the Afghan Taliban prevent TTP militants from using Afghan territory to launch attacks against Pakistan. On June 3, 2022, the TTP announced an indefinite ceasefire with Pakistan’s government. Although once promising, peace progress faced a new roadblock on November 28, 2022, when the TTP announced that its leadership decided to end the ceasefire with Islamabad. The TTP claims the Pakistani military is increasing the number of attacks against the group and encourages their fighters to resume attacks against Islamabad. (Sources: ([Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)))

In the midst of allegations that Afghan-based militants are increasingly carrying out terrorist attacks in Pakistan, senior officials from Pakistan and the Taliban met in Kabul on July 19, 2023, to discuss security cooperation between the two countries. In particular, Pakistan urged the Taliban to abide to the conditions of the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement that bars terrorists from operating in Afghanistan. The talks occurred amidst an increase in militant activity particularly around the Afghan-Pakistan, of which most attacks are claimed by or blamed on the TTP. (Source: [Voice of America](#))

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Public Opinion

A 2019 public opinion poll, published by the Asia Foundation, was taken following the initiation of the U.S.-Taliban peace talks that year. According to the poll, 58 percent of the Afghan public surveyed in the sample size thought that the country was headed in the wrong direction. Additionally, 75 percent of the Afghans surveyed feared for their safety. Furthermore, pollsters were unable to visit about 32 percent of Afghan villages due to “Taliban presence in the village, military operations or other security reasons.” More than 75 percent of Afghans live in rural areas, which demonstrates that the Taliban had considerable influence over these rural spaces—considering pollsters were unable to access a significant number of these communities—well before the movement took over Kabul in August 2021. (Source: [Washington Post](#))

Personal Safety

The United Nations recorded near record levels of civilian casualties in Afghanistan between January and March 2018. That February, the *Washington Post* reported high levels of feelings of insecurity among the Afghan population, as well as a general feeling that the government has abandoned the Afghan people. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Washington Post](#))

According to a 2016 poll of the Afghan people by the Asia Foundation, 69.8 percent of Afghans fear for their personal safety. This represents only a slight increase over the 2015 survey’s result of 67 percent, but is still the highest number recorded in a decade. According to the 2016 poll, Afghans in the southwest region of the country experienced the greatest fear for their safety (82 percent). Within that region, 55.4 percent residents of Helmand province reported always being afraid for their safety. Overall, 73.5 percent of Afghans living in urban areas said they feared for their safety, compared with 68.6 percent of Afghans living in rural areas. (Sources: [Asia Foundation](#), [Asia Foundation](#))

Public safety fears have negatively affected Afghan civics. In the 2016 survey, 74.8 percent of Afghans believed it dangerous to run for public office. Afghans’ fear of voting declined slightly from 55.6 percent in 2015 to 53.7 percent in 2016, though the Asia Foundation noted that no major elections took place in 2016. The Asia Foundation also recorded a slight increase in Afghans’ fear of participating in peaceful demonstrations, rising from 69.1 percent in 2015 to 71.6 percent in 2016. (Source: [Asia Foundation](#))

Afghans are also increasingly fearful of travel. The Asia Foundation recorded an all-time high of 81.5 percent of Afghans reported some or a lot of fear when traveling to other regions of the country. This represented an increase of 20.5 percent since 2008. (Source: [Asia Foundation](#))

The Asia Foundation poll found that 53.7 percent of Afghans believed that the Afghan National Army is getting better at providing security, while 20 percent believed the army is getting worse. A smaller 39.6 percent believed that the Afghan Local Police (ALP) were improving, while 26.4 percent believed the ALP was getting worse. Only 34.6 percent of Afghans believe the Afghan National Police (ANP) is getting better at providing security, while 30.7 believe the ANP is getting worse. (Source: [Asia Foundation](#))

ISIS

Almost three out of four Afghans (74.3 percent) polled by the Asia Foundation in 2015 had heard of ISIS. Of that number, 54.2 percent said that ISIS poses or could pose a threat in the future to their home districts. Knowledge of ISIS was higher in Kabul and the southeastern provinces and lower in more remote areas, according to the Asia Foundation. In the 2016 poll, overall knowledge of ISIS increased to 81.3 percent, but perception of ISIS as a security threat decreased from 2015 (54.2 percent) to 2016 (47.9). The 2016 survey found that 94.6 percent of Afghans in general fear an encounter with ISIS. (Sources: [Asia Foundation](#), [Asia Foundation](#))

According to the U.S. State Department’s 2016 Country Report on Afghanistan, ISIS has received little support among the Afghan population since the group declared a province in Afghanistan and Pakistan in January 2015. According to the State Department, Afghan militants, including the Taliban, have largely rejected ISIS’s ideology and tactics. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

Armed Opposition Groups

A 2016 survey by the Asia Foundation found that 93 percent of Afghans are fearful of encountering the Taliban. As in 2015, the 2016 survey found that 62.9 percent of Afghans believed that a peace process with armed opposition groups could help stabilize Afghanistan, but confidence levels

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dropped in Kabul and the central region, as well as in the western and northeastern regions. (Source: [Asia Foundation](#))

Sympathy for armed opposition groups fell by 10.8 percent in 2016 to 16.7 percent. When the Asia Foundation asked Afghans in 2016 why they believed armed opposition groups are fighting against the Afghan government, 23.1 percent responded that the armed opposition groups are seeking power, an increase over 2015 (18.9 percent) and 2014 (15.6 percent). Other reasons cited include: support from Pakistan (12 percent), government corruption (7 percent), unemployment/poverty (2 percent), the presence of foreign troops/foreign community (11 percent), and to support Islam (2 percent). In 2015, Afghans had selected the pursuit of power as the primary motivator for armed opposition groups in the country. In 2014, Afghans had largely believed the presence of foreign troops motivated Afghanistan's armed opposition groups, according to the Asia Foundation. (Sources: [Asia Foundation](#), [Asia Foundation](#))