

2.1. Persons affiliated with the former Afghan government

COMMON ANALYSIS

Last update: April 2022

This profile includes members of the ANSF as well as civilian profiles affiliated with the government, such as civil servants and members of the judiciary.

COI summary

During the years of the conflict, ANSF personnel both on or off-duty have been a priority target for the Taliban. After the Doha Agreement in February 2020, the Taliban increased their attacks on government forces, mainly in rural areas. Attacks against government forces at army bases, police stations and checkpoints, deliberate killings, executions, abductions and torture against detainees, including ANSF personnel, were reported, and explicitly legitimised by the Taliban *Layeha* (code of conduct). According to the *Layeha*, the Taliban were instructed to make ANSF members surrender and/or join the group [[Anti-government elements](#), 1.2.1, 2.5, 2.6.1; [State structure](#), 2.1; [Security 2020](#), 1.1.1, 1.3, 1.5.2].

Available sources indicated that officers of NDS, members of PGMs and police chiefs were most frequently targeted by the Taliban [[Security 2020](#), 1.2.1, 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 2; [Anti-government elements](#), 2.6; [Conflict targeting](#), 1.2.1]. It was also reported that the Taliban often threatened and targeted female security officers [[Anti-government elements](#), 2.6.1.1].

Family members of security forces have also been targeted by insurgents. Moreover, during the years of the conflict, family members were often pressured to convince their relative to give up his or her position in the security forces.

There were also reports of former members of the ANSF who have been targeted after having left the ANSF [[Anti-government elements](#), 2.6.1; [Conflict targeting](#), 1.3.1, 1.4.1].

Employees of ministries which were at the forefront of the fight against insurgents, for example the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice, have regularly been targeted by the Taliban. To a lesser degree, employees of other ministries not involved directly in the fight against insurgents have also been targeted; personal enmity or open statements against the Taliban could be seen as relevant circumstances in this regard [[Anti-government elements](#), 2.6.2; [Conflict targeting](#), 1.2.2; [Security 2020](#), 1.3.3, 1.3.4]

Judges, prosecutors, and other judicial staff have been important targets for the Taliban. Targeted killings, abductions and threats have been reported during the years of the conflict. Judges also frequently received threats from local leaders or armed groups [[State structure](#), 3.3; [Conflict targeting](#), 1.2.2; [Security 2020](#), 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 1.4.2].

There have been reports of civilians being threatened and/or killed for being employees or (perceived) supporters or spies for the government, such as tribal or community elders and heads of villages, as well as local or provincial council members or government officials [[Anti-government elements](#), 2.6.2; [Security 2020](#), 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 2; [Conflict targeting](#), 1.2.2, 1.5.1.1].

Threats, targeted killings and parallel justice punishment of individuals accused of criticising the Taliban or supporting the government were also documented [[Anti-government elements](#), 2.6.2; [Criminal law and customary justice](#), 1.8].

Individuals under this profile were also seen as a legitimate target by other insurgent groups, for example the ISKP and foreign armed groups [[Security 2020](#), 1.2.2, 1.5.2, [Anti-government elements](#), 3.5, 3.6, 4.3].

After the takeover of control in August 2021, in their first press conference the Taliban announced a general amnesty, saying that they had pardoned ‘all of those who had fought against us’ [[Security September 2021](#), 1.1.2]. Despite this amnesty, retaliatory acts by Taliban members against former ANSF-personnel and against officials of the former government and the judiciary were reported [[Country Focus 2022](#), 2.5].

Shortly after the takeover, a source reported that the Taliban rounded up Afghans on a blacklist and targeted people with suspected links to the previous administration or US-led forces, noting that those ‘particularly at risk are

individuals in central positions in military, police and investigative units'. House-to-house searches to find blacklisted individuals were also reported. The Taliban were also said to visit local mosques and police offices to receive information on certain individuals [[Security September 2021](#), 1.1.4]. Secret files on intelligence officers and informers were retrieved by an armed group which was able to enter the headquarters of the National Directorate of Security [[Country Focus 2022](#), 2.5].

The Taliban's acting Army Chief of Staff stated that soldiers and officers from the former government would be allowed to join the planned new Afghan army. However, the Taliban Intelligence Direction of Ghazni province reportedly instructed its members to identify in their ranks, among others, ageers (mercenaries) belonging to the former government, and report them to the intelligence direction [[Country Focus 2022](#), 2.5].

Incidents of summary executions, violent abuses and forced disappearances of former ANSF personnel have been reported [[Country Focus 2022](#), 2.5].

Moreover, cases were also reported where family members were interrogated or beaten by the Taliban looking for former officials. The Taliban reportedly also threatened relatives of Afghan pilots who had fled to Tajikistan after the Taliban takeover, in order to force the pilots to return to the country [[Country Focus 2022](#), 2.5].

Sources reported a lack of control of the Taliban leadership over their fighters and observed Taliban fighters acting on their own initiative and engaging in incidents because of personal enmities and desire for revenge. Furthermore, the Taliban did not hold their fighters accountable when they conducted atrocities such as killings, hangings, and subjecting people to violence. There were also patterns of local rivalry, and rivalry between tribes who have aligned themselves with either the Taliban or the former government which aggravated after the takeover [[Country Focus 2022](#), 1.3, 2.5].

After the takeover, Taliban called government employees to resume their work. It is reported that most male workers of government ministries have returned to work [[Country Focus 2022](#), 1.1.4, 1.2.1]. Targeted attacks against former government officials have however been reported [[Country Focus 2022](#), 2.5].

Judges and prosecutors were reportedly subjected to house searches, harassment and death threats. Female judges were claimed to be at added risk due to their gender as the Taliban do not accept that women have the right to judge men.

Female judges and prosecutors are reportedly living in hiding and searched after by Taliban and released prisoners. Also, family, friends and neighbours were said to have been pressed to reveal judges' whereabouts [[Country Focus 2022](#), 2.5].

Risk analysis

The acts to which individuals under this profile could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution (e.g. abduction, torture, execution).

Conflicting and limited information concerning the Taliban policies and differences with regard to the implementation of orders from the central Taliban leadership by Taliban foot soldiers, as well as differences at a regional level, render an assessment of the risk for individuals under this profile difficult.

Based on previous persecution and reports of continuing targeting, individuals seen as priority target of the Taliban, including those in central positions in former military, police and investigative units, as well as members of the judiciary, would in general have a well-founded fear of persecution.

For other individuals under this profile, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as: area of origin, gender, personal enmities, involvement in (local) conflicts, etc.

Family members of some individuals under this profile could also be at risk of treatment that would amount to persecution, e.g. in the context of the Taliban searching for the mentioned individual.

Nexus to a reason for persecution

Available information indicates that persecution of this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile (see the chapter [6. Exclusion](#)).
