

## Press Release: Afghanistan in Focus

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### EASO publishes a Country of Origin Information (COI) report on security situation in Afghanistan

*Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) Report entitled '[Afghanistan - security situation](#)'. The report is an update of a previous report published in February 2015 and provides a comprehensive overview of the security situation in Afghanistan, providing information relevant for Protection Status Determination of Afghan asylum seekers. In 2015, Afghanistan ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the top countries of origin in EU+ countries<sup>1</sup>, with a total of almost 200,000 applicants.*

The EASO 'Afghanistan security situation' COI report provides a general description of the security situation in Afghanistan, covering the following topics: a brief historical overview; actors in the conflict; security trends and armed confrontations, description of tactics and arms used; state ability to secure law and order; impact of the violence on security forces, civilian population and the political process. In addition, the report provides a description of the security situation for each of the 34 provinces and Kabul. In these chapters, a general overview of the province is given, followed by information on the impact of violence in the province, data on violent incidents, and qualitative information on the type of violence. Finally, a brief overview of violence-induced displacements is given, followed by a description of the armed actors in the province. The reference period for the security report runs from 1 November 2014 until 31 October 2015.

#### **Main Findings**

The numbers of violent incidents and civilian casualties in the first half of 2015 remained consistent with the same period in 2014, but in the second half of 2015 significant security developments were noticed, including a rise in civilian abductions on the roads and more unpredictable violence, including in the cities.

Armed insurgent groups, such as the Taliban and Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan, have increasingly conducted large-scale attacks on the Afghan National Security Forces. The insurgents have been increasingly successful in taking control of and holding territory. This trend culminated in the events at the end of September 2015, when the northern city of Kunduz fell to the Taliban. This was the first time since 2001 that the Taliban was able to gain control over a provincial capital. In these events, the civilian population was severely affected, including during the following counter-operations and retaliatory actions; a clear example was the US warplane attack against a Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in Kunduz. A new development was the appearance of Islamic State on the Afghan security scene which led to atrocities against civilians, mainly in Nangarhar, but also in other provinces. There are still significant geographical differences in the security situation. Sources indicate Helmand,

<sup>1</sup> EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland

Kandahar and Nangarhar as the provinces with the most violent incidents between January and August 2015. The most peaceful areas are situated in central and northern Afghanistan.

Researchers from EASO, Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Hungary and Slovak Republic participated in the joint drafting process of this country overview report. It was written in accordance with the EASO [COI Report Methodology](#) and reviewed by other experts (from Sweden, the UK and UNHCR) to ensure the highest quality.

This is the fourth COI report on Afghanistan published by EASO. In 2012, EASO published: "[COI Report Afghanistan, Taliban Strategies: Recruitment](#)" and "[COI Report Afghanistan, Insurgent Strategies: Intimidation and targeted violence against Afghans](#)"; in 2015, EASO published its first [security situation report](#).<sup>2</sup>

It is EASO's intention to continue to produce such reports on important countries of origin and to update them on a regular basis in order to raise and harmonise COI standards in the EU and to further support the practical implementation of the Common European Asylum System.

**Quick Link:** Country of Origin Information (COI) Report entitled '[Afghanistan - security situation](#)'

*Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office by contacting Mr Jean-Pierre Schembri on the following e-mail address: [jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu](mailto:jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu)*

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<sup>2</sup> All reports are available via EASO's website: (<http://easo.europa.eu/asylum-documentation/easo-publication-and-documentation/>).