



## COI QUERY

**Country of Origin**      **Afghanistan**

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Title</b>                      | <b>Major legislative, security-related, and humanitarian developments</b>  |
| <b>Reference period</b>           | 1 October 2023 to 31 January 2024  |
| <b>Topics</b>                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Recognition status and territorial control</li><li>2. Implementation of <i>sharia</i></li><li>3. Detentions and releases of activists</li><li>4. Security situation</li><li>5. Humanitarian situation</li></ol> |
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This response to a COI query has been elaborated according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology](#) and [EUAA Writing and Referencing Guide](#).

It was produced in response to COI information requests received from the EUAA Country Guidance drafting team in the development of country guidance on Afghanistan.

All sources used are referenced and cited in the bibliography section. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned COI methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive or conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

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## COI QUERY RESPONSE – Afghanistan

### Major legislative, security-related, and humanitarian developments

#### 1. Recognition status and territorial control

The *de facto* administration of Afghanistan, officially the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), remains unrecognised by countries worldwide<sup>1</sup> and continued to exercise territorial control of Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2. Implementation of *sharia*

Sources described the Taliban's continued enforcement of strict dress codes for women and girls.<sup>3</sup> In early January 2024, there were media reports of several women being arrested in Kabul<sup>4</sup> for not wearing *hijab* properly.<sup>5</sup> United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) expressed deep concern 'over recent arbitrary arrests and detentions of women and girls by Afghanistan's *de facto* authorities because of alleged non-compliance with the Islamic dress code', and documented 'a series of hijab decree enforcement campaigns' targeting women and girls in Kabul City and also Nili City in Daykundi Province.<sup>6</sup> Other local sources described how the crackdown began in Kabul, but then expanded to the provinces of Daikundi and Balkh.<sup>7</sup> There were also single reports about arrests taking place in the provinces of Herat, Kunduz, Takhar<sup>8</sup>, Bamyán and Ghazni.<sup>9</sup>

A *de facto* security official explained in a video on social media that women had been detained as they did not wear *hijab*, and were wearing trousers or leggings and dresses instead of loose-fitting garments covering the whole body.<sup>10</sup> Teenage girls interviewed by the Guardian stated that they had been arrested at school, in shopping centres and street markets

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<sup>1</sup> TOLONews, Islamic Emirate Wants Positive Relations with World: Muttaqi, 9 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ruttig, T., Whose Seat Is It Anyway: The UN's (non)decision on who represents Afghanistan, 7 December 2023, [url](#); UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 1 December 2023, [url](#), para. 18

<sup>3</sup> RFE/RL, Afghan Women Accuse Taliban Of Torture And Extortion Amid Dress Code Crackdown, 16 January 2024, [url](#); UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October – December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>4</sup> France24, Afghan women detained over improper hijab: Taliban official, 10 January 2024, [url](#); AP, Taliban arrest women for 'bad hijab' in the first dress code crackdown since their return to power, 4 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>5</sup> TOLONews, Mujahid Reacts to Reports, Saying Arrests Based on Law, 6 January 2024, [url](#); AP, Taliban arrest women for 'bad hijab' in the first dress code crackdown since their return to power, 4 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>6</sup> UNAMA, UNAMA deeply concerned over detentions of Afghan women and girls, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>7</sup> RFE/RL, Afghan Women Accuse Taliban Of Torture And Extortion Amid Dress Code Crackdown, 16 January 2024, [url](#); Rukshana Media, Taliban's "improper hijab" crackdown spreads to Balkh province as three women arrested in Mazar-e-Sharif, 21 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>8</sup> RFE/RL, Afghan Women Accuse Taliban Of Torture And Extortion Amid Dress Code Crackdown, 16 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> Rukshana Media, Taliban's "improper hijab" crackdown spreads to Balkh province as three women arrested in Mazar-e-Sharif, 21 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>10</sup> France24, Afghan women detained over improper hijab: Taliban official, 10 January 2024, [url](#)



in Kabul.<sup>11</sup> Some eyewitnesses had reportedly seen women and girls being arrested despite wearing *hijab*.<sup>12</sup> The Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid dismissed reports of the Taliban Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (MPVPV) mistreating women as ‘propaganda’.<sup>13</sup> Mujahid told the Guardian that the families of the arrested girls had ‘concerns’ that their daughters were being ‘supported by foreign groups’ to ‘promote “bad hijab”’. According to him, these types of arrests were ‘not usual practice’, and the girls had been taken to the police and freed on bail.<sup>14</sup> According to UNAMA, the release processes had required a *mahram* to sign a letter ‘guaranteeing future compliance or else face punishments’.<sup>15</sup> Most arrests reportedly took place in the Hazara dominated area of Dasht-e Barchi in Kabul City,<sup>16</sup> and UNAMA also noted some arrests in Khair Kahana area – ‘which is mainly populated by people of Tajik ethnicity and communities from Pansjh[e]r’.<sup>17</sup>

The United Nations (UN) recorded arrests of individuals accused of sorcery,<sup>18</sup> which was banned on 7 August 2023.<sup>19</sup> A spokesperson of the Taliban MPVPV claimed to have detained nearly 200 sorcerers and witches (called *Jadogar*) as of 2 October 2023.<sup>20</sup> A spokesperson of the Taliban MPVPV also stated that most arrests had been taking place in Kabul, and that prison sentences awaited those found guilty.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. Detentions and releases of activists

Education activist Maitullah Wesa was released on 26 October 2023, after having been detained for seven months.<sup>22</sup> The Taliban have also arrested other male activists advocating for girls’ education, including Ahmad Fahim Azimi and Sadiqullah Afghan,<sup>23</sup> who were arrested in mid-October 2023.<sup>24</sup> University lecturer, Islamic scholar and activist Rasool Parsi, was sentenced to 16 months in prison in October 2023, for blasphemy and for propagandising

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<sup>11</sup> UNAMA, UNAMA deeply concerned over detentions of Afghan women and girls, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>12</sup> Rukhshana Media, Taliban arrest dozens of women and girls for “improper” clothing in Kabul, 6 January 2024, [url](#); RFE/RL, Afghan Women Accuse Taliban Of Torture And Extortion Amid Dress Code Crackdown, 16 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>13</sup> Zabihullah [Twitter], posted on: 11 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>14</sup> Guardian (The), Afghan girls detained and lashed by Taliban for violating hijab rules, 10 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>15</sup> UNAMA, UNAMA deeply concerned over detentions of Afghan women and girls, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>16</sup> EFE, UN slams Taliban for arresting women over ‘bad hijab’, 5 January 2024, [url](#); UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October – December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>17</sup> UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October – December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>18</sup> UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 1 December 2023, [url](#), para. 35

<sup>19</sup> EUAA, Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>20</sup> TOLONews, Vice Ministry: Nearly 200 Jadogar (Sorcerers, Witches) Detained, 2 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>21</sup> EFE, Taliban arrest hundreds on allegations of performing witchcraft, 6 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>22</sup> TOLONews, Educational Activist Matiullah Wesa Released, 26 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>23</sup> UNAMA News [Twitter], posted on: 3 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>24</sup> Hasht-e Subh, Taliban Transfer Female Education Activists to Pul-e-Charkhi Prison Without Trial, 27 December 2023, [url](#); Amu TV, Families demand immediate release of two education activists from Taliban prison, 28 December 2023, [url](#)



against the regime.<sup>25</sup> Before the judgement he spent seven months in detention after having criticized the Taliban on social media.<sup>26</sup>

At least four women's rights activists were also kept in Taliban custody after their arrests earlier in 2023, including Munizha Sediqi<sup>27</sup>, Parisa Azadi, Neda Parwani, and Zholia Parsi.<sup>28</sup> One activist was held in custody together with her son,<sup>29</sup> and another together with her husband and four-year-old child.<sup>30</sup> Azadi, Parwani and Parsi were released in December 2023, while Sediqi remained in custody.<sup>31</sup>

French-Afghan journalist, Mortaza Behboudi, was released on 18 October 2023 after having been detained for nine months. He was released after being acquitted by a *de facto* court.<sup>32</sup>

## 4. Security situation

This section contains conflict data from Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)<sup>33</sup> and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).<sup>34</sup>

### General conflict data

In the period 1 October 2023–12 January 2024, ACLED recorded 207 events in total – 69 battles, 33 events involving explosions or remote violence, and 105 events involving violence against civilians.<sup>35</sup> In the same period, the UCDP recorded 118 events and 93 civilian deaths.<sup>36</sup> A provincial breakdown of events is provided in [Annex 1. Provincial breakdown of events.](#)

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<sup>25</sup> Afghanistan International, Taliban Sentences Afghan University Professor To 16 Months In Prison in Kabul, 30 October 2023, [url](#); Shafaqna, Taliban court sentenced a university professor to 16 months in prison, 2 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>26</sup> EUAA, Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, [url](#), p. 92

<sup>27</sup> Khaama Press, Takhar women demand release of detained activists, 20 November 2023, [url](#); AI, Afghanistan: Stop punishing women protesters, 7 December 2023, [url](#); UNAMA News [Twitter], posted on: 3 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>28</sup> Khaama Press, Takhar women demand release of detained activists, 20 November 2023, [url](#); AI, Afghanistan: Stop punishing women protesters, 7 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>29</sup> Shafaqna, Afghanistan: Taliban detained a protesting girl in Kabul, 17 November 2023, [url](#); Khaama Press, Prominent women's rights activist Julia Parsi arrested in Kabul, sparking outrage 29 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>30</sup> Aamaj News English [Twitter], posted on: 19 September 2023, [url](#); AI, Afghanistan: Stop punishing women protesters, 7 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>31</sup> UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October – December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>32</sup> RSF, RSF announces the release of journalist Mortaza Behboudi after 284 days in detention in Afghanistan: "the end of a painful ordeal", 18 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>33</sup> ACLED, The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project - Bringing clarity to crisis, n.d., [url](#). For more information on ACLED data and how it is used by the EUAA, see the [EUAA COI Report Afghanistan - Country Focus](#)

<sup>34</sup> UCDP, About UCDP, n.d., [url](#). For more information on UCDP data and how it is used by the EUAA, see the [EUAA COI Report Afghanistan - Country Focus](#)

<sup>35</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>36</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 22 January 2024



## ***Activity of groups resisting the Taliban***

The Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) claimed an increased amount of attacks against Taliban targets.<sup>37</sup> On X, formerly Twitter, the AFF claimed to have carried out 43 attacks in the period 1 October 2023–15 January 2024, of which 19 took place in November 2023, as reported by BBC Monitoring.<sup>38</sup> Most attacks were claimed to have been carried out in Kabul, and the northeastern provinces of Laghman, Kapisa, Parwan and Takhar. One claimed attack was carried out in Kandahar City.<sup>39</sup> ACLED and the UCDP also recorded attacks involving the AFF (36 events respectively 38 events) in the period 1 October 2023–12 January 2024. Events were recorded in the above-mentioned provinces, but also in the province of Baghlan, Balkh, Panjsher, and Samangan. UCDP, however, did not record any event in Takhar.<sup>40</sup> The UN Secretary-General described the AFF as ‘the most active group’ in his latest reporting period (18 September–1 December 2023), while describing the National Resistance Front (NRF) as ‘much less active than in 2022’. The UN Secretary-General furthermore noted that the NRF did not carry out any attacks in its former stronghold Panjsher Province.<sup>41</sup> Neither ACLED nor UCDP recorded any events involving the NRF in Panjsher Province in the period 1 October 2023–12 January 2024, but recorded events involving the group in other parts of Afghanistan.<sup>42</sup>

In recorded ACLED events involving the AFF and NRF, the target was the *de facto* military forces or the *de facto* police forces. ACLED recorded 36 events involving the AFF and 23 events involving the NRF in the period 1 October 2023–12 January 2024.<sup>43</sup> In the same period, the UCDP recorded 38 events involving the AFF, and 22 involving the NRF. No civilian deaths were recorded in relation to these events.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: Rise in AFF rebel group's claimed attacks on Afghan Taliban, 1 December 2023, [url](#); EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>38</sup> BBC Monitoring, Analysis: Afghanistan Freedom Front's anti-Taliban operations, 15 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>39</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: Rise in AFF rebel group's claimed attacks on Afghan Taliban, 1 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>40</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#); EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 22 January 2024

<sup>41</sup> UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 1 December 2023, [url](#), para. 2, 18

<sup>42</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#); EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 22 January 2024

<sup>43</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>44</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 22 January 2024



## **Attacks against civilians**

In the period 1 October 2023–12 January 2024, the actor most frequently involved in events recorded by ACLED was the *de facto* military forces targeting civilians (67 events in total).<sup>45</sup> The UCDP recorded 21 such events, which caused 15 civilian deaths.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, ACLED recorded 25 events in which civilians were targeted by unknown actors, and 11 events involving the ISKP.<sup>47</sup> The UCDP recorded 10 such events, which caused 13 civilian deaths. Moreover, the UCDP recorded 8 events which were claimed or attributed to the ISKP which caused 51 civilian deaths.<sup>48</sup>

In 2023 no sectarian attacks against the Shia Hazara community had been recorded,<sup>49</sup> until a suicide bomber attacked a Shia mosque in Pul-e Kumri (Baghlan Province) on 13 October 2023. Estimates of the number of deaths and injured varies. According to the Taliban, it caused 7 deaths, and injured 1 person<sup>50</sup>, while the New York Times reported ‘at least’ 17 deaths and ‘dozens’ injured<sup>51</sup> and UNAMA on 21 deaths, and 30 injured.<sup>52</sup> ISKP claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, a series of IED attacks claimed by the ISKP took place in Dash-e Barchi<sup>54</sup> – a Hazara dominated area Dasht-e Barchi in Kabul City.<sup>55</sup> These attacks include the following:

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<sup>45</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#); EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 22 January 2024

<sup>46</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 22 January 2024

<sup>47</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>48</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 October 2023 to 12 January 2024 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 9 October 2023 and 22 January 2024

<sup>49</sup> New York Times (The), Islamic State Attack Kills 17 at Shiite Mosque in Northern Afghanistan, 13 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>50</sup> Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan: Angrepp mot shiamuslimers sista kvartalet 2023, 19 December 2023, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>51</sup> New York Times (The), Islamic State Attack Kills 17 at Shiite Mosque in Northern Afghanistan, 13 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>52</sup> UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October – December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>53</sup> Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan: Angrepp mot shiamuslimers sista kvartalet 2023, 19 December 2023, [url](#), p. 3; New York Times (The), Islamic State Attack Kills 17 at Shiite Mosque in Northern Afghanistan, 13 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>54</sup> Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan: Angrepp mot shiamuslimers sista kvartalet 2023, 19 December 2023, [url](#), p. 5; RFE/RL, Islamic State Claims Responsibility For Deadly Minibus Blast In Kabul, 7 January 2024, [url](#); TOLONews, Dasht-e- Barchi Death Toll Rises to 5, 15 People Wounded, 7 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>55</sup> Adili, A. Y., A Community Under Attack: How successive governments failed west Kabul and the Hazaras who live there, 17 January 2022, [url](#)



- 26 October 2023: an explosion at a sports club.<sup>56</sup> Casualty estimates vary from 4 deaths and 7 injured (as stated by the *de facto* authorities),<sup>57</sup> to 8 deaths and 35 injured as reported by UNAMA.<sup>58</sup>
- 7 November 2023: an explosion targeting a minibus. According to the Taliban, it caused 7 deaths and around 20 injured,<sup>59</sup> while UNAMA reported slightly higher figures (11 deaths, 21 injured).<sup>60</sup>
- 6 January 2024: an explosion targeting another minibus.<sup>61</sup> Casualty estimates varied, according to UNAMA at least 25 Hazaras were killed and wounded in total.<sup>62</sup>
- 11 January 2024: a grenade detonated outside a commercial centre which killed 2 people and injured 12 according to the *de facto* police.<sup>64</sup> No one claimed responsibility for the attacks.<sup>65</sup> According to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), another explosion occurred earlier the same day near a mosque, with no reported casualties [corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA].<sup>66</sup>

The UN Secretary-General noted an overall decrease in attacks claimed by or attributed to the ISKP. In the period 1 August–7 November 2023, the UN recorded 8 ISKP attacks carried out in 3 provinces. Three of these attacks targeted the Shia community, including the above-mentioned attack in Pul-e Khumri, and two of the attacks in Dasth-e Barchi (on 23 October and 7 November 2023).<sup>67</sup> ACLED data also indicated a decrease of events involving the ISKP in 2023 (49 events in total) in contrast to 2022 (199 events).<sup>68</sup> Human Rights Watch also noted a decrease of ISKP attacks in 2023.<sup>69</sup>

In the outskirts of Herat City, five Shia religious leaders were killed in three targeted attacks on 22 October 2023, 23 November 2023, and on 1 December 2023. No one claimed responsibility for these killings.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Le Monde, Afghanistan: ISIS claims responsibility for attack that left four dead in a Kabul shopping center, 28 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>57</sup> Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan: Angrepp mot shiamuslimers sista kvartalet 2023, 19 December 2023, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>58</sup> UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October – December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>59</sup> TOLONews, 7 People Killed, 20 Wounded in Blast in Kabul, 7 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>60</sup> UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October – December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>61</sup> VOA, Bomb Hits Minibus in Kabul, Killing 2 Afghan Civilians, 6 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>62</sup> RFE/RL, Islamic State Claims Responsibility For Deadly Minibus Blast In Kabul, 7 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>63</sup> UNAMA News [Twitter], posted on: 7 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>64</sup> RFE/RL, 2 Killed In Third Deadly Kabul Explosion In Less Than A Week, 11 January 2024, [url](#); AP, Grenade explosion in Afghanistan's capital kills 2 people and wounds 12 in Shiite neighborhood, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>65</sup> AP, Grenade explosion in Afghanistan's capital kills 2 people and wounds 12 in Shiite neighborhood, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>66</sup> RFE/RL, 2 Killed In Third Deadly Kabul Explosion In Less Than A Week, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>67</sup> UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 1 December 2023, [url](#), para. 19

<sup>68</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>69</sup> HRW, World Report 2024 – Afghanistan, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>70</sup> Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan: Angrepp mot shiamuslimers sista kvartalet 2023, 19 December 2023, [url](#), p. 4



## 5. Humanitarian situation

In 2024, Afghanistan entered its third consecutive year of drought, after having ‘endured its worst drought in 30 years’ in 2023, according to UNOCHA. The same source stated that 30 out of 34 provinces have been ‘grappling with severe or extremely poor water quality’ and assessed that 21 million people were in need of accessing clear water and sanitation – compared to 2.4 million people being in need ten years ago.<sup>71</sup>

On 7 October 2023, a powerful earthquake hit the province of Herat, which was followed by additional aftershocks.<sup>72</sup> According to data from geological institutes, as referenced by the Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), there were at least 35 aftershocks until 19 October 2023<sup>73</sup> and ‘a region measuring 20 x 30 km around the epicentre had risen by about 40 cm’.<sup>74</sup>

The epicentre of the first earthquake was in the district of Zindajan,<sup>75</sup> which UNOCHA identified as one of the most affected districts together with the districts of Herat and Injil.<sup>76</sup> Entire villages have reportedly been destroyed<sup>77</sup>, with both buildings and almost all inhabitants being wiped out in some cases.<sup>78</sup> Most of those who died were women and children<sup>79</sup> as they were indoors during the time of the quakes. They were crushed or suffocated as they got ‘trapped under the rubble’. Meanwhile, many men in the region were outdoors working on the fields<sup>80</sup> or abroad (in Iran) for work.<sup>81</sup> On 12 October 2023<sup>82</sup>, a sandstorm destroyed hundreds of tents where earthquake victims had been sheltering.<sup>83</sup>

According to assessments collected by UNOCHA more than 275 000 people in nine districts were ‘directly affected’ by the earthquakes<sup>84</sup> that caused at least 1 480 deaths and 1 950 injuries<sup>85</sup>, and ‘completely destroyed’ more than 8 429 homes and left 17 088 homes ‘severely damaged’.<sup>86</sup> Acilis (a geographical information services organisation), however, estimated the

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<sup>71</sup> UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update November 2023, 7 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>72</sup> UN News, ‘A mountain of hardship’, as Afghanistan suffers yet another earthquake, 16 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>73</sup> Shapour, R., Nature’s Fury: The Herat earthquakes of 2023, AAN, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>74</sup> Shapour, R., Nature’s Fury: The Herat earthquakes of 2023, AAN, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>75</sup> AP, More than 90% of people killed by western Afghanistan quake were women and children, UN says, 12 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>76</sup> UNOCHA, Herat Earthquakes: Flash Update #7 Earthquakes in Herat Province, Western Region, Afghanistan (20 October 2023), 20 October 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>77</sup> CNN, ‘We are left with nothing’: Survivors of Afghanistan earthquake tell of trauma and heartbreak, 15 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>78</sup> Shapour, R., Nature’s Fury: The Herat earthquakes of 2023, AAN, 10 November 2023, [url](#); AP, Quake in Afghanistan leaves rubble, funerals and survivors struggling with loss, 11 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>79</sup> UNICEF, UNICEF earthquake relief supplies to treat Afghan children and their families arrive in Kabul, 23 October 2023, [url](#); Shapour, R., Nature’s Fury: The Herat earthquakes of 2023, AAN, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>80</sup> AP, More than 90% of people killed by western Afghanistan quake were women and children, UN says, 12 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>81</sup> Shapour, R., Nature’s Fury: The Herat earthquakes of 2023, AAN, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>82</sup> UNOCHA, Herat Earthquakes: Flash Update #5 Earthquakes in Herat Province, Western Region, Afghanistan, 13 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>83</sup> Outlook, In Quake-Hit Afghanistan Powerful Sandstorm Sweeps Through Homes, 13 October 2023, [url](#);

<sup>84</sup> UNOCHA, Today’s top news: Occupied Palestinian Territory, Afghanistan, 16 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>85</sup> UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Herat Earthquake Response Plan (October 2023 - March 2024), [url](#), p. 5

<sup>86</sup> UNOCHA, Herat Earthquakes: Flash Update #7 Earthquakes in Herat Province, Western Region, Afghanistan (20 October 2023), 20 October 2023, [url](#), p. 1





number of people impacted by the earthquakes to be much higher, based on analyses on satellite imagery. Acilis estimated that 512 992 compounds were impacted, and calculating 10 individuals per household more than 5 million people were impacted<sup>87</sup> – which corresponds to 12.5 % of the Afghan population.<sup>88</sup> Many earthquake victims relocated to Herat City where they slept outside on the streets and in public parks.<sup>89</sup> The Director-General of WHO stated that Herat City had become a ‘tent city’ with small tents being set up in open spaces.<sup>90</sup> A journalist consulted by the AAN emphasised the cold temperatures as a further challenge.<sup>91</sup> On 15 January 2024, 100 days after the first earthquake, UNICEF called for greater support for 96 000 children that were affected by the earthquakes, and expressed concern about their survival during the winter.<sup>92</sup>

Pakistan’s repatriation of undocumented Afghan migrants also added upon the humanitarian needs in Afghanistan.<sup>93</sup> Nearly one million Afghans have returned since the campaign was announced on 3 October 2023.<sup>94</sup> Additional information can be found on this topic in the following EUAA Query Responses:

- EUAA COI Query Response: [Afghanistan – Situation of Afghan returnees from Pakistan amid the campaign linked to the ‘Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan’ \(IFRP\)](#)
- EUAA COI Query Response: [Pakistan – ‘Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan \(IFRP\)](#)

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<sup>88</sup> Shapour, R., Nature’s Fury: The Herat earthquakes of 2023, AAN, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>89</sup> Shapour, R., Nature’s Fury: The Herat earthquakes of 2023, AAN, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>90</sup> Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus [Twitter], posted on: 16 October 2023, [url](#)

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<sup>92</sup> UNICEF, 96,000 children affected by earthquakes in western Afghanistan in dire need of support this winter, UNICEF warns, 15 January 2024, [url](#)

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## Annex 1. Provincial breakdown of events

Table 1 contains ACLED data and UCDP data covering the period 1 July 2022–12 January 2024 to provide an update of the conflict data presented in [EUAA COI Report Afghanistan - Country Focus](#).

**Table 1. Provincial breakdown of events 1 July 2022–12 January 2024**

| Province   | Events |      | Fatalities |      | Civilian deaths |      |
|------------|--------|------|------------|------|-----------------|------|
|            | ACLED  | UCDP | ACLED      | UCDP | ACLED           | UCDP |
| Kabul      | 245    | 130  | 393        | 426  | -               | 199  |
| Takhar     | 177    | 83   | 226        | 119  | -               | 23   |
| Panjsher   | 154    | 61   | 356        | 313  | -               | 15   |
| Badakhshan | 107    | 35   | 235        | 107  | -               | 17   |
| Baghlan    | 107    | 63   | 311        | 212  | -               | 31   |
| Kandahar   | 93     | 45   | 107        | 57   | -               | 26   |
| Nangarhar  | 90     | 52   | 105        | 94   | -               | 38   |
| Parwan     | 79     | 40   | 98         | 80   | -               | 9    |
| Balkh      | 68     | 28   | 89         | 55   | -               | 23   |
| Kapisa     | 65     | 40   | 96         | 60   | -               | 7    |
| Herat      | 54     | 24   | 112        | 104  | -               | 61   |





| Province | Events |      | Fatalities |      | Civilian deaths |      |
|----------|--------|------|------------|------|-----------------|------|
|          | ACLED  | UCDP | ACLED      | UCDP | ACLED           | UCDP |
| Kunar    | 51     | 34   | 71         | 55   | -               | 19   |
| Ghazni   | 50     | 22   | 44         | 34   | -               | 21   |
| Helmand  | 48     | 16   | 65         | 58   | -               | 14   |
| Samangan | 35     | 19   | 53         | 50   | -               | 30   |
| Faryab   | 34     | 27   | 33         | 37   | -               | 20   |
| Khost    | 33     | 16   | 35         | 27   | -               | 11   |
| Kunduz   | 31     | 16   | 39         | 35   | -               | 2    |
| Laghman  | 29     | 24   | 38         | 37   | -               | 8    |
| Paktika  | 29     | 15   | 30         | 19   | -               | 8    |
| Paktya   | 26     | 10   | 15         | 15   | -               | 6    |
| Daykundi | 25     | 7    | 18         | 15   | -               | 15   |
| Zabul    | 23     | 8    | 11         | 14   | -               | 7    |
| Ghor     | 21     | 14   | 20         | 19   | -               | 18   |
| Jawzjan  | 21     | 13   | 17         | 13   | -               | 12   |



| Province  | Events |      | Fatalities |      | Civilian deaths |      |
|-----------|--------|------|------------|------|-----------------|------|
|           | ACLED  | UCDP | ACLED      | UCDP | ACLED           | UCDP |
| Nimroz    | 21     | 10   | 31         | 20   | -               | 11   |
| Logar     | 20     | 9    | 14         | 15   | -               | 13   |
| Badghis   | 19     | 7    | 17         | 10   | -               | 6    |
| Bamyan    | 19     | 7    | 11         | 8    | -               | 4    |
| Farah     | 13     | 15   | 13         | 17   | -               | 14   |
| Uruzgan   | 13     | 7    | 13         | 6    | -               | 4    |
| Nuristan  | 10     | 7    | 10         | 12   | -               | 5    |
| Sar-e Pul | 9      | 7    | 9          | 10   | -               | 5    |
| Wardak    | 7      | 7    | 7          | 13   | -               | 11   |

Source: EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan, data covering 1 July 2022 to 12 January 2024, as of 29 January 2024, [url](#); EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 July 2022 to 12 January 2024 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 22 January 2024; EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2023 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 9 October 2023.