



# Security Council

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## Letter dated 8 December 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the sixteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to resolution 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015), which was submitted to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), in accordance with paragraph (a) of the annex to resolution 2763 (2024).

I should be grateful if the attached report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

*(Signed)* Asim Iftikhar **Ahmad**  
Chair of the Security Council Committee  
established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)



**Letter dated 17 November 2025 from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)**

I have the honour to refer to paragraph (a) of the annex to resolution 2763 (2024). In that paragraph, the Security Council requested the Monitoring Team to submit, in writing, an annual comprehensive, independent report to the Committee, on implementation by Member States of the measures referred to in paragraph 1 of the resolution, including specific recommendations for improved implementation of the measures and possible new measures.

I therefore transmit to you the Monitoring Team's sixteenth comprehensive report, pursuant to the above-mentioned provisions of resolution 2763 (2024).

As described in the report, travel by the Monitoring Team in 2025 in support of the present report was severely constrained by the Secretariat's liquidity crisis. The Monitoring Team worked to mitigate the impact by making best use of regional meetings and of consultations with Member State delegations in New York or by videoconference.

The Monitoring Team notes that the document of reference is the English original and that all information considered for the report was put forward no later than 9 November.

*(Signed)* Colin **Smith**  
Coordinator  
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

**Sixteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2763 (2024) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan**

*Summary*

There is a measure of internal peace and security, as well as domestic stability, all of which benefit some parts of society more than others. Women and girls, as along with some minority groups, lose out significantly.

The Taliban, as the de facto authorities, have continued to consolidate their hold on power. Although there are policy disagreements, these generally happen behind closed doors: the Taliban prize regime unity above all.

Strong central rule has allowed the de facto authorities to make progress in a number of areas. Most significantly, in 2025, poppy cultivation remained more than 95 per cent below its peak under the Taliban in 2022.

The economy appears relatively resilient, but weak. There are ambitious plans for infrastructure development. However, de facto authorities face a number of challenges, including in relation to responding to forced returns of Afghan citizens from neighbouring countries and to recent natural disasters.

The de facto authorities have suppressed – although not eliminated – the threat from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K, QDe.161) in Afghanistan. ISIL-K continues to pose serious threats within Afghanistan, regionally and beyond.

The de facto authorities continue to maintain that no terrorist groups operate in, or from, its territory. Such claims are not credible.

In particular, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP, QDe.132) has conducted numerous high-profile attacks in Pakistan from Afghan soil. These attacks have led to cross-border military confrontation, causing a number of casualties, as well as disruptions to bilateral trade. This issue poses the greatest short-term threat to the de facto authorities' stability.

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\* Circulated in the language of submission only.

## I. Overview

1. The Taliban believe that they are destined to rule Afghanistan. They do not seek popular support or consent. Although the Taliban seek international recognition, they do not readily respond to international opinion.
2. The leadership prizes unity above all else. The Taliban have continued to consolidate their hold on power in Afghanistan and their rule is largely unchallenged. There is a measure of internal peace and security, as well as domestic stability, but this benefits some parts of society more than others. Women and girls, as well as some minority groups, lose out significantly.
3. Hibatullah Akhundzada (not listed) is the absolute ruler of Afghanistan. Although there are disagreements in private, for example over girls' education or the recent Internet shutdown, these are rarely aired in public. Hibatullah has isolated himself in Kandahar, the de facto capital of Afghanistan, and does not engage in policy discussion or debate; he sees his role primarily in religious terms.
4. Strong central rule has allowed the de facto authorities to make progress in a number of areas. Most significantly, the Amir's decree banning poppy cultivation has now held for the past three years, and in 2025 cultivation remained more than 95 per cent below its peak under the Taliban in 2022. The de facto authorities have suppressed – although not eliminated – the threat from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K), which now largely operates in small cells, primarily in the north and east of Afghanistan.
5. The Amir's writ is not applied uniformly across the country. At the local level, unpopular policies can be subverted or ignored. Powerful leaders, such as the members of the Haqqani Network, have scope to do as they wish – so long as it does not jeopardize regime unity.
6. The de facto authorities, however, face a number of significant challenges.
7. The most serious challenge is the Taliban's approach to terrorism. The de facto authorities continue to deny that any terrorist groups have a footprint in or operate from its territory. That claim is not credible. A wide range of Member States consistently report that ISIL-K, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Al-Qaida (QDe.004), the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (QDe.088), also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party (ETIM/TIP), Jamaat Ansarullah (not listed), Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan (not listed), and others are present in Afghanistan. Some groups have used or are continuing to use Afghanistan to plan and prepare external attacks. Regional Member States generally see Afghanistan as a source of insecurity.
8. Most significantly, TTP has conducted numerous high-profile attacks against Pakistan from Afghan soil. These attacks have led to cross-border military confrontation, causing a number of casualties. At the time of writing, in addition to the loss of life, the closure of border crossings with Pakistan is estimated to cost the Afghan economy around \$1 million per day. Unless the underlying issues are addressed, there is a risk that military confrontation could escalate.
9. The economy appears relatively resilient, but weak. The de facto authorities have an ambitious programme of infrastructure development, including prolific madrasa construction, and they hope to capitalize on the country's position as a key transit route between Central and South Asia. It is not clear how they will be able to pay for such infrastructure without fundamental reform.
10. Meanwhile, the forced return of Afghan citizens, mostly from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, is putting additional strain on services, the economy and social cohesion. Their forced return has also led to a loss of remittance payments.

Since October 2023, over 4.5 million Afghans have been forcibly returned. The international community's ability to provide support to returnees has been impeded by the de facto authorities' policies that limit the role of women in the response (e.g. services by midwives, female nurses).

11. Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, have hit the country hard and are stretching scant resources. Drought is reducing crop yields. Kabul is projected to be the first capital city in modern times to run out of water, with associated risks to stability. These fundamental challenges are exacerbated by a reduction in international assistance.

12. Finally, stability often comes at the expense of human rights abuses and internal repression. Economic challenges are compounded by severe restrictions on women's ability to work. The Amir's edicts on girls' education further limit economic potential. Non-Pashtun individuals are generally treated less well than their Pashtun counterparts.

13. In drawing up the present report, the Monitoring Team engaged with a range of Member States. It also engaged directly with the de facto authorities. At the end of 2024, the Monitoring Team met with de facto authorities' representatives in a third country. More recently, some members of the Monitoring Team were able to travel to Kabul to engage with the de facto authorities directly.

## II. Status of the Taliban

### A. Leadership

14. Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada (not listed) is described as *Amir al Mu'minin* (leader of the faithful). He has continued to consolidate power within Kandahar, the effective political capital of Afghanistan, and solidify his brand of theocratic rule. There is growing centralization of power and tighter control through the appointment of hand-picked loyal personnel. Hibatullah has proclaimed a sharia-based form of governance in Afghanistan and ordered the establishment of councils of ulama (religious scholars), in each province. Public executions of those violating sharia law have resumed.

15. Leadership discussions and debate are not encouraged, though internal tensions remain. One of the main sources of tension has been the Amir's ban on education for girls and employment for women (not least because most parts of the country adhere to less conservative religious traditions). Opponents argue that this ban erodes public trust in the de facto authorities and prevents them from overcoming international isolation. It also has long-term economic effects, since half the population will not be educated or able to work freely.

16. To maintain Taliban cohesion, internal disagreements and debates are generally suppressed and kept from the public eye. The combined mechanisms of the de facto Directorate for Implementation and Oversight of the Amir's Decrees, Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice and Supreme Court, under the de facto Chief Justice, Sheikh Abdul Hakim Haqqani (not listed)<sup>1</sup>, constitute a stable group of hardline clerics close to Hibatullah who have effectively secured strict adherence with his orders in the running of the country. The provincial Governor of Kandahar, Mullah Mohammad Shirin Akhund (not listed), is reportedly the principal gatekeeper for engagement with Hibatullah.

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<sup>1</sup> A member of Hibatullah's inner circle, the de facto Chief Justice, Sheikh Abdul Hakim Haqqani, remains one of the highest-ranking de facto authorities' officials committed to enforcing Hibatullah's interpretation of Sharia, which has been reflected in the de facto Supreme Court's rejection of international criticism related to Taliban public executions and calls for non-interference by foreign entities in the implementation of Sharia law.

17. Taliban authority and policy are enforced by provincial ulama shuras throughout Afghanistan, providing advice and oversight as directed by the clerical circle around the Amir. As the “religious eyes and ears”, the shuras who report directly to and are accountable to Hibatullah maintain control over Taliban governing structures, which in turn exercise control over the population; dissenters face the possibility of referral to Taliban courts. Nevertheless, the Amir’s writ does not apply uniformly across Afghanistan, and there is considerable regional variation in its application.

18. On 8 July 2025, the International Criminal Court announced arrest warrants for Hibatullah and the de facto Chief Justice in connection with alleged crimes against humanity in Afghanistan. With both exercising de facto authority since August 2021, the Court found that they were responsible for persecution on gender and political grounds and that the Taliban leadership had systematically deprived women and girls of fundamental rights, including access to education and freedom of movement, expression and religion. It is not clear how the Court’s arrest warrants may affect the de facto authorities’ push for international recognition.

19. Member States, particularly those neighbouring Afghanistan, have adopted a pragmatic approach to diplomatic relations with the Taliban. It is reported that there are currently 28 foreign missions and international organizations represented in Kabul, and the de facto authorities have 42 representative offices abroad. One country, the Russian Federation, has formally recognized “the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”. Securing the recognition of other States is a high priority for the de facto authorities.

## **B. Internal dynamics**

20. While key figures perceived to be rivals to Hibatullah’s authority continue to criticize existing policies (S/2024/499, para. 14), the Taliban leadership has navigated a course that still finds the movement largely unified and obedient to the Amir. His position remains secure. There is no clear leadership succession or favoured candidate to replace him.

21. The most significant public disagreement has been between Hibatullah’s Kandahar base and the Haqqani Network (TAe.012). In December 2024, internal rifts were reported between de facto Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Jallaloudine Haqqani (TAi.144), and de facto Minister of Higher Education, Neda Mohammad Nadeem (not listed), allegedly due to disagreements over additional restrictions on female education. Sirajuddin Haqqani is viewed as supporting a more moderate path than that of Hibatullah, one that may be more palatable to the international community.

22. In early December 2024, Sirajuddin Haqqani delivered a critique of current Taliban policies, asserting that the de facto authorities had failed to govern under Islamic principles. Beginning in January 2025, he spent a prolonged absence abroad after performing hajj in Saudi Arabia. He returned to Afghanistan in March; since his return, his public remarks have been carefully worded to reaffirm his support for national unity and the supremacy of sharia, calling upon de facto authorities’ officials to reaffirm their allegiance to the Amir. Some Member States have downplayed the division between leaders in Kandahar and Kabul as akin to a family dispute that would not alter the status quo; all senior leaders are invested in the success of the Taliban enterprise, and they will not jeopardize it. In previous reports (e.g. S/2024/499, para. 26), the Monitoring Team has noted that consolidation of power has also involved a continued build-up of security forces under the direct control of Kandahar.

23. The issue of girls’ education has continued to be a lightning rod for internal disagreement. For example, following public statements and audio messages critical of the Amir’s ban on girls’ education as contrary to sharia, Sher Mohammad Abbas

Stanekzai Padshah Khan (TAi.067) was dismissed on 10 May 2024 as de facto Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Political). Known for his calls for greater inclusivity, he made further comments in January 2025 that were critical of the Taliban senior leadership.<sup>2</sup> After his statement was published in the media, the Amir ordered a warrant for his arrest, and Stanekzai fled abroad before he could be apprehended. He is still effectively in exile.

24. Similarly, in July 2025, a prominent Taliban religious scholar, Abdul Sami Ghaznawi, was detained at his Kabul madrasa by de facto authorities' officials. Known for his nuanced support for girls' education, Ghaznawi was tried by a military court and sentenced to a 45-day prison term. Ghaznawi had been detained previously for similar views diverging from those of Hibatullah. In September 2025, an adviser at the de facto Ministry of Energy and Water and former deputy of the National Islamic Front, Dr. Farouq Azam, was arrested, again reportedly on the orders of Hibatullah. Following the earthquake in Afghanistan in September 2025, Dr. Azam had posted a call on social media for female medical professionals to travel to Kunar Province to assist victims of the disaster, noting that this would not only provide key humanitarian relief but also highlight the importance of women's education in acquiring medical knowledge that many believed obligatory within Islam.

25. One of the few senior Taliban officials openly criticizing Hibatullah's policy on girls' education, apparently without negative consequences, is de facto Deputy Minister of Interior and brother-in-law of Sirajuddin Haqqani, Mohammad Nabi Omari (not listed). Following efforts to detain Stanekzai, however, Omari has noticeably refrained from further criticisms of policy emanating from Kandahar, while increasingly advocating loyalty to Hibatullah as Amir.

### C. Governance

26. The Taliban have consolidated their control across the country, particularly in urban areas. However, governance can be opaque and poorly communicated, as the Taliban do not recognize the need for popular support or consent for their policies.

27. On 1 October, Internet connectivity and telecommunications services in Afghanistan were cut for approximately 48 hours, after which they were partially restored.<sup>3</sup> The Internet shutdown caused significant disruption to a range of services, including air traffic control and banking, as well as anxiety among citizens at being suddenly cut off from the outside world. The underlying reasons for the shutdown are not clear. Reports suggested that the Amir's concerns regarding "immorality" being spread by means of the Internet were the root cause. It is not clear whether controls on the Internet will be reimposed, in what form or when. The episode has resulted in conjecture around internal Taliban tensions, reinforced by reporting that the order to re-establish Internet connections was taken by de facto Prime Minister, Mohammad Hassan Akhund (TAi.002).

28. The de facto authorities in Kandahar have reorganized the system of education to place it under the direct oversight of the Amir, with a clear emphasis on religious indoctrination according to de facto authorities' interpretation of sharia law. Efforts

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<sup>2</sup> On 20 January 2025, Stanekzai is reported to have said that the ban on girls' education in Afghanistan "is an injustice to the 20 million people of this country and contrary to Islamic law".

<sup>3</sup> While access to the Internet has been partially restored, service has been reduced from previous levels of 4G to 2G. Internet watchdog NetBlocks, an organization that monitors cybersecurity and Internet governance, issued a statement confirming that several major social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat, had been deliberately restricted in Afghanistan. Subsequently, the de facto authorities have reportedly banned several widely used social media and entertainment applications, including Instagram, TikTok, Likee, Snapchat and the online game PUBG.

include successive revisions to the curriculum at the lower school and university levels by removing references to civic values, human rights and women's rights, women's studies and international institutions and focusing solely on Taliban ideology, anti-Western narratives and loyalty to the Amir. In a letter dated 24 August 2025 from the de facto authorities' Ministry of Higher Education to the Department of Private Universities, 18 academic subjects were identified that were deemed to be incompatible with sharia principles and the de facto authorities' policies. These subjects were removed, including those covering the constitutional law of Afghanistan, Islamic political movements and trends, good governance, electoral systems, democracy and human rights, sociology of women, the philosophy of ethics, constitutional analysis, gender and development, and the history of religions. More than 200 additional subjects (including law, political science, psychology, philosophy, education, media, management, sociology, economics, child development and women's studies) were permitted to be taught only if rewritten in a "critical and reformative" manner, consistent with the de facto authorities' official interpretation.

29. Despite severe financial constraints, the de facto authorities continue to construct new – and bigger – mosques and madrasas. That policy was underscored during the Taliban Cabinet meeting held in Kandahar on 13 August 2025, during which the Amir instructed Kabul Municipality to expand the construction of mosques and transfer responsibility for them to the de facto Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs.

30. At the same Cabinet meeting, chaired by Hibatullah, he further prioritized religious education as part of improving governance, strengthening the sharia system and addressing public needs. Stressing that the foundation of the Islamic system rests on religious education, Hibatullah urged efforts to raise religious awareness, promote moral conduct, protect against harmful ideologies and strengthen adherence to Islamic principles. Delegations from key ministries were instructed to give greater attention to mosques, madrasas, schools and universities, with a particular focus on reviving and strengthening curricula in rural religious institutions.

#### **D. Competency to provide security**

31. The security situation in Afghanistan has stabilized compared with the previous reporting period, but challenges remain. The main challenge is primarily related to the presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan, which threaten regional stability and cause heightened bilateral tensions.

32. Since the beginning of 2025, the de facto authorities have carried out a series of counter-terrorism operations against ISIL-K, attempting to dismantle strongholds and neutralize its leadership. In June 2025, the de facto authorities' deputy spokesperson asserted that security forces had successfully suppressed ISIL-K operations, citing an operation that targeted an ISIL-K hideout in Kabul police district 15 as evidence of the Taliban's ongoing vigilance and effectiveness in countering such threats.

33. The Taliban continue to deny the existence of ISIL-K within Afghan territory. They often accuse neighbouring countries of harbouring or even supporting ISIL-K.

34. However, although the de facto authorities' counter-ISIL operations have been quite effective, ISIL-K is resilient and continues to pose a threat, both internally in Afghanistan and externally. There are frequent attacks claimed by ISIL-K, combined with regional concerns over the group's operational capacity, strength, increased propaganda, recruitment and ability to infiltrate the de facto authorities' ranks. These factors point to an enduring security challenge and raise doubts as to the Taliban's ability to effectively address the threat posed by ISIL-K. In spite of their claims to have suppressed the threat, the de facto authorities regularly seek external counter-

terrorism assistance to fight ISIL-K, an effort led in the most part by the Head of the General Directorate of Intelligence, Abdul-Haq Wassiq (TAi.082).

35. ISIL-K has demonstrated significant expansion northward and eastward. Without adequate coordination between Afghanistan and its neighbours, there is also a risk of threat displacement or spillover.

36. In addition to ISIL-K operations in Afghanistan, and despite security efforts led by the de facto authorities in Kabul and their achievements, more than 20 international and regional terrorist organizations remain active in the country. These include Al-Qaida, TTP (QDe.132), ETIM/TIP (QDe.088), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (QDe.010) and Jamaat Ansarullah (not listed). These groups aim to expand regionally. With the exception of ISIL-K, they have generally endeavoured to maintain good relations with the Taliban. The Taliban have absorbed into their local security forces some former fighters from various terrorist groups, in order to exploit their combat experience; however, this raises concerns about infiltration by terrorist groups and their ideological alignment.

37. Although the Taliban have strengthened control across Afghanistan, a number of resistance groups, including the National Resistance Front, the Afghanistan Freedom Front and the Afghan Liberation Movement, continue to pose challenges through sporadic attacks and targeted assassinations.<sup>4</sup> These groups, however, are fragmented and uncoordinated, and they do not currently significantly threaten the stability of the regime.

38. The Taliban's governance model is insufficient for policing, rule of law and law enforcement activities, particularly outside major urban centres. Corruption, weak accountability and the contested legitimacy of local forces remain significant obstacles. While the Taliban have made the transition from insurgency to de facto authorities, structural weaknesses undermine their ability to fully address these threats. At the local level, disputes within the Taliban also weaken the security apparatus, eroding domestic control and diminishing the regime's ability to counter physical threats. The leadership's failure to compromise has destabilized the security sector, heightening terrorist risks and negatively affecting stability and the security situation across Central and South Asia. Taliban leaders continue to create their own system of governance, with judicial and law enforcement systems dominated by Pashtun Taliban.

39. The challenging economic situation in Afghanistan has further complicated the de facto authorities' security response. It has resulted in the Taliban's struggle to pay salaries, which are especially consequential within the security sector. The leadership in Kandahar has pushed, often against the will of those in Kabul, for a downsizing within the de facto Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior, as well as the General Directorate of Intelligence. It is notable that following Hibatullah's order on 13 April for a 20 per cent reduction in security forces due to budgetary constraints, out of the more than 4,000 commanders and rank-and-file officers removed nationwide, approximately 1,000 were removed from Badakhshan Province alone. After Badakhshan, the highest proportion of redundancies occurred in other northern provinces, Kapisa, Parwan and Takhar, all of which are home to larger numbers of ethnic Tajik and Uzbek Taliban.

40. During the first half of financial year 2025, security-related spending amounted to 55.2 billion afghanis (around \$835 million), representing 46 per cent of total expenditure, while approximately 64.2 billion afghanis (\$980 million), or 54 per cent,

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<sup>4</sup> In 2024, the Afghanistan Freedom Front and the National Resistance Front were reported to have conducted 83 attacks and 261 attacks, respectively, whereas from January to July 2025, the Afghanistan Freedom Front and the National Resistance Front claimed 43 and 73 attacks, respectively.

were allocated to other sectors and service delivery programmes.<sup>5</sup> The Taliban security apparatus is reported to comprise between 380,000 and 450,000 personnel: 150,000 soldiers and 200,000 police officers, as well as intelligence personnel.

## **E. Status of women and girls, minorities and officials of the former Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

41. The situation for women and girls in Afghanistan remains dire. They continue to be denied basic rights. In the *Afghanistan Gender Index 2024*, published in 2025, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) assessed that 8 out of 10 Afghan women are excluded from education, employment and training. Afghanistan has the second widest gender gap in the world.<sup>6</sup> Afghan women face more barriers in access to healthcare and higher levels of unemployment. There are concerns that families may be increasingly pushing girls into early and forced marriages. By one estimate, the Taliban's policies towards women cost the country's economy over \$1 billion per year.<sup>7</sup>

42. From Kandahar, Hibatullah and his inner circle of advisers have issued decrees, through the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, for religious madrasas around the country to follow only the Hanafi Deobandi school of thought. References to other forms of jurisprudence in official curricula have been omitted and crackdowns continue against followers and madrasas of non-Deobandi forms of Islam, such as Salafism, Shia or the Tablighi Jamaat. As noted in the fifteenth report of the Monitoring Team, the General Directorate of Intelligence is reported to have a unit – the Batar unit – that is dedicated to monitoring and controlling Salafists in Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup> Arrests of religious leaders who openly criticize Taliban policies point to the de facto authorities' growing inclination to eliminate alternative or competing religious narratives in order to maintain ideological control and consolidate their religious and moral authority.

43. The Monitoring Team has previously highlighted internal divisions within the Taliban stemming from ethnic and sectarian divisions, including increased Pashtun domination at the expense of ethnic Tajik and Uzbek Taliban military commanders (S/2023/370, para. 28, and S/2022/419, paras. 19–23). Except for the Army Chief of Staff, Qari Fasihuddin Fitrat (not listed), an ethnic Tajik from Badakhshan, this trajectory has continued, fuelled by Pashtun primacy within the Taliban movement and internal fears of non-Pashtun defections to ISIL-K.

44. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (not listed),<sup>9</sup> founder of the Hizb-i Islami (Islamic Party) in Afghanistan (later becoming the insurgent group Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin) has been a key Afghan leadership figure alongside Mullah Mohammad Omar and Sirajuddin Haqqani. He has also been a vocal critic of the de facto authorities, which led the Taliban to oust him from his Kabul compound in 2024, while simultaneously censoring his televised appearances. Despite reported support from Sirajuddin Haqqani and Mullah Yaqub (de facto Defence Minister, not listed), the de facto authorities further

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, "Afghanistan Economic Monitor", September 2025.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://knowledge.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/06/afghanistan-gender-index-2024>.

<sup>7</sup> See [https://www.congress.gov/crs\\_external\\_products/IF/PDF/IF11646/IF11646.14.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF11646/IF11646.14.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> See the fifteenth report of the Monitoring Team (S/2024/499, paras. 16 and 28).

<sup>9</sup> In February 2017, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (formerly QDi.088) was removed from the sanctions list maintained by the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, after he reconciled with the Government of Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in late 2016.

restricted Hekmatyar in March and April 2025 by ordering the closure of all Hizb-i Islami offices, the detention of staff and the confiscation of office equipment.

45. In May, national media reported that Hibatullah had dismissed the Taliban Head of Provincial Counter-terrorism within the General Directorate of Intelligence, Malawi Haji Bashir (not listed), over allegations of misconduct that included extrajudicial killings of Salafi and Wahhabi individuals.

46. On 18 October, the Taliban General Directorate of Intelligence suspended broadcasts of Shamshad TV and Radio, a private Kabul-based station, on the order of Hibatullah. According to the Afghanistan Journalists Centre, broadcasts were halted due to Shamshad failing to defend Kabul's position during recent Pakistani air strikes on Afghan territory.

47. Despite general observance over the past four years of the amnesty decree, reports of arrests and killings of security personnel of the former Islamic Republic of Afghanistan persist. There continue to be credible reports that, since returning to power, the Taliban have detained, tortured and in some cases killed journalists, former members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and former regime officials.<sup>10</sup> Direct evidence of de facto authorities' involvement, however, remains difficult to obtain or confirm. Media freedoms have continued to decline, with many outlets closed and strict censorship in place; female journalists in particular have been targeted, and many have been marginalized or lost their jobs.

48. On 8 September, the former Police Commander for Paktiya Province, Mohammad Omar Mokhles (not listed), stated to a gathering of Taliban fighters that his forces "had been ordered to kill journalists", whom Mokhles described as "traitors". He added that prior to the takeover, fighters had received instructions to kill "polytheists", a label used by the Taliban for journalists and media workers.

49. Reporting suggests that officials of the General Directorate of Intelligence detained a former Afghan National Defence and Security Forces commander, Parviz Sayed Khali, along with his brother, as they returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran in September. Earlier, the body of a former Special Forces Commander in the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, Abdul Wali Naimi, was discovered in Kabul, two weeks after he went missing after returning to Afghanistan from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### **III. Taliban finances and narcotics situation**

50. The economy of Afghanistan remains precarious, though resilient. At the time of writing, it is stable.

51. In the first half of 2025, gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 6.5 per cent; monthly income per capita in Afghanistan has fallen to about \$100. The unemployment rate is 75 per cent, more than 90 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line and over 70 per cent of Afghans depend on humanitarian assistance, which has decreased considerably.

52. The economic outlook is marked by exogenous shocks: a decline in foreign aid, the impact of natural disasters, severe drought during critical crop development stages, and multiple earthquakes, as well as geopolitical tensions that are disrupting trade and deterring investment.

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<sup>10</sup> There are reports that between January and March 2025, there were 23 cases of arbitrary detention in addition to at least six cases of extrajudicial killings of former Members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces.

53. The situation has been exacerbated by the forced return of more than 4.5 million Afghan citizens from neighbouring states since October 2023, swelling Afghanistan's population by roughly 10 per cent. The influx has placed additional pressure on already difficult economic and social conditions. Forced returns have also led to a loss of remittances from overseas employment.

54. In 2025 alone, around 2.2 million Afghan citizens have been returned. The international community's response to the forced returns has been severely hampered by de facto authorities' restrictions on women and girls, with operations in some parts of the country closing because of a refusal to allow United Nations-supported nurses and midwives.

55. Domestic revenue collection increased in October 2025, reaching 23.2 billion afghanis (around \$349 million), representing a 12 per cent increase year-on-year, driven by stronger enforcement, import growth and non-tax collections (e.g. mining royalties, administrative charges and fees). Tax revenues and customs duties increased by approximately 20 per cent through enhanced tax enforcement measures, border management, recent tariff adjustments and higher imports. The country's international payments capacity remains severely constrained, with formal banking channels accounting for only a fraction of cross-border flows, and *hawala* networks used widely. Declining external grants leave Afghanistan heavily dependent on donor support and trade-related taxation.

56. The de facto authorities' total expenditures in 2025 remain in line with 2024, but wages and salaries fell by about 8 per cent (5.6 billion afghanis, or \$85.5 million) compared to last year. Cumulative spending increased by 30 per cent in the first part of 2025, reflecting support for returning refugees from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as higher allocations for pensions and transfers for families of "martyrs" and the disabled.

57. The reimposition of sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran may have implications for the Afghan economy, potentially making trade even more challenging for the Taliban. The de facto authorities have admitted that it may limit their trade with India in particular. In September, the United States of America announced the rescission of the 2018 sanctions waiver for the Iranian port of Chabahar, effectively blunting further investment and development of the port, as well as trade with and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

58. Even with severe economic challenges, the country's economy is gradually recovering (2.5 per cent increase in GDP in 2024), but at a slow pace, and the outlook remains uncertain due to fiscal pressures, a widening trade deficit and persistent poverty and food insecurity.

59. The narcotics trade continues to dominate the informal economy in Afghanistan. This trade sustains a large network of traffickers, criminal organizations and even some State actors, who derive economic benefits.

60. Following the Amir's ban on opium cultivation in April 2022, the de facto authorities' enforcement of the ban has led to a decline in the volume of opiates being trafficked out of Afghanistan, with less heroin being processed inside the country as a result. Prices for dry opium, however, have increased sharply over the past few years and are, on average, roughly four times higher than prices at the time when the ban was announced.<sup>11</sup>

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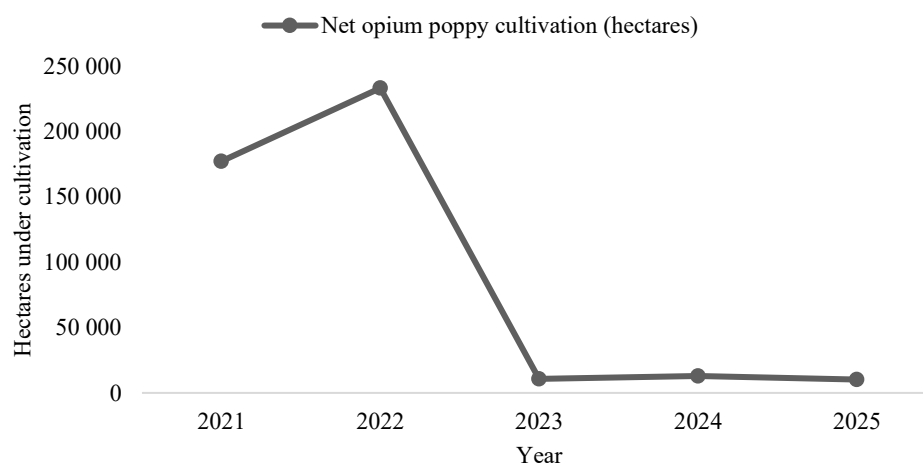
<sup>11</sup> UNODC, *Afghanistan Drug Insights Volume 4: Drug Trafficking and Opiate Stocks* (January 2025), available at [https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan\\_Drug\\_Insights\\_V4.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_Drug_Insights_V4.pdf).

61. On 6 November, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released its annual report on poppy cultivation. The ongoing narcotics ban, coupled with drought, have kept levels of poppy cultivation and production low. In 2025, opium cultivation was estimated at 10,200 ha, 20 per cent lower than in 2024 (see figure I). Opium production declined at a faster rate than that of cultivation, by 32 per cent compared to 2024. The focus of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan had shifted from the south-west of the country, to the north-east (mainly Badakhshan).

62. Opium revenues per hectare remain up to 20 times higher than revenues per hectare of wheat and 10 times higher than those per hectare of cotton. Farmers' income from opium sales dropped by nearly half, to historic lows (from \$260 million in 2024 to \$134 million in 2025), and there were concerns regarding the lack of alternative sources of income, exacerbated by forced returns. The decline in opium income deepens economic vulnerability and unrest in rural areas. Protests erupted in May following the arrest of locals for poppy cultivation, resulting in the deployment of security forces. At least two locals were confirmed dead and nine injured. Following an announcement in June by de facto authorities of counter-narcotic operations to destroy poppy fields in Badakhshan, deadly protests erupted, with locals attacking the local de facto authorities' administrative offices and blocking roads. The de facto authorities agreed to a 15-day window for the poppy harvest to take place, mirroring a similar decision taken in May in the adjacent district of Jurm, after a week of protests began following eradication efforts there.

Figure I

**Opium poppy cultivation across Afghanistan in hectares, 2021-2025**



Source: UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2021–2025*.

63. There are reports that, to offset the decline in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, extensive poppy cultivation has been transferred across the border, where Afghan narcotics networks are demonstrating resilience by relocating farmers and equipment. The movement of poppy cultivation also represents the potential of terrorist groups, including ISIL-K and TTP, operating in those areas, as such groups could reap benefits from the poppy income.

64. With high unemployment in remote areas, many rural farmers and local traffickers have shifted their focus to the production of methamphetamine by cultivating the plant *Ephedra oxyphylla*, a key precursor ingredient in the production of methamphetamine. According to the Taliban's Counter-Narcotics Directorate, over the past year they have dismantled 1,400 drug production facilities, including meth labs, and referred nearly 14,000 individuals involved in drug trafficking and the drug

trade to judicial authorities. Officials also claim to have reduced the production of *Ephedra oxyphylla* by 80 per cent. UNODC noted, however, that there had been a discernible increase in seizures of methamphetamine, suggesting a growing risk that synthetic drugs were replacing opiates.

#### **IV. Assessment of terrorist groups in Afghanistan**

65. The Taliban contend that no terrorist groups operate in or from Afghanistan. Member State reporting, however, indicates that a range of terrorist groups still operate in the country, with varying degrees of autonomy and oversight from Taliban authorities.

##### **A. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan**

66. The de facto authorities have publicly maintained that ISIL-K has been defeated in Afghanistan and that remaining threats come from cross-border infiltration by ISIL-K cells.

67. According to the Taliban, it has successfully neutralized hundreds of ISIL-K members, including the upper echelon of ISIL-K leadership, and imprisoned many others. These measures have diminished ISIL-K recruitment capacity and curtailed ISIL-K ability to conduct attacks. The de facto authorities continue to assert that ISIL-K does not control any territory in Afghanistan, though they also highlight the need for technical, information-sharing and aerial support from the international community in order to confront the threat.

68. On 16 August 2025, media reports indicated that General Directorate of Intelligence operations in Darah-i Nur District, Nangarhar Province, had killed Haji Musa, a key ISIL-K military and intelligence operative. Two days prior, the de facto Ministry of the Interior announced that its Special Forces had foiled an ISIL-K plot to attack a ceremony marking the fourth anniversary of the Taliban return to power, in the Barikab Industrial Park area of Bagram District, Parwan Province.

69. There have also been a number of high-profile arrests by the Pakistani authorities, such as the arrest of an ISIL-K spokesperson, Sultan Aziz Azam (QDi.435), on 16 May 2025. Overall, the capability of ISIL-K has been degraded as a result of counter-terrorism operations by the de facto authorities and Pakistan. Taken together, these efforts have disrupted the group's ability to freely organize and conduct high-profile attacks on both sides of the border. Key ISIL-K commanders and ideologues have been neutralized and the numbers of ISIL-K fighters have likely been reduced. Several plotted attacks have been disrupted.

70. ISIL-K propaganda output in some languages has also been affected. For example, the main English-language propaganda vehicle of ISIL-K, "Voice of Khorasan", went offline in June 2025 for several months, likely due to counter-terrorism pressure. The arrest in mid-2025 by Turkish and Pakistani authorities of Özgür Altun, known as Abu Yasir al-Turki, a key figure in the group's media and logistical operations, may have contributed to the suspension of "Voice of Khorasan".

71. Propaganda output in other languages, though, has continued. It is notable that ISIL-K online propaganda did not appear affected by the recent Internet outage in Afghanistan, suggesting that it is either located outside Afghanistan or is exploiting commercial satellite communications.

72. Although the number of attacks inside Afghanistan by ISIL-K has declined in 2025, and despite the elimination of some key commanders, the group remains resilient. The Taliban has been unable to completely eliminate ISIL-K hideouts in the

north and east of the country. Member States continue to assess that the greatest terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan remains ISIL-K.

73. The group retains the capability and intent to conduct external operations. It has continued to prioritize attacks on Shia communities, the de facto authorities and foreigners. The killing of the de facto Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, Khalil Ahmed Haqqani (TAi.150), in a suicide bombing on 11 December 2024 claimed by ISIL-K, demonstrated their persistent capability and marked the highest-profile casualty within the de facto Cabinet since the Taliban takeover.

74. The leaders of ISIL-K are working to discredit the Taliban among the population and deepen splits within the movement. Media affiliated with ISIL-K have, for example, criticized Taliban policies towards women and girls as being “un-Islamic” and Taliban international engagement as “talking to infidels”. In the Afghan public consciousness, the Taliban leadership is accused of deviating from the principles of the “sacred struggle against the infidels for the construction of a Sharia emirate”.

75. Sanaullah Ghafari (QDi.431, alias Shahab al-Muhajir) continues as leader of ISIL-K. He moves frequently. Ghafari has been instrumental in developing the recruitment strategy of ISIL-K. ISIL-K operators Abu Munzir (not listed) and Kaka Younis (not listed) reportedly recruited some 600 Central Asian volunteers, mostly from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Some of the recruits travelled to Afghanistan, some remained in their home countries and some were sent to Europe. Many were young (17 or 18 years old) with the majority in their mid-20s and the eldest ranging up to 40 years old. None were noted to have backgrounds with terrorist groups prior to recruitment by ISIL-K. Many had been recruited online through religious chat groups in which ISIL-K handlers screened for candidates to be radicalized.

76. ISIL-K representatives are also increasing their recruitment efforts among the local population in Afghanistan in order to establish a network of sleeper cells to further enhance their capabilities, as well as their ability to conduct attacks outside Afghan territory. In North Afghanistan and areas close to the Pakistani borders, ISIL-K is reported to have indoctrinated children in madrasas, establishing a suicide training course for minors around 14 years of age.

77. The number of ISIL-K fighters is estimated to be about 2,000. While the leadership remained overwhelmingly Afghan Pashtun, much of the rank-and-file are now of Central Asian origin. The objective of ISIL-K is to conduct high-profile attacks globally, projecting their capability to attract recruits and donations.

78. Some Member States believe that ISIL-K maintains opportunistic links to TTP, as well as to disillusioned elements within the Taliban. The level of ISIL-K infiltration of the de facto authorities’ structure remains unknown but is considered to be extensive.

79. Prior to the attempt to exfiltrate from Afghanistan following the 2024 attacks in Kerman, Islamic Republic of Iran, and in Crocus City Hall in Moscow, the external operations network of ISIL-K had been based in Nimroz Province in south-western Afghanistan, where both attacks were reported to have been planned and facilitated (finance and logistics). Sources highlighted that removal of the network had been a success due to mutual intelligence-sharing and cooperation between various countries, with the exception of the Taliban de facto authorities who had refused to cooperate, share information or assist, despite the Taliban’s adversarial role towards ISIL-K.

80. Annual revenues and expenditures of ISIL-K are unknown. Interviews with ISIL-K detainees suggested that laptop and mobile telephones were readily available, with rations delivered to individuals for sustenance. ISIL-K funding is believed to come from a range of sources, including donations, kidnap-for-ransom operations that target local businessmen, and a reliance on cryptocurrencies, especially *Monero*.

81. In terms of propaganda, ISIL-K has been at the forefront of experimenting with the use of artificial intelligence. Several centres have been organized for the mass preparation of instructions created on the basis of neural networks for the manufacture of improvised explosive devices from household components and the printing of weapon components on 3D printers, propaganda brochures for recruiting new militants, methodological manuals for identifying vulnerabilities in international and national systems for combating money-laundering and creating on this basis conspiratorial schemes for financing terrorist activities. This information is distributed through specialized channels in Telegram, Element and WhatsApp.

## **B. Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan**

82. Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP, QDe.132) has intensified attacks in the reporting period, mostly against Pakistani military and State institutions. While Taliban authorities continue to deny and deflect responsibility for failing to restrain TTP, escalating attacks against Pakistani targets have led to open hostilities and further deterioration in bilateral relations between the two countries.

83. Continued Taliban harbouring of TTP leadership in Afghanistan and its ongoing facilitation of TTP operations have brought relations to a critical point. Within the Taliban there are varying degrees of sympathy for and allegiance with TTP. Some senior members increasingly view TTP as a liability, unnecessarily disrupting and antagonizing relations with Pakistan, while others remain supportive of it. Given the historical ties, the Taliban are unlikely to confront or act against TTP. Even should they wish to, they may lack the ability to do so.

84. Since the Taliban takeover, negotiations between Islamabad and Kabul focused on TTP have resulted in temporary ceasefires but failed to deliver lasting solutions. Pakistan has seen a sharp rise in cross-border terrorism since 2021, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan Provinces most affected.

85. In January, TTP issued a new directive expanding targets of its attacks to include “military-owned businesses”, thereby significantly escalating its focus on the economic interests of the military of Pakistan and of Chinese enterprises in Pakistan. TTP announced its 2025 spring offensive, referred to as “Al-Khandaq”, on 15 March, in a statement issued in five languages, later accompanied by a video statement by the TTP leader, Noor Wali Mehsud, (QDi.427) calling for jihad against the Pakistani military. The video was the first by the TTP leader in two years. The statement outlined planned operations against Pakistani security forces and installations. A majority of those conducting suicide bombings in Pakistan were reported to be Afghans.

86. The number of TTP attacks in Pakistan has been increasing throughout 2025. Although many have been thwarted by Pakistani security forces, by some estimates there have already been more than 600 attacks in Pakistan in 2025. Many attacks have been complex in nature, involving multiple, coordinated attackers using methods such as vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, combined with teams of suicide attackers on foot, for example.

87. Following a series of attacks, including the killing on 7 October 2025 of 11 soldiers in a TTP ambush in Kurram, there were reports of Pakistani air strikes against Afghanistan on 9 and 10 October. Air strikes were also reported in Paktika Province (Barmal District, Margha Bazaar area, along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border). There were reports that an air strike had targeted the TTP leader, Mehsud, in Kabul, but the de facto authorities maintained that it was actually a sonic boom over Kabul by Pakistani aircraft. Immediately following the alleged strike, an audio message attributed to Mehsud was released, as proof of life.

88. TTP maintained a strength of around 6,000 fighters, with locations in the Provinces of Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar, Paktika and Paktiya. The overall number of fighters associated with TTP also includes more than a dozen subgroups or factions.

89. The TTP leader, Mehsud, is believed to spend time in Kabul but was reported also to have visited locations in Kandahar, Kunar, Nangarhar and Paktika Provinces in spring 2025. The Monitoring Team has previously reported that the Taliban continue to provide TTP with logistical and operational space and financial support, with one Member State noting that the family of Mehsud received a monthly payment of 3 million afghanis (roughly \$43,000).<sup>12</sup> Mehsud has a long-term vision for TTP and is reported to have been grooming potential successors. Other notable senior TTP leaders in Afghanistan include: Mukarram Shah (alias Umar Khorasani) (not listed), leader of Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (QDe.152), reported to be in Lal Pura District of Nangarhar Province; Tehrik-e Taliban Swat leader, Qari Amjad (not listed) and his deputy Akbar (alias Dr. Hamood), reported to be in Shultan District of Kunar; and Hafiz Gul Bahadur, the leader of his own faction, Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group being currently located in Paktika Province.

### C. Al-Qaida

90. The de facto authorities continue to reject that there is any Al-Qaida presence in Afghanistan, of either current or former fighters. The de facto authorities assert that they are in full compliance with the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the United States of America and the Taliban (Doha Agreement).

91. The Monitoring Team, however, assesses that the status, strength and location of Al-Qaida in Afghanistan is unchanged from that noted in previous Monitoring Team reports. Al-Qaida provides ideological guidance to a range of groups. It also acts as a service provider and multiplier for other groups in Afghanistan, providing them with training, advice and logistical support.

92. The Taliban continues to maintain tight control of Al-Qaida and its activities. It continues to host and support the group. Senior Al-Qaida commanders are reported to be living in Kabul.

93. In summer 2024, the de facto Al-Qaida leader, Sayf al-Adl (QDi.001), declared Afghanistan a safe haven and urged loyal Al-Qaida members to travel there for training and in order to gain experience and knowledge. Members of, or sympathizers with, Al-Qaida are believed to be in senior positions of the de facto authorities and some members of the group have reportedly been appointed to the de facto security forces and government bodies.

94. The Afghan arena remains the symbolic homeland for Al-Qaida. Many members desire to return there. This is reinforced by the group's pledge of allegiance (*bayat*) to the Amir in addition to the personal relationships and intermarriages between Al-Qaida and Taliban members. While Taliban leaders are sympathetic to Al-Qaida ideology, the de facto authorities are conscious of the risks associated with their presence in Afghanistan and continue to curtail external activities as necessary for the Taliban's success. The closest allies of Al-Qaida in Afghanistan remain the Haqqani Network (TAe.012).

95. Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) remains active in the south-eastern provinces of Afghanistan, where the Haqqani Network exerts considerable influence. In March 2025, Osama Mahmoud (not listed) was formally declared "amir" of AQIS. He comes from Bajaur District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Atif Yahya Ghouri (not

<sup>12</sup> S/2025/71/Rev.1, para. 93.

listed), deputy chief of AQIS, based in Barmal District in Paktika Province, plays a significant role in the day-to-day operations of AQIS.

96. With or without Taliban acquiescence, AQIS has blended itself with TTP, including by providing training. AQIS has increasingly turned its focus towards Pakistan. Member States assess AQIS to number between 200 and 300 members.

#### **D. Other terrorist groups**

97. Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan (not listed) is a new group that appeared in April 2025. It is generally believed to include elements from AQIS, Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group (a TTP splinter group), and Lashkar-e-Islam. Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan has already established a reputation for its hardline stances and willingness to attack civilian targets. Just as Tehrik-e Jihad Pakistan appeared in 2023, Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan is viewed as a front for elements of TTP and AQIS to conduct attacks while maintaining plausible deniability (S/2024/92, para. 82).

98. Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan had claimed over 150 attacks to date, targeting Pakistani security forces. It is believed to have about 500 fighters, 200 of whom are under the Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group. The de facto authorities are thought to have facilitated freedom of movement for Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan into Afghanistan for training in local Islamist camps, prompting fears of the group's potential use in terrorist attacks against neighbouring States of Central Asia. The Monitoring Team is closely scrutinizing this new group and its trajectory.

99. Since the release of its new strategic plan and second edition of its charter, in March 2025, Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (QDe.088), also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party (ETIM/TIP) has moved beyond its established bases in Baghlan, Sar-e Pul and Kabul, to Badakhshan, including the Wakhan corridor, inciting its members to attack Chinese interests. Members of ETIM/TIP reportedly have been conducting business, such as trading, mining and agriculture, in order to raise funds for terrorist operations. Some Member States reported that ETIM/TIP cooperates with TTP through support in personnel training, weapons and equipment and financing of terrorism.

100. Jamaat Ansarullah (not listed) has fighters spread across different regions of Afghanistan. The main goal of Jamaat Ansarullah remains to destabilize the situation in Tajikistan and create security threats to the Central Asian region as a whole. The leader is Asliddin Khairiddinovich Davlatov (alias Mawlawi Ibrahim, not listed), who maintains contacts with the Taliban and has declared his adherence to their ideology. Davlatov cooperates with various international terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan – such as ETIM/TIP and the Islamic Jihad Group (Islamic Jihad Union, QDe.119) – and has also positioned himself as a supporter of Al-Qaida, expressing gratitude for their financial and organizational support. There are reports that the Taliban have provided 18 members of Jamaat Ansarullah with Afghan passports and have also hired experienced fighters from the group, paying them between \$200 and \$300 per month.

101. The status and strength of other groups in Afghanistan, such as Khatiba Imam al-Bukhari (QDe.158) and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (QDe.010), remains largely unchanged.

#### **V. Sanctions implementation**

102. Under resolution 1988 (2011), 135 individuals and five entities are subject to the mandatory sanctions of an asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo. As of the

end of October 2025, the Monitoring Team has confirmed that at least 58 sanctioned Taliban members are associated with the de facto authorities (see annex).

103. In the 2023 position paper of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) (S/2023/467), the Committee tasked the Monitoring Team with undertaking a thorough review of the list. The Monitoring Team is currently conducting its annual review of entries on the sanctions list, prioritizing individuals who lack identifiers or are reportedly deceased, and entities reported or confirmed to have ceased to exist.

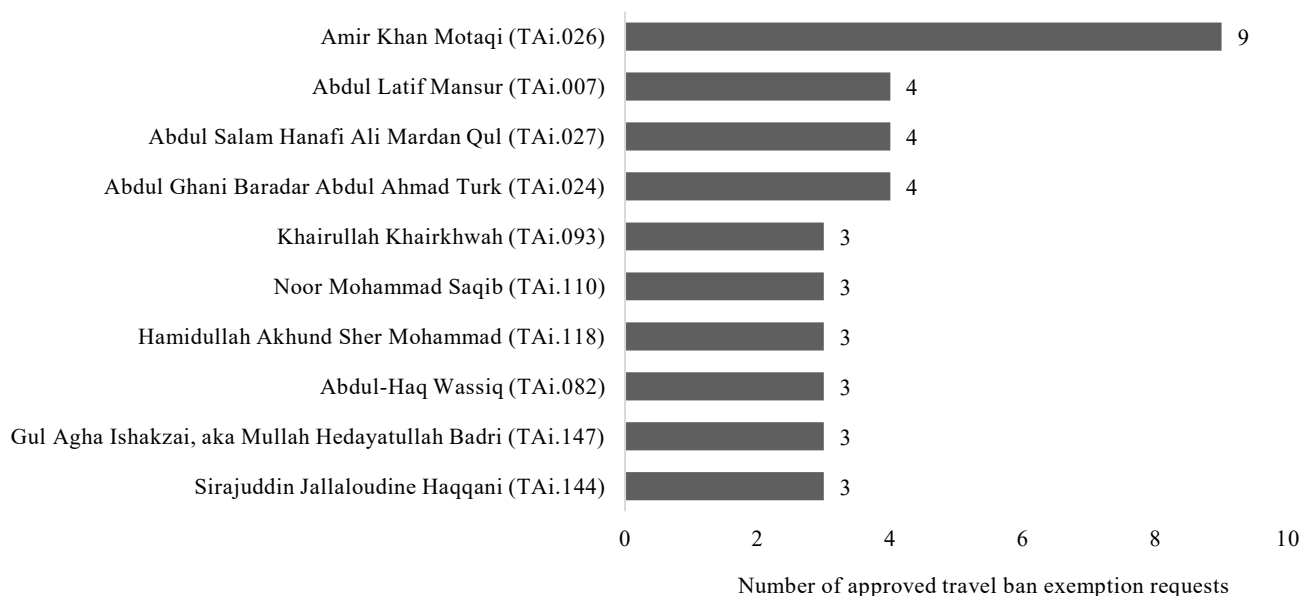
## A. Travel ban

104. Under paragraphs 19 and 20 of resolution 2255 (2015), the Committee is authorized to consider requests for exemptions to the travel ban imposed under paragraph 1 (b) of the resolution. All international travel by listed individuals must receive Committee approval in advance of travel as set out in resolution 2255 (2015) (paras. 19–21 and 22 (b)) and the Committee’s guidelines (sect. 13).

105. The Committee approved 38 requests for exemptions from the travel ban, from 11 Member States, for travel by listed individuals during the reporting period (May 2024–11 November 2025) (see figure II). The purpose of the travel was for medical treatment (4 requests), to perform *haji* (9 requests), to participate in international meetings (21 requests) or for bilateral consultations (8 requests). The countries of destination were: Cameroon, China, India, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan.

Figure II

### Sanctioned individuals granted multiple travel exemptions, 29 May 2024–11 November 2025



Source: Monitoring Team and Secretariat.

106. As noted in previous reports of the Monitoring Team, exemption requests have consistently been received by the Committee after or concurrent with the listed individual’s travel, which is not consistent with the Committee’s guidelines. To address these issues, the Committee has corresponded with specific Member States

hosting listed Taliban members, as well as with all Member States to remind them of requirements for the advance submission of travel ban exemption requests.

## **B. Asset freeze**

107. The Committee approved four requests for exemptions to the asset freeze from Member States during the reporting period. The Monitoring Team believes more outreach is necessary to help Member States understand the process for asset freeze exemption requests (for example, where the listed individual is drawing on assets for medical treatment, irrespective of whether the funds are their own).

108. As noted previously, any support to listed individuals provided by hosting States beyond basic travel expenses requires an exemption to the asset freeze. The Committee may wish to consider directing the Monitoring Team to better capture assets being made available for the benefit of those individuals.

## **C. Arms embargo and related issues**

109. In Afghanistan, various groups have acquired weapons, including sophisticated modern weapons and equipment, through cross-border smuggling and the black-market trade. Member States reported that some of these groups deployed drone attacks on Pakistani military installations in Sibi, Balochistan Province, and Machi, Punjab Province. It was also re-emphasized that TTP capability had benefited from being equipped with small arms and light weapons, as well as night-vision goggles.

110. The de facto authorities are aware of the key role of drones in contemporary military operations, including the threat that drones pose to Afghanistan. As such, the de facto authorities have pushed to develop their own capabilities to benefit from their lower costs compared with conventional weapons, while seeking to create an “air force on the cheap”. The de facto authorities are primarily focused on counter-drone capability due to the number of drones that fly over Afghanistan on a regular basis, for which they have no countermeasures. The Taliban had reportedly reached out to some Member States to request assistance with drone technology and technical assistance.

111. Some Member States reported possible participation of Al-Qaida emissaries in the Taliban's activities to mass produce drones on former military bases in the Province of Logar and the city of Kabul. Drones used were small and lightweight, with limited payload capacity and range. Al-Qaida's drone research and manufacturing base was focused on improving technological content and payload. Al-Qaida had obtained drone equipment and technology through various means, including procurement of drones through the black market and the purchasing of accessories through legal channels.

## **VI. Recommendations**

112. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee consider revisiting the guidelines for the conduct of its work, in order to clarify and facilitate Member States' compliance with travel ban or asset freeze requirements.

113. The Monitoring Team would welcome the Committee's support in requesting assistance from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to increase its engagement with, and support for, countries in Central Asia, in order to consolidate and enhance sanctions implementation.

114. The Monitoring Team would similarly welcome the Committee's support in strengthening engagement with the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, with a view to a more coordinated approach on travel ban implementation and the sharing of best practices.

115. Given the increased use of cryptocurrencies, in particular by ISIL-K, the Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States asking them to share relevant information and analysis, including on digital wallet addresses, and to encourage Member States to share information regarding terrorist groups' use of cryptocurrencies.

## **VII. Work of the Monitoring Team**

116. The present report covers the period from 29 May 2024 to 11 November 2025.

117. The Monitoring Team's travel in support of the report was limited due to financial constraints. The Team attempted to mitigate this situation by making use of regional meetings, including with some countries neighbouring Afghanistan.

118. The Monitoring Team also sent written requests for information to over 50 Member States and international organizations, but received fewer responses than in previous years. Among those responding, there was a general consistency of analysis across Member State contributions on most issues.

119. The Monitoring Team met with the de facto authorities on two occasions during the reporting period. The first meeting was with their representatives in a third country in late 2024. The Monitoring Team also made a short – and limited – visit to Afghanistan in November 2025,<sup>13</sup> to meet with a range of interlocutors, and was hosted by the de facto authorities at a multi-stakeholder round-table discussion. The Team also continues to engage with international and regional organizations to supplement its work, including several United Nations system entities, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Anti-Terrorism Centre of the Commonwealth of Independent States, among others. The Team remains appreciative of the cooperation with these bodies.

120. The Monitoring Team notes that reliable data on the number of fighters aligned with groups affiliated with Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) are difficult to obtain, particularly in conflict zones. Individuals can be aligned with more than one group. The figures used in the present report reflect either consensus or a range of estimates made by contributing Member States, with a potential margin of error. Where possible, the Team sought to disaggregate fighters from family members or other affiliates.

121. The Monitoring Team welcomes feedback on the analysis and suggestions contained in the present report, which can be sent by email ([1988mt@un.org](mailto:1988mt@un.org)).

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<sup>13</sup> Although the visit was requested in August, and had already been postponed once, at the last moment the Department of Foreign Affairs raised concerns about their ability to process visas in time. As such, only two members of the Monitoring Team were able to travel to Kabul.

## Annex

**Individuals in the de facto administration subject to sanctions imposed by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)**

Table derived from the annex to the fifteenth report of the Monitoring Team (S/2024/499) and information received since May 2024 concerning members of the Taliban de facto administration who were also listed under the 1988 sanctions regime.

**Senior positions in the Taliban de facto administration**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Permanent reference number</i>
1.	Prime Minister	Mullah Hasan Akhund, listed as Mohammad Hassan Akhund	Pashtun	TAi.002
2.	Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs	Mullah Barader, listed as Abdul Ghani Baradar Abdul Ahmad Turk	Pashtun	TAi.024
3.	Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs	Mawlawi Abdul-Salam Hanafi, listed as Abdul Salam Hanafi Ali Mardan Qul	Uzbek	TAi.027
4.	Minister for Refugees and Repatriation	Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, listed as Abdul Kabir Mohammad Jan	Pashtun	TAi.003
5.	First Deputy Minister of Defence	Mullah Mohammad Fazel Mazlum, listed as Fazl Mohammad Mazloom	Pashtun	TAi.023
6.	Director-General of Intelligence (General Directorate of Intelligence)	Abdul Haq Wasiq, listed as Abdul-Haq Wassiq	Pashtun	TAi.082
7.	Minister for Hajj and Religious Affairs	Mawlawi Nur Muhammad Saqib, listed as Noor Mohammad Saqib	Pashtun	TAi.110
8.	Deputy Minister for Finance and Administrative Affairs, Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs	Arifullah Arif, listed as Arefullah Aref Ghazi Mohammad	Pashtun	TAi.030
9.	Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration of Environmental Protection	Sa'aduddin Sa'id, listed as Saduddin Sayyed	Pashtun	TAi.087
10.	Minister of Borders and Tribal Affairs	Mullah Noorullah Noori, listed as Nurullah Nuri	Pashtun	TAi.089
11.	Minister of Civil Aviation and Transport	Mullah Hamidullah Akhundzada, listed as Hamidullah Akhund Sher Mohammad	Pashtun	TAi.118
12.	Minister of Economy	Qari Din Muhammad Hanif, listed as Din Mohammad Hanif	Tajik	TAi.043
13.	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Amir Khan Muttaqi, listed as Amir Khan Motaqi	Pashtun	TAi.026
14.	Minister of Interior	Sirajuddin Haqqani, listed as Sirajuddin Jallaloudine Haqqani	Pashtun	TAi.144

<i>No.</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Permanent reference number</i>
15.	President of Afghan Red Crescent Society	Shahabuddin Delawar	Pashtun	TAi.113
16.	Minister for Public Works	Mullah Muhammad Isa Sani, listed as Mullah Mohammad Essa Akhund	Pashtun	TAi.060
17.	Deputy Minister of State for Finance and Administrative Affairs, Ministry for National Disaster Management	Abdul Rahman Zahed	Pashtun	TAi.033
18.	Minister of Urban Development and Housing	Najibullah Haqqani, listed as Najibullah Haqqani Hidayatullah	Pashtun	TAi.071
19.	Minister of Communications and Information Technology	Hamdullah Nomani	Baloch	TAi.044
20.	Minister of Energy and Water	Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor, listed as Abdul Latif Mansur	Pashtun	TAi.007
21.	Minister of Mines and Petroleum	Mullah Hedayatullah Badri, listed as Gul Agha Ishakzai	Pashtun	TAi.147
22.	Governor of the Central Bank of Afghanistan (Da Afghanistan Bank)	Ahmad Zia Agha a.k.a. Noor Ahmad Agha, listed as Ahmad Zia Agha	Pashtun	TAi.156
23.	Director General of Properties, Ministry of Finance	Abdul Qadir Ahmad a.k.a. Mawlawi Abdul Qadir Haqqani, listed as Abdul Qadeer Basir Abdul Baseer a.k.a. "Abdul Qadir Haqqani"	Pashtun	TAi.128
24.	Deputy Auditor General of Finance and Legal Affairs at the Supreme Audit Office	Ezatullah Haqqani Khan Sayyid	Pashtun	TAi.064
25.	Deputy Commander 207 Al-Farooq Military Corps, Herat Province	Abdul Razaq Akhund Lala Akhund	Pashtun	TAi.053
26.	Deputy Minister for Military Affairs, Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice	Sayed Ahmad Shahid Khel, listed as Said Ahmed Shahidkhel	Pashtun	TAi.028
27.	Deputy Minister for Finance and Administrative Affairs, Ministry of Information and Culture	Qudratullah Jamal	Pashtun	TAi.047
28.	Deputy Minister of Borders and Tribal Affairs	Mawlawi Ahmad Taha, listed as Ahmad Taha Khalid Abdul Qadir	Pashtun	TAi.105
29.	Head of the National Disaster Management Authority	Mullah Nooruddin Torabi, listed as Nooruddin Turabi Muhammad Qasim	Pashtun	TAi.058
30.	Deputy Minister for Professional Services, Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs	Zia-ur-Rahman Madani	Tajik	TAi.102

**Administrative or advisory roles around the de facto administration**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Permanent reference number</i>
31.	Senior Adviser and Head of Monitoring Office of Emir Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada	Mullah Muhammad Zahed Ahmadzay, listed as Mohammad Zahid	Pashtun	TAi.127
32.	Director General of Ariana Airlines	Abdul Wali Seddiqi	Pashtun	TAi.133
33.	Adviser to Amir Hibatullah on Financial Affairs	Jan Mohammad Madani, listed as Jan Mohammad Madani Ikram	Pashtun	TAi.119
34.	Senior Adviser in Ministry of Education	Sayed Ghiyas al-Din Agha, listed as Sayyed Ghiassouddine Agha	Uzbek	TAi.072
35.	Deputy Commanding Officer – Helmand 215 Azm Army Corps	Abdul Samad Achekzai	Pashtun	TAi.160
36.	Deputy Mayor of Kabul	Esmatullah Asim, listed as Sayed Esmatullah Asem Abdul Quddus	Pashtun	TAi.080
37.	Director for Mayors' Affairs and General Development, ex-Director in Office of Administrative Affairs	Mohammed Eshaq Akhundzada	Pashtun	TAi.101
38.	Director General for Implementation and Supervision of Leadership Orders and Decrees	Mawlawi Shamsuddin, listed as Shamsuddin a.k.a. Shamsuddin Shari'ati	Tajik	TAi.103
39.	Director in Ministry of Defence under the Deputy for Technology and Logistics	Abdul Jabbar Omari	Pashtun	TAi.088
40.	Head of Education and Culture in the Taliban Army	Shaykh Abdul Rahman Akhundzada, listed as Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Agha	Pashtun	TAi.114
41.	Head of National Examination Authority	Abdul Baqi Haqqani, listed as Abdul Baqi Basir Awal Shah	Pashtun	TAi.038
42.	Head of Internal Investigations at the Ministry of Higher Education	Fazlullah Rabi, listed as Fazl Rabi	Pashtun	TAi.157
43.	Head of Public Information for Ministry of Interior	Rahmatullah Kakazada	Pashtun	TAi.137
44.	Director of Professional Development in Ministry of Education	Mohammad Ibrahim Omari a.k.a. Ibrahim Haqqani	Pashtun	TAi.042
45.	Ministry of Interior, Special Adviser and in charge of suicide bombers	Yahya Haqqani	Pashtun	TAi.169
46.	Professor of Islamic Studies at Kabul University	Mawlawi Abdul Quddus Mazhari	Tajik	TAi.135
47.	Provincial Chief of Police, Kabul Province	Wali Jan Hamza, listed as Waliijan	Pashtun	TAi.095

<i>No.</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Permanent reference number</i>
48.	Governor of Maidan Wardak	Mullah Khairullah Khairkhawa, listed as Mullah Khairullah Khairkhah	Pashtun	TAi.093
49.	Governor of Nangarhar	Haji Gul Muhammad, listed as Mohammad Naim Barich Khudaidad	Pashtun	TAi.013
50.	Third Secretary in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghan Embassy	Mohammad Aleem Noorani	Pashtun	TAi.138
51.	Deputy Director of Vocational Training Institute in Kabul	Nik Mohammad Dost Mohammad	Pashtun	TAi.019
52.	Deputy Director-General of National Environmental Protection Agency	Azizirahman Abdul Ahad	Pashtun	TAi.121
53.	Senior Adviser in Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, ex-Adviser of the Haqqani Network (TAe.012)	Muhammad Taher Anwari	Pashtun	TAi.005
54.	Senior Adviser to Minister of Interior Sirajuddin Haqqani (TAi.144)	Shams ur-Rahman Abdul Zahir	Pashtun	TAi.008
55.	Official in Kandahar Province Directorate of Borders and Tribal Affairs, adviser to Governor of Kandahar	Mohammad Rasul Ayyub	Pashtun	TAi.104
56.	Adviser	Abdul Habib Alizai a.k.a. Agha Jan Alizai	Pashtun	TAi.148
57.	Adviser	Fayzullah Khan Nurzay, listed as Faizullah Khan Noorzai	Pashtun	TAi.153
58.	Adviser	Malik Noorzai	Pashtun	TAi.154