



Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 17 December 2015

Is there any information that employees of Dacaar and other NGO organisations and especially women are at risk from the Taliban because of their employment? Is there any information on the risk that would face employees especially women if returned to Afghanistan.

A December 2015 report on the situation in Kunduz Province published by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), in a paragraph headed “NGO Workers”, states:

“UNAMA received consistent reports of NGO staff being singled out by the Taliban in house searches, seemingly on the basis of their perceived association with ‘foreigners’. UNAMA is not in a position to assess the extent to which Taliban commanders deliberately disregarded the instructions in the statement attributed to Mullah Mansour regarding NGO protection. However, according to UNAMA sources, even where individual Taliban commanders wished to ensure the protection of NGO personnel and property, they struggled to achieve this given the number of different groups engaged in fighting and the lack of a centralized command and control structure in Kunduz.” (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (December 2015) *Afghanistan: Human Rights and Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Special Report on Kunduz Province*, pp.16-17)

In a section titled “Deliberate Killings” this report states:

“UNAMA received reports that the Taliban allegedly targeted individuals because of their perceived support to the Government or sought out other targets for deliberate killings. One source informed UNAMA that, on 29 September, the Taliban entered the house of a female NGO worker, shooting and killing her husband. The NGO worker was reportedly not in the house at the time.” (ibid,p.13)

See also section of this report titled “Systematic Targeting, Threats and Intimidation of Civil Society and Government Workers” which states:

“According to numerous accounts received by UNAMA, within a few hours of entering Kunduz city on 28 September, Taliban commenced house to house searches using pre-prepared lists containing the names and addresses of human rights defenders, and in particular women, women active in public life, NGO workers, United Nations staff, journalists and Government officials, including lawyers, judges and prosecutors.” (ibid, p.15)

The 2015 Amnesty International report on Afghanistan, in a paragraph headed “Abuses by armed groups”, states:

“Between January and August 2014 the NGO Safety Organization in Afghanistan recorded 153 attacks on aid workers, resulting in 34 people killed and 33 injured. The government attributed the majority of these attacks to gunmen belonging to insurgent groups, including the Taliban.” (Amnesty International (25 February 2015) *Amnesty International Report 2014/15 – Afghanistan*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

“Afghanistan was once a magnet for foreign aid workers but surging violence has left NGOs struggling to recruit staff and restricted their ability to deliver crucial aid to the country's vulnerable. Plagued by decades of war and natural disasters such as last month's earthquake, which killed more than 120 people in the country and left thousands homeless, up until around 2009 Afghanistan was considered a risky but rewarding post for humanitarian workers. But with a resurgent Taliban leaving Afghan forces floundering and forcing NATO allies to extend their presence in the country, increasing attacks are leaving would-be volunteers jittery. Posts now remain 'empty for a long time' compared to a decade ago, said Elise, of France's Acted NGO in Kabul, who declined to provide a last name.” (Agence France Presse (11 June 2015) *Foreign aid workers shy away from Afghanistan as violence surges*)

A BBC News report on the killing of four employees of the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR) in 2003 states:

“Four Afghan aid workers have been killed after their car was ambushed by militants, the aid agency they were working for says. The Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (Dacaar) said the workers were travelling through Ghazni Province, south-west of Kabul, on Tuesday when an armed gang stopped the car. The aid workers were asked to get out of the vehicle. Four were shot dead, while a fifth escaped with injuries. Dacaar said two of the men worked for the organisation while three others were local Afghans assisting in a local water supply project.” (BBC News (10 September 2003) *Afghan aid staff die in ambush*)

A report from DACAAR on the killing of an employee in 2007 states:

“Fighting between Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) and local people in Badghis province has claimed the life of a DACAAR staff member. Abdul Khaleq, who worked as a cook for the DACAAR field office in Gulchin village was shot and wounded by unidentified gunmen on the evening of 29 July, while trying to escape the intense fighting taking place that night in the Qadis district of Badghis province. Abdul Khaleq was found seriously wounded by his DACAAR colleagues and died before they could assist him to hospital. Abdul Khaleq, who was 43 years old, had worked for DACAAR since 2004 as a well respected cook. AbdulKhaleq leaves behind six daughters, three sons, his wife and his mother.” (Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR) (1 August 2007) *Afghanistan: DACAAR employee killed in Badghis*)

A report published by the European Asylum Support Office, in section 2.7.1. “Faryab”, states:

“According to a source in Kabul, intimidation and abduction of selective targets, especially NGO staff, aid workers, government officials and ANSF personnel continued unabated.” (European Asylum Support Office (January 2015) *EASO Country of Origin Information Report – Afghanistan: Security Situation*, p.128)

In section 2.8.2. “Badghis” this report states:

“On 3 May 2014, the Taliban fired three mortars at a meeting organised by an NGO in Muqur District Centre. They hit the centre, the NDS office and a private house. One civilian driver was killed and one five-year-old girl and two ANP were injured.” (ibid, p.149)

A report from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), in a section titled “Examples of deliberate Taliban attacks against civilians and claims of Responsibility (Attack against development NGO, Kabul city)”, states:

“On 29 November 2014, three Taliban gunmen threw two hand grenades into the compound of an NGO ‘Partnership in Academics and Development’ in Kabul city, entered the compound and deliberately shot at unarmed civilians hiding in different parts of the compound. The attack resulted in 11 civilian casualties (five killed and six injured). The NGO was supporting education by funding several secondary schools and offering English language, mathematics and computer courses. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the incident.” (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (February 2015) *Afghanistan - Annual Report 2014 Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, pp.70-71)

An IRIN News report states:

“In May 2013, the compound of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), one of the aid agencies with the best access in Taliban-controlled areas, was attacked in Jalalabad, capital of Nangahar Province, with one staff member killed. While it has never been confirmed, it was widely reported to be the work of a Taliban splinter organization. ICRC declined to comment. Numerous NGOs raised concerns over the ICRC killing to IRIN, pointing out that a deal with the Taliban no longer guarantees security. ‘We can reduce risk by 20-40 percent by agreeing an access deal with the Taliban but we can never be sure,’ said a senior NGO worker.” (IRIN News (19 January 2015) *Aid at risk as Afghanistan's war splinters*)

A report from the independent Afghan television station Tolo TV states:

“Six employees of ACTED [Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development] NGO have been killed in a Taleban ambush in Fariab Province [northern Afghanistan]. The Fariab Province police commander confirmed this incident and said these workers of the NGO were killed in a mine explosion which had been planted by the Taleban in the Pashtun Kot area of this province when they wanted to go to Almar District this morning. He adds that one of the workers of the NGO was injured in this incident.” (Tolo TV (27 November 2013) *Six NGO workers killed in blast in Afghan north*)

A report from the Afghan Islamic Press states:

“The Taliban killed two Afghan workers of the humanitarian assistance NGO in Kohestanat District of Fariab Province [northern Afghanistan]. The head of Kohestanat District, Emam Din Taqwa, told Afghan Islamic Press [AIP] on Tuesday, 29 April, that the opponents of the government killed two workers of CHA [Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance] in the Tirband area of this district yesterday. He added that the opponents of the government kidnapped these workers in an area on the outskirts of Kohestanat District when these workers were returning from Maymana city [capital of Fariab Province] at night on 27 April. He added that one of the kidnapped people was the head of the NGO office in this district. The Taliban have claimed responsibility for this attack and their spokesman, Qari Mohammad Yusof Ahmadi, told AIP that these two officials named Gholam Sakhi Balkhi and Najibollah were not kidnapped but they were killed in a Taliban attack on the office of this NGO.” (Afghan Islamic Press (29 April 2014) *Taliban kill two NGO workers in Afghan north*)

See also Afghan Islamic Press report which states:

“Four people including three employees of an NGO were killed in an armed attack in Dehrawud District of Urozgan Province [southern Afghanistan]. The head of Dehrawud District, Aminollah, told Afghan Islamic Press [AIP] on Monday, 4 May, that some unidentified armed people attacked the vehicle of workers of the Sabat [Stability] programme in the Kagro area of this district last night, 3 May, and four people were killed as a result. He added that three workers of the stability programme SIKA [Stability in Key Areas of Afghanistan] and one policeman, who had been deployed for the security of these workers, were among the killed men. The head of the district said that these people were employees of SIKA and were working under the umbrella of a stability programme named Sabat.” (Afghan Islamic Press (4 May 2015) *Three NGO workers, one policeman killed in Afghan south*)

A report from Amnesty International states:

“According to the Agency Coordinating Body of Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR), seven humanitarian workers were among those killed in last night’s attack. ‘Reports that several aid workers were among those killed are especially worrying – the Taliban are again targeting the very individuals and agencies who are committed to help ordinary Afghan people,’ said Horia Mosadiq.” (Amnesty International (14 May 2015) *Afghanistan: Taliban’s atrocious attacks on civilians show contempt for human life*)

An Afghan Islamic Press report states:

“Armed men killed nine people, NGO staff, who had come to the area to inspect projects by the National Solidarity Programme. Spokesman for the governor of Balkh Province, Sher Jan Durrani, told Afghan Islamic Press [AIP] on Tuesday, 2 June, that unidentified armed men killed nine people in an area in Zarey District of Balkh Province last night. He said: ‘The killed people were workers of the National Solidarity Programme, and that they had travelled to the district without informing the security forces.’ According to Durrani, other details about the incident have not been received yet and an investigation has been launched. A well-informed source told AIP that these people were

workers of the PIN [People in Need] a Czech Republic NGO which helps people in the agriculture and health sectors.” (Afghan Islamic Press (2 June 2015) *Nine killed NGO workers were from Czech Republic's People in Need – source*)

A Daily Mail article refers to this incident as follows:

“Gunmen killed nine Afghan employees of a Czech aid organisation in their beds during an overnight raid in northern Afghanistan Tuesday, one of the deadliest recent attacks on humanitarian workers in the war-battered country. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the killings in the relatively tranquil Balkh province, but the Taliban are intensifying their annual spring offensive despite repeated government attempts to reopen peace talks. The nine victims were shot as they slept in a guesthouse belonging to People in Need (PIN), a Czech organisation that has been active in Afghanistan since 2001, delivering aid to remote communities in the east and north. 'Those killed in Zari district of Balkh province include two drivers, two guards and five project staff, which included a woman,' PIN country director Ross Hollister told AFP. 'They were killed in their beds while they were sleeping,' he added. Hollister said the organisation has been working in that area since 2002 and had no forewarning of the raid. Tuesday's attack is among the worst ever on aid workers in Afghanistan, who have increasingly been casualties of a surge in militant violence in recent years.” (Daily Mail (2 June 2015) *Gunmen kill nine Afghan employees of Czech charity*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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