

Chronology of Events in Afghanistan, August 2003*

August 2

Afghan governor survives assassination attempt. (*Radio Afghanistan*)

The governor of Urozgan Province survived an assassination attempt. Officials in Urozgan Province discovered and defused a bomb 5 km from Urozgan Province at midnight when the governor of the province, Jan Mohammad, was on his way home. The bomb was connected to a remote control device. The governor of Urozgan confirmed the incident and said a person named Mowlawi Noman and his alleged foreign accomplice had been arrested in this connection. According to the governor of Urozgan, Mowlawi Noman and his accomplice “confessed” to implement this plot upon receiving a huge amount of money.

Iran deports young Afghans without the knowledge of their families. (Afghan news agency Herat News Centre)

Afghan sources reported that Iranian police were forcefully deporting young Afghan girls and boys to Afghanistan without the knowledge of their families. A humanitarian official working in the border for refugees said: “The process of deporting refugees began one-and-a-half years ago. However, the process has seen a major rise over the last past weeks. Even, those with legal documents have been deported from Iran.” The same organization in Herat City reported that the deportations of Afghans took such a momentum that even some members of the families were deported without the knowledge of their families. The agency is especially concerned with the deportation of the young boys and girls who are sent across the border to Afghanistan without giving notice or information to their families.

August 3

Afghan commission orders removal of illegal checkpoints in Kabul. (*Radio Afghanistan*)

The Senior Security Commission at a meeting assigned the Kabul Garrison Command to take emergency measures to identify and remove unauthorised security checkpoints in Kabul City and its suburbs.

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Security institutions to enforce moral and religious rules. (*Radio Afghanistan*)

The Senior Security Commission assigned the security institutions to thwart moral felonies and ensure respect for religious sanctities. Their sources should be discovered and be treated according to the law.

August 4

Explosion kills 13, injures 21 in Jawzjan province. (*Agence France Presse / AFP*)

A massive explosion killed 13 militiamen and injured 21 others helping collect weapons in a disarmament drive in northern Afghanistan. The police sources in the province of Jawzjan reported that a truck full of weapons exploded in Aqcha district, killing 13 soldiers and injuring 21 more. The injured were in a serious condition in hospital in the Jawzjan provincial capital Sheberghan. The police in Sheberghan said they believed the blast was an accident rather than an attack. The cause was still being investigated. The weapons had been collected as part of a local drive to disarm thousands of militiamen in northern Afghanistan, where factional fighting has left dozens dead in 2003. The truck and five escort vehicles were destroyed in the blast as the truck started up for the 40-kilometre journey to Sheberghan, where the weapons were being taken.

Deputy Defence Minister Abdul Rashid Dostum has launched a drive to disarm thousands of militiamen in Jawzjan, his home province. Around 1,000 of his fighters were disarmed at the weekend, the Uzbek general said in Aqcha. Dostum's efforts are separate from an internationally-backed national program to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate some 100,000 militiamen across Afghanistan.

Disarmament initiative led to clashes in Faryab province. (*Reuters*)

Uzbek Jumbish and Tajik Jamiat factions clashed in south and southwest of the Faryab provincial capital of Maimana, in which one Jamiat member was killed, two wounded and two civilians also hurt. According to a Jamiat Area Commander, the clash resulted from Dostum's efforts for disarmament, which opponents considered as a move to eliminate his rivals. General Abdul Rashid Dostum has been collecting weapons under an initiative separate from a planned nationwide disarmament plan led by the government. Farouq Khan, head of 24th division of Faryab province who belongs to Jamiat-e-Islami faction, said he would not hand in weapons to Dostum. He said: "We will resist any move by Dostum to make himself stronger in Faryab. We are ready for the disarmament plan if the weapons are stored by the Defence Ministry in Kabul and is done by the Defence Ministry."

August 5

Area commander killed by unknown gunmen in Kabul. (*Afghan news agency Bakhtar*)

A former *jihad* commander of Paghman District was killed in the Niazberg area of Kabul. Commander Mohammad Nabi Qoraishi, resident of Pashaei village of Paghman District, Kabul Province, was shot dead by unknown men carrying

kalashnikovs at 08:00 hours local time. According to the commander's son Nasratollah, two armed men in military uniform met his father and, after a short conversation, fired at least 20 bullets all over his body. According to Nasratollah, commander Mohammad Nabi Qoraishi was being followed by strange men recently.

August 6

One killed, two injured in explosion on the Konar-Jalalabad road. (Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency / AIP)

An explosive device was detonated by remote control on the Konar-Jalalabad main road in eastern Afghanistan, and a government vehicle was destroyed. It was reported that one man was killed and two were injured in the explosion.

Mercy Corps driver killed in Helmand Province. (AIP)

Gunmen carried out an attack in Deh Shu District in Helmand Province, killing seven people. It was reported that six Afghan government troops, and a driver working for an American agency, Mercy Corps, who was in his car at the scene of the attack, were killed. The attackers reportedly took at least one person with them from the district.

August 7

Supporters of former Afghan monarch form political party. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh)

Relatives and associates of former Afghan king reportedly formed a new party, namely the Jonbesh-e Wahdat-e Melli Afghanistan [Afghan National Unity Movement]. It consists of a number of former state politicians and high-ranking officials. The movement is run by Azizollah Wasefi in Kabul. It has established close ties with a number of university lecturers, former high-ranking officials and tribal leaders from Kandahar, Paktia, Hazarajat and with the Uzbeks. They decided to announce a seven-member committee as the leadership council of the party. The leadership committee consists of Azizollah Wasefi, Homayun Shah Asefi, Abdol Satar Sirat, Prof Abdorrasul Amin, Soltan Mahmud Ghazi and Hakim Nurzai, all relatives or associates of the former king.

Afghan Supreme Court denies handing down death sentence in blasphemy case. (Iranian radio *Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)

The Supreme Court in Afghanistan denied that it has sentenced to death two journalists, including an Iranian citizen working in this country. The editor-in-chief of the Kabul-based independent newspaper, *Aftab*, Mir Hussain Musawi, and his Iranian deputy, Ali Reza Payam Sistani, were arrested by Afghan officials on 17 June on the charges of publishing articles entitled "Holy Fascism" and "Religion + Government = Tyranny" in June 11 issue which the country's court believes are against Islam. A deputy chief justice of Afghanistan, Fazl Ahmad Minawi, said that neither the editor-in-chief of *Aftab* weekly and his deputy had been put on trial by any court yet, nor had they been sentenced to death. The two will be given a public trial, with journalists

attending it, Minawi said. However, the accused announced that they would appear only in a media court under the Ministry of Information and Culture.

August 8

Afghan political activist attacked in Herat Province. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)

A political activist in Herat Province survived an assassination attempt. It was reported that unidentified armed people attacked the residence of a political activist, Nasir Alami, with a grenade in the evening. However, no-one was injured in the attack. No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

August 10

UN suspends road missions in southern Afghan districts after attacks. (AFP)

The United Nations has suspended road missions across much of southern Afghanistan following a series of attacks which left 7 dead and 15 injured, a UN spokesman said. All UN missions to the border districts of Helmand and Kandahar provinces have been suspended. There are also currently no missions to Uruzgan and Zabul provinces or to northern Helmand except to the capital Lashkar Gah or northern Kandahar.

Six Afghan soldiers and an Afghan working for the US aid agency Mercy Corps were killed in an attack on the district commissioner's office in Dishu, southern Helmand province on August 7. In neighbouring Kandahar province, 10 Afghan staff of the non-government organisation Coordination Humanitarian Assistance were attacked and beaten in their offices in Maiwand district on August 5. They were severely beaten and tied up when they refused to release the keys to their newly-purchased vehicles. The armed men who attacked them set fire to three vehicles.

August 12

Taleban blockade road between two southern Afghan provinces. (Afghan news agency "Hindokosh")

The road from Urozgan to Zabol Province has been blocked for several days by the Taleban. It was reported that Taleban have reorganized in the areas and potential guerrilla attacks are expected every moment by them.

Three Afghans killed. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)

Unknown men have killed three Afghans in the military area of Darikhel District, between Paktia and Khost Provinces. It was reported that the bodies of the dead men were beheaded and were not identifiable.

People in Mazar-i Sharif protest against reconstruction delays. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)

People in Mazar-i Sharif, the capital of Afghan northern Balkh Province, staged a protest rally against a delay in reconstruction work in the area. Officials in Mazar-i Sharif say that about 4,000 dollars were allocated last year to repair streets and roads in the city. But people in the city were said to be spending their own money to get the city streets repaired.

August 13

At least 25 killed in Afghan factional clash in Uruzgan province. (Reuters)

At least 25 people, most of them factional fighters, were killed in central Afghanistan when fighting erupted between forces of a sacked provincial official and his successor. The fighting broke out early in the day between supporters of Amanullah, former ruler of the remote district of Kajran in Uruzgan province, and his successor Abdul Rahman Khan. Khan said the clashes started after Amanullah's fighters opened fire on a bus carrying his supporters. He alleged that eight of his people died in the bus incident, in which 20 were wounded, and he lost seven others. On the other hand, Amanullah said 10 of his men, including close family, were killed.

17 killed in alleged Taliban attack in Helmand province. (AFP)

A powerful bomb tore through a minibus in killing 17 people, half of them children, in the second deadly attack in less than a week blamed on Taliban guerrillas. The bomb exploded at 8:00 am local time just outside Helmand province's capital Lashkar Gah, provincial security chief Abdul Rahman Sabir said. The Toyota minibus was on a 25 kilometre journey from the Marja district of Helmand to Lashkar Gah when the bomb exploded around 15 kilometres west of the city. The blast was caused by explosives inside the bus, Sabir said, citing police investigations. Afghan officials warned of further attacks by Taliban and al-Qaeda following a suicide car bombing in June which killed four German peacekeepers and injured 29 others in Kabul.

Bomb explosion kills two in Kabul. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*)

Two people have been killed due to a bomb explosion in Kabul.

Afghanistan changes governors in restive provinces. (Reuters).

The Afghan government announced a reshuffle of provincial positions. The previous governor of Kandahar province, Gul Agha Sherzai, swapped posts with Minister of Urban Development Yusuf Pashtun. Mohammad Hashim had been appointed intelligence chief for the province. Hamidullah Tokhi, the previous governor of Zabul, had been appointed to govern Maidan Wardak province, while his previous post was taken up by Hafizullah.

A government decree also stated that Ismail Khan would remain as governor of Herat, but would not longer hold the position of military commander simultaneously. It said a new military commander for Herat would be named soon.

Agence France Presse / AFP report on the same news: Afghan President Hamid Karzai stripped powerful warlord Ismail Khan of his post as military commander of

western Afghanistan in a major reshuffle of provincial governors and officials. The National Security Council decided Khan could not retain his post as military commander while governor of Herat province it said, citing a decree by Karzai who said earlier in 2003 that officials could not hold both military and civil posts.

Afghan commander rejects formation of council by rival leader in Mazar-i Sharif. (Radio Afghanistan).

General Abdorrashid Dostum rejected the *Nokhbagan Shura* (Council of the Elite) which was formed by his rival, General Atta Mohammad in Mazar-i Sharif city. He called it illegal. Based on the decisions made by the Afghan Security Council, the military authorities are not allowed to interfere in the civil affairs.

Two Afghan aid workers die, three hurt in ambush in Ghazni province. (Reuters).

Two local aid workers belonging to the Afghan Red Crescent Society have been killed and three of their colleagues wounded in an ambush southwest of Kabul. The incident occurred in Andar district of Ghazni province.

August 14

UNHCR suspends operations in Kunar province after rocket attack. (Associated Press / AP).

The U.N. Refugee Agency suspended operations in an eastern Afghan province after a rocket was fired near one of its compounds in the area, a spokeswoman said. The rocket landed about 400 meters from the UNHCR office in the city of Asadabad on August 10, said a spokeswoman for the agency. Operations in Kunar province were suspended soon after. "The security situation in the province has been difficult for about a year now, with frequent rockets, mines and bomb explosions," she said.

August 16

Four injured in clashes with Herat police for playing live music. (AIP).

It was reported that four people have been injured in clashes between the security officials and the participants of a private party in Herat. Clashes broke out between the security forces and the party-goers in the Pulpashtun area on the Kandahar-Herat highway, some 10 kilometres from the Herat City. The incident broke out when security officials prevented the live music. It was reported that shooting broke out and at least four people including security personnel were injured. It was reported that the incident in Pulpashtun erupted when the security officials destroyed music instruments. More than 20 of the party-goers were detained by the security officials. Young men in Herat go to the villages and organize open air parties with live music.

August 17

Afghanistan's new army opens first recruiting center in east. (AP).

Afghanistan's national army opened the first recruitment center in Jalalabad, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province. Before the opening of the recruitment office, most soldiers have been recruited to the national army through provincial governors and commanders. Other recruiting centers are due to open in Gardez, Bamiyan, Kandahar, Kunduz and Kabul. New recruits must be between the ages of 18 and 22 and physically fit. All recruits will travel to a military training center in eastern Kabul for an initial 10-week training course. Troops are trained by forces from France, the United States and other coalition countries serving in Afghanistan.

Insurgents launch massive assault on police station in Afghanistan, 22 dead. (AP).

Hundreds of insurgents in a convoy of trucks attacked a police headquarters in southeastern Afghanistan, triggering a gunbattle that killed 22 people, officials said. The fierce fighting in Paktika province was the latest in a wave of violence. The assault began shortly before midnight on August 16 when about 400 guerrillas travelling in trucks drove across the border from Pakistan and attacked the police headquarters in the province's Barmal district, said provincial Governor Mohammed Ali Jalali. Firing rockets, heavy machine guns and grenades, the attackers easily took over the office. About 15 to 20 Afghan police were in the compound at the time and seven of them - including the district police chief - were killed, Jalali said. Between 15 to 20 insurgents were also reportedly killed. Provincial police chief Daulat Khan said the attackers retreated with the bodies. The insurgents held the police station until dawn before destroying the building, getting back in their vehicles and fleeing to Pakistan, 8 kilometers away, Jalali said.

Save the Children Fund workers injured in Afghan attack in Balkh province. (AFP).

Two Afghan workers for the British charity Save the Children Fund were wounded by unknown gunmen in northern Afghanistan in the latest attack on humanitarian organisations. The two were wounded when gunmen opened fire on their car in Balkh, 20 kilometres west of the main northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, Mazar security chief Isa Iftikhary said. They are now in hospital in Mazar and their driver escaped unhurt. The workers had been carrying out humanitarian work in Balkh and were returning to Mazar when they were attacked. Iftikhary said the United Nations had suspended road missions out of Mazar for 24 hours following the attack.

Afghan president grants amnesty to hundreds of prisoners. (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*).

On the occasion of the 84th anniversary of the independence of Afghanistan, the Chairman of the Transitional State of Afghanistan, Hamed Karzai, has issued an amnesty decree applying to hundreds of prisoners throughout the country. The presidential press office of Afghanistan announced that in line with Karzai's decree all prisoners who are over 60 years of age are to be released regardless of their crime and the term of their imprisonment. All prisoners who had one year or less than one year

left to serve would also be covered by the amnesty decree. According to the decree, women who have served half of their prison term would be released, too.

Two injured in explosion at house of Afghan president's brother. (AFP).

At least two people were injured in an explosion at the Kandahar home of the younger brother of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Ahmad Wali Karzai had left his home in the city of Kandahar just minutes before the blast. Two injured people were seen being taken from the house to a local hospital. It was not immediately known what caused the explosion, with some local people saying there was a rocket attack while others said it was bomb blast.

August 18

Ten policemen killed in Logar province. (Reuters).

Taliban guerrillas have killed 10 policemen, including a provincial police chief. Abdul Khaliq, police chief of Logar province, and several other senior police officers from the province south of Kabul were among those killed in an ambush, Logar's military commander Fazlullah Mojadidi said. He said the police chief had been returning from a funeral for two family members of a police officer who were killed in a rocket attack blamed on the Taliban.

August 19

Men in camouflage attack deminers in Wardak province. (AFP).

Armed men clad in camouflage attacked deminers and ransacked their office in central Afghanistan. The United Nations Mine Action Programme (UNMAP) said 22 unknown assailants attacked a base of the locally-run Mine Detection Centre (MDC) in Wardak province's Salar district 12:45 local time. Some MDC workers were slightly injured while being beaten up by the attackers. The workers were all Afghan nationals. The attackers also shot out the tyres of a truck, stole and then torched an ambulance.

August 20

Attackers set fire to Afghan school admitting girls in Logar province. (AFP).

Militants torched a school Logar province where girls were studying and warned them not to return. The blaze affected classrooms mainly used by girls attending the Abu-Sofyaan school in Musai district of Logar province. A school guard was injured but no students were at school as the new term was to start on August 23.

August 21

Security commander of Urozgan Province reportedly killed. (Afghan news agency Hindokosh).

The security commander of Khas Urozgan District of Urozgan Province Asadollah and his bodyguard have been killed in an attack. Some 200 government troops and 15 soldiers of the coalition have launched clean up operation in Khas Urozgan District.

August 22

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan re-established. (Chinese Xinhua News Agency).

About 800 former members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) at a meeting officially formed the new party. Officials of the new party said that they would not repeat previous mistakes of the PDPA and try to work for the national interests and improve the war-ravaged economy.

Reuters report on the same news on August 26: Afghanistan's Supreme Court has called for the prosecution and trial of members of the former communist regime who have formed a political party of about 800 people. The Supreme Court took the decision at a meeting chaired by Afghanistan's top judge, Mawlawi Fazl Hadi Shinwari. It comes within days of the Justice Ministry barring members of the communist regime from political activity after many former communist officials banded together in Kabul to form the National Unity Party, which is led by Noorulhaq Uloomi. Uloomi was a general in the communist regime that ruled Afghanistan backed by the former Soviet Union from 1979 until 1992 and which paved the way for a 10-year invasion of the country by the Red Army in the 1980s. It was unanimously decided by the Court that "the organisers of this party have committed serious crimes against the people of Afghanistan... (and that) they should be prosecuted legally and be put on trial in due time."

Alleged Taliban seize central Afghan town. (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran).

Unidentified people seized Khas Urozgan in Urozgan Province. It was reported that a number of unidentified armed people who were said to be Taleban carried white flags and seized Khas Urozgan. They sent letters to surrounding villages they called on villagers to join them. The governor of Urozgan, Jan Mohammad, confirmed the news and said that on receiving the news of this action of unidentified armed people, government forces were sent to the area and were able to seize back the area after several hours of clashes. He said during the clashes four attackers had been killed and six others had been detained by the government forces. Urozgan's governor described the people as Taleban supporters and said that the rest of these people had taken refuge in Zabol Province.

Reuters report of the same news on August 23: An Afghan official said that the government troops had recaptured parts of a district in the central province of Uruzgan overrun by hundreds of Taliban guerrillas. But the official in Khas Uruzgan district said 250 to 300 Taliban fighters were still holding parts of the area. "As far as

we know, the Taliban were driven out of several sections of the district, including its headquarters where they had put their flag," the official said. "They are still out there and we are chasing them and some low-level clashes happen here and there occasionally."

August 24

Political parties operating in Afghanistan declared "illegal". (Chinese Xinhua News Agency).

All political parties currently operating in Afghanistan are illegal because the transitional government is yet to enact a political party law, Afghan Justice Minister Abdul Rahim Karimi said. Karimi said that the government is not responsible for providing assistance and help to those parties as they are not registered with the government. "There is no responsibility from the government side for the current political parties until there is a legitimate framework for political parties," the minister said. Currently there are around 83 social organizations active in political scene in the country. Regarding a newly established communist party named the National Unity Party, Karimi said: "We will not allow enemies of democracy to carry out political activities inside Afghanistan."

"Mojahedin-e Fedayan-e Islam" vows bloodshed until foreigners leave Afghanistan. (AIP).

A group, calling itself the "Mojahedin-e Fedayan-e Islam", has called on the Afghan youth to unite and "defeat the infidels and overthrow their puppets". In a statement issued in Konar Province, the group also urged its followers not to attack schools and to respect public property and the wellbeing of civilian population. The statement said: "Eliminate the servants and puppets of the enemies. Make yourselves the slogans of *ji*had and the models of courage. Pursue enemy spies and send them to hell by death to be an example for others. Do not show any mercy to them. Hung those cursed pseudo Ulema, who have sold the faith, homeland, honour, courage and bravery. Let others learn a lesson from their death."

August 25

Former Afghan commander loyal to Hekmatyar freed in Pakistan after "terrorist" links unproven. (AP).

Pakistani authorities released a former Afghan commander, loyal to rebel leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, after exonerating him of "terrorist connections". Haji Jamil was released in Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's North West Frontier province, said an intelligence official speaking on condition of anonymity. Jamil was detained on August 7 in the Pakistani tribal town of Miranshah. Jamil was picked up because of his ties to Hekmatyar, who is currently living in hiding. During the 1990s Jamil was a representative of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami group. Speaking at a news conference, Jamil said he had severed links with Hekmatyar's group.

August 27

Taliban guerrillas retake areas in Zabul province. (Chinese news agency Xinhua).

Taliban fighters have recaptured some areas of a southern Afghan province despite an ongoing massive joint operation by government troops and US-led coalition forces to hunt them down, an Afghan military official said. According to Haji Janan, a commander of the Afghan Army's 7th Corps stationed in Kandahar, two districts of Larzahwa, Chanaraha and a part of the district of Dai Chupan in Zabul province were fallen to the hands of Taliban guerrillas. Affizullah Hashmi, governor of Zabul province, said that two strategic Taliban bases in the Dara Dozi valley located in Dai Chupan mountains were destroyed.

Afghan Herat province stops issuing driving licenses to women. (Afghan news agency Herat News Centre).

The head of the Herat City Traffic Department said: "Based on the order of Emir Sahib, Herat Governor Esmail Khan, we have not issued any driving license to the women. As you may know the situation in our city does not let us issue licenses to women. At the first opportunity we will issue this permission to women to drive during certain hours."

August 28

UN road missions in Kandahar resume after enhanced security. (Xinhua News Agency).

UN road missions along a major highway linking the southern Afghan city of Kandahar with a border town has resumed after security efforts by local authorities, a UN spokesman said. "There are up to 10 government check posts along the road between Kandahar and Spin Boldak, and the border police units have also been reinforced," Manoel de Almeida e Silva of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said. He said that UN road missions from now on will be accompanied by armed escorts, which are being provided by Kandahar Police and available to all aid agencies. The Kandahar-Spin Boldak road was closed about one month ago after a series of armed attacks against aid workers by suspected Taliban fighters in the area.

August 30

Clergyman reportedly talking to Taleban on behalf of Afghan government. (AIP).

A Zabol Province representative to the Loya Jerga, Mowlawi Abdorrahman Hotak, reportedly started negotiations with the Taleban on behalf of the Afghan government in Atghar District in Zabol Province.

August 31

New private radio station banned in Nangarhar Province. (Afghan newspaper *Erada*).

A new privately-owned radio station has recently started broadcasting on trial basis after receiving a legal permit. However, a few days later it was banned by the order of the leadership of the Nangarhar Province.

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