AFGHANISTAN
Weekly Report
19 – 25 October 2017
Key events

- On 20 October, a suicide bomber targeting Imam Zaman Mosque in PD13, Kabul city, killed at least 56 people. The attack was claimed by IS.
- A suicide attacker rammed a car full of explosive into a bus leaving Marshal Fahim University in PDS, Kabul city, on 21 October, killing at least 15 soldiers. The Taleban claimed responsibility for the bombing.
- The European Commission announced it is allocating an additional EUR5 million in humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, as the number of displaced people and civilian casualties continues to grow. This brings the total humanitarian aid for the country in 2017 to EUR30.5 million.

National overview

At least 100 people were killed in suicide attacks this week, two of which occurred in Kabul city. Taleban attacks on Afghan security checkpoints continued into the reporting period, although on a comparatively limited scale following large scale assaults on police compounds in Paktia and Ghazni on 17 October and Kandahar on 19 October. Of concern, a recent US report claimed Afghan security forces were being killed at a rate of approximately 600 a month in battles and targeted bombings earlier this year. Meanwhile, the Pakistani Foreign Minister said on 25 October that approximately 45% of Afghanistan’s territory is currently under the direct control of either the Taleban or IS. In other developments, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met with Afghan President Ghani in a surprise visit to Afghanistan this Monday 23 October. Speaking at a news conference after the meeting, Tillerson reiterated that Pakistan needs to “take action to undermine the support the Taleban receives.” He subsequently travelled to Islamabad, where Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi affirmed Pakistan’s commitment to the war on terror. Nonetheless, tensions in US-Pakistani relations have increased in recent years, with Pakistan also continuing to reject a greater political role for India in Afghanistan. Heightened tensions are to be expected as, following Tillerson’s visit to India on Wednesday, the Indian Foreign Minister announced the country has agreed to hold talks on Afghanistan with Washington and Kabul. On the back of political developments this week, senior American officials stated the CIA is expanding its covert operations in Afghanistan and will be sending small teams to hunt and kill Taleban militants countrywide, illustrating yet another layer of President Trump’s new Afghanistan strategy.
Significant Events 19 – 25 October 2017
Afghanistan Weekly Report

Qush Tepa, 22 Oct 2017:
Taleban attacked IS in Chaqma Chaqar village. Five IS militants and five Taleban were killed in the clash, a further five IS and another five Taleban were injured.

Pashtun, 21 Oct 2017:
Militants attacked a police checkpoint in Mehrabad, killing an officer and injuring another five.

Tarin Kot City, 23 Oct 2017:
A police ranger truck ran over an IED. An officer was killed and another five injured.

Ishkamish, 22 Oct 2017:
A barrel IED exploded inside a restaurant in Qianal Bazar, killing three civilians and injuring another seven.

Kabul City, 21 Oct 2017:
A rocket hit a wall at the Saudi Arabian embassy, while another two rockets landed near the NATO mission’s compound.

Sayed Karam, 23 Oct 2017:
Insurgents attacked a security checkpoint in Mash, killing one officer and injuring another four.
Central

- **Kabul City**: 25 Oct 17, (01) INS named Qari Abdullah Paghmani, is planning to launch BBIED and VBIED attacks, using (02) fielder vehicles carrying explosive materials, targeting ANSF and/or diplomatic facilities in Kabul City.

- **Kabul City**: 25 Oct 17, The Taliban commander named Momtaz have gotten (01) Tank and (02) LTVs from ANSF personnel in combat, plan to fill all vehicles and conduct VBIED attacks in Kabul city or Sorobi district. The vehicles are now kept in Bagh e Babeker Khel areas of the mentioned district.

- **Pul-e Alam City**: 25 Oct 17, the Haqani Network INS, are planning to launch (02) VBIED attacks, using (02) humvee vehicles full of explosive materials, green and yellow in colors, targeting Logar PHQ and/or Charkh and Baraki Barak Districts HQs.

- **Maidan Shahr City**: 25 Oct 17, (01) BBIED, led by Haji Najibullah, riding (01) mazda truck full of explosive material, green and white in color, license plate No# (Kandahar – 18322) is planning to target Wardak PHQ and/or NDS directorate in mentioned City.

East

- **Andar District**: 25 Oct 17, INS provided a Humvee vehicle full of explosives which was taken from ANSF personnel, the vehicle is now parked in Alizai village of the mentioned district plan to conduct attack over Andar PHQ command.

- **Musa Khel District**: 25 Oct 17, (03) Humvee vehicle mounted with PKM placed near to Kaho Khlo areas, and other INS guard the vehicles plan to fire attack over the CPs and fire rounds.

North

- **Chimtal District**: 25 Oct 17, The Taliban team leads named Mullah Faizullah Mansoor and Sheikh Abdul Kareem ordered its INS to lay mines over the way of ANSF personnel and carry out attacks over the security CPs in order to fall the CPs to the hands of Taliban.

- **Khan Abad District**: 25 Oct 17, The Taliban governor named Mullah Muhammad now residing in Qala e Zal district ordered the Taliban to placed in Adam Khan Aks, Aksi Daud and Khwajah Posta areas of the mentioned district in order to carry out attacks over high way security CPs.

West

- **Kashak e Kohna District**: 25 Oct 17, Armed INS under the command of Mullah Abdul Rauf placed in Sayed Shah village, plan to carry out attacks over security CPs and HQ command of the mentioned district.

- **Farah City**: 25 Oct 17, the INS, led by Mawlawi Khadem, have laid several IEDs along Tewsak area roadway. Intend to target the ANSF personnel.

South

- **Shah Wali Kot District**: 25 Oct 17, One of the Taliban commander named Sabetullah provided INS groups dressed with military uniforms and (02) Humvee vehicles full of explosives, placed in the mentioned district areas, plan to carry out attacks over Camps and security CPs of the mentioned districts.

- **Qalat City**: 25 Oct 17, a number of the INS, wearing ANP uniforms, riding (02) humvee vehicles carrying explosive materials, are planning to launch VBIED and aggressive attacks over Zabul PHQ.
Two suicide bombings were reported in the city during the past week. At least 56 people were killed on 20 October when a suicide bomber detonated inside the Shia Imam Zaman Mosque in the Dasht-e Barchi neighbourhood, PD13. The mosque is outside the city centre and given its low profile as a local community place of worship is not assessed as a likely key target. In this respect, it could have been targeted due to easier access and/or assistance by a member of the community. The bombing was claimed by IS. The group has claimed responsibility for the majority of attacks targeting Shia Muslims in recent months. IS issued a warning to Afghan Shias following a suicide bombing and a gun attack on the Iraq Embassy in Kabul in July this year, with several attacks targeting worshipers having been conducted since. In a separate incident on 21 October, a suicide attacker rammed a car full of explosives into a bus leaving the Marshal Fahim Military Academy, killing 15 soldiers. The Taleban claimed responsibility for the bombing. The attack comes amid an increase in insurgent assaults, including suicide bombings, targeting security personnel countrywide in the past two weeks. Also on 21 October, a rocket reportedly impacted a wall of the Saudi Arabian embassy, while another two landed near the NATO mission’s HQ in the Shashdarak area. Witnesses reported alarms could be heard from both the NATO base and several foreign embassies in the area. The attacks are significant as they targeted locations within the Green Zone. Although the aiming of rockets fired by militants are relatively inaccurate, the general radius is sufficient to be effective. The Green Zone has been targeted on several occasion in the past. However, the accuracy of this incident has raised concerns. IDF poses a continuing threat to Kabul, although incidents tend to be sporadic and inconsistent.
Central Afghanistan remained relatively stable over the reporting period. Hostile activity in the region was highest in Wardak province throughout the past week. A number of attacks on police checkpoints were recorded. Also of note, an IED detonated in Maidan Shahar city, on 23 October, targeting an army Humvee. Three soldiers were injured in the explosion. Two civilians were killed and another four injured on 25 October, when two missile rounds launched from Qatar Sang village impacted a local police base and the city centre respectively. Meanwhile, coalition airstrikes in the province resulted in the death of an insurgent and the destruction of a militant base in Shah Gul village, Saidabad district, on 21 October. Another two insurgents were killed and a motorcycle destroyed in an airstrike targeting militant positions in Kosa village, Nerkh district. Although a number of high profile attacks were recorded in Kabul city this week, activity in the wider province remained subdued. Of note, on 20 October, insurgents fired PKA weapons targeting security checkpoints in Tangi Abrishum, Sorobi district. A limited number of violent incidents were also recorded in Parwan province. Of note, two unidentified suspects shot and killed a security official in Khanjar Khel village, Bagram district. Meanwhile, Pnajshayr, Logar, Bamyan, and Kapisa remained stable. Although there were no reported incidents in Pnajshayr and Bamyan, criminality and sporadic SAF continue to pose a credible threat in the provinces. Sporadic violent incidents are also expected to continue to occur in Logar and Kapisa. Notably, on 19 October militants fired heavy weapons on the Tagab District HQ, killing a police officer and injuring another three. A similar attack targeting a police checkpoint was conducted on 20 October in Pul-e Alam city, Logar province; there were no reported casualties.
Clashes between insurgents and security forces increased in Faryab province over the past week. Notably, the Taleban were reported to have overran Ghora village, Pashtun Kot district, abducting eight women and taking them to Kohistan. Additionally, the 209th Shaheen Corps of the Afghan Army stationed in the north of the country claimed the Taleban shadow governor of Ghormach district was killed during infighting in Faryab province. However, no further details surrounding the alleged death were disclosed, with the Taleban also not having commented on the report. Meanwhile, hostile activity increased in Jowzjan province. Afghan army sources claimed at least 50 militants were killed in a clash between the Taleban and IS in Qush Tapa district on 22 October. Fighting reportedly broke out due to a disagreement over the collection of “zakat,” the compulsory giving of a set proportion of one’s wealth to charity under Islamic law. Later, on 24 October, two IS insurgents wearing burqas opened fire on the Taleban in Chaqma Chaqor village, Qush Tapa district. The district governor confirmed the incident, stating at least 15 Taleban were killed. IS was also able to take control of Khan Aqa village which had fallen to the Taleban earlier on Monday 23 October. The Taleban have not commented on the incidents. A limited number of violent incidents were reported elsewhere in the north of the country. Notably, on 19 October, insurgents attacked a police checkpoint in Jar Qalah area of Chimtal district, Balkh province, killing six police officers and injuring another. Also of note, security forces raided the residence of a police sergeant in northeastern Takhar on the evening of 22 October, recovering 23 Kalashnikovs, two rockets, a machine gun, 16 pistols, four rifles, and hundreds of rocket launchers and ammunition. The suspect resisted arrest, wounding another sergeant.
Hostile activity remained heightened in eastern Afghanistan. Following the 17 October Taleban attack on the District HQ and a police checkpoint in Ander district, violent clashes in the district continued. Ground security operations supported by airstrikes between 17 and 21 October reportedly resulted in the death of 148 and the injury of 52 insurgents. Five militants were also captured and several weapons and vehicles seized. Additional security personnel remain deployed to the district. A number of clashes were also reported in the wider Ghazni province. Of note, on 23 October, the Taleban attacked police checkpoints in Khurshid 3 and Khurshid 4, Waghiz district, killing six soldiers and injuring another three. A number of clashes were recorded across Paktiya province, although no further large scale militant attacks were reported following the 17 October Taleban assault on the police training centre attached to the Paktiya Police HQ. Of note, it was reported on 19 October that the emir of the Pakistani Taleban faction known as Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, Omar Khalid Khurasani, was killed in a US drone strike in Paktiya province. Subsequently, on 22 October, the group issued a statement under Khurasani’s name, therefore, explicitly denying the claim. That being said, the statement did not include any visual or audio proof of his health. The US military has not confirmed his death. Khurasani, who is closely linked to Al-Qaeda’s emir Ayman al Zawahiri, has been on the US forces’ most wanted list for over a decade. In other developments, violent incidents remained high in Nangarhar province. Notably, coalition airstrikes on 22 October killed 40 suicide attackers in Achin district. Fighting also continues to be reported between the Taleban and IS. Of note, on 19 October, the two groups clashed in Khugyani district, resulting in the death of at least two Taleban and four IS militiants.
Unrelated to the Kabul mosque attack this week, a suicide bomber targeted the Sunni Khaja Galan mosque in Doleena district, Ghor province, on 20 October. At least 30 people were killed in the bombing that appeared to target the former militia commander and Jamiat-e Islami party leader Abdul Ahed who had sided with the government. Ahed and seven of his bodyguards were killed during the attack. The bombing has not been claimed yet. In other developments, the security environment in Farah province remained volatile during the reporting period, with a number of recorded militant attacks targeting security personnel. Insurgents attacked a police checkpoint in Masjid-e Safid, Farah city, at approximately 2320 hours on 18 October. The battle ended around 0600hrs, with nine police officers killed and another injured. Nine soldiers were also killed and four injured in an attack on a security checkpoint in Pusht Road district on 24 October. At least 17 Taleban were killed after the Afghan Air Force was deployed to repel the attack. Hostile activity increased in Herat province over the past week. An airstrike targeted a gathering of over 300 Taleban in the vicinity of Chest Sharif district on 24 October, inflicting heavy casualties on the militants. Surviving insurgents fled the area. The reason for the Taleban meeting has not been ascertained, although authorities stated the airstrike was carried out based on a tip-off from locals. Earlier on 22 October, at least 50 militants were killed in a clash between supporters of Mullah Hebatullah Akhundzada and dissident Taleban leader Mullah Mohammad Rasool in Shindand district. Similar infighting incidents have been reported in the past. While Herat province is relatively stable, security conditions in some remote districts have deteriorated in recent years, amid a persisting Taleban insurgency.
Following the 19 October attack on a military base in Maiwand district, Kandahar, which resulted in the death of at least 43 soldiers, clashes continued to occur in the district, albeit on a comparatively limited scale. Fighting was also reported in Raghistan and Shorabak districts. Also of note, on 25 October, three police officers were injured and a ranger vehicle destroyed in an IED explosion at Mianshin district. The Taleban are assessed to be in control of at least five districts in the province, with attacks aimed at further territorial gains expected to continue. Helmand’s security environment also remains volatile, amid continuing clashes between Afghan security forces and the Taleban over contested areas. Of note, coalition airstrikes killed three insurgents in Garmsir district on 22 October and another four on 23 October in Nad Ali district. According to the provincial governor, at least nine Taleban leaders were killed during counterterrorism operations in Lashkargah city, Nad Ali and Kajaki districts over the past week. However, the Taleban have not confirmed the claim. Meanwhile, two IED explosions were reported in Tarin Kot city in addition to clashes in Khas Uruzgan and Chora districts, Uruzgan province. Elsewhere in the south, the security environment remained stable for a successive week. Notably, a policeman was killed in an IED explosion in Qalat city, Zabul province, on 19 October. Militants also attacked a checkpoint in Khash Rod district on 19 October, killing five police officers and injuring three. In other developments, in Daikundi province, representatives of Lal-o Sarjangal district’s youth association urged the government to increase the number of security forces, expressing concern over the safety of the population. They also pointed out the lack of healthcare facilities and schools, adding the implementation of development projects in the area must be considered.
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