



Afghanistan: Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 6 August 2009

Treatment of supporters of Hezb-e-Islami

A report by *the UK Home Office* under the heading “Former Hizb-i-Islami members” states;

“The Danish fact-finding mission of March/April 2004 reported the views of various sources on the position for people with connections to Hezb-e-Islami in their report published in November 2004. According to UNHCR, ex-Hezb-e-Islami, including former commanders, do not have any problems with the Government in Afghanistan today if they make it clear that they are no longer working with Hekmatyar. UNHCR was reported as saying that “A number of ex-Hezb-e-Islami members occupy high positions within the government. As an example the source mentioned that Hekmatyar’s former right-hand [man] currently holds a high position in the government. The present situation taken into consideration, the source found that it depends on the history of a former member of the Hezb-e-Islami whether or not he/she risks being persecuted in Afghanistan” (UK Home Office (26th June 2009) - *Country of Origin Information Report – Afghanistan*)

The report also states;

“The source mentioned that one of President Karzai’s advisors was formerly the deputy head of Hezb-e-Islami’s security forces in Peshawar. The source was of the opinion that a former member of the Hezb-e-Islami who has changed side, and who is clearly expressing his support for the government can remain in Afghanistan without being involved in problems. However, it is a pre-condition that one is no longer connected with the party. People who are currently active for the Hezb-e-Islami are considered to be at war with the current government like the Taliban supporters. They will not be able to remain in the country without encountering problems.” (Ibid)

A report from *UNHCR* under the heading ‘11. National commissions’ notes:

“The Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), established by the Bonn Agreement, continue, as elaborated upon below, to be active in building the capacity of Afghan governing institutions. With the purpose of promoting reconciliation with the Taliban and strengthening the overall peace process, President Karzai established in March 2005 the National Peace Commission¹⁰³ and appointed Professor Seghatullah Mujadeddi – the Head of the Upper House of the National Assembly – as its Chair. Due to the work of the Commission, some 3,500 previously armed Taliban joined the peace process and others were released from Guantanamo Bay and Bagram prisons.

Despite the refusal of the Taliban leadership to respond to the calls of the Government of Afghanistan for reconciliation, the Commission continues to function, thus providing an opportunity to commanders of armed factions and low-ranking Taliban and Hizb-e-Islami members to join the peace process.” (UNHCR (December 2007) *UNHCR’s Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Afghan Asylum*)

An *Agence France Presse* report on the surrender of former Taliban says:

“More than 1,200 members of the Taliban or the extremists Hezb-e-Islami faction of wanted warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar have signed up to the amnesty scheme since it started less than a year ago.” (Agence France Presse (26 February 2006) *Sixty former Taliban surrender to Afghan government*)

See also *Washington Post* article which says:

“Yet the militia’s resurgence comes as a new government reconciliation program, open to all but senior Taliban militants linked to terrorism or war crimes, is yielding unprecedented results. Several hundred former Taliban members have recently streamed back into Afghanistan from Pakistan after formally renouncing violence, according to Afghan and U.S. officials.” (Washington Post (14 August 2005) *Former Members of the Taliban Turn Their Backs on Insurgency; Among Hundreds Returning From Exile, Some Running for Office Aizenman, N.C.*)

An *Associated Press* report on the assassination of former Taliban leader Mohammed Khaksar says that:

“Khaksar was one of a number of former Taliban leaders who have swapped sides. The government has encouraged Taliban members to go through a formal reconciliation program and so far, about 300 rank-and-file and some 50 senior officials have done so.” (Associated Press (14 January 2006) *Gunmen Kill Former Taliban Minister Cooney, Daniel*)

In a section titled “The Targets of Reconciliation” (paragraph titled “The Individual Level”) a report from the *United States Institute of Peace* states:

“Reconciliatory efforts in the form of covert negotiations and invitations to join the peace process are currently focused on individual and midlevel commanders, particularly those who do not want to be part of the neo-Taliban movement but who otherwise fear arrest or harassment. Efforts have also been made by U.S. and coalition forces to release certain prisoners so that they can rejoin their families and communities. They are provided with amnesty letters by the chairman of the PTS. In return, community and tribal elders guarantee that these newly released individuals will no longer engage in violence.” (United States Institute of Peace (10 September 2008) *Thwarting Afghanistan’s Insurgency – A Pragmatic Approach toward Peace and Reconciliation* Stanekzai, Mohammad Masoom, P.13)

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre 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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