



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on the calendar used by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

In *Dates and Meanings of Religious and other Multi-Ethnic Festivals 2002-2005* published in 2001, it states:

“The Muslim calendar is based on the lunar year and consists of twelve months alternating 30 and 29 days each...Although the Christian Era may be in official use, people in Muslim countries tend to use the Muslim Era for non-official purposes” (Dr Shrikala Warriar and Dr John G. Walshe (2001) *Dates and Meanings of Religious and other Multi-Ethnic Festivals 2002-2005*,p.17).

The same publication commenting on the Baha'i calendar states:

“The calendar year consists of nineteen months...” (*Ibid*,p.21).

Published in 1999 *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* states:

“The Muslim calendar is lunar, with twelve months...” (John Bowker (1999) *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*,p.187).

A report published in July 2009 by the *UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* states:

“The present report contains the months and years according to the solar calendar used in Afghanistan. The Afghan New Year began on 1 Hamal, which is the equivalent of 21 March in the western calendar. For example, 1 Hamal 1386 is 21 March 2007” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (9 July 2009) *Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights : 2nd to 4th periodic reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant : Afghanistan*,p.8).

In April 2007 the *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit* notes:

“Three calendar systems are used in Afghanistan:

- Hejrah-e Shamsi (solar Islamic) calendar, Afghanistan's official calendar, established in the constitution and in use officially since 1957 (month names differ from the Iranian or Persian forms).
March 21 2007 = 1 Hamal 1386.
- Hejrah-e Qamari (lunar Islamic) calendar, used for religious events and holidays.
- Gregorian calendar = Miladi (solar Christian),

used in international relations” (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (April 2007) *Afghanistan Research Newsletter No. 13*,p.9).

A *BBC News* story from February 2002 states:

“The leader of the Afghan interim government, Hamid Karzai, has issued a decree replacing the lunar calendar with the traditional Afghan solar calendar. The solar calendar was used in Afghanistan until 1999 when it was changed by the Taliban authorities who wanted the country to adopt the system used in Saudi Arabia” (BBC News (5 February 2002) *Afghanistan re-adopts solar calendar*).

No further information on these issues could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (April 2007) *Afghanistan Research Newsletter No. 13*
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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.

Sources Consulted

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