



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 12 January 2011

Are there any reports specifically about Taliban activity and insurgency against government in the District of Marawara or generally throughout the Province of Kunar for 2009, 2010 and so far into 2011?

A report published by the *Afghanistan NGO Safety Office*, in a paragraph headed “Kunar”, states:

“Kunar remains the most volatile province in the region, with fierce fighting ongoing between AOG and IMF/ANSF.” (Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (2 November 2010) *The ANSO Report: Issue 60. 16-31 October 2010*, p.18)

The Introduction to the most recent eligibility guidelines published by the *UN High Commissioner for Refugees* states:

“In light of the worsening security environment in certain parts of the country and the increasing number of civilian casualties UNHCR considers that the situation can be characterized as one of generalized violence in Helmand, Kandahar, Kunar, and parts of Ghazni and Khost provinces. Therefore, Afghan asylum-seekers formerly residing in these areas may be in need of international protection under broader international protection criteria, including complementary forms of protection.” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (17 December 2010) *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Afghanistan*, p.3)

A *Washington Times* article states:

“An Army general has summed up the military challenge in Afghanistan: ‘We can’t kill our way out of this thing.’ Maj. Gen. John Campbell commands Regional Command East (R.C. East) along the border with Pakistan, an insurgent heartland and one of the hottest areas in Afghanistan. As the general said at a Wednesday press conference, the environment in R.C. East is, using the contemporary vernacular, ‘very, very kinetic. If you go up into Kunar [province], up into the Pech River Valley, they’re fighting every single day up there ... very, very kinetic to this day.’” (Washington Times (14 October 2010) *Advantage: Taliban*)

See also article published on the *POLITICO.com* website which states:

“Campbell runs Regional Command-East, an ‘area of responsibility’ that includes several forward operating bases in Kunar Province near the Pakistan border. Since summer, he says, coalition forces have captured or killed some 3,500 insurgents in Kunar province. But they’ve also dropped 850 bombs in the process — leaving locals as frustrated with the coalition as they are with the Taliban.” (POLITICO.com (11 December 2010) *An inescapable conclusion*)

Numerous reports of Taliban activity in Kunar Province were found among sources consulted by the Refugee Documentation Centre. A sample selection of typical reports is listed below.

An *Agence France Presse* report states:

"NATO warplanes pounded a Taliban stronghold in eastern Afghanistan on Monday, killing more than 20 insurgents and destroying a bunker complex, military officials said. Noor Akbar, a regional Taliban commander, was among those killed in the raid in the province of Kunar, a mountainous region and Taliban flashpoint area near the Pakistan border, Afghan army general Mohammad Qasim Bitanai told AFP. 'More than 20 Taliban fighters, including their commander Noor Akbar, were killed in the raid,' he said." (Agence France Presse (7 December 2009) *Afghan, NATO strike destroys Taliban bastion: officials*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report states:

"A popular Muslim cleric who had called for peace in Afghanistan has been assassinated. Police in Kunar Province say cleric Rahman Gul was killed on May 16 along with his brother and a relative. Police say the three were shot dead as they returned to their homes in Chapa Dara district." (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (17 May 2010) *Pro-Peace Cleric Assassinated In Afghanistan*)

An *Agence France Presse* report states:

"A force of about 700 US and Afghan troops has killed up to 150 Taliban insurgents in a major offensive along eastern Afghanistan's border with Pakistan, the Washington Post reported Tuesday. The US-led operation, which began Sunday, was one of the largest yet in the region around Kunar province, said the newspaper, which cited US officials as calling it 'one of the most intense battles of the past year' in Afghanistan. In a statement Sunday, NATO's International Security Assistance Force said more than 600 ISAF and Afghan troops were pursuing Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants in Kunar and that 'a number of insurgents' had been killed." (Agence France Presse (29 June 2010) *Up to 150 Taliban killed in eastern Afghan offensive: report*)

See also *Agence France Presse* report which states:

"A roadside bomb tore through a military convoy in eastern Afghanistan Sunday, killing four Afghan soldiers, an official said. The soldiers were on patrol in Kunar province when their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb, a weapon widely used by the Taliban insurgents, provincial governor Fazilullah Wahedi told AFP." (Agence France Presse (20 June 2010) *Four Afghan army soldiers killed in blast*)

A *Guardian (UK)* article states:

"Elsewhere in the east, US and Afghan forces battled hundreds of militants from an al-Qaida-linked group for a third day yesterday in Kunar province, the US military said. Two American soldiers were killed on Sunday in the first day of the operation. The attack in Kunar was directed against insurgents thought to be responsible for a roadside bombing that killed five American personnel in the area on 7 June, a US statement said." (The Guardian (UK) (30 June 2010) *Eight Taliban fighters killed in failed raid on Nato base*)

A NATO report states:

“One Afghan child was killed and one child wounded when insurgents attacked a coalition outpost in the Watahpur district of Kunar province yesterday.” (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (9 August 2010) *Afghanistan: Insurgents Kill, Wound Children in Kunar*)

A Reuters report states:

“Taliban fighters attacked a foreign military base at the main airport in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, one of four incidents in 24 hours that marked a sudden upswing in violence. Militants mounted attacks in Jalalabad and Kunar in the east and in Kunduz in the north, after an attack in the capital Kabul on Friday, apparently demonstrating their continuing strength despite NATO-led forces stating that they have made gains.” (Reuters (13 November 2010) *Taliban mount series of attacks in Afghanistan*)

A Los Angeles Times article states:

“Eastern Afghanistan is one of the places where insurgents remain potent. Briefing Gates at an outpost in Kunar province, Lt. Col. J.B. Vowell, commander of the U.S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, said there had been a 'surge in fighting' since his battalion arrived in March and that during the summer attacks ran well above 2009 levels. Vowell attributed the increase in violence in the remote and rugged province in part to the presence of additional U.S. troops, which he said allowed the Taliban to recruit fighters in a place known for its isolation and hostility to outsiders, including the Afghan government in Kabul.” (Los Angeles Times (8 December 2010) *Gates gets sobering war update on Afghan visit*)

An Associated Press report states:

“U.S. forces clashed with insurgents in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday, fending off a Taliban assault for the second time in as many days. U.S. soldiers came under small arms fire early Wednesday morning as they set up a combat outpost in Kunar province, near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. An Associated Press photographer at the base said the insurgents fired from a hillside and the U.S. troops returned fire with rifles and artillery. The roughly 30-minute battle was the second time the same unit has come under fire in under 24 hours. Late Tuesday, they repelled a Taliban ambush and offensive using artillery and mortars in a fight that raged for nearly an hour. The outpost is said to come under attack by the Taliban as much as five times a week, at times twice daily.” (Associated Press (29 December 2010) *US troops clash with Taliban in east Afghanistan*)

A Los Angeles Times article states:

“At almost the same time, a remote-controlled bomb killed the deputy intelligence chief and his driver in the eastern province of Kunar.” (Los Angeles Times (13 January 2011) *Deadly day in Afghanistan includes bombing in Kabul*)

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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