



OES/OFS IN BRIEF

This quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Enduring Sentinel (OES) and Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) summarizes the events that took place in Afghanistan this quarter, including the U.S. "over-the-horizon" counterterrorism activities under OES and efforts to wind down the 5-year OFS mission.

U.S. Airstrike Kills al-Qaeda Leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul

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- Zawahiri was **Osama bin Laden's deputy** during the 9/11 attacks and had served as the **worldwide head of al-Qaeda** since bin Laden's death in 2011.
- The terrorist leader's presence in downtown Kabul raised questions about the **Taliban's commitment to counterterrorism**.
- The **Taliban condemned the attack** as a violation of Afghan sovereignty and refused to confirm Zawahiri's presence.
- The **DoD has not conducted any strikes** in Afghanistan since August 2021.

ISIS-K Continues to Target Religious Minorities, the Taliban, and Foreign Interests

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- ISIS-K claimed at least **41 attacks** in **8 provinces** this quarter, including suicide bombings, ambushes, and assassinations.
- On September 30, a suicide bomber **killed dozens** of people—mostly **female students**—at a school in a Hazara neighborhood of Kabul.
- An ISIS-K suicide bomber attacked the **Russian embassy** in Kabul, killing two Russian embassy staff and at least six other people.

Oversight and Investigations

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- DHS OIG found that the DHS Unified Coordination Group struggled to **track Afghan evacuees** departing U.S. military bases.
- DoD OIG completed its classified evaluation of the **August 29, 2021, airstrike** in Kabul that killed 10 civilians.
- DoD OIG issued a special report on the **relocation of Afghan nationals**, identifying 8 lessons learned for future interagency coordination.
- State OIG released the first of 5 reports on the **Afghan SIV program**, responding to congressional questions about the SIV process.

U.S. Engages With the Taliban Without Recognizing it as the Afghan Government

pp. 18–20

- **No sovereign state** recognized the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan.
- Senior U.S. and Taliban officials discussed the **economic** and **humanitarian** situation in Afghanistan as well as **women's rights**.
- The U.S. established the **Afghan Fund** to administer **\$3.5 billion** in frozen Afghan assets for the benefit of the Afghan people.
- U.S.-Taliban negotiations resulted in the **release of Mark Frerichs**, a U.S. citizen held hostage since January 2020, in exchange for an imprisoned Taliban warlord and drug trafficker.

24M of Afghanistan's 39M People Require Food Assistance Due to Multiple Crises

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- The cost of a **food basket** in Afghanistan was **22% higher** than it was during the same time last year.
- Despite increased need, the UN World Food Programme scaled down operations in Afghanistan due to a **\$1.1 billion funding shortfall**.
- Humanitarian workers faced an increased number of **access impediments**, including threats, theft, arrests, and death.

DHS Continues to Process Afghan Evacuees Under Operation Allies Welcome

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- **88,500** Afghan nationals had been **resettled** in the U.S. since August 2021.
- Afghan evacuees are generally paroled into the U.S. under OAW for **2 years**, after which they may apply for different forms of immigration status.
- The DHS Office of Biometric Identity Management disseminates information from multiple government **databases** to **vet applicants**.