



OES IN BRIEF

This quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Enduring Sentinel (OES) summarizes the situation in Afghanistan this quarter, including the status of terrorist organizations, such as ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) and al-Qaeda, as well as U.S. diplomatic, humanitarian efforts, and oversight reporting related to Afghanistan.

Al-Qaeda is at an Historical Low Point in Afghanistan and Pakistan

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- Al-Qaeda has lost target access, group cohesion, and rank-and-file commitment from which it is **unlikely to recover**.
- Al-Qaeda leaders continued to maintain a **low profile** in compliance with **Taliban directives**.
- Taliban restrictions on terrorist violence have likely **hindered** al-Qaeda's **recruitment** and **retention**.
- Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, a regional affiliate, had approximately **200 members**, while **fewer than a dozen** core leaders remained.

Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Posed the Gravest Threat to Stability in the Region

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- The TTP generally **avoided civilian casualties** and **increased its attacks** on the Pakistani government and security forces, which it says is its only targets.
- TTP's ability to direct operations against Pakistan from **bases in Afghanistan** was a major source of **tension** between the two countries.
- In July, the Taliban said that its commitments under the **Doha agreement do not apply** to Pakistan.

The Taliban Focused its Counterterrorism Activity Against ISIS-K

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- The Taliban's offensives have **degraded** ISIS-K's **capability** and eliminated **key leaders**.
- ISIS-K claimed **3 attacks** in July and August, a **significant decrease** from 33 attacks over the same period in 2022.
- In July, the Taliban **prevented** ISIS-K from conducting **attacks** during a **Shia observance** during which ISIS-K killed more than 100 in 2022.
- The DIA said the Taliban is **moderately able** to prevent terrorist attacks against Afghan civilians.

Senior U.S. and Taliban Representatives Met in Doha, Qatar

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- U.S. delegates called on the Taliban to fulfill its **counterterrorism** commitments, release **detailed U.S. citizens**, and respect **human rights**.
- The talks included discussions of **women's rights**, particularly education and access to employment.
- The Taliban requested—and U.S. officials denied—an easing of **sanctions** on Taliban leadership.
- The two sides identified the **economy** and **counternarcotics** as potential areas for **confidence building**.

Afghans Continued to Struggle from Unmet Humanitarian Needs

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- The UN identified **funding gaps** in international assistance for **2.1M children**.
- These vulnerabilities were compounded by **economic decline**, the Taliban's **restriction on women** working with NGOs, and **natural disasters**.
- Heavy rains intensified in July, causing flash **flooding** and **landslides** that **killed** at least **61** people and destroyed or damaged 672 houses.

Oversight and Investigations

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The Lead IG and partner agencies published **6 reports** related to OES during the quarter, including reports on:

- State's **evacuation of the U.S. Embassy** in Kabul in 2021;
- State's **termination of contracts** following the fall of the Afghan government;
- Cooperative agreements supporting State's **refugee resettlement** support centers; and
- DHS's **adjudication of asylum applications** from paroled Afghan evacuees.