

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS



OPERATION ENDURING SENTINEL

AND OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO

AFGHANISTAN



OCTOBER 1, 2024–DECEMBER 31, 2024



On the cover: World Food Programme (WFP) vocational training programs teach Afghan women marketable skills to support their families. In 2024, more than 13,500 women received vocational training from the the WFP. (WFP photo)



We are pleased to present this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) report to Congress on Operation Enduring Sentinel (OES). This report discharges our quarterly reporting responsibilities as amended under 5 U.S.C. 419.

In October 2021, the Department of Defense (DoD) initiated OES as the U.S. mission to conduct over-the-horizon counterterrorism operations against threats emanating from Afghanistan. The DoD also engages in security cooperation activities with Central Asian and South Asian regional partners to build their border security and counterterrorism capacity.

This quarterly report describes the activities of the U.S. Government in support of OES, as well as the work of the DoD, the Department of State (State), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to further the U.S. Government's policy goals in Afghanistan.

This report covers the period October 1-December 31, 2024. In January 2025, the President issued an Executive Order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid. In response, the Secretary of State subsequently paused most U.S. foreign assistance funded by or through State and USAID for review.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven A. Stebbins".

Steven A. Stebbins
Acting Lead Inspector General
for OES
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra J. Lewis".

Sandra J. Lewis
Acting Associate Inspector General
for OES
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of State

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc A. Meyer".

Marc A. Meyer
Acting Deputy Inspector General
Performing the Duties of
the Inspector General
U.S. Agency for International
Development





World Food Programme (WFP) vocational training programs teach Afghan women marketable skills to support their families. In 2024, more than 13,500 women received vocational training from the WFP. (WFP photo)

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A group of women begins the labor-intensive process of saffron cultivation by handpicking flowers in Herat, Afghanistan. (WFP photo)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed Khalil Rahman Haqqani.¹ Haqqani was the Taliban's acting Minister for Refugees and a U.S.-designated global terrorist.² The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) said that Haqqani was the most senior Taliban official killed by ISIS-K in Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power.³

In December, Pakistan launched airstrikes into Afghanistan. The strikes targeted a Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) camp, a group that has targeted Pakistani security forces.⁴ Taliban forces retaliated, though tensions later cooled and Pakistan continued to engage the Taliban peacefully on security and other issues.⁵

Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhundzada announced a decree to bring military equipment under his control. Media reported that the action was enacted to cut back on smuggling and misuse of weapons but was also seen as a strategic move by the Taliban leader to limit ministry heads' control over military resources.⁶

State continued to relocate eligible Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants to third countries for continued visa processing. State reported that between September 1, 2021, and December 30, 2024, it issued more than 71,000 SIVs.⁷

The U.S. Government remained the largest humanitarian donor to Afghanistan. In 2025, 22.9 million people, nearly half of Afghanistan's population, will require humanitarian assistance.⁸ The U.S. Government has provided more than \$2 billion in humanitarian assistance to support the people of Afghanistan since the fall of Kabul in 2021, including \$234 million in FY 2025.⁹ However, the Taliban's restrictions continued to hinder the provision of humanitarian aid.¹⁰

State's implementing partners made payments to the Taliban. One State office reported that between September 2021 and December 2024 its implementing partners paid \$1.8 million to the Taliban for a variety of expenses, including taxes on local staff salary and vehicle registration fees. State requires implementing partners to report the payments.¹¹ The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control authorizes these transaction through general licenses.¹²

Enforcement of the Taliban's "morality" laws intensified, directly impacting women's access to public spaces, employment, and education.¹³ A new ban in December on women studying in health fields will likely impact the country's health system.¹⁴ U.S. partners adopted various ways to continue operations, including use of mahrams (male family members as escorts), separate workspaces, and virtual work.¹⁵



An Afghan woman trains to weave carpets through a WFP vocational training program. (WFP photo)

MISSION UPDATE

This section, “Mission Update,” describes U.S. activities under the OES mission and related activity that affects the OES mission. The following section, “U.S. Policy Objectives in Afghanistan,” describes diplomatic, political, humanitarian assistance, and development activities in Afghanistan that are integral to the OES mission.

The mission of Operation Enduring Sentinel (OES) is to contain terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan and to protect the homeland by maintaining pressure on those threats. The DoD also engages in security cooperation activities with Central Asian and South Asian regional partners to foster counterterrorism partnerships.¹⁶

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET MADE A DECISION TO RECOGNIZE A GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

The U.S. Government has not made a decision whether to recognize the Taliban or any other entity as the government of Afghanistan. Accordingly, any references in this report to so-called “Taliban governance,” the “Taliban’s ministries” and “officials,” a “former” Afghan government, and similar phrases are not meant to convey any U.S. Government view or decision on recognition of the Taliban or any other entity as the government of Afghanistan.

The overall U.S. Central Command cost for ISR activities this quarter was \$61.3 million, compared to \$111.9 million during the previous quarter.

SECURITY

State said the most critical U.S. Government interest in Afghanistan is to ensure that it can never again be a launching pad for terrorist attacks against the United States.¹⁷ During the quarter, State continued to call publicly and privately on the Taliban to fulfill its counterterrorism commitments under the 2020 Doha Agreement.¹⁸

The United States coordinates counterterrorism efforts across multiple agencies and cooperates with partners and allies to prevent the re-emergence of external threats from Afghanistan and counteract terrorist recruitment efforts.¹⁹

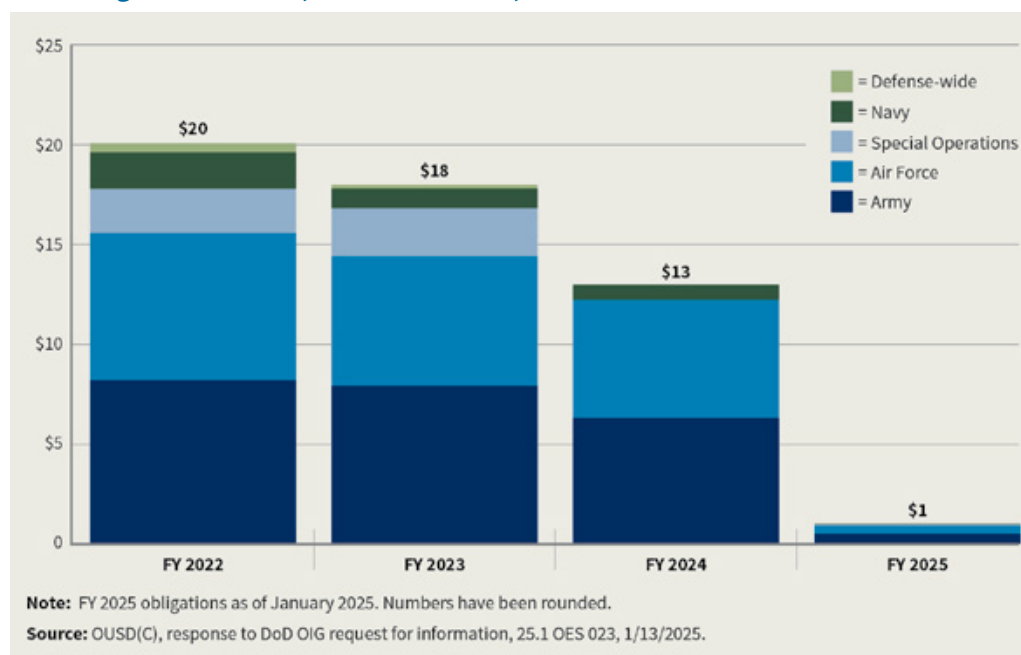
The DoD provided limited publicly releasable information about U.S. military activity related to OES during the quarter. Further information is available in the classified appendix to this report.

Other elements of U.S. efforts to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria–Khorasan (ISIS-K) include law enforcement, providing border security assistance, and supporting reintegration initiatives in Central and South Asia.²⁰

DoD funding for OES has declined since the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan in 2021. (See Figure 1.) The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) stated that operational costs for ISR flights are captured by region and not by overflight of a specific country.²¹ The overall U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) cost for ISR activities this quarter was \$61.3 million, compared to \$111.9 million during the previous quarter.²²

Figure 1.

DoD Obligations for OES, FY 2022–FY 2025, in \$ Billions



ISIS-K ACTIVITY

ISIS-K Remains a Threat to Region, U.S. Interests

State said that ISIS-K remained a threat to U.S. interests.²³ According to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), ISIS-K maintained the intent and capability to conduct attacks outside its traditional area of operations in South Asia.²⁴ The DIA also stated that ISIS-K probably was committed to enabling attacks in the U.S. homeland.²⁵

The Department of the Treasury (Treasury) reported that ISIS's al-Siddiq Office (ASO), the regional directorate that includes ISIS-K, has received funding from ISIS's global leadership (ISIS Core) to conduct external operations and was responsible for the 2024 attacks in Moscow and Iran. ISIS-K increasingly relies on international donations and ISIS Core funding provided via virtual assets.²⁶

ISIS-K attacks in Afghanistan included a November 23 gun attack that left 10 people dead at a Sufi shrine in northern Baghlan province, according to the DIA and media reporting.²⁷ Taliban authorities have repeatedly said they have defeated ISIS-K, but the group regularly claims responsibility for attacks, notably against Sufi or Shiite minorities, targets they consider heretical, according to media reports.²⁸

ISIS-K also expanded its attacks in Pakistan. In October and November, ISIS-K conducted four attacks in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province against Pakistani government and political targets, killing three and wounding six.²⁹ ISIS-K claimed responsibility for a November 15 gun attack in Pakistan, in which gunmen on a motorcycle killed Jamaat-e-Islami Bajaur party leader Sufi Hameed after he left a mosque.³⁰

Khalil al-Rahman Haqqani Assassination Demonstrates Increased ISIS-K Capabilities

On December 11, ISIS-K carried out a suicide bombing in Kabul that killed several Taliban officials, including Khalil al-Rahman Haqqani, the acting Minister for Refugees, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.³¹ ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the attack.³²

State's Rewards for Justice website listed Haqqani as a global terrorist and offered a \$5 million bounty for information leading to his apprehension. Haqqani was considered a key member of the Haqqani Network, conducted operations for the Taliban, and has been linked to al-Qaeda.³³ Haqqani was the brother of Jalaluddin Haqqani, the late founder of the Haqqani Network, and uncle of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the group's commander who is currently serving as the Taliban's interior minister.³⁴

Media reports called the Haqqani killing a "significant blow" to the Taliban, and stated that the attack raises concern about ISIS-K's expansion in the region.³⁵ Haqqani was the most senior Taliban official killed by ISIS-K in Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power, the DIA stated.³⁶ According to one regional analyst, Haqqani's death could escalate tensions between the Haqqani Network and Kandahari factions in Afghanistan, thus opening opportunities for terror groups operating from inside Afghanistan to strengthen their position in the country.³⁷

ISIS-K attacks in Afghanistan included a November 23 gun attack that left 10 people dead at a Sufi shrine in northern Baghlan province, according to the DIA and media reporting.

The DIA and State reported that there were no indications that al-Qaeda is rebuilding an attack capability or reconstituted an operational presence in Afghanistan.

AL-QAEDA ACTIVITY

Al-Qaeda Maintains a Low Profile in Afghanistan

The DIA and State reported that there were no indications that al-Qaeda is rebuilding an attack capability or reconstituted an operational presence in Afghanistan.³⁸ The DIA stated that it lacks sufficient evidence to determine the extent to which al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda in the subcontinent (AQIS) is capable of attacking the U.S. homeland or U.S. interests in the region in the next 12 months.³⁹ State said that neither the few remaining al-Qaeda core members nor its regional affiliate AQIS were plotting to attack the United States or its interests abroad during the quarter.⁴⁰

Force size: The DIA did not note any significant changes in the number of al-Qaeda and AQIS fighters in Afghanistan during the quarter.⁴¹ (See Table 1.)

Leadership and organization: The DIA stated that it did not observe any indicators of al-Qaeda senior leaders providing new guidance, funding, or propaganda support to AQIS or other al-Qaeda global affiliates during the quarter. Additionally, the DIA did not observe the Taliban regime exerting command and control over AQIS and other global affiliates.⁴²

Relationship with the Taliban: The DIA reported that there has been no change to its previous assessments that al-Qaeda leaders have probably decided to comply with the Taliban’s 2020 pronouncement that Afghanistan would not serve as a base for transnational attacks.⁴³ USCENTCOM assessed that al-Qaeda leaders are posturing for a long-term fight and are overtly claiming to support the Taliban’s restrictions. However, al-Qaeda leaders are covertly—and with awareness or assistance from some Taliban officials—recruiting, training and supporting AQIS and TTP attacks in Pakistan. USCENTCOM assesses that AQIS seeks to expand its operational footprint across the Indian Subcontinent, and is quietly posturing itself in neighboring countries to spread its interpretation of Islam across South Asia.⁴⁴

Table 1.
Estimated Number of VEO Fighters in Afghanistan and Region

Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	4,000-6,000
ISIS-K	2,000
Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)	200
Al-Qaeda	Fewer than a dozen core members

Sources: DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 25.1 OES 030, 1/3/2025; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 25.1 OES 032, 1/3/2025; 24.4 OES 030, 10/9/2024.

Law Enforcement and the Homeland

The Department of Justice (DoJ) reported that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) worked with interagency partners to vet Afghans intending to travel to the United States.⁴⁵ The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) supported the FBI by working to deny and revoke immigration benefits and ultimately remove those aliens who are radicalized or later determined to be inadmissible on terrorism grounds.⁴⁶

The DHS reported that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered 166 Afghan “inadmissible non-citizens” at the U.S. southwest border ports of entry during the quarter, as of December 10, 2024.⁴⁷ The DHS reported that the CBP encountered 1,893 inadmissible Afghans in FY 2024, compared to 342 in FY 2023 and 68 in FY 2022.⁴⁸

The DHS stated that all individuals encountered at a port of entry or apprehended in between a port of entry are vetted against the U.S. Government’s Terrorist Screening Dataset (a terrorist watchlist), which holds identity information that represents a spectrum of derogatory information.⁴⁹

TALIBAN ACTIVITY

Haqqani Attack Likely to Spur More Taliban Raids Against ISIS-K

The Taliban conducted multiple raids against ISIS-K this quarter, the DIA stated. The Taliban probably will prioritize disrupting ISIS-K cells in Afghanistan following the successful attack on Khalil al-Rahman Haqqani, the DIA stated.⁵⁰

The DIA, citing press reporting, said that the Taliban likely was focused on improving its counterterrorism capabilities by implementing mobile security units and carrying out search operations in different provinces around Afghanistan.⁵¹ The purpose of the mobile units is to quickly respond to counterterrorism and criminal threats posed to the Taliban and the general population. Taliban operations killed multiple ISIS fighters throughout Afghanistan.⁵²

In late October, the Taliban Ministry of Interior declared that all previous licenses for weapons were invalid, according to the DIA, citing a press report.⁵³ The revocation of licenses for weapons likely is an attempt to restrict terrorist and militant groups’ ability to conduct internal and external attacks, the DIA stated, judging from press reporting.⁵⁴

The DIA stated it had no information on whether the Taliban used U.S.-origin equipment during the quarter. Additionally, the DIA stated it had not seen the Taliban use any aircraft in counterterrorism strikes.⁵⁵

Low-level Taliban members continued to conduct reprisals against former Afghan government and security personnel. During the quarter, at least five members of the former Afghan government were arrested, tortured, or killed by either Taliban or suspected Taliban members, according to the DIA, citing public reporting. Similar to previous quarters, the DIA reported that Taliban leadership is almost certainly not directing attacks against former Afghan government and military personnel.⁵⁶

In November, Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhundzada prohibited the use or distribution of military equipment seized in the Taliban's 2021 takeover and registered under the Defense and Interior ministries and the Intelligence Directorate without his explicit permission, media reported.

In October 2023, the Pakistan government announced that “undocumented” Afghan refugees should leave the country or face deportation, an international NGO reported. Since then, 783,918 people have returned to Afghanistan.⁵⁷ The DIA stated that the influx of Afghan returnees from Pakistan is unlikely to affect the Taliban’s military and security dominance for at least the next 12 months.⁵⁸

Taliban Leader Announces Controls for Military Equipment

In November, Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhundzada prohibited the use or distribution of military equipment seized in the Taliban’s 2021 takeover and registered under the Defense and Interior ministries and the Intelligence Directorate without his explicit permission, media reported.⁵⁹ The action was reportedly enacted to cut back on smuggling and misuse of weapons but also seen as a strategic move by Taliban leader to limit ministry heads’ control over military resources.⁶⁰

State said that Akhundzada and those in his inner circle prioritize regime stability and cementing the Taliban’s control over the country.⁶¹ The order was seen as a means to further consolidate Akhundzada’s power, according to media reports. The order also signaled possible distrust of senior Taliban officials in Kabul. Some Taliban leaders have openly defied some of Akhundzada’s directives.⁶²

REGIONAL STABILITY

The DIA reported that the countries neighboring Afghanistan continued to state their persistent concerns about terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan.⁶³

Central Asian States: As of mid-December, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan sought to cooperate with Russia through the Collective Security Treaty Organization to address the threat of VEOs operating from Afghanistan, according to the DIA, citing a press report. The Collective Security Treaty Organization identified Afghanistan as the main source of terrorist threats to Central Asia. On November 29, the three Central Asian States, as well as Russia, adopted measures to strengthen stability and security along Tajikistan’s border with Afghanistan to counter VEO activities.⁶⁴

India: India continued to engage in regional and international efforts to maintain stability in Afghanistan, especially through humanitarian aid, according to the DIA, citing press reporting. In early November, an Indian joint secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs met with the Taliban’s foreign and defense ministers. Also in early November, the Taliban publicly stated that it had appointed an acting consul to the Afghanistan mission in Mumbai, which India has not denied.⁶⁵

Iran: Iran remained intent on stopping terrorist groups, particularly ISIS-K, and Afghan migrants from entering Iran and worsening internal instability, according to the DIA, citing press reporting. Iran departs at least hundreds of Afghan migrants monthly back to Afghanistan. As of December, Iran had completed a roughly 22-mile border wall section and continues to conduct counterterrorism operations along the Afghanistan border.⁶⁶

Pakistan: In early October, two border clashes occurred between the Taliban and Pakistani security forces on their joint border, according to the DIA, citing press reports.⁶⁷ These border skirmishes, paired with a spike in Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) cross-border attacks from Afghanistan into Pakistan, have almost certainly strained relations between Islamabad and the Taliban, the DIA reported.⁶⁸ In late October, the TTP claimed responsibility for a high-profile attack on a northwestern Pakistan security outpost that killed 10 border police, according to press reporting. Pakistan and the Taliban held diplomatic talks on November 28 for the first time in several months, according to the DIA, citing a press report.⁶⁹ According to the Pakistan Foreign Office, these meetings focused on combatting terrorism, the DIA reported.⁷⁰ Tensions flared again in December, when Pakistan conducted airstrikes against a TTP training camp in Afghanistan, and the Taliban retaliated.⁷¹ (See page 10.)

People's Republic of China (PRC): The PRC is probably helping to promote stability in Afghanistan through trade and closer relations, the DIA reported.⁷² During the quarter, the PRC agreed to lift tariffs on Afghan exports to China, inaugurated a new freight line between Afghanistan and China, and donated humanitarian aid to the UN Relief Agency to distribute to Afghans in conflict-affected areas. However, PRC leaders have said that PRC diplomatic recognition of the Taliban-led government in Kabul is dependent on regional consensus and counterterrorism cooperation, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.⁷³ In response to a rise in terrorist attacks against its nationals in Pakistan, the PRC took action to enhance safety measures and counterterrorism efforts.⁷⁴ Pakistan and the PRC also announced in November their first combined counterterrorism military exercise in 5 years, media reported.⁷⁵

Russia: Russian officials expressed their intent to increase cooperation with the Taliban during the quarter on security, counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and counter-weapons trafficking. In mid-December, the Russian Duma approved a bill that would pave the way for removal of the Taliban from Russia's terrorist list and facilitate increased cooperation, according to a press report. In early December, a Kremlin spokesperson said Russia is in contact with the Taliban government and is willing to expand relations with Afghanistan, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.⁷⁶

TTP Intensifies Violence in Pakistan

The TTP seeks to expel Pakistan's military from the former Federal Administered Tribal Areas and replace the Pakistani government with an Islamic state, according to the DIA.⁷⁷ Pakistani officials reported increased attacks at the beginning of the quarter, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.⁷⁸ State designated the TTP as a foreign terrorist organization in 2010.⁷⁹

In one attack, the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, a breakaway faction of the TTP, conducted a suicide bombing on November 20 at security post in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, killing 12 members of the security forces and wounding others.⁸⁰

The DIA stated that the TTP only targets Pakistani security forces and does not intend to launch attacks against U.S. or Western interests.⁸¹ U.S. or Western unilateral counterterrorism operations or direct involvement in Pakistani counterterrorism operations against the group may drive the TTP to reverse its stance on targeting Western interests, the DIA reported.⁸²

Pakistani military aircraft conducted airstrikes in Afghanistan's eastern Paktika province on December 24, targeting a TTP training camp in an area near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, according to press reports.

State listed the BLA as Specially Designated Global Terrorists in 2019, and the group has up to 1,000 armed militants, according to the U.S. Government.

The United States provides extensive assistance programs to strengthen Pakistani civilian institutions' ability to counter terrorism.⁸³ Although the TTP claims not to directly target U.S. interests in Pakistan, there is potential for collateral damage to U.S. persons or facilities, according to State.⁸⁴

Pakistan Launches Airstrikes into Afghanistan while Seeking Greater Engagement with the Taliban

Pakistani military aircraft conducted airstrikes in Afghanistan's eastern Paktika province on December 24, targeting a TTP training camp in an area near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, according to press reports.⁸⁵ The Pakistani airstrikes led to Taliban retaliation, and later, clashes between Pakistani security forces and militants, and border skirmishes between Afghan and Pakistani forces, media reported.⁸⁶ Pakistani security officials said that the strikes involved jets and unmanned aircraft and that they killed at least 20 TTP militants.⁸⁷ The Taliban claimed that there were civilian casualties.⁸⁸

On December 28, the Taliban Defense Ministry announced that its forces targeted "several points" in Pakistan.⁸⁹ State reported that despite the border skirmish, the two sides reached a ceasefire by December 29, with Pakistan publicly expressing the desire for a diplomatic resolution.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, Pakistan continued political engagement with the Taliban, with a focus on security issues, State said.⁹¹ Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Asif said that Pakistan was working with countries that maintain ties with both Pakistan and Afghanistan to facilitate the normalization of relations.⁹² Pakistan's Defense Minister also said that the Taliban requested \$35.93 million to "relocate" TTP fighters away from border areas to other parts of Afghanistan, media reported.⁹³

State said that the United States continued to engage with Pakistan on issues related to Pakistan-Afghanistan relations that remain mutual concerns, such as countering regional security threats and ensuring the relocation of Afghan allies.⁹⁴

BLA Continued Attacks in Pakistan

During the quarter, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) continued to launch deadly attacks in Pakistan. The BLA's primary objectives are to achieve greater Baloch autonomy in Pakistan's Balochistan province through targeting Pakistan security forces, elections, and PRC interests, according to the DIA, citing a press report.⁹⁵

In October, the BLA attacked a convoy of PRC nationals outside Pakistan's largest airport in Karachi.⁹⁶ In November, the BLA targeted Pakistani troops in a suicide bombing at a train station Quetta.⁹⁷

State listed the BLA as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2019, and the group has up to 1,000 armed militants, according to State and the Congressional Research Service.⁹⁸

Balochistan is Pakistan's largest province but its least populated, made up largely of high mountains along the country's border with Afghanistan and Iran.⁹⁹ Its population is comprised largely of the ethnic Baloch minority, whose members say they face discrimination and exploitation by the central government, fueling the separatist insurgency.¹⁰⁰ Balochistan is also home to the PRC-built and operated Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea, part of the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.¹⁰¹

The violence comes in the wake of worsening relations between Pakistan and the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan. According to media reporting, the BLA is linked to the TTP and leaders from both VEOs have received support and safe haven from the Afghan Taliban.¹⁰²

VEO Use of U.S.-Origin Equipment Likely Limited

Regional militant groups probably are using limited quantities of U.S.-origin weapons and equipment from stockpiles that were transferred to the former Afghan government, including small arms and night vision devices, according to the DIA.¹⁰³ Pakistani officials have claimed that militants have used U.S.-origin weapons obtained since the Taliban assumed power in Afghanistan, according to the DIA, citing a press report. However, reports of U.S.-origin equipment reaching regional militants are typically vague, difficult to corroborate, and probably exaggerated, the DIA stated. The DIA stated that it does not have information demonstrating Russian attempts to acquire U.S. weapons or equipment during the quarter.¹⁰⁴

In late October, Pakistani officials indicated that they conducted a raid where they captured an unspecified number of AK-47s, AMd-65s, M4 rifles, ammunition, and explosives, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.¹⁰⁵

DIPLOMACY

United States Continued to Engage Directly with Taliban

The United States continued to engage directly with the Taliban to advance U.S. national interests, State said.¹⁰⁶ During the quarter, State engaged with the Taliban bilaterally and through UN-convened working groups under the Doha Process. As part of an agreement made in July 2023, U.S. and Taliban senior representatives and technical professionals continue ongoing dialogue in support of the Afghan people.¹⁰⁷ State said that direct engagement with the Taliban allows it to hold the Taliban accountable in fulfilling its counterterrorism commitments, and to continually seek the unconditional release of U.S. citizens currently held in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁸

State also engaged with a broad range of Afghans, including the Taliban—when it was in the U.S. interest—to convey critical messages from Washington, including on freedom of movement, human rights, inclusive governance, humanitarian assistance delivery, and counterterrorism commitments.¹⁰⁹ However, State said that as the divide between State and the Taliban on political and human rights matters widened, it was becoming “difficult to justify” continued engagement, even on technical matters.¹¹⁰ State said that any engagement must be linked with a broader dialogue on human rights and a political roadmap, as envisioned by the UN Security Council.¹¹¹

State said that direct engagement with the Taliban allows it to hold the Taliban accountable in fulfilling its counterterrorism commitments, and to continually seek the unconditional release of U.S. citizens currently held in Afghanistan.



Then-Secretary Antony J. Blinken delivers remarks at the “Partnerships in Action: Honoring Our Commitment to Afghan Allies” Reception at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., on December 2, 2024. (State photo)

U.S. citizens: The U.S. Government continued to secure the release of U.S. citizens who remained in Afghanistan.¹¹² State said that multiple detainees were being held by the Taliban General Directorate of Intelligence and the Taliban Directorate of Prison Affairs.¹¹³ The U.S. Government has asked Qatar, which serves as the protector of U.S. interests in Afghanistan, to visit and observe the health of the American detainees.¹¹⁴ On January 21, two of the Americans were freed in a prisoner swap with the Taliban, according to a media report.¹¹⁵

Embassy facilities: In December, State reported that the U.S. Embassy in Kabul is not in State’s control.¹¹⁶ In November, media reported that the Taliban removed barriers near the U.S. Embassy compound in Kabul. However, access to the public was still restricted. According to news reporting, removing the barriers would relieve traffic congestion and access would be limited to officials and “invited guests” with no timing specified as to when the road would be open to the public.¹¹⁷

Global Engagement Center: On December 23, State’s Global Engagement Center (GEC) terminated “by operation of law,” according to State.¹¹⁸ The center was responsible for coordinating U.S. efforts to counter foreign disinformation.¹¹⁹ State reported that the GEC had no active grants or contracts related to Afghanistan, but that any GEC-related programming for Central Asia would be covered by State’s Under Secretary for Public Affairs Office of Countering Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference.¹²⁰

International Community Continues to Pressure the Taliban

State said that it advocates for including civil society and other non-Taliban Afghan representatives in UN-convened working groups.¹²¹ On November 28, Afghanistan Affairs Unit Chargé d’Affaires (CDA) Karen Decker represented the United States in the counternarcotics working group. State said that CDA Decker’s participation in the virtual meeting sought to ensure the working group would be tied to the broader UN roadmap process.¹²² The first meeting of the private sector working group is planned for early 2025.¹²³ A fourth meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan is likely to occur only after all of the working groups are established and have met, State reported.¹²⁴

Table 2.

UN Security Council Committee Travel Ban Exemptions for November-December 2024

November 22	Approved a travel ban exemption and a related asset freeze exemption for Shahabuddin Delawar (Afghan Red Crescent Society) regarding his visit to Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, PRC, to attend the 2024 Asia Pacific Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Induction Course from November 26 to 30.
November 19	Approved a travel ban exemption for Abdul Salam Hanafi Ali Mardan Qul (Council of Ministers) regarding his visit to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, for negotiations with the leadership of the country.
November 15	Approved a travel ban exemption for Najibullah Haqqani Hidayatullah (Communications Minister) regarding his visit to Zhejiang Province, PRC, to participate in the 2024 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit from November 20 to 24.
December 26	Approved a travel ban exemption for Amir Khan Motaqi (Foreign Minister) regarding his visit to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from December 28, 2024, to January 7, 2025, to take part in meetings on regional security, stability, and reconciliation.

Source: UN Security Council, “Travel Exemptions in Effect,” website, undated.

State said that U.S. and UN sanctions against Taliban officials and related networks remained in place. U.S.-designated individuals and entities are subject to blocking sanctions (freezing assets or other property) under U.S. law. UN-designated individuals are subject to a travel ban, arms embargo, and asset freeze, State said, though the United Nations approves exemptions.¹²⁵ (See Table 2.) In December, the UN Security Council unanimously agreed to extend the mandate of the team monitoring sanctions against the Taliban and associated individuals for another 14 months.¹²⁶

Additionally, State said that it worked with allies and partners to press the Taliban to reverse its discriminatory edicts and that any step toward normalization of relations was contingent upon improvements in the treatment of women and girls.¹²⁷ The Taliban’s recent morality edict banned women’s voices and bare faces in public, prohibited the publication of images of living beings, further restricted the personal conduct of Afghan citizens, and empowered inspectors with strengthened enforcement that particularly targets women and girls.¹²⁸

Neither the UN-led Doha Process nor other forms of international engagement have spurred the Taliban to bring their policies in line with universal human rights norms. To the contrary, State said that despite Taliban calls for “recognition” from the international community, Taliban policies are becoming more repressive.¹²⁹

According to State, no country has publicly announced that it recognizes the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan, including the participants who have supported the UN-led Doha Process.¹³⁰ However, several countries have accepted Taliban-appointed ambassadors or diplomatic representatives.¹³¹ In October, Uzbekistan’s new ambassador to Afghanistan presented his credentials to the Taliban’s Foreign Minister. In December, Saudi Arabia re-opened its embassy in Kabul.¹³² State said that it tracks other countries’ relationships with the Taliban and that during the quarter, some countries did rotate their diplomatic personnel working on Afghan issues or assigned to their missions in Kabul.¹³³

Enduring Welcome

Enduring Welcome (EW) is a whole-of-government effort to relocate and resettle eligible Afghan allies and their families from Afghanistan. The previous interagency effort to relocate Afghan allies, Operation Allies Welcome, formally ended on September 30, 2022, and was replaced with EW.¹³⁴

Congress established the EW administrative expenses account at State to increase oversight and accountability of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to State for EW program expenses. It provides for relocation and related support of at-risk individuals as a result of the situation in Afghanistan, including travel and other related expenditures.¹³⁵ State reported to Congress that as of October 31, 2024, it had \$1.1 billion available for EW expenses. This included \$1 billion remaining in the EW administrative expenses account and \$113 million from all the previous EW appropriations and transfers outside the EW account. State told Congress that based on current spending trends, it anticipated fully obligating all EW funding by the end of Fiscal Year 2025, requiring additional funding and/or program reductions by the start of FY 2026.¹³⁶

AFGHAN SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISA PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

State reported that between September 1, 2021, and December 30, 2024, it issued more than 71,000 Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIV). As the end of the quarter, approximately 53,000 principal applicants were undergoing Chief of Mission review.¹³⁷

During the quarter, State said that the Afghan SIV office, which determines whether an SIV applicant is eligible for Chief of Mission approval, took several steps to improve SIV application review. The office launched a new tool designed to streamline the verification of the employment and recommendation letters submitted with each Chief of Mission application. Historically, verification processing has been the Afghan SIV office's most time-intensive step. State reported that the office issued an average of 884 decision letters per week during the quarter, a 3.5 percent increase from the previous quarter.¹³⁸

State also reported that the Afghan SIV office finalized an automated connection with the DoD's Afghan SIV Support Team. According to State, the connection allows for automated data sharing, cleaning, and processing between State and the DoD. The automated connection also allows the DoD support team to more efficiently match applicants to DoD employment records and significantly reduced manual processing and maintenance for both the Afghan SIV office and the DoD. State said that this will reduce overall processing time for DoD cases.¹³⁹

REFUGEE PROCESSING AND VETTING

The DHS reported that the USCIS continued to conduct Afghan refugee processing of all priority categories in countries worldwide. From October 1, 2020, to November 19, 2024, USCIS initially interviewed approximately 45,900 Afghan refugee applicants.¹⁴⁰

The DHS's Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM) maintains interoperability with the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center to screen for known or suspected terrorists, transnational organized criminals, and other immigration and naturalization exceptions.¹⁴¹ The DHS OBIM utilizes biometric data such as fingerprints to detect and prevent illegal entry into the United States, vetting entrants, enforcing federal laws, and to protect national security.¹⁴² The DHS OBIM stated that it did not match to any Afghan latent fingerprints during the quarter.¹⁴³ The DHS

(continued on next page)

Enduring Welcome *(continued from previous page)*

stated that it was not aware of any violent extremist organization (VEO) intent or efforts to affect or infiltrate ongoing U.S. and coalition efforts to relocate American, Afghan, or other friendly personnel from Afghanistan during the quarter.¹⁴⁴

The DHS stated that all Afghans paroled into the United States in the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 are subject to recurrent vetting by DHS and interagency partners.¹⁴⁵

STATE'S AFGHAN SIV PROGRAM WIND-DOWN PLAN

On September 25, State submitted to Congress its plan to wind down the Afghan SIV program.¹⁴⁶ Under the plan, 99 percent of SIV applicants were projected to complete all the steps of the SIV process, and to have been interviewed by summer 2029 if processing continued at the September pace. State noted in the plan that it will need additional visa numbers to ensure SIV availability for remaining eligible applicants.¹⁴⁷

Subject to available funding, State's plan includes three assumptions. One is that the Afghan SIV office will continue to process applications for Chief of Mission approval until all appeals are exhausted. The second is that State's Bureau of Consular Affairs will continue to issue SIVs as long as visa numbers remain available. The third is that State's relocation and resettlement operations, as well as the Department of Health and Human Services' resettlement services, will continue as long as sufficient resources for such activities remain available.¹⁴⁸

State said that it intends to modify some SIV processes to implement this wind down plan in a timely manner and in the future require that SIV applicants denied Chief of Mission approval submit their appeals within a certain period after the denial to ensure potential appeals are not pending indefinitely. State would also administratively close abandoned or inactive cases that had not received Chief of Mission approval and notify affected applicants via email prior to case closure. State would then initiate termination of visa application cases where the applicant has not taken steps to apply for an SIV within 1 year of Chief of Mission approval.¹⁴⁹

DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan's Economy Struggles, Exacerbated by the Taliban's Repressive Edicts

State reported that Afghanistan's economic and social outlook remains hampered by policy uncertainty, financial isolation, and limited human and physical capital. Afghanistan's overall trade deficit remains high, at \$748 million.¹⁵⁰ Pakistan remained Afghanistan's largest export market at 47 percent, followed by India at 30 percent.¹⁵¹ The World Bank reported that Iran emerged as Afghanistan's largest source of imports, making up 30 percent.¹⁵²

State also reported that the Afghan currency depreciated slightly against the U.S. dollar in December, causing further strain on individual Afghans' ability to purchase basic necessities. In response, the Afghan Central Bank reportedly injected \$16 million into the market to control the currency's exchange rate.¹⁵³ In addition, the Afghan economy remains heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance in the form of U.S. dollars to support liquidity and balance of payments.¹⁵⁴

**USAID
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during the
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At the end of the
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While the traditional economic indicators show continued weakness, a World Bank analysis of nighttime light patterns published in November indicated a shift in Afghanistan's economic activity since 2020, away from Kabul and former military bases. Nighttime lights increased by more than 10 percent compared to 2020/2021 levels, indicating an economic recovery in the civilian sector that is not captured by GDP data.¹⁵⁵

With U.S. Government funding, partners implement livelihoods programming and skills training to support refugee reintegration and enhance opportunities for vulnerable host community populations. These activities focus on increasing literacy, business knowledge, and skills development.¹⁵⁶ USAID Afghanistan supported 26 active awards during the quarter totaling \$1.3 billion.¹⁵⁷ At the end of the quarter, \$74 million remained unobligated.¹⁵⁸

Taliban Tightens Restrictions on Women

Following a 40-day adjustment period, enforcement of the Taliban's morality edicts became a significant issue this quarter, according to USAID.¹⁵⁹ USAID implementers reported increased visits by the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, the General Directorate of Intelligence, and other authorities. One implementing partner reported that, although it varied widely by geography, enforcement of restrictions on women's freedom has intensified and has directly impacted women's access to public spaces, employment, and education.¹⁶⁰

On December 29, the Ministry of Economy issued a stringent warning to national and international NGOs demanding "full compliance" with its earlier ban on employing women. The ministry warned that violations would result in the suspension of an organization's activities and the revocation of its license.¹⁶¹ USAID reported that the ban on women aid workers will have catastrophic effects on tens of millions of Afghans in need of humanitarian assistance, especially women and children.¹⁶² Female aid workers are essential in needs assessment, planning, and implementing humanitarian responses, and their absence will severely hinder efforts to provide support, USAID said.¹⁶³

A December ban on women studying in allied health fields will certainly have an impact on the health system, USAID said, though it will likely not be fully felt for a few years as female health workers retire or leave work for other reasons and cannot be replaced due to the lack of qualified candidates. While male clinicians are generally able to consult female patients, this is less accepted in the more conservative parts of the country, and rare for obstetrics and gynecology.¹⁶⁴ USAID noted that the ban was enacted within an already restrictive environment for women's education; women have not been able to attend university to train as physicians since December 2022.¹⁶⁵

U.S. Partners Adapt to Continue Work Under Taliban Restrictions

Organizations have adopted various ways to continue operations, including financial support for mahrams (male family members who escort females), separate workspaces, and working with community volunteers. Despite these efforts, the enforcement of the morality edict has led to increased anxiety among staff, reduced field and office attendance by women, and heightened harassment and compliance checks by authorities.¹⁶⁶

Women working with USAID-supported organizations have been forced to operate discretely, adhering to strict dress codes and other requirements, while professional development activities have been shifted to virtual platforms to ensure continued engagement.¹⁶⁷ Women-led and women-focused livelihood and income generation activities were the least impacted by the restrictions.¹⁶⁸

Remote service provision: One USAID program at an education complex in Kabul—which serves 386 female students studying midwifery, nursing, dental prosthesis, and anesthesia—shifted to using online education platforms after it had to suspend in-person studies due to the Taliban’s recent ban on women’s health institutions.¹⁶⁹ Other partners pivoted to provide services under health support frameworks, as well as a shift to individualized or remotely-provided support.¹⁷⁰ For some projects, women employees continued to work from home while awaiting permission to return to the project offices.¹⁷¹

Private sector apprenticeships: USAID activities focused on placing women in apprenticeships within willing private sector firms to learn new skills, supporting women at home through kitchen gardens, and designing activities and support mechanisms for women-run law firms.¹⁷²

Male relatives: In response to a decline in female aid workers able to travel to field locations, many humanitarian organizations reported providing financial incentives for male relatives to accompany women to field sites.¹⁷³ USAID reported that a survey found that despite operational constraints, the proportion of relief actors operating at full capacity increased compared to previous rounds of the survey, and many health partners reported that they were able to operate using an exemption granted by the Taliban for health and education actors.¹⁷⁴

Coordination with local authorities: One implementing partner reported its consistent coordination at the national, provincial and district level to ensure local authorities are aware of and approve activities taking place has resulted in smooth program implementation with no delays due to Taliban enforcement of the so-called morality law. However, the project has experienced some provinces more reluctant to support activities, such as those involving women, than others.¹⁷⁵

Taliban Authorities Continued to Interfere with Targeted Basic Needs Assistance

USAID Afghanistan reported that it did not observe a significant shift in violence against aid workers this quarter. However, there was a noticeable increase in harassment and detentions targeting individuals in sectors such as rights advocacy, media, and psychosocial support.¹⁷⁶

In addition, delays in signing memoranda of understanding (MoU) caused some operational challenges for USAID's Afghanistan Support Program.¹⁷⁷ For example, one grantee experienced a 1-month delay in obtaining an MoU for a professional capacity-building project.¹⁷⁸ The MoU was eventually signed.¹⁷⁹ Delays increased operational costs and disrupted project timelines.¹⁸⁰

In another case, the Taliban-appointed Kandahar governor did not allow USAID Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive activity surveyor staff to conduct household data collection in Kandahar province.¹⁸¹ The activity, in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and the National Statistics and Information Authority, continues discussions with the Kandahar governor to resolve the issue.¹⁸² According to USAID, fieldwork in the remaining provinces continued uninterrupted.¹⁸³

State Continues to Fund and Monitor Counternarcotics Programs in Afghanistan

During the quarter, State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) continued to fund counternarcotics projects in the areas of alternative livelihoods, drug demand reduction, counternarcotics research.¹⁸⁴ In November 2024, State INL signed a new agreement with UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for phase two of the

Figure 2.

Afghan Opium Production and Poppy Cultivation Estimates, 2000–2024

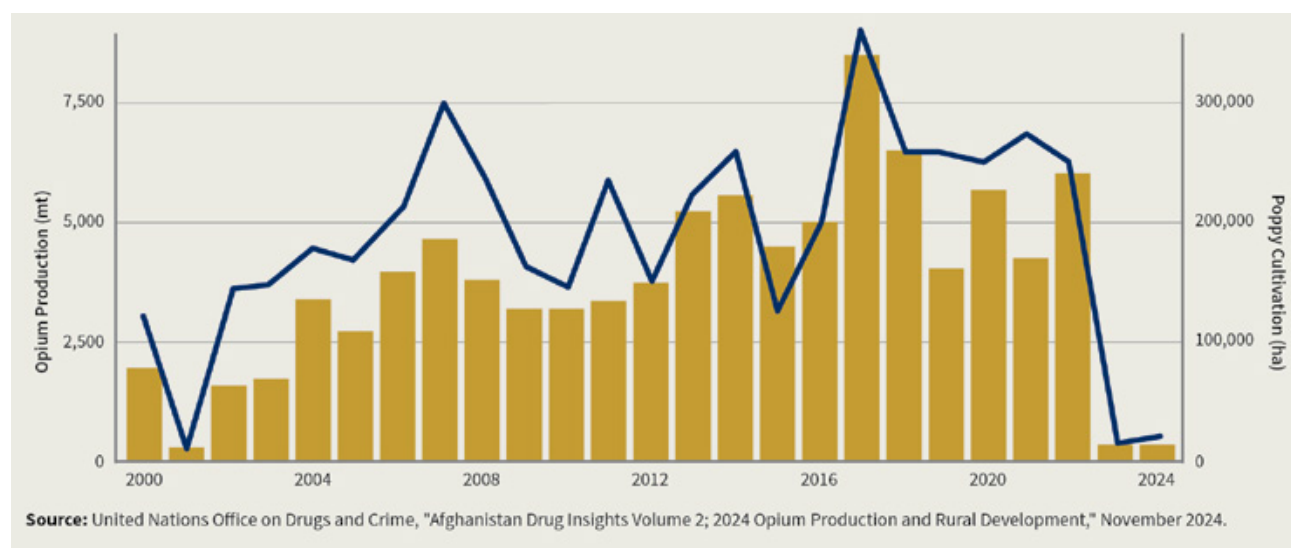


Table 3.

UNODC: Ways to Support the Narcotics Production Ban in Afghanistan

- Diversify Afghanistan's economy to support its transition from illicit to licit production
- Prevent drug production from shifting to new regions, both within the country and abroad is necessary
- Upgrade farmers' skills and infrastructure to increase agricultural productivity and income
- Prevent drug production from shifting to alternative synthetic drugs and non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs, both domestically and internationally.

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Afghanistan Drug Insights Volume 2; 2024 Opium Production and Rural Development," 11/2024.

Afghan Opiate Trade Project. The project produces actionable analytical reports to inform law enforcement, border management, and the international community to better understand Afghan-origin illicit narcotics production and trafficking trends, State said.¹⁸⁵

A State-funded UNODC report, released in November, stated that opium production in Afghanistan increased by 30 percent in 2024 compared to the previous year. However, the increase remained 93 percent below 2022 levels, the year that the Taliban began enforcing its country-wide ban on drugs.¹⁸⁶ (See Figure 2.) At the same time, opium production remains profitable, generating up to 60 times more revenue in comparison to wheat. Without profitable, licit alternatives, some farmers might return to poppy cultivation due to economic hardship, the report said. The analysis also found that cultivation and production sites shifted from the southwest to the northeast provinces of Afghanistan.¹⁸⁷

State emphasized it was important for the United States to continue monitoring the effects of the narcotics ban, including any further geographical shifts in cultivation and that the slight increase in cultivation underscores the difficult choice farmers must make in light of the ban as they navigate Afghanistan's struggling rural economy.¹⁸⁸ (See Table 3.) One regional expert observed that although foreign influence on Taliban drug policies was limited, quality data for international community discussions with the Taliban on counternarcotics was important.¹⁸⁹

State said that it was not aware of any reports of Taliban interference in State INL-funded programming in Afghanistan this quarter and that State INL continued to monitor programs through regular check-ins with program implementers and program quarterly reports.¹⁹⁰ During the quarter, a monitoring team completed project site visits in Balkh, Farah, Laghman, and Nangarhar provinces to meet with farmers and agribusiness owners that participate in the project, State said. The team also planned a site visit to districts in Kandahar province in late December. Another State INL-funded monitoring team conducted 59 site visits and interviewed 191 implementing staff and beneficiaries of one of State INL's projects that supports Afghan women. Since the project solely focuses on women and girls, the monitoring team hired and trained female surveyors for the project, State reported.¹⁹¹

Afghan Fund Update

On October 16, the Board of Trustees of the Afghan Fund met for the seventh time since November 2022 and approved several policies and procedures related to risk management, compliance, and internal controls. Acknowledging its statutory mandate to focus on economic and financial stability, the board said in a statement that it remained open to disbursing funds to the Asian Development Bank to address Afghanistan's outstanding arrears. As of December 31, 2024, the Fund's assets totaled more than \$3.9 billion with investment earnings.¹⁹²

The United States, through State and Treasury, together with Switzerland and Afghan economic experts, announced the establishment of the Afghan Fund on September 14, 2022, to support the people of Afghanistan amid ongoing economic and humanitarian crises. The Fund's stated purpose is to "receive, protect, preserve, and disburse assets for the benefit of the Afghan people, including for financial and economic stability."¹⁹³

State Program Clears Landmines and Other Explosive Remnants of War

Afghanistan is one of the most explosive ordnance-contaminated countries in the world, with an average of 55 casualties per month, most of them children, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).¹⁹⁴

During the quarter, State's Conventional Weapons Destruction program for Afghanistan continued 10 humanitarian mine action projects valued at \$30.136 million. From 1997 through December 31, 2024, State-funded implementing partners cleared nearly 394 million square meters of land and removed or destroyed more than 8.5 million landmines and other explosive remnants of war such as unexploded ordnance, abandoned ordnance, stockpiled or cached munitions, and homemade explosives in Afghanistan.¹⁹⁵

State said its Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement continued to employ a third-party monitoring entity that provided weekly and monthly situation reports documenting monitoring and evaluation site visits of all U.S.-funded projects covering humanitarian demining, technical survey, information management of the Mine Action database, and victim assistance. The weekly site visits identify operational non-conformities and ensure partner compliance with mine action standards, State said. Although State reported that the Taliban did not interfere with State-funded programming in Afghanistan during the quarter, on December 3 an implementing partner requested to relocate a victim assistance project from Nimroz to Kunduz province because local leaders insisted upon approving recipients of U.S.-funded assistance.¹⁹⁶

USAID Staff Were Unable to Conduct Traditional Oversight Field Visits in Afghanistan

USAID staff were unable to conduct traditional site monitoring visits in Afghanistan and instead relied on third-party monitoring as a method of on-site monitoring.¹⁹⁷ One third-party monitoring visit was canceled due to the Taliban enforcement of the ban on women working with NGOs, according to USAID.¹⁹⁸ During the quarter, USAID Afghanistan's third-party monitoring mechanism supported nine awards.¹⁹⁹

Table 4.

USAID Afghanistan Awards Covered by Third-Party Monitoring During the Quarter

Award	Total Award Amount
Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA)	\$105,722,822
Afghanistan Support Project (ASP)	\$25,884,633
Afghan Value Chain–Program (AVC-P)	\$75,672,170
Afghanistan Jobs Creation Project–Turquoise Mountain Trust (AJCP-TMT)	\$14,935,752
Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan’s Recovery (STAR)	\$26,585,607
Women’s Scholarship Endowment (WSE)	\$50,000,000
Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls Activity (UN Women)	\$30,000,000
Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT)	\$117,000,000
Urban Health Initiative (UHI)	\$104,000,000
Accessible and Quality Basic Education*	\$79.249,987

Note: * Covered, but there were no activities to monitor during the quarter.

Source: USAID Afghanistan OFM, response to USAID OIG request for information, 12/7/2024.

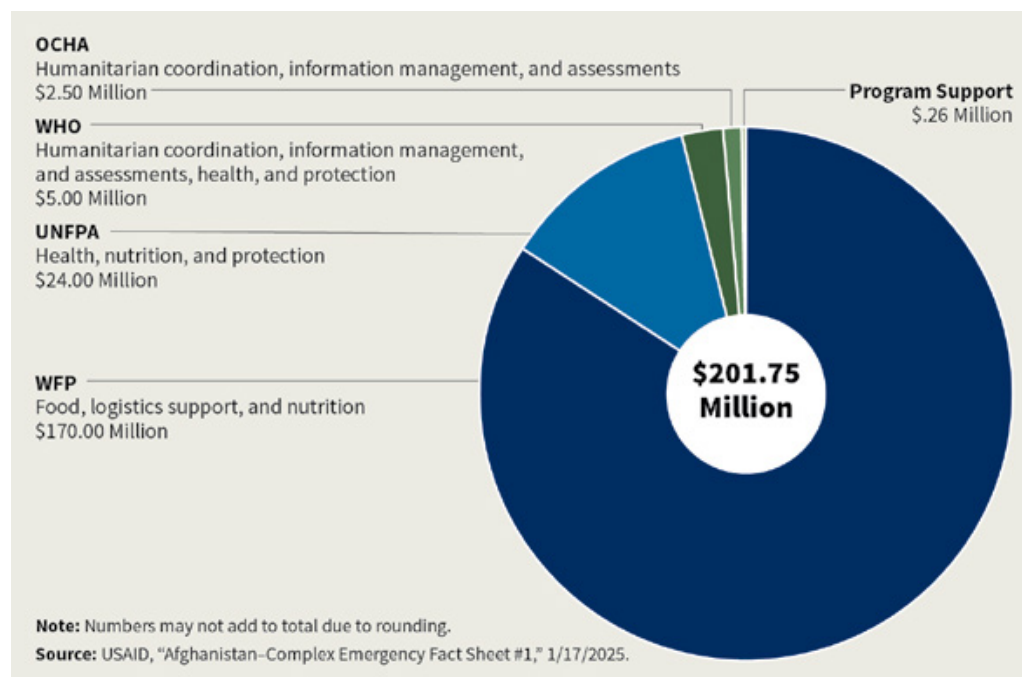
Table 5.

USAID Afghanistan Awards Eligible for Third-Party Monitoring, But Not Covered During the Quarter

Award	Total Award Amount
Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS)	\$13,999,997
Rural WASH (PIO award)	\$35,841,332
Young Women Lead	\$4,935,797
Information, Dialogue and Rights in Afghanistan (IDR)	\$14,079,528
Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (SRL-FS) (PIO grant contribution)	\$80,000,000
WHO Polio and Immunization Grant II: Polio Eradication Surveillance and Response (PIO award)	\$28,500,000

Source: USAID Afghanistan OFM, response to USAID OIG request for information, 12/7/2024.

Figure 3.

USAID Humanitarian Assistance Funding by Implementer in FY 2025

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The U.S. Government's humanitarian objectives in Afghanistan are to support and provide assistance to vulnerable Afghans, including women and girls, through a principled humanitarian response that maintains the independence of humanitarian partners in facilitating aid; and to improve protection and health assistance to support the living conditions of Afghan Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), refugees, recent returnees to Afghanistan from countries of refuge, and new Afghan arrivals in neighboring countries, particularly women and girls, according to State.²⁰⁰ The U.S. Government has provided more than \$2 billion to support the people of Afghanistan since the fall of Kabul in 2021, according to State.²⁰¹

The U.S. Government remains the largest humanitarian donor to the Afghanistan Response, providing more than \$697 million in humanitarian assistance in FY 2024.²⁰² (See Table 6.) USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) had a total of 17 active awards during the quarter (total award amount ceiling of \$771 million).²⁰³ State reported it did not obligate any funding for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan during the quarter.²⁰⁴

Table 6.

U.S. Government Humanitarian Funding for the Afghanistan Response in FY 2024 and FY 2025

	FY 2024	FY 2025
USAID BHA	\$534,719,064	\$201,755,857
State PRM	\$162,299,944	\$32,100,000
TOTAL	\$697,019,008	\$233,855,857

Note: Funds committed or obligated in FY 2025 as of January 17, 2025.

Sources: USAID, "Afghanistan–Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #4," 9/30/2024; USAID, "Afghanistan–Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #1," 1/17/2025.

In December, then-Secretary Blinken told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that State had “processes in place” to ensure funding provided to implementers in Afghanistan was spent appropriately. He added that the money has helped avert famine, and helped prevent the “collapse of the entire economy.”²⁰⁵

Global Humanitarian Aid Shortfall Continues as Millions of Afghans Require Assistance

The United Nations reported that as of November 11, Afghanistan’s 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan had received 37.5 percent (\$1.15 billion) of its \$3.06 billion in needed funds. From January to September 2024, the United Nations reported that humanitarian partners reached 15.3 million people—88 percent of the 17.3 million overall target—with at least one form of humanitarian assistance.²⁰⁶

On December 17, the United Nations released the 2025 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, which requested \$2.42 billion to reach 16.8 million people. The UN humanitarian response comprises food assistance, emergency shelter, healthcare, nutrition services, education, safe drinking water, hygiene items, cash assistance, and other forms of multi-sectoral support. The protection of vulnerable groups, especially women, girls, boys and those living with disabilities, remains paramount, ensuring they do not fall further into humanitarian need.²⁰⁷

According to the plan, the main drivers of humanitarian need in 2025 will be Taliban restrictions, especially on women and girls; seasonal shocks and natural disasters exacerbated by climate change; and geopolitical events including potential large-scale returns from Pakistan and Iran. The 2025 plan notes that these needs are exacerbated by ongoing economic stagnation and a lack of basic services, which creates conditions for recurring humanitarian crises.²⁰⁸

According to the UN’s 2025 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, nearly half (22.9 million people) of the population of Afghanistan will require humanitarian assistance in 2025 to survive.²⁰⁹ Continued restrictions by the Taliban increased risks to women, girls and boys, young people, and other at-risk groups, reducing access to life-saving services and livelihood opportunities and increasing their need for further humanitarian assistance.²¹⁰

FOOD INSECURITY

An estimated 14.8 million Afghans will likely experience acute levels of food insecurity from November 2024 through March 2025, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.²¹¹ This represents an increase from September and October, when approximately 11.6 million people likely experienced acute insecurity. USAID said that the increased food insecurity is due to the previous winter lean season, economic instability, high food prices, limited livelihood opportunities, and reduced remittances.²¹² However, overall food insecurity has steadily decreased in Afghanistan since late 2022, when at least 55 percent of the population likely experienced acute levels of food insecurity.²¹³

According to the UN’s 2025 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, nearly half (22.9 million people) of the population of Afghanistan will require humanitarian assistance in 2025 to survive.

Humanitarian agencies were pre-positioning 62,000 metric tons of food to support up to 6 million vulnerable people over the winter.

In response, the U.S. Government provided cash transfers for food, food vouchers, and in-kind food assistance.²¹⁴ USAID BHA reported that it distributed nearly 11,300 metric tons of emergency food commodities through the World Food Programme to approximately 1 million people across Afghanistan in November.²¹⁵ USAID-funded international NGO implementers are providing seeds and livestock feed in areas at risk of food insecurity to bolster the agricultural capacity of vulnerable households, along with food assistance to meet immediate needs.²¹⁶

Beginning in November, the World Food Programme increased emergency food and nutrition assistance to reach 6 to 7 million people, still fewer than half of those in need. Humanitarian agencies were pre-positioning 62,000 metric tons of food to support up to 6 million vulnerable people over the winter.²¹⁷

RETURNEES FROM PAKISTAN AND IRAN

State said that Pakistan's Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan remained in effect, but Pakistan had paused the part of the plan focused on the deportation of Afghan Citizen Card holders. The deportation of Afghans living in Pakistan who are not in U.S. resettlement or immigration pathways declined since January 2024 but continued at lower levels. State said that between January 1 and November 30, 293,027 Afghans—the vast majority of whom are undocumented individuals—returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan. State said that the United States remained in close and constant communication with the Pakistani government on the safety of individuals in U.S. resettlement and immigration pathways.²¹⁸

In September, Iran announced plans to deport up to 2 million undocumented Afghans by March 2025, further straining resources.²¹⁹ High numbers of returns burden over-stretched services in Afghanistan which already has an estimated 6.3 million displaced people.²²⁰

UN agencies reported a massive need for scaled-up services in rural and urban areas to meet the needs of both returnees and host communities. According to State, food, shelter, and cash assistance remain among the highest needs for both Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran and host communities in areas of return. Continued movement of displaced and returning Afghans across the country—to both rural and urban areas—will further exacerbate pressures on host communities and stretch the limited resources available for assistance, State said.²²¹ Approximately 55,000 individuals in refugee or refugee-like situations who returned to Afghanistan from Iran, Pakistan, and other countries were reached by State-funded international organizations and nearly 660,000 individuals were supported with in-kind and other forms of assistance, including protection support.²²²

In addition, U.S. Government-funded implementers delivered mental health and psychosocial support services, and implemented child protection activities, family services, and legal assistance to help returning refugees access documentation.²²³ USAID-funded United Nations Population Fund and its NGO partners reached nearly 371,400 individuals, the majority of whom were women, with health nutrition, and protection support across 27 provinces, according to USAID.²²⁴

State reported that UN and NGO partners of its Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) scaled up humanitarian assistance at border reception and transit centers on the Afghan side of the borders with Iran and Pakistan to facilitate travel to areas of return and to address immediate humanitarian needs.²²⁵

State said that assistance to returnees constitutes part of the humanitarian response inside Afghanistan. Returnees experience serious protection risks owing to their mobility, isolation from resources, and reduced accessibility to stable health, transportation, and basic needs service provision. State said that for this reason, assistance to returnees is considered part of broader humanitarian assistance efforts to help Afghans in need. Even prior to the large-scale return of Afghans from Pakistan starting in late 2023, returnee communities in Afghanistan demonstrated higher levels of humanitarian need compared to their host community counterparts. State said that post-returnee monitoring of returnees from Pakistan indicated 75 percent of returnees report experiencing debt, of which 95 percent reported that their debt exceeded their monthly income.²²⁶

SHELTER

Shelter needs in Afghanistan remained significant due to natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, harsh winter weather, and landslides, and displacement within Afghanistan and from neighboring countries.²²⁷ In response, USAID BHA and State PRM implementers, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and NGOs, delivered safe drinking water and essential hygiene items, rehabilitated water and sanitation systems, and conducted hygiene promotion activities, according to USAID.²²⁸ USAID-funded UNICEF assisted approximately 54,900 people with access to safe drinking water across 13 provinces through the construction of more than 20 solar-powered water supply systems and rehabilitated 4 flood-damaged water supply systems during the quarter.²²⁹

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Taliban's Morality Edict Impacts Aid Delivery

A survey conducted by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group and the Humanitarian Assistance Working Group found that a majority of organizations continued to operate but continued to face challenges as a result of the Taliban's Morality Edict.²³⁰ (See Table 7.)

In FY 2025, State PRM awards to NGOs include a requirement to report any interference by authorities. Earlier State PRM awards to international organizations and NGOs did not include this requirement, State said. State PRM will continue to use monthly check-ins with NGO and international organization partners to detail its expectation of proactive reporting around instances of Taliban interference, diversion, or harassment.²³¹

State PRM advises its partners to avoid practices that normalize lower-quality working conditions and assistance, such as replacing female staff with men to continue activities that only men can benefit from; using male staff or relying only on remote methods to target and monitor female beneficiaries; or pressuring partners to implement programs where activities do not fall within their principled humanitarian policies. State PRM continued to encourage

Table 7.

Results of a Survey of Humanitarian Assistance Providers in Afghanistan, November and December 2024

Of 126 organizations surveyed:

- 62 percent were fully operational and 32 percent partially operational
- 52 percent of female staff were able to go to the field, compared to 64 percent in September
- 43 percent of organizations reported that female staff have left due to Taliban decrees, a 13-percentage point increase from September
- 41 percent face gender-related impediments such as difficulties in registering projects involving female staff

Source: State, response to State OIG request for information, 1/10/2025.

partners to maintain and leverage the existing coordination mechanisms to respond to the Taliban, supporting a cohesive and more unified humanitarian response to Taliban interference.²³² State said that while Taliban restrictions hindered access for humanitarian workers, the United States does not place political conditions on humanitarian assistance.²³³

Similarly, donor countries continued to provide humanitarian and basic needs assistance that directly reaches the Afghan people, though they varied on how this approach should evolve in the face of the Taliban's growing repression. According to State, donor countries are torn between limiting engagement to signal the Taliban has crossed a redline and maintaining (if not increasing) engagement to mitigate the morality edict's effects on assistance going to the Afghan people.²³⁴

State said that many countries, both like-minded and not, believe engaging the Taliban is the best way to secure their own interests.²³⁵ However, State said that it expects that all humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance will only continue if principled delivery of assistance can be ensured, including the observance of humanitarian principles, the inclusion of female personnel and distribution of assistance to female beneficiaries, and the use of appropriate measures to deter and detect attempted diversion and interference.²³⁶

Implementing Partners Make Payments to the Taliban in Providing Humanitarian and Other Aid

State implementing partners are often required to pay operational fees and make salary withholdings to the Taliban. For example, one State office reported that between September 2021 and December 2024 its implementing partners paid \$1.8 million comprising a variety of expenses. State said that these included taxes on local staff salary, expatriate visa and work permit fees, vehicle registration fees, local airline costs, and taxes withheld from supplier bills.²³⁷

According to State, such transactions are authorized by The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control's General Licenses 14, 15, 18, 19, and 20 and its Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations and are consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2615.²³⁸

According to State, Afghan nationals whom the United States employs (whether by contract or arrangement) or finances (whether by contract, grant, or otherwise) and who are present in Afghanistan to perform work in connection with U.S. assistance are not exempt from the payment of income, withholding, or social security taxes imposed under the laws of Afghanistan. State said that section 7013(g)(2) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024, and prior year appropriations acts clarify that the restrictions on "taxes and taxation do not include individual income taxes assessed to local staff."²³⁹

State PRM said that it reinforced with partners operating in Afghanistan that no U.S. funds can be used, directly or indirectly, to provide support to individuals or entities associated with or identified as foreign terrorist organizations.²⁴⁰ Beginning in FY 2025, State PRM cooperative agreements supporting activities in Afghanistan require partners to report on any activity funded that involves a transaction with, or the provision of resources or support to, any sanctioned individual or entity. The new provisions require recipients to submit a semi-annual report on State PRM-funded transactions with any sanctioned individual or entity, including those covered under a specific or general license. Recipients are expected to report payments in the form of taxes, tolls, and fees as well as any diversion of funds, supplies or services. Partners were scheduled to submit their first reports in April 2025.²⁴¹

According to the United Nations, the number of reported access incidents significantly increased in recent months with more than 160 incidents, primarily driven by Taliban-related interference in humanitarian activities.

Humanitarian Organizations Face Heightened Access Constraints and Security Incidents

According to the United Nations, the number of reported access incidents significantly increased in recent months with more than 160 incidents, primarily driven by Taliban-related interference in humanitarian activities, in November, an increase of nearly 60 percent compared to October.²⁴² The incidents resulted in a temporary suspension of more than 70 humanitarian programs, the temporary closure of one humanitarian facility, and the permanent termination of two humanitarian projects.²⁴³ The majority of reported incidents involved Taliban interference in humanitarian programming followed by requests for staff information and sensitive data; attempts to obtain information about staff recruiting processes; restrictions on female humanitarian personnel, including prohibiting women's use of certain services; delays in improving memoranda of understanding required for humanitarian organizations to operate in-country; attempted influence in beneficiary selection; and confiscation of humanitarian assistance.²⁴⁴

Violent incidents targeting humanitarian assets, facilities, and personnel increased nearly 40 percent in November compared with October, with more than 10 incidents reported.²⁴⁵ These incidents included the detainment of eight humanitarian personnel; four threats against humanitarian organizations, assets, and facilities; two physical assaults targeting humanitarian staff; and the forced closure of two humanitarian facilities.²⁴⁶ In one case, seven staff (including six female members) of a USAID implementer were detained for

Overall, heightened access constraints, insecurity, and interference continued to complicate the humanitarian operating environment and compromised the safety and security of humanitarian personnel across Afghanistan, according to USAID.

alleged non-compliance with mahram and hijab requirements.²⁴⁷ Another implementer staff member arrived and negotiated their release.²⁴⁸ Overall, heightened access constraints, insecurity, and interference continued to complicate the humanitarian operating environment and compromised the safety and security of humanitarian personnel across Afghanistan, according to USAID.²⁴⁹

USAID implementers also reported increased audits of assets and staff by the Ministry of Economy, with a continued focus on budgets (direct and indirect costs).²⁵⁰

Monitoring and Oversight of Humanitarian Programs Siphoning Program Funds

State reported that prior to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, international organizations and NGOs could work with the Afghan government to investigate allegations of corruption and diversion. Since then, international organizations and NGOs have had to bring these functions in-house. State said that this likely caused a greater share of funding going to activities supporting monitoring, which State PRM views as a necessary increase to safeguard taxpayer funds and to ensure lifesaving humanitarian assistance reaches its intended beneficiaries.²⁵¹

State PRM's international organization and NGO partners utilize post-distribution monitoring mechanisms for cash and in-kind assistance to supplement other in-person monitoring efforts and to verify delivery of both cash and in-kind assistance following cash and/or non-food item distributions.²⁵²

State PRM partners provided quarterly reports and had monthly conversations with State PRM representatives. In addition, a third-party monitor continued in-person site visits to State PRM's implementing partners. Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, third-party monitors have been able to carry out uninterrupted site visits using male family members who accompany female enumerators. The third-party monitors are private businesses registered under the Ministry of Commerce and are not subject to the same operational challenges as State PRM's international organization and NGO partners, which are registered under the Ministry of Economy.²⁵³

State PRM's NGO partners submit financial reporting on all expenses including for monitoring activities, but the reporting templates do not include sub-total calculations for monitoring expenses specifically. Various monitoring expenses are often reflected across a number of different reporting sub-categories such as personnel, equipment, supplies, and contractual.²⁵⁴ State said that requests for financial reporting on specific award activities such as monitoring would require a data call to partners.²⁵⁵

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

Under the Lead Inspector General (IG) framework, the DoD OIG, State OIG, USAID OIG, and partner agencies conduct audits, inspections, evaluations, and investigations related to Operation Enduring Sentinel (OES).

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Overseas Contingency Operations Joint Planning Group serves as the primary venue to coordinate audits, inspections, and evaluations of U.S. Government-funded activities supporting overseas contingency operations, including those relating to Afghanistan and the Middle East. The Joint Planning Group meets quarterly to provide a forum for coordination of the broader Federal oversight community, including the Military Service IGs and audit agencies, the Government Accountability Office, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), and the OIGs of the Departments of Justice, the Treasury, Energy, and Homeland Security (DHS), the Social Security Administration, and the Intelligence Community.

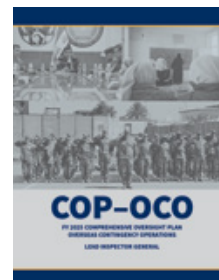
Pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, the Lead IG develops and implements a joint strategic plan to guide comprehensive oversight of programs and operations for each overseas contingency operation. The Lead IG agencies update the oversight plan annually.

The *FY 2025 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan for Operation Enduring Sentinel*, issued on September 30, 2024, as part of the *FY 2025 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations*, is organized by three strategic oversight areas: Military Operations; Diplomacy, Development Assistance, and Humanitarian Assistance; and Support to Mission.

AUDITS, INSPECTIONS, AND EVALUATIONS

The Lead IG agencies use dedicated, rotational, and temporary employees, as well as contractors, to conduct oversight projects, investigate fraud and corruption, and provide consolidated planning and reporting on the status of overseas contingency operations.

DoD OIG oversight and investigative personnel continued to work on OES-related projects and cases from the United States, Bahrain, Germany, Kuwait, and Qatar. State OIG personnel performed their oversight duties from Washington, D.C., and Frankfurt, Germany. USAID OIG personnel continued oversight work from the USAID Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand, and from Washington, D.C.



**FY 2025
Comprehensive
Oversight Plan
for Overseas
Contingency
Operations.**

COMPLETED PROJECTS

From October 1 to December 31, 2024, the Lead IG and partner agencies issued 4 oversight reports related to OES, as detailed below. Completed reports by the Lead IG and partner agencies are available on their respective web pages.

FINAL REPORTS BY PARTNER IG AGENCIES

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the Disposition of Sensitive Security Assets at U.S. Embassies Kabul, Afghanistan, and Kyiv, Ukraine

AUD-GEER-25-01; October 16, 2024

State OIG conducted this audit to determine whether U.S. embassies in Kabul and Kyiv managed, safeguarded, and disposed of sensitive security assets in advance of evacuation at each post in accordance with State guidance. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul (Embassy Kabul) suspended operations on August 31, 2021, and the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv (Embassy Kyiv) suspended operations on February 28, 2022. In accordance with State requirements and guidance, both posts were required to remove or destroy sensitive security assets—including special protective equipment and armored vehicles—in advance of the suspensions of operations to prevent their use by hostile forces.

State OIG found that the embassies faced different challenges that impacted their ability to manage, safeguard, and dispose of sensitive security assets in advance of their respective evacuations. For example, State OIG found that 26 percent of Embassy Kabul's firearms and 63 percent of its armored vehicles were left in Afghanistan. Many of those assets were abandoned intact, although some were disabled using ad hoc methods. State OIG identified several issues that contributed to assets being abandoned intact, including Embassy Kabul maintaining more assets than needed for daily operations, inadequate disposition planning, inadequate guidance, and insufficient training. In contrast to Embassy Kabul, Embassy Kyiv staff were able to remove all of the embassy's sensitive security assets prior to the suspension of operations. However, a senior Embassy Kyiv security official acknowledged that they had a smaller inventory of sensitive assets than Embassy Kabul and may have also had to abandon or destroy assets if they had faced a more exigent evacuation scenario. In addition, State OIG found that State did not fully and accurately account for sensitive assets exfiltrated from Embassy Kabul. Finally, State OIG found that State issued a waiver allowing the transfer of half of Embassy Kyiv's armored vehicle fleet to the government of Ukraine after the suspension of operations in February 2022. As a result of the transfer, Embassy Kyiv did not have sufficient armored vehicles after resuming operations.

State OIG made 12 recommendations to address the shortcomings identified in this report. State concurred with all 12 recommendations and, at the time the report was issued, State OIG considered all 12 recommendations resolved, pending further action. The recommendations will remain open until State OIG receives documentation that all agreed upon actions have been completed.

FINAL REPORTS BY PARTNER IG AGENCIES

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

Combating Violence Against Women in Afghanistan: State and USAID Can't Fully Determine Impacts of U.S. Efforts Without Developing Goals and Increasing Site Visits

SIGAR-25-03-AR; November 22, 2024

SIGAR conducted this audit to determine the extent to which State and USAID

1) implemented projects and activities that aligned with U.S. government strategic goals to combat gender-based violence (GBV) in Afghanistan; 2) conducted required monitoring and oversight for those projects and activities and tracked and measured progress towards achieving their goals; and 3) coordinated those projects and activities with their partners.

SIGAR found that State's October 2023 Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) for Afghanistan failed to meet the recommendations laid out in the 2022 U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally (U.S. Global GBV Strategy) in support of the U.S. government's GBV priorities. Specifically, the 2022 U.S. Global GBV Strategy recommends federal agencies integrate GBV prevention and response efforts into country level strategies and other relevant strategy and policy documents. However, State's ICS for Afghanistan did not include GBV mitigation efforts.

Furthermore, neither State nor USAID updated their country strategies to address the changing environment for more than two years following the collapse of the Afghan government in August 2021. Despite USAID telling SIGAR that after the collapse, the agency conducted a review of these ongoing programs and resumed implementation of humanitarian and development activities that could still operate in the new environment, SIGAR found these changes were not reflected in USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS).

SIGAR found that neither State nor USAID consistently followed all three of GAO's key practices for monitoring the implementation of foreign assistance awards. The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016, Pub. L. No. 114-191, requires State and USAID to monitor their foreign assistance efforts and evaluate the outcomes of their work.

Additionally, SIGAR found that USAID's Mission to Afghanistan chose to rely on implementing partners' monitoring policies and procedures and opted not to use its own third-party monitor to perform site visits for one of its awards. This limited the agency's ability to monitor partner progress and adjust GBV activities based on those observations. Without site visits, USAID may not have all the information it needs to fully and independently assess its implementing partners' operations. For example, site visits could provide vital additional information not included in progress reports, such as beneficiary satisfaction, availability of services, and the extent to which the implementing partner is meeting the terms of the award agreement.

SIGAR found that State’s awards had 191 GBV-related targets and its implementing partners met 121 of those targets. Additionally, SIGAR found that USAID’s awards had 16 GBV-related targets, and its implementing partners met 7 of those targets. Together, State and USAID’s implementing partners met 128 (or 62 percent) of the 207 GBV-related targets from the awards SIGAR reviewed.

SIGAR made one recommendation to the Secretary of State and one recommendation to USAID’s Mission Director for the Mission of Afghanistan. State concurred with the recommendation and asked SIGAR to direct the recommendation from the Bureau of Budget and Planning to State’s Mission Afghanistan. SIGAR made this change as requested. USAID also concurred with the recommendation.

Staffing the Mission: Lessons from the U.S. Reconstruction of Afghanistan

SIGAR-25-05-LL; November 21, 2024

SIGAR examined how U.S. officials were unable to overcome critical deficiencies in U.S. military and civilian personnel practices during the two decades in Afghanistan. SIGAR found that in its effort to rebuild Afghanistan over 20 years, U.S. government agencies suffered from a chronic lack of institutional preparation that consistently prevented them from getting the right people into the right jobs at the right times. SIGAR found that politically driven timelines hindered long-term thinking that made it difficult to invest in U.S. institutions to effectively rebuild Afghanistan.

SIGAR identified three critical issues: 1) a recurring inability to staff a demanding mission, 2) rapid turnover of the staff, and 3) poor coordination between military and civilian organizations. SIGAR found that DoD, State, and USAID training for staff often fell short in preparing personnel for specific tasks and challenges they encountered in Afghanistan. Additionally, coordination was a challenge and growing insecurity forced civilian agencies to depend on the military for various needs, creating a conflict as immediate military priorities clashed with the long-term political nature of reconstruction efforts.

Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Afghanistan: USAID is Meeting Programming Goals but Could Be Providing Better Oversight

SIGAR-25-01-AR; October 10, 2024

SIGAR conducted this audit to examine USAID water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programming authorized by the Water Act and implemented since August 2021. SIGAR’s objectives were to assess the extent to which USAID’s Water Act programming 1) complied with Water Act requirements, 2) met program objectives, and 3) complied with USAID oversight requirements.

SIGAR found that USAID designed Ru-WASH to comply with the Water Act’s long-term sustainability and maximum impact requirements. For example, Ru-WASH’s original design included gender-based programming activities, such as building boys’ and girls’ WASH facilities in primary and secondary-level schools and health centers. Ru-WASH’s original design also included long-term sustainability activities, such as capacity building with the former Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRDD), so the MRDD could generate and collect revenue to allow the ministry to self-sustain WASH infrastructure and activities.

The Korkho irrigation canal under construction in Badakhshan Province. (WFP photo)



SIGAR determined that Afghanistan’s operating environment undermines Ru-WASH’s ability to achieve the Water Act’s long-term sustainability goal because Afghanistan lacks a host government with whom USAID can coordinate. Following the Taliban’s August 2021 takeover of Afghanistan, USAID worked with the UN International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to modify Ru-WASH’s implementation strategy by focusing on local-level institutions, such as community development councils (CDC). However, in May 2024, the Taliban dissolved the CDCs in all 34 provinces and mandated that international organizations engage with the Taliban directly for program coordination and implementation. WASH strategies and best practices indicate that for WASH programming to be sustainable, programming should engage host governments and national-level institutions, in addition to engaging with local-level institutions. In the absence of national level coordination, Ru-WASH cannot ensure the sustainability of its programming.

SIGAR found that while USAID met its oversight and adaptive management requirements, USAID chose not to increase its oversight activities for Ru-WASH programming despite Afghanistan’s changed operating environment. USAID reviewed its oversight strategy after the Taliban takeover and determined that it was adequate, thus meeting USAID’s adaptive management requirements. However, even though USAID and UNICEF modified Ru-WASH’s programming after the Taliban takeover, USAID chose not to exercise an agreement clause allowing it to perform site visits through a third-party monitor. USAID told SIGAR that conducting site visits was “optional and not mandatory,” that UNICEF provides sufficient oversight and monitoring of project results, and that USAID relies on public international organization internal policies and procedures for monitoring public international organization agreements, not USAID’s own oversight policies or procedures.

SIGAR did not make a recommendation due to the limited time left prior to the scheduled conclusion of the Ru-WASH program. However, should USAID extend Ru-WASH or conduct additional Water Act-authorized programming in Afghanistan, USAID should consider long-term sustainability of WASH programming and require site visits as part of program oversight.

ONGOING AND PLANNED OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

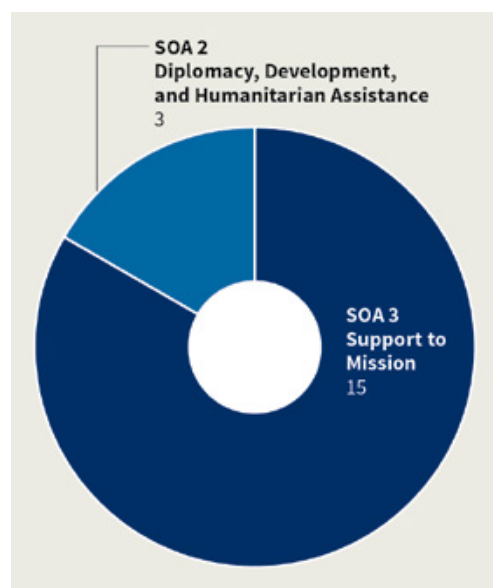
As of December 31, 2024, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 34 ongoing and 14 planned projects related to OES, including the examples highlighted below. Tables 10, 11, and 12, contained in Appendixes E and F, list the titles and objectives for all ongoing and planned projects.

Diplomacy, Development Assistance, and Humanitarian Assistance

- **State OIG** is conducting a multipart review of the Afghan special immigrant visa (SIV) program, to assess the number of SIV applications received and processed, and their processing times; the status and recommendations made by State OIG in “Quarterly Reporting on Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program Improvement” (AUD-MERO-20-24, June 2020) and “Review of Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program” (AUD-MERO-20-35, June 2020); the status of SIV recipients; adjustments made to processing SIV applications from 2018 to 2021; and the whole of State OIG reporting on the SIV program in capping report.
- **USAID OIG** is conducting an audit to assess USAID oversight of implementer efforts to manage security and safety risks and mitigate Taliban interference with assistance in Afghanistan.

Figure 4.

Ongoing and Planned Projects by Strategic Oversight Area



Support to Mission

- The **DoD OIG** is conducting an audit to assess the effectiveness of the DoD’s management of the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program V contract in support of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts Doha at Camp As Sayliyah.
- The **DHS OIG** is conducting an evaluation of DHS’ monitoring of the End of Immigration Parole to assess whether DHS has processes, procedures, and resources to ensure parolees are lawfully present in the U.S. and determine whether consequences exist for parolees who stay in the U.S. after parole expiration or revocation.

HOTLINE AND INVESTIGATIONS

INVESTIGATIONS

The DoD OIG's criminal investigative component, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), maintained investigative personnel in Bahrain and Kuwait, where they worked on cases related to OES and Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS). DCIS agents also worked on OES/OFS-related cases from offices in the United States. State OIG and USAID OIG investigators worked on cases related to OES/OFS from Washington, D.C., El Salvador, Germany, Israel, South Africa, and Thailand.

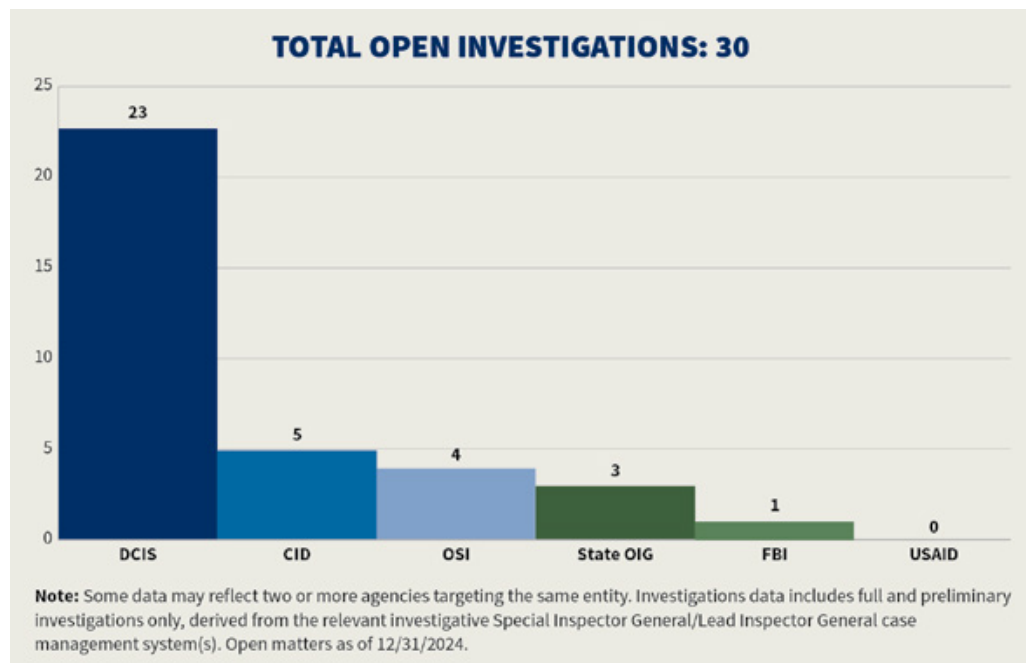
During this quarter, investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies had 30 open investigations and closed 7 investigations. Four referrals were made to the Department of Justice during this quarter.

The Lead IG agencies and their partners continue to use the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group (FCIWG) framework to coordinate investigative activities, deconflict potential or common targets, and interact for logistical and legal support. The FCIWG framework consists of representatives from DCIS, State OIG, USAID OIG, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Figure 5 displays the data on investigations related to OES/OFS.

Figure 5.

OES-related Investigation Activities, October 1–December 31, 2024



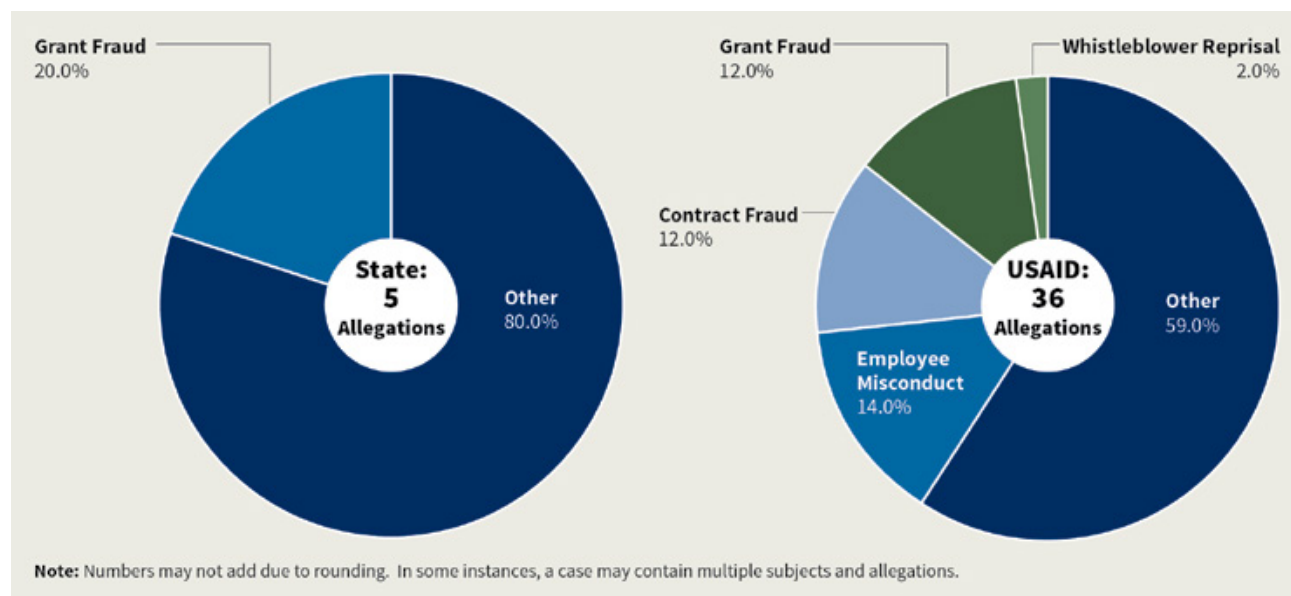
HOTLINE ACTIVITY

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints specific to its agency. The hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report violations of law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; or abuse of authority.

During the quarter, the DoD OIG hotline investigator received no complaints or allegations related to OES or Afghanistan. State OIG received 5 allegations and referred 4 cases. USAID OIG received 36 allegations and did not refer any cases. In some instances, a case may contain multiple allegations.

Figure 6.

State, and USAID OES-related Hotline Activities, October 1–December 31, 2024



APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Classified Appendix to this Report

A classified appendix to this report provides additional information on Operation Enduring Sentinel, as noted in several sections of this report. The appendix will be delivered to relevant agencies and congressional committees.

APPENDIX B

About the Lead Inspector General

The Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. Section 419, previously found at 5 U.S.C. App, Section 8L) established the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations. The Lead IG agencies are the Offices of Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (State), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Section 419 requires the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to appoint a Lead IG from among the Inspectors General of the Lead IG agencies upon the commencement or designation of a military operation that exceeds 60 days as an overseas contingency operation or receipt of notification thereof.

Lead IG oversight of the operation “sunset” at the end of the first fiscal year after commencement or designation in which the total amount appropriated for the operation is less than \$100,000,000.

The Lead IG agencies collectively carry out the Lead IG statutory responsibilities to:

- Submit to Congress on a quarterly basis a report on the contingency operation and to make that report available to the public.
- Develop a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight of the operation.
- Ensure independent and effective oversight of programs and operations of the U.S. Government in support of the operation through either joint or individual audits, inspections, investigations, and evaluations.

APPENDIX C

Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Report

This report complies with section the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. Section 419), which requires that the designated Lead IG provide a quarterly report, available to the public, on each overseas contingency operation, and is consistent with the requirement that a biannual report be published by the Lead IG on the activities of the Inspectors General with respect to that overseas contingency operation. The Chair of the Council of the Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency designated the DoD IG as the Lead IG for Operation Enduring Sentinel (OES). The Lead IG appointed the State IG to be the Associate IG for OES.

This report covers the period from October 1 to December 31, 2024. The three Lead IG agencies—DoD OIG, State OIG, and USAID OIG—and partner oversight agencies contributed the content of this report.

To fulfill the congressional mandate to report on OES, the Lead IG agencies gather data and information from Federal agencies and open sources. The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of audits, inspections, investigations, and evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited the information collected through open-source research or from Federal agencies, and the information provided represents the view of the source cited in each instance.

INFORMATION COLLECTION FROM AGENCIES AND OPEN SOURCES

Each quarter, the Lead IG agencies gather information from the DoD, State, USAID, and other Federal agencies about their programs and operations related to OES. The Lead IG agencies use the information provided by their respective agencies for quarterly reporting and oversight planning.

This report also draws on current, publicly available information from reputable sources. Sources used in this report may include the following:

- U.S. Government statements, press conferences, and reports
- Reports issued by international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and think tanks
- Media reports

The Lead IG agencies use open-source information to assess information obtained through their agency information collection process and provide additional detail about the operation.

REPORT PRODUCTION

The DoD IG, as the Lead IG for this operation, is responsible for assembling and producing this report. The DoD OIG, State OIG, and USAID OIG draft the sections of the report related to the activities of their agencies and then participate in editing the entire report. Once assembled, each OIG coordinates a two-phase review process of the report within its own agency. During the first review, the Lead IG agencies ask relevant offices within their agencies to comment, correct inaccuracies, and provide additional documentation. The Lead IG agencies incorporate agency comments, where appropriate, and send the report back to the agencies for a second review prior to publication. The final report reflects the editorial view of the DoD OIG, State OIG, and USAID OIG as independent oversight agencies.

APPENDIX D

State- and USAID-funded Activities During the Quarter

Table 8.

USAID Afghanistan Programs Supporting Afghan Women and Girls

Program	Program Description
Women's Scholarship Endowment (WSE) 9/27/2018–9/26/2028 \$60,000,000	USAID/Afghanistan's WSE Activity aims to assist Afghan women in obtaining a university or graduate education either in-person or online in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) and other fields of study, better enabling them to overcome barriers to gaining employment, raise their incomes, and help them achieve leadership roles within their families and communities. The program also provides career development and leadership training to scholars to better prepare them to enter the workforce.
Young Women Lead (YWL) 9/2023–9/2025 \$4,935,797	Young Women Lead (YWL) activity aims to expand post-secondary education opportunities and increase access in fields of study where females are allowed at the post-secondary education level such as allied health. Allied health fields include anesthesia, dental prosthesis, medical technology, midwifery, nursing, and pharmacy.
Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan 12/30/2022–12/31/2026 \$27,284,620	Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan (SSSA) aims to sustain access and improve retention in local, quality higher education opportunities for male and female students living in Afghanistan. SSSA meets the needs of young women living in all provinces of Afghanistan, delivering quality higher education and targeted academic programs, including college preparatory classes, wrap-around services, and extracurricular programs.
Accessible and Quality Basic Education (AQBE) 10/1/2023–9/30/2028 \$79,500,000	Still in the startup phase, the purpose of AQBE is to improve safe, equitable access to quality learning for primary school-aged girls and boys and secondary school-aged girls
Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (Ru-WASH) 6/24/2020–6/23/2025 \$35,841,332	The Ru-WASH activity addresses the following needs in Afghanistan: acute water and sanitation needs in underserved, rural and peri-urban areas of Afghanistan; unequal sanitation facilities for girls and boys in schools; lack of adequate WASH facilities in health care facilities; service delivery and operations support to sustain critical WASH structures, including community-level structures; and transmission of the COVID-19 virus in schools and their surrounding catchment communities in high-risk COVID-19 areas.
Urban Health Initiative (UHI) 10/14/2020–10/13/2025 \$104,000,000	The goal of UHI is to improve health outcomes for people living in urban areas, with a special focus on women, children and other vulnerable populations. In order to achieve this, UHI provides the following interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring, training, and supportive supervision to health care providers, in public and private facilities, to improve the quality of basic service delivery • Support to midwifery-led care networks to increase women's access to services • Strengthen COVID response and treatment • Promote virtual care through the establishment of mobile service delivery opportunities and a telementoring platform • Procure and supply essential medicines, equipment, and commodities for select health facilities

Program	Program Description
Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT) 7/10/2020–7/9/2025 \$117,000,000	<p>The goal of AFIAT is to improve the health outcomes of the Afghan people, particularly women of childbearing age and preschool children, in rural and peri-urban parts of Afghanistan. In order to achieve this, AFIAT provides the following interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring, training, and supportive supervision to health care providers, in public facilities, to improve the quality of basic service delivery. • Build core competency of midwives to deliver maternal and child health services • Co-lead the NGO Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Management Group to help meet the needs of health facilities for essential medicines and supplies • Strengthen the national health management information system (HMIS) to ensure accurate tracking of health service update and outcomes • Strengthen COVID response and treatment • Provide oversight for the development and implementation of the 2023 Afghanistan National Health Survey, a household-level survey that looks at health outcomes—especially for women and children.
Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS) 8/1/2022–7/31/2025 \$18,054	<p>LHSS represents USAID’s highly successful, long-term engagement in health private sector social marketing (formerly SHOPS-Plus). The goal of LHSS is to increase the use of priority health services through strategic expansion of private sector approaches within the health system.</p> <p>Through a partnership with the Afghanistan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO), LHSS promotes affordable, socially marketed health products focused on women and children. Their current basket of products includes micronutrients, iron folate, postnatal care products, antidiarrheal treatment, water treatment, and family planning products.</p> <p>It is estimated that 22 percent of Afghan women who use modern contraceptives rely on LHSS-supported products. Additionally, LHSS contributes 16 percent of total household water treatment use, 11 percent of oral rehydration salts use, and 5 percent of micronutrient use nationally.</p>
National Disease Surveillance Response (NDSR) 2/2/2022–9/30/2031 Annual buy-in (amount changes) \$50,000,000 in FY 2023	<p>The NDSR is Afghanistan’s only comprehensive indicator and event-based surveillance system. It tracks and reports on 17 priority infectious diseases and pregnancy-related deaths from 613 sentinel sites. This real time data provides critical information on outbreaks (many of which disproportionately affect women and children), allowing for rapid and targeted response.</p>
Global Health Supply Chain Management (GHSC-PSM) 4/20/2015–11/28/2026 \$25,000,000	<p>GHSC-PSM serves as the central procurement mechanism for USAID Missions worldwide to purchase high quality contraceptives and other essential public health supplies. This mechanism is used by the Afghanistan Mission to procure contraceptive commodities for the USAID-supported social marketing program (LHSS).</p>
Information, Dialogue, and Rights in Afghanistan (IDR) 9/23/2022–6/30/2026 \$14,079,528	<p>This activity supports women’s empowerment through various interventions that protect access to independent sources of information, create platforms for rights-based discourse, and promote policy dialogue on the conditions for all Afghans to live in dignity and rights. Specifically, IDR activities support reporting on rights and governance issues of public interest; developing a strong cadre of female journalists and producers, helping journalists operate safely and effectively, enabling Afghan civic activists to advocate and facilitating dialogue on inclusive governance.</p>

(continued on next page)

Program	Program Description
Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls 5/30/2022–5/29/2025 \$30,000,000	This activity supports the re-establishment of comprehensive support services for women and girls and contributes to an enabling environment for women's rights and women's participation. The activity's three broad objectives are to: 1) provide access to essential services that prevent and respond to VAWG according to international norms and standards; 2) support the livelihoods of vulnerable women through training, entrepreneurship support, and job placements; and 3) support women-led civil society organizations and networks to advance women's rights in Afghanistan.
Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan's Recovery (STAR) 2/18/2021–12/31/2024 \$28,338,901	The Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan's Recovery (STAR) program activities aim to build the resilience of Afghan communities in some of the country's poorest and most conflict-affected districts. The program strengthens the food and livelihood security of families who have struggled throughout the country's long war, providing cash assistance, resilience-focused agricultural and livestock support, and market skills and linkages. In addition, targeted communities will be supported to rehabilitate or construct critical WASH infrastructure for improved access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. The program also mainstreams protection, focusing on women, girls, and other vulnerable groups.
Counter Trafficking in Persons (CTIP III) 10/2/2024 - 9/30/2027 \$8,250,000	Counter Trafficking in Persons (CTIP III) is still in the start phase. The program will focus on raising public awareness to identify and refer trafficking in persons (TIP) cases, strengthening protection and recovery services for victims, enhancing rehabilitation and reintegration support, and empowering local CSOs through capacity building and grants. It will use 50% of resources for local solutions to counter TIP and support survivors.
Afghanistan Competitiveness for Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA) 1/28/2020–4/26/2025 \$105,722,822	Subsequent to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, ACEBA resumed work with the private sector prioritizing livelihoods support. The activity retains its market focus and where possible maintains existing efforts in its key value chains of carpets, cashmere, and saffron, while also adding a new value chain for humanitarian goods and services. All value chains are recognized for their potential to deliver demonstrable results from downstream value-add, sales, exports, and job creation particularly in providing livelihood opportunities for women.
Exports, Jobs, and Market Linkages for Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains 1/31/2019–4/30/2025 \$14,941,606	<p>The Exports, Jobs, and Market Linkages in the Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains activity supports the Afghan carpet and jewelry sectors as major drivers of broad-based economic growth and sustainable employment in Afghanistan, primarily for women.</p> <p>The goal of the program is to create jobs and exports within the carpet and jewelry sectors, driving \$20 million in direct-to-market sales of finished Afghan carpet and jewelry products (\$19 million in sales of carpets and \$1 million in sales of jewelry) thus supporting new jobs, particularly for women. The carpet and jewelry value chains were selected for their exceptional potential of creating jobs for women, unlike many other economic sectors.</p> <p>Since the program began in 2019, it has added 59,987 jobs for women, 45,019 of which were added since the Taliban takeover in August 2021. The results exceeded the project's target of 29,000 jobs.</p>

Program	Program Description
Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security Program (SRL-FS) 7/31/2022–7/31/2026 \$80,000,000	<p>The purpose of the SRL-FS activity is to improve the food security of crisis and emergency level affected population groups in the 8 most food insecure provinces of Afghanistan. The program helps minimize the impacts of economic disruption and instability, drought, and other recent shocks on vulnerable, and at-risk agriculture-based communities and livelihoods; it also helps to minimize negative effects on productive agricultural assets in targeted provinces and districts of Afghanistan, with a focus on women and vulnerable populations. This assistance also aims to enhance food security and improve nutrition and near-term resilience of vulnerable smallholder farmers and herders including landless and women-headed households. This activity emphasizes support to women alongside Afghan Value Chains-Program listed below.</p>
Afghan Value Chains-Program (AVCP) 6/9/2018–6/8/2025 \$75,672,170	<p>AVCP is a market-driven, private sector-focused program that aims to sustainably strengthen livestock and crops value chains, resulting in increased incomes, employment, commercial viability, resiliency, and productivity. AVCP is aiming to increase food security and support for women in agriculture, identifying channels for women to continue and increase participation in Afghanistan's economy.</p> <p>The project facilitates the integration of women into livestock and crops value chains and seeks to upgrade the roles of women already participating in the agriculture sector</p>
Women and Man in Agriculture (WAMA) 10/1/2024–9/30/2029 \$59,910,649	<p>The purpose of the Women and Men in Agriculture (WAMA) activity is to improve food security for all Afghans and expand women's empowerment and benefit by supporting sustainable agricultural livelihoods. WAMA will focus on private sector-led broad-based market systems development to reactivate the rural economy and preserve the gains of USAID's investments in agriculture over the last two decades.</p>
Afghanistan Integrated Youth Activity (AIYA) 10/1/2024–9/30/2029 \$62,000,000	<p>The Afghanistan Integrated Youth Activity aims to empower Afghan youth, particularly girls and young women, by equipping them with market-relevant technical and soft skills. This initiative seeks to enhance income, food security, and economic resilience among participants. The overarching goal of AIYA is to improve learning outcomes and livelihood opportunities for young women and men. Expected outcomes include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved post-secondary technical and vocational education or learning opportunities for youth, with a focus on market-relevant, skills-based learning within the agricultural sector and its related value chains. 2. Youth, particularly girls and young women, acquire market-relevant skills to improve livelihood opportunities and engage in climate.

Source: USAID Afghanistan, response to USAID OIG request for information, 12/7/2024.

Table 9.

State-funded Non-humanitarian Assistance Activities in Afghanistan During the Quarter

Program	Activity Highlights
Consolidated Community-Based Agriculture and Rural Development-Access to Licit Livelihoods 2.0 \$14,691,263	Supports male and female farmers in six provinces with a history of high opium poppy cultivation to transition to licit crop production and connects them with agribusinesses and exporters to facilitate market linkages. As reported last quarter, this new Letter of Agreement was enacted on September 26, 2024, consisting of \$3,000,000 in FY 2023 INCLE funds and \$11,691,263 in remaining funding from the first phase of the project (now removed from this table as the first phase concluded on September 25, 2024).
Afghan Opiate Trade Project \$3,272,548	Supports UN research and analysis initiatives to understand global trafficking trends of Afghan opiates. This Letter of Agreement concluded in November 2024 upon the November 11, 2024, issuance of the Letter of Agreement for the second phase of the project, consisting of \$3,224,561 in repurposed, previously obligated and disbursed funding to UNODC from remaining balances on closed INL projects.
Afghan Opiate Trade Project Phase II \$3,103,738	Supports UN research and analysis initiatives to understand global trafficking trends of Afghan opiates. This Letter of Agreement began on November 11, 2024, and consists of \$3,103,738 in repurposed, previously obligated and disbursed funding to UNODC from remaining balances on closed INL projects.
Afghanistan Opium Survey \$7,310,465	Supports the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's annual Afghanistan opium cultivation survey to inform international community of opium poppy cultivation and production trends.
Drugs Monitoring Platform \$4,097,041	Monitors trafficking and seizures of Afghan-origin drugs in near real-time.
Counternarcotics Public Information \$7,029,264	Supports Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty-affiliated public information outlets in Afghanistan to promote counternarcotics public awareness campaigns.
Assistance to Drug Treatment Centers \$13,304,680	Supports drug treatment centers in Afghanistan for women and children in six provinces. On November 18, 2024, an Amendment IOLOA reprogrammed \$2,130,111.47 of previously obligated and disbursed funding to Colombo Plan from remaining balances on closed INL projects.
Monitoring and Evaluation and Impact Assessment of Community-Based Agriculture and Rural Development and UN Women Service Points \$4,837,516	Provides in-depth third-party monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment services for the Community-Based Agriculture and Rural Development program and third-party monitoring for INL's work with UN Women.
Drug Use Disorder Treatment and Care for Afghan People \$8,926,690	Supports service quality improvement of 24 drug use disorder treatment and care services to ensure people with drug use disorders, especially women, adolescents and children in Afghanistan have increased access to quality, evidence-based, humane drug use disorder treatment and recovery support in project provinces.

Program	Activity Highlights
Afghan Women Economic Empowerment Through Leveraging the Private Sector (WEELP) \$1,802,776	Advances the economic security and resilience of Afghan women in Afghanistan. Supports the ability of the private sector, NGOs, and other CSOs to engage and provide assistance to Afghan women.
Land Release and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) Clearance \$3,600,000	Reduces at-risk, illicitly proliferated, or indiscriminately used conventional weapons of war, increases civilian security, and promotes U.S. foreign policy interests in Badakhshan and Kunduz Provinces, Afghanistan.
Weapons and Ammunition Disposal Teams \$5,789,800	Conducts non-technical survey, excavation, disposal (mechanical), and mine risk education.
Third Party Monitoring and Oversight \$6,625,000	Monitors, mentors, and develops Conventional Weapons Destruction program in Afghanistan working closely with PM/WRA.
Conventional Weapons Destruction \$3,375,000	Improves security and stability for Afghan civilian population by removing and destroying ammunition, explosives, explosive source material, and weapons to restrict their flow to armed opposition groups and to prevent civilian accidents.
Demining, Risk Education, and Re-Integration Project in Maydan Wardak Province \$3,282,000	Removes landmines and Explosive Remnants of War, thereby reducing civilian casualties, ensuring a safe environment, and enabling productive land use for agriculture, grazing, habitation, and other economic development initiatives.
Support to UN-led Humanitarian Mine Action Coordination in Afghanistan \$2,680,975	United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) will ensure Afghan communities benefit from humanitarian mine action initiatives unimpeded by dangerous explosive ordnance.
Non-technical Survey and Land Release in 49 Contaminated Districts \$1,500,000	Collects up-to-date, reliable, and accurate data and information, to identify and confirm actual scope and social economic impact of mines/Explosive Remnants of War.
Survey and Clearance of Abandoned Improvised Munitions in Helmand \$4,858,569	Increases stability and improves human security through removal of abandoned improvised munitions and other Explosive Ordnance from impacted communities in Helmand province.
Victim Assistance in Afghanistan—Emergency mobile physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education sessions across Kabul, Kandahar, and Nimroz provinces \$1,606,000	Provides emergency support to landmine survivors through physical rehabilitation, psychological support, and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education sessions, and enhance quality and availability of prosthetics and orthotics services.
Victims Assistance and Physical Rehabilitation Project in Paktika Province \$500,000	Builds local capacity and establish a mechanism for disability and rehabilitation services to prevent long-term disability; and facilitate physical rehabilitation for victims of war and manmade disasters in Patika province.

Source: State, response to OIG request for information, 1/10/2025.

APPENDIX E

Ongoing Oversight Projects

Tables 10 and 11 list the titles and objectives for Lead IG and partner agencies' ongoing oversight projects related to OES.

Table 10.

Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OES by Lead IG Agencies, as of December 31, 2024

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of the DoD's Management of the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program Contract for the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts at Camp As Sayliyah

To assess the effectiveness of the DoD's management of the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program V contract in support of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE) Doha at Camp As Sayliyah.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Review of the Department of State Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program

To assess the number of SIV applications received and processed and their processing times; the status and resolution of recommendations made by State OIG in "Quarterly Reporting on Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program Needs Improvement" (AUD-MERO-20-34, June 2020) and "Review of the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program" (AUD-MERO-20-35, June 2020); the status of SIV recipients; adjustments made to processing SIV applications from 2018 to 2021; and the whole of State OIG reporting on the SIV Program in a capping report.

Inspection of Embassy Doha, Qatar

To evaluate the programs and operations of the U.S. Embassy in Doha, Qatar.

Classified Inspection of Embassy Doha, Qatar

To evaluate the programs and operations of the U.S. Embassy in Doha, Qatar.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit of USAID's Efforts to Safeguard Implementers and Activities in Afghanistan

To determine USAID's oversight of implementer efforts in Afghanistan to mitigate; 1) security and safety risks in activities, and 2) Taliban interference in activities.

Table 11.

Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OES by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of December 31, 2024

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

National Snapshot of Recent Trends in the Refugee Resettlement Program

To 1) summarize nationwide data on the Office of Refugee Resettlement Program; 2) identify recent trends in participation and outcomes; and 3) identify any challenges encountered by States, Replacement Designees, and domestic resettlement agencies and other non-profit organizations in administering ORR-funded benefits and services

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Review of Asylum Application Adjudication Processing in Response to Ahmed vs. DHS

To determine whether missed aliases or incomplete resolution of potential matches to derogatory records have increased following the Ahmed vs. DHS settlement agreement.

Evaluation of DHS’ Monitoring of the End of Immigration Parole

To assess whether DHS has processes, procedures, and resources to monitor the end of immigration parole to ensure parolees are lawfully present in the U.S. and determine what enforcement consequences exist for parolees who stay in the U.S. after parole expiration or revocation.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Participation in Operation Allies Refuge and Operation Allies Welcome

To assess the effectiveness of the FBI’s coordination with its Federal partners to support Operation Allies Refuge and Operation Allies Welcome.

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

Audit of U.S. Agencies’ Oversight of Funds Provided to Public International Organizations for Activities in Afghanistan

To assess the extent to which U.S. agencies and PIOs conduct oversight of U.S. funds provided for assistance to Afghanistan.

State Implementing Partner Agreements with the Taliban

To determine the extent to which: 1) State’s implementing partners have entered into agreements with the Taliban to facilitate program implementation; 2) those agreements were completed and reviewed in accordance with applicable requirements; and 3) agreements with the Taliban have affected program implementation.

U.S.-Funded Capital Assets in Afghanistan

To reevaluate and update SIGAR’s prior capital assets report to determine the current status of these assets, including the extent to which the Taliban, or other actors in Afghanistan, have maintained and use these assets.

Follow on Performance Audit of State’s Demining Activities in Afghanistan

To determine the extent to which State performed all required oversight activities including annual reviews of award risk assessment and monitoring plans, quarterly reviews of performance progress and financial reports, and final review memoranda; State developed measurable award agreement targets and objectives and connected them to higher level goals; and funds provided for demining activities have directly benefited the Taliban regime or prohibited entities and individuals.

APPENDIX F

Planned Oversight Projects

Table 12 lists the titles and objectives for Lead IG and partner agencies’ planned oversight projects related to OES.

Table 12.

Planned Oversight Projects Related to OES by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of December 31, 2024

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Review of the Coordinator of Afghanistan Relocation Operations

To determine whether CARE-Doha is 1) operating in accordance with State contract oversight requirements; 2) operating in accordance with State security requirements; and 3) housing and processing Afghan guests in accordance with applicable standards.

ACRONYMS

Acronym	
AAU	Afghanistan Affairs Unit
ACEBA	Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Business Activity
AQIS	al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
ASO	al-Siddiq office, a regional ISIS directorate covering Afghanistan
BHA	USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
BLA	Baloch Liberation Army
CARE	State Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CDA	Chargé d’Affaires
DCIS	Defense Criminal Investigative Service
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCIWG	Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group
FY	fiscal year
GEC	Global Engagement Center
IDP	internally displaced persons
INL	State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIS-K	ISIS-Khorasan
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
Lead IG	Lead Inspector General
Lead IG agencies	DoD, State, and USAID OIGs
MOU	memoranda of understanding
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OAW	Operation Allies Welcome

Acronym	
OBIM	DHS Office of Biometric Identity Management
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OES	Operation Enduring Sentinel
OFAC	Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assistance Control
OFS	Operation Freedom’s Sentinel
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OUSD(C)	Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller)
OUSD(P)	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
PM	State’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs
PRC	People’s Republic of China
PRM	State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SIV	Special Immigrant Visa
State	Department of State
Treasury	Department of the Treasury
TTP	Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNICEF	UN Children’s Fund
U.S.	United States
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
VEO	violent extremist organization
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	UN World Health Organization



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Men and women wait at a distribution site in Parwan province to receive cash to help their families cover their food needs. (WFP photo)

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