

## LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS



# OPERATION ENDURING SENTINEL AND OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO AFGHANISTAN



JANUARY 1, 2025–MARCH 31, 2025



**On the cover:** Empty food assistance boxes pile up at a distribution site in Kabul. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that 8 million Afghans may not receive emergency food assistance because of a lack of funding. (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 pursuant to Section 419 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

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 during the period January 1 through March 31, 2025. This report also discusses the planned, ongoing, and completed oversight work conducted by the Lead IG agencies—the DoD, State, and USAID OIGs—and our partner oversight agencies.

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arne B. Baker".

**Arne B. Baker**  
Associate Inspector General  
for OES  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of State

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Toayoa Aldridge".

**Toayoa Aldridge**  
Acting Deputy Inspector General  
Performing the Duties of  
the Inspector General  
U.S. Agency for International  
Development









Drivers prepare lunch next to a World Food Programme fleet truck while waiting for the road conditions and congestion to improve before continuing their journey to Kabul. (WFP photo)

# CONTENTS

JANUARY 1, 2025–MARCH 31, 2025

## 3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 4 MISSION UPDATE

- 4 U.S. Assistance
- 8 Security
- 12 Regional Stability
- 14 Diplomacy and Political Developments
- 22 Economy and Development
- 23 Humanitarian Assistance

## 27 APPENDIXES

- 27 Appendix A:  
Classified Appendix to this Report
- 27 Appendix B:  
About the Lead Inspector General
- 28 Appendix C:  
Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Report
- 29 Appendix D:  
Status of USAID and State Programs in Afghanistan
- 35 Appendix E:  
Completed Oversight Projects
- 36 Appendix F:  
Ongoing Oversight Projects
- 37 Appendix G:  
Hotline and Investigations
- 38 Acronyms
- 39 Map of Afghanistan
- 40 Endnotes





Empty food assistance boxes pile up at a distribution site in Kabul. The WFP estimated that 8 million Afghans may not receive emergency food assistance because of a lack of funding. (WFP photo)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**On January 20, President Donald J. Trump issued an executive order for an immediate 90-day pause on U.S. foreign assistance pending a review of all programs.**<sup>1</sup> As a result, nearly all State and USAID foreign assistance programs in Afghanistan came to a halt.<sup>2</sup> Some programs, particularly those that provide life-saving humanitarian assistance, continued briefly under a waiver. However, in early April, State terminated all but two programs in Afghanistan, one of which supported education for women and girls. Those two programs were extended through June.<sup>3</sup> Not all State and USAID offices provided information about the status of individual programs.<sup>4</sup>

**The Office of the Director of National Intelligence's (ODNI) annual terror threat assessment said the Afghanistan-based Islamic State of Iraq and Syria–Khorasan (ISIS-K) aims to attack the United States.** ISIS-K is the group's branch most capable of carrying out external terrorist attacks in the region and globally, although its capabilities vary, the ODNI said. Additionally, the ODNI stated that al-Qaeda and its global affiliates maintain their intent to target the United States and U.S. citizens.<sup>5</sup> However, State assessed that al-Qaeda does not have the capability to launch attacks from Afghanistan against the United States or its interests abroad.<sup>6</sup>

**The United States charged an ISIS-K attack planner in connection with the August 2021 ISIS-K attack on the Kabul airport.**<sup>7</sup> Pakistani authorities acted on Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) intelligence to arrest Mohammad Sharifullah, also known as “Jafar,” in Balochistan province near Pakistan's border with Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents later travelled to Pakistan to transfer Jafar to the United States, where he admitted his role in the suicide bomber attack, according to media reporting and court documents.<sup>9</sup>

**U.S.-origin weapons and equipment that fell into Taliban hands after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan remained a security concern in the region.**<sup>10</sup> Pakistani authorities said that small arms, night vision goggles, and other military articles are used by militants in the country's multiple insurgencies, including rifles used by Baloch separatists during a deadly passenger train hijacking in March, media reported.<sup>11</sup> President Trump said that the United States should reclaim its military hardware, but the Taliban responded that it would use the materiel to defend Afghanistan's sovereignty.<sup>12</sup>

**President Trump also issued an executive order suspending the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).**<sup>13</sup> On January 26, State's Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts paused flights from Afghanistan for all Afghans eligible for relocation assistance, including Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants, refugees, and Afghans awaiting family reunification.<sup>14</sup>

**Afghanistan continued to experience one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.** After acknowledging that the United States has been the largest donor to Afghanistan for more than 2 decades, the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires for the U.S. Mission to the United Nations said that it was “well past time” that Afghan stakeholders, including the Taliban, take responsibility for responding to the needs of the Afghan people.<sup>15</sup> More than 22 million Afghans rely on emergency humanitarian assistance.<sup>16</sup>



A WFP fleet convoy passes by a village in Samangan province on its way with mixed food commodities from Mazar-e-Sharif to Kabul. (WFP photo)



## MISSION UPDATE

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 and State also engage in security cooperation activities with Central Asian and South Asian regional partners to foster counterterrorism partnerships.<sup>17</sup>

## U.S. ASSISTANCE

### U.S. Government Announces Foreign Assistance Pause and Review, Terminates Many Programs

On January 20, the White House issued Executive Order 14169, “Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid,” which placed an immediate 90-day pause on U.S. foreign aid.<sup>18</sup> During the pause, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, provided guidelines to agency heads to review their programs for efficiency and consistency with U.S. foreign policy, and determine whether to continue, modify, or cease each foreign assistance program.<sup>19</sup>

Secretary Rubio and State’s Director of Foreign Assistance directed every State and USAID bureau, office, or other entity providing any type of foreign assistance to produce a list of all active, pending, and proposed grants, subgrants, contracts, and subcontracts, as well as an explanation of how the current or proposed use of obligated funds advances the President’s policy.<sup>20</sup>

**Stop-work orders:** Secretary Rubio’s guidance directed contracting and grants officers to issue temporary stop-work orders pending results of the review.<sup>21</sup> Most State and USAID-funded foreign assistance programs in Afghanistan came to a halt, as did third-party

**On March 10, Secretary Rubio announced that State was canceling 5,200 USAID awards—83 percent of USAID programs worldwide.**

monitoring of these programs.<sup>22</sup> The order paused new obligations and disbursements for foreign development assistance funds to foreign countries, implementing non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and contractors.<sup>23</sup>

**Waivers:** On January 24, Secretary Rubio authorized requests for waivers to allow emergency food assistance, as well as necessary administrative expenses, including salaries, to manage awards, prior expenses incurred under existing awards or legitimate expenses associated with stop-work orders, and exceptions to the pause approved by the State Director of Foreign Assistance.<sup>24</sup> Subsequent guidance modified the waiver request and approval process several times and expanded the authorization to request waivers for life-saving humanitarian assistance, including medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence assistance.<sup>25</sup> However, in early April, all but two programs in Afghanistan were terminated, one of which supported education for women and girls. Those programs were extended through June.<sup>26</sup>

According to State, the temporary waivers did not reflect a final Administration view on whether a particular program should ultimately be retained or terminated; these waivers were designed to continue certain programs while they conducted the broader review.<sup>27</sup>

**Program terminations:** On March 10, Secretary Rubio announced that State was canceling 5,200 USAID awards—83 percent of USAID programs worldwide.<sup>28</sup> On March 19, State announced that State-funded foreign assistance programs no longer required exceptions or waivers and were authorized to rescind stop-work orders and suspensions for paused programs.<sup>29</sup> In April, Secretary Rubio canceled an additional 139 grants totaling \$214 million.<sup>30</sup>

While some State and USAID offices provided information about the status of individual programs, others declined, noting that until the completion of a final report on the foreign assistance review, individual program status information is unavailable.<sup>31</sup> In April, State extended the foreign assistance review, which had an original completion date of April 20, to about May 20.<sup>32</sup> Further details about affected programs—including information about whether programs were active, had been terminated, or were pending waivers—are available in Appendix D on pages 29 to 34.

In addition to the foreign assistance pause, the White House issued additional executive orders that impacted foreign assistance in Afghanistan. (See Table 1.) A pair of executive orders withdrew the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO)—through which the international community, including the United States, had previously delivered foreign assistance—and the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>33</sup> State said that it complied with the executive orders and terminated all humanitarian assistance awards, and has ceased all bilateral interaction with the WHO, though the United States will remain a member of the WHO until January 2026.<sup>34</sup> State said that it has engaged an internal process to identify credible and transparent partners globally to assume activities previously undertaken by the WHO.<sup>35</sup>

**U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP):** Executive Order 14163 suspended the USRAP.<sup>36</sup> State said it will comply with court orders to continue processing Afghan applicants through the USRAP on a case-by-case basis.<sup>37</sup> On January 26, the Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE) paused all relocation flights from

Table 1.

**Executive Orders (EO) Relevant to OES Programs**

<b>EO 14169</b> Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid January 20, 2025	Instituted a “90-day pause in U.S. foreign development assistance for assessment of programmatic efficiencies and consistency with U.S. foreign policy;” paused new obligations and disbursements of development assistance funds to foreign countries, NGOs, international organizations and contractors.
<b>EO 14155</b> Withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization January 20, 2025	Withdrew the United States from the UN World Health Organization (WHO); paused all U.S. Government funds, support or resources to WHO; ordered recall of U.S. Government personnel and contractors; ordered identification of “credible and transparent U.S. partners” to assume necessary WHO activities.
<b>EO 14163</b> Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program January 20, 2025	Suspended the USRAP “until such time as the further entry into the United States of refugees aligns with the interests of the United States.” Within 90 days, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, is to submit a report to the President regarding whether resumption of entry of refugees into the United States under the USRAP would be in the interests of the United States.
<b>EO 14199</b> Withdrawing the United States from and Ending Funding to Certain United Nations Organizations and Reviewing United States Support to All International Organizations February 10, 2025	Withdrew the United States from and ended funding for the UN Human Rights Council; ordered a Secretary of State review of U.S. membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; ordered review of “all international intergovernmental organizations of which the United States is a member and provides any type of funding or other support, and all conventions and treaties to which the United States is a party.”

**Sources:** White House, “Executive Order 14155—Withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization,” 1/20/2025; White House, “Executive Order 14169—Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid,” 1/20/2025; White House, “Executive Order 14163—Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program,” 1/20/2025; White House, “Executive Order 14199—Withdrawing the United States from and Ending Funding to Certain United Nations Organizations and Reviewing United States Support to All International Organizations,” 2/10/2025.

Afghanistan to third countries for all Afghans eligible for relocation assistance, including Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants, refugees, and Afghans awaiting family reunification. As of the end of the quarter, CARE relocation flights remained paused.<sup>38</sup>

## Assistance Pause Immediately Affects Programs in Afghanistan

In response to Executive Order 14169, USAID and State implementing partners that received stop-work orders halted all activities and expenses, except for those necessary to carry out the stop-work directives.<sup>39</sup> As of the end of the quarter, awards were either terminated, issued full or partial stop-work orders, or exempted entirely as life-saving assistance.<sup>40</sup> While exempt activities continued during the review, payments to partners were frozen—including for completed and ongoing work—forcing many to pause operations, halt life-saving aid delivery, and, in some cases, terminate staff or close offices.<sup>41</sup>

**Program terminations:** USAID began issuing termination notices to implementers in February. As of the end of the quarter, 19 development awards funded through USAID Afghanistan had been terminated.<sup>42</sup> State reported that as of April 11, it had terminated 23 programs in Afghanistan with a total value of \$87,378,516. An additional program



**Some of the USAID and State programs given an initial waiver for providing life-saving support were subsequently terminated.**

valued at \$1,606,000 expired.<sup>43</sup> At the end of the quarter, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) said that they could not provide details on which awards remained active or were terminated, pending conclusion of the foreign assistance review.<sup>44</sup>

Some of the USAID and State programs given an initial waiver for providing life-saving support were subsequently terminated. For example, two USAID Afghanistan programs that focused on tuberculosis and maternal-child health were granted waivers on February 20 to continue life-saving humanitarian assistance.<sup>45</sup> However, both programs were terminated 6 days later, and while one was allowed to resume work in March, it was terminated for a second time 4 days later.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, State lifted the suspension of six humanitarian programs administered by its Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), valued at \$56.62 million.<sup>47</sup> However, shortly after the quarter ended, State PRM said that it had terminated all remaining funding for Afghanistan-related humanitarian programs.<sup>48</sup> The largest State PRM programs terminated were a \$34.56 million program that supported critical emergency health interventions in 32 out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan and a \$15.5 million program that provided emergency health care and medical vocational training.<sup>49</sup>

The terminations caused funding gaps and ended essential services for vulnerable Afghan populations.<sup>50</sup> Planned initiatives in health, education, and livelihoods were put on hold, affecting target beneficiaries, including women and children, and hindering progress toward program goals and expected outcomes.<sup>51</sup> For instance, the USAID-funded Afghanistan Health Survey gathered data on health and nutrition across 34 provinces.<sup>52</sup> However, the partner had to suspend the initiative entirely, despite an investment of more than \$6 million.<sup>53</sup>

**Unused commodities:** Food and agricultural commodities funded by USAID Afghanistan and valued at \$7.2 million were at risk of being looted or spoiling or missing the upcoming planting season. The commodities were intended to support 48,000 vulnerable households in the eight most food insecure provinces.<sup>54</sup>

**Reduced workforce:** USAID operated with a reduced workforce due to a February 4 directive that placed many staff on administrative leave and ordered overseas staff to return home within 30 days.<sup>55</sup> Nearly all of the USAID Afghanistan mission's 15 U.S. direct hire staff and 2 of 24 U.S. personal services contractors were placed on indefinite leave.<sup>56</sup> USAID Afghanistan reported that this disruption severely compromised the ability of the Mission to communicate with implementers, collect development data, respond to local challenges, and provide oversight of the expedited disposition of program assets left behind.<sup>57</sup> As of the end of the quarter, the Mission Director in Doha, Qatar and the Mission Controller in Astana, Kazakhstan were the only remaining USAID Afghanistan mission direct hire staff who were not on leave.<sup>58</sup>

On March 28, USAID informed staff that non-statutory positions would be terminated by September 2025, and that USAID would begin a multi-step process to merge with State.<sup>59</sup> As of the end of the quarter, State had not assumed responsibility for administering USAID programs or operations in Afghanistan.<sup>60</sup>

## SECURITY

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, State said.<sup>61</sup>

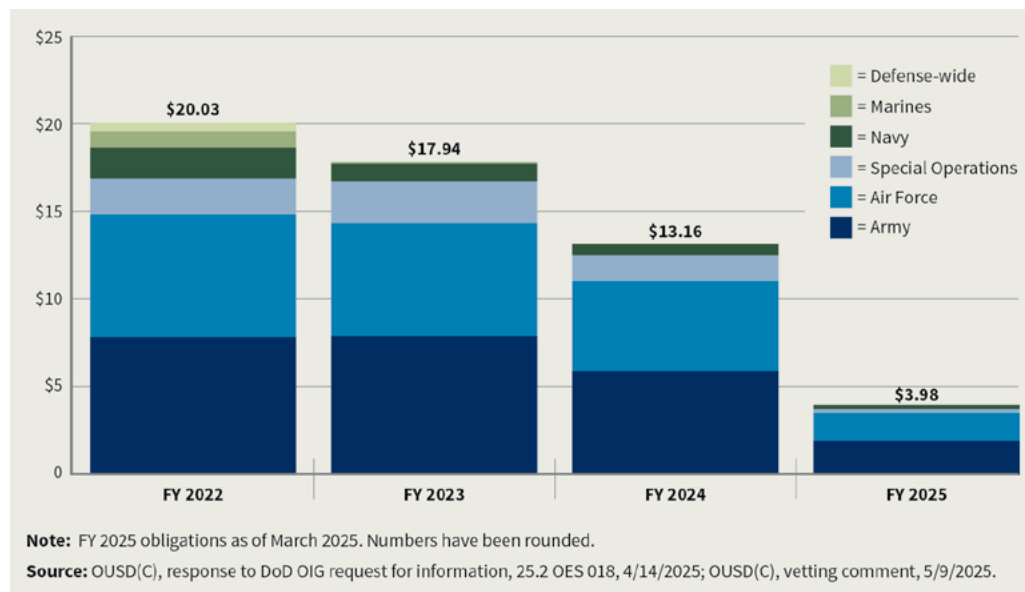
The DoD provided limited publicly releasable information about U.S. military activity related to OES during the quarter. Further information is available in the classified appendix to this report.

DoD funding for OES has declined since the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan in 2021. (See Figure 1.) The DoD Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer stated that operational costs for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) flights are captured by region and not by overflight of a specific country.<sup>62</sup> Overall U.S. Central Command costs for ISR activities during the quarter decreased to \$50.1 million from \$61.3 million last quarter and \$111.9 million during the 4th quarter of FY 2024.<sup>63</sup>

State said that the U.S. Government's most critical interests in Afghanistan are ensuring the country can never again become a launching pad for terrorist attacks against the United States and ensuring the welfare of all U.S. citizens detained in Afghanistan.<sup>64</sup> State said that the United States will never outsource its counterterrorism efforts to the Taliban and that the United States maintains the capability to conduct over-the-horizon counterterrorism operations against threats emanating from Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup> The Taliban must ensure Afghanistan can never again be used as a safe haven for terrorist groups to threaten the security of the United States, its allies, or any country, State said.<sup>66</sup>

Figure 1.

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



ISIS-K ACTIVITY

In March, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) issued its annual threat assessment, which described the Afghanistan-based ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) as the most dangerous ISIS branch. ISIS-K remains intent on attacking the West, including the U.S. homeland, and is the branch most capable of carrying out external terrorist attacks, such as attacks in South and Central Asia, the report stated.<sup>67</sup>

**Attacks:** ISIS-K claimed responsibility for a high-profile February suicide bombing that killed Hamidul Haq, the son of a founding figure of the Taliban. Haq headed the pro-Taliban Jamia Haqqania seminary in Pakistan’s northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which launched the Taliban movement in the 1990s, according to media reports.<sup>68</sup> Many Taliban members and current leaders studied at the seminary, which is considered an incubator for radical Islamists.<sup>69</sup>

The attack followed a high-profile ISIS-K suicide bombing last quarter that killed the Taliban’s acting Minister for Refugees, Khalil Rahman Haqqani, a U.S.-designated global terrorist and a key figure during the Taliban’s formation in the mid-1990s.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the attack that killed Haq, ISIS-K claimed at least eight attacks against foreigners, a Taliban cabinet minister, and civilians, according to the DIA, citing press reporting and a conflict-tracking database.<sup>71</sup> The attacks included a February attack against the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing and a January gun attack that killed a Chinese national in Takhar province, Afghanistan.<sup>72</sup>

**Finances:** The Department of the Treasury (Treasury) said that it anticipates that ISIS-K will continue to rely heavily on virtual assets and move funds quickly and securely.<sup>73</sup> ISIS-K continues to use bank accounts in Pakistan to make money transfers in addition to the informal “hawala” transfer system.<sup>74</sup> Treasury stated that ISIS-K will likely continue to try to generate revenue through economic operations and through its media apparatus.<sup>75</sup> Treasury reported that ISIS-K’s Voice of Khorasan magazine generated thousands of dollars in donations in 2024.<sup>76</sup>

**Recruiting:** The DIA reported that ISIS-K continued to use its media, including its propaganda arm, al-Azaim Media, which publishes content in multiple languages, to drive recruiting.<sup>77</sup> ISIS-K probably views Central Asian groups as especially receptive to its

message and as having greater access to external targets than Afghans, the DIA reported.<sup>78</sup>

**Training Camps:** the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team reported that ISIS-K operates training camps for fighters and suicide bombers in Afghanistan’s Badakhshan province. Training camps with were also present in Kunar and Nuristan provinces.<sup>79</sup>

Table 2.  
Estimated Number of Violent Extremist Organization Fighters in Afghanistan and Region

Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	4,000-6,000
ISIS-Khorasan (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, 25.2 OES 021, 25.2 OES 023, 25.2 OES 024, 4/9/2025; DIA, response to DoD OIG request for information, 24.4 OES 030, 10/9/2024.



## U.S. Charges Planner of Kabul Airport Attack

The Department of Justice (DoJ) announced on March 5 that the United States charged Mohammad Sharifullah, also known as “Jafar,” in connection with the August 2021 ISIS-K attack on the Kabul airport, which killed 13 U.S. Service members and approximately 160 Afghans as U.S. forces were withdrawing troops from Afghanistan.<sup>80</sup> The United States charged Sharifullah with providing and conspiring to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization resulting in death.<sup>81</sup> Sharifullah’s role in the attack, which occurred at the airport’s Abbey Gate, included scouting out a route to the airport that would allow the suicide bomber to avoid law enforcement and American or Taliban checkpoints, according to court documents.<sup>82</sup>

According to media, Pakistani authorities acted on CIA intelligence to arrest Sharifullah in southwest Balochistan province near Pakistan’s border with Afghanistan.<sup>83</sup> State said that the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad facilitated the transfer of the accused operative to U.S. custody, although other U.S. agencies coordinated with the Pakistani government on his arrest.<sup>84</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) transferred Sharifullah to the United States after Pakistan transferred him to U.S. custody, according to media reporting.<sup>85</sup>

Court documents stated that Sharifullah joined ISIS-K in or around 2016, and that he claimed to have supported or participated in other ISIS-K attacks. Sharifullah also claimed he provided firearms training to attackers involved in the deadly March 2024 attack on a nightclub near Moscow.<sup>86</sup>

## AL-QAEDA ACTIVITY

In its threat assessment, the ODNI said that al-Qaeda maintains its intent to target the United States and its citizens. The report noted that many of the group’s leaders are now in Iran.<sup>87</sup> According to the DIA, al-Qaeda leaders probably continue to comply with Taliban limits on external attack planning and other operations.<sup>88</sup> The DIA reported that it did not observe the Taliban regime exerting command and control over al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) or other global affiliates.<sup>89</sup>

According to State, the U.S. Government assessed that al-Qaeda has not reconstituted an operational presence in Afghanistan since the 2021 U.S. withdrawal of forces. State said that it did not assess al-Qaeda to currently have a capability to launch attacks from Afghanistan against the United States or its interests abroad and that neither the few remaining al-Qaeda core members, nor its regional affiliate AQIS, were plotting to attack the United States.<sup>90</sup>

However, the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team reported during the quarter that the Taliban maintained a permissive environment for al-Qaeda to consolidate, and allowed for safe houses under the protection of the Taliban intelligence service, and training camps scattered across Afghanistan.<sup>91</sup> Some member states noted that two senior al-Qaeda members were in highly secured areas in Kabul, one of which served as a training center for Taliban forces, according to the United Nations.<sup>92</sup>

According to the DIA, the Taliban conducted multiple raids against ISIS-K this quarter.

## TALIBAN ACTIVITY

State reported that the Taliban remains a cohesive organization.<sup>93</sup> While State reported that Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhundzada continued to make appointments at the national and sub-national level, it was unclear whether the appointments were to consolidate his control or were based on merit or institutional conditions.<sup>94</sup>

**Internal security:** According to the DIA, the Taliban conducted multiple raids against ISIS-K this quarter. The Taliban also enacted new internal security procedures, which probably will contribute to regional stability during the next year.<sup>95</sup> This included increased security measures to combat the smuggling of weapons in furtherance of Akhundzada's October decree to bring military weapons under his control.<sup>96</sup> Akhundzada also seeks to control weapons that could be used against the Taliban regime and neighboring countries, the DIA stated.<sup>97</sup> In January, the Taliban announced the seizure of 8,000 weapons and unspecified military equipment in Nimroz province.<sup>98</sup> In February, the Taliban police announced the installation of 10,000 additional closed-circuit video cameras with facial recognition capabilities to monitor activities in Kabul, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.<sup>99</sup> The Taliban claimed the cameras, provided by a Chinese company, would help in crime prevention, but the DIA stated that they probably will also help limit terrorist activity in Kabul.<sup>100</sup>

**ISIS-K infiltrations:** Taliban officials continued monitoring and investigating Taliban security forces to identify ISIS-K infiltrators during the quarter, the DIA stated.<sup>101</sup> However, the DIA stated that such infiltrations likely are insufficient to significantly impact security in Afghanistan over the next quarter.<sup>102</sup> In late January, Taliban officials arrested an unidentified member of the regime's General Directorate of Intelligence, alleging ties to ISIS-K, according to the DIA, citing a press report.<sup>103</sup>

**Reprisals against former government personnel:** The DIA assessed that Taliban leadership is almost certainly not directing attacks against former Afghan government and military personnel, and that any reprisals were "ad hoc" actions by low-level regime members.<sup>104</sup> The DIA stated that reporting indicates at least five instances of former Afghan government officials being arrested, tortured, or killed by low-level Taliban members this quarter.<sup>105</sup> However, the Taliban also conducted intelligence activities to monitor and arrest former Afghan government personnel, the DIA stated, citing press reporting.<sup>106</sup> In January, the Taliban arrested at least 57 people in Panjshir province on unknown charges, including a former bodyguard of Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, the former Chief Executive of Afghanistan.<sup>107</sup>

**U.S.-origin weapons:** President Trump has stated that future financial assistance to Afghanistan will be contingent upon the return of U.S. military arms and equipment.<sup>108</sup> A Taliban spokesperson stated on social media that the U.S.-origin weapons and equipment left behind by departing U.S. troops or provided to the former Afghan government now belong to Afghanistan and that the Taliban will use the weapons to defend against any attempts to reclaim them.<sup>109</sup>

A March 2022 DoD report to Congress estimated that \$7.12 billion in equipment previously transferred to the ousted Afghan government remained in Afghanistan in varying states of repair from when U.S. forces withdrew in August 2021.<sup>110</sup> The DoD at the time stated that much of the remaining equipment required specialized maintenance, and that without U.S. technical knowledge and support the operational readiness of this materiel would continue to degrade.<sup>111</sup>

## REGIONAL STABILITY

The DIA reported that the countries neighboring Afghanistan took various actions to address concerns about terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan.<sup>112</sup> Regional states attempted to preserve stability in Afghanistan and almost certainly focused on providing economic assistance and preventing cross-border terrorism instead of providing direct security assistance to the Taliban.<sup>113</sup>

**Central Asian States:** Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic continued to seek cooperation with Russia through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to address the threat of violent extremist organizations operating from Afghanistan, according to the DIA, citing a press report.<sup>114</sup> From March 17 to 20, the three countries participated in a CSTO exercise to address, in part, threats to Central Asia and the preparation of a peacekeeping operation in the region. In February, Tajikistan and Russia discussed cooperating more closely to combat terrorism, both bilaterally and through the CSTO and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.<sup>115</sup> In a pivot away from Russia, Uzbekistan recently expanded its military cooperation with China, including by acquiring Chinese air defense systems in February, media reported.<sup>116</sup>

**China:** As of March, China continued to advocate for international humanitarian assistance and economic cooperation in support of Afghan stability and counterterrorism cooperation, building on their growing trade ties with Afghanistan, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.<sup>117</sup> China's primary security objectives related to Afghanistan are to protect its citizens and economic interests, and the prevention of cross-border terrorism spreading into China.<sup>118</sup> China also used its relationship with Pakistan to encourage trilateral discussions with the Taliban on regional counterterrorism issues, the DIA stated.<sup>119</sup>

**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.<sup>120</sup> In early January, Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met with acting Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in the United Arab Emirates, where they discussed trade, security and other shared interests.<sup>121</sup> It was the second high-level bilateral meeting between the two nations since November, the DIA stated, citing press reporting.<sup>122</sup>

**Iran:** In March, the Taliban embassy in Tehran noted that both sides were working to expand bilateral relations. Iran very likely seeks a stable border with Afghanistan to prevent terrorist groups based in Afghanistan from entering and operating within Iran, the DIA stated, citing press reporting.<sup>123</sup>

**Russia:** This quarter, Russian defense and foreign affairs officials held separate bilateral meetings with China, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to discuss security in Afghanistan, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.<sup>124</sup> In January, Russia announced a planned joint team with the Taliban to work on political, economic, and security issues. Russia also began implementation of a program to strengthen the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border with CSTO member states, according to the DIA, citing a press report.<sup>125</sup> In March, Russia offered to mediate a settlement between Pakistan and the Taliban and advocated for regional stability.<sup>126</sup>

**This quarter, Russian defense and foreign affairs officials held separate bilateral meetings with China, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to discuss security in Afghanistan, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.**



January was the second-deadliest month for militant attacks in Pakistan since 2016, the DIA stated, citing press reporting.

## TTP Could Pose Future Threat to U.S. Interests

During the quarter, the Pakistani government repeatedly called for the Taliban to prevent Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attacks from Afghanistan against Pakistan, State said.<sup>127</sup> In 2010, State designated the TTP as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.<sup>128</sup>

State said that TTP operatives operate from the Afghanistan side of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. TTP leader Noor Wali Mahsud has pledged allegiance to the Taliban, State reported.<sup>129</sup>

Al-Qaeda's support to other terrorist groups in the region, such as the TTP, are also of concern, according to the ODNI's annual threat assessment report.<sup>130</sup> While the TTP has focused on targeting the Pakistani security forces rather than U.S. targets, its capabilities and historical ties to al-Qaeda present a potential future threat, the ODNI stated.<sup>131</sup> Additionally, the TTP insurgency creates an environment of insecurity that transnational threats such as ISIS-K and al-Qaeda could exploit, State said.<sup>132</sup>

## Militant Groups Continued to Try to Destabilize Pakistan

January was the second-deadliest month for militant attacks in Pakistan since 2016, the DIA stated, citing press reporting.<sup>133</sup> During the quarter, Pakistani security forces conducted raids against multiple terrorist groups, the DIA stated, citing press reporting.<sup>134</sup> State said that it continued to engage with Pakistan on issues related to Pakistan-Afghanistan relations of mutual concern, including countering regional security threats.<sup>135</sup> In February, China and Pakistan called on the Taliban leadership to eliminate all terrorist groups in Afghanistan, and to prevent their use of Afghan territory against other countries, State reported.<sup>136</sup>

**TTP:** The TTP continued operations to further its goal of toppling the Pakistani government and implementing its interpretation of Islamic law across the country.<sup>137</sup> According to the DIA and State, the TTP's attacks have largely targeted Pakistani security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the TTP almost certainly will maintain its policy of not conducting attacks against the United States or U.S. interests in Pakistan during the next year.<sup>138</sup>

Pakistan remained concerned about the TTP's ability to conduct cross-border attacks from Afghanistan. Pakistan maintained a ground force presence along its border with Afghanistan and exchanged small arms and artillery fire with Taliban forces during the quarter, according to press reporting.<sup>139</sup> The Taliban continued to relocate TTP forces away from border regions to Ghazni province, according to the DIA, citing a press report.<sup>140</sup>

**Baloch Liberation Army (BLA):** The BLA seeks to achieve Baloch independence in Pakistan's Balochistan province through targeting perceived exploitation by Pakistani security forces and Chinese interests, according to the DIA, citing press reporting.<sup>141</sup> The BLA claimed that its militants attacked a passenger train on March 11 in Balochistan province, taking more than 100 hostages and resulting in 31 deaths, State and media reported.<sup>142</sup>

Pakistan is especially worried that U.S.-origin weapons and equipment left behind in Afghanistan may fall into the hands of the TTP, the BLA, and other groups.<sup>143</sup> For example, media reported that the TTP may have acquired U.S.-made anti-tank guided missiles, which can be used to target armored vehicles and other fortified structures with great precision.<sup>144</sup>

According to a media analysis, at least two of the rifles used by the Baloch separatist hijackers in the March train attack were provided to Afghan forces and subsequently abandoned following the collapse of the former Afghan government.<sup>145</sup>

The media report stated that U.S.-made assault rifles, machine guns, and night-vision goggles provided to Afghanistan's former government are now being used by the TTP and Baloch separatists in their insurgencies against Pakistan. The U.S. Army and the DoD confirmed to a media outlet that 63 weapons that the Pakistani government showed to reporters—seized from captured or killed militants in other incidents—had been provided by the U.S. Government to Afghan forces.<sup>146</sup>

## Taliban and Pakistan Border Clashes Continue Despite Diplomatic Engagement

During the quarter, security issues continued to drive Pakistan's political engagement with the Taliban, State said.<sup>147</sup> On February 21, Pakistan closed the Torkham border crossing after Afghanistan authorities began constructing a border post that Pakistan previously protested.<sup>148</sup> In early March, Afghan and Pakistani border security personnel exchanged fire, killing at least one combatant and injuring several others, State reported.<sup>149</sup>

The Torkham crossing, a key transit point on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border for commercial activities and pedestrian traffic, reopened on March 19, State reported.<sup>150</sup>

Pakistani and Afghan officials held talks in late March on the economic importance of opening key transit routes, including the Torkham crossing, and Pakistan's ongoing concerns related to terrorism, State and media reported.<sup>151</sup>

## DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

During the quarter, the United States continued to call on the Taliban to fulfill its counterterrorism commitments under the Doha Agreement.<sup>152</sup> State said that direct engagement with the Taliban allows the United States to hold the Taliban accountable in fulfilling its counterterrorism commitments and that the Taliban appear to be willing to consider suggestions and ideas relating to State's efforts.<sup>153</sup>

The Afghanistan Affairs Unit in Doha, Qatar, manages U.S. diplomacy with Afghanistan, including consular affairs, administering humanitarian assistance, and working with allies and partners to coordinate U.S. engagement and messaging to the Taliban.<sup>154</sup>

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*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 U.S. Government has not made a decision whether to recognize the Taliban or any other entity as the government of Afghanistan.*



George Glezmman, center, detained by the Taliban for over 2 years, was released in March during a visit to Kabul, Afghanistan, by U.S. official Adam Bohler, former U.S. envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, and Qatari diplomats. (Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo)

## U.S. Government Expands Direct Engagement with the Taliban; Lifts Millions in Bounties

During the quarter, State held meetings with senior Taliban members and pressed for the release of Americans detained in Afghanistan. Four American citizens detained in Afghanistan were released.<sup>155</sup> According to State, additional U.S. citizens have been detained since the start of 2025.<sup>156</sup> State said that the safety and security of Americans abroad remains a high priority and State was working tirelessly to bring Americans home.<sup>157</sup>

In January, just after the inauguration of President Trump but following negotiations that took place at the end of the Biden administration, the Taliban released two U.S. citizens, Ryan Corbett and William McKenty.<sup>158</sup> In exchange, the United States released a Taliban figure imprisoned for life in California on drug trafficking and terrorism charges, according to media reporting.<sup>159</sup> State reported that the Qatari government facilitated negotiations to secure the release of the two Americans.<sup>160</sup>

In March, the Taliban released another American, George Glezmman. The release followed a March 20, meeting in Kabul between Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Taliban's acting foreign minister, and two U.S. officials, Adam Bohler, the Special Envoy for Hostage Response, and former U.S. envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, who participated as a private citizen.<sup>161</sup> Media reported that it was the "highest-level, publicly acknowledged" meeting between the United States and the Taliban since August 2021.<sup>162</sup> Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that the release was a "positive and constructive step."<sup>163</sup>

Following Mr. Glezmman's release, the United States lifted \$20 million in bounties on three members of the Haqqani Network, who are also senior Taliban officials, media reported.<sup>164</sup> The move signaled a thaw in U.S. views on Taliban hardliners who "have refashioned themselves as a more moderate voice within the Taliban," media reported.<sup>165</sup> A Taliban foreign ministry official reportedly said the Taliban's release of Mr. Glezmman and the U.S. removal of bounties showed both sides were moving beyond the wartime phase and taking steps to "pave the way for progress" in bilateral relations. Another Taliban official hailed the development as the start of normalization, media reported.<sup>166</sup> However, State said

**Ambassador Dorothy Shea, Chargé d’Affaires, U.S. Mission to the United Nations, speaks at a UN Security Council briefing on Afghanistan. (U.S. Mission to the United Nations photo)**



that Taliban members continue to be subject to U.S. and UN sanctions on their travel and economic activity.<sup>167</sup>

On March 28, days after the United States removed the bounties, the Taliban released Faye Hall, another American the Taliban detained earlier this year along with two British nationals and their Afghan translator.<sup>168</sup> The Qatari government and the European Union assisted in her release.<sup>169</sup>

## **State Expresses Skepticism, but Continues Support for UN-led Doha Process, UNAMA Mission**

During the quarter, State expressed skepticism regarding the Taliban’s willingness to engage in good faith in the Doha Process, noting that the United States “cannot build confidence” with a group that unjustly detains Americans, has a long history of harboring terrorist groups on its soil, and ignores the basic rights and needs of its own people.<sup>170</sup> However, State continued to participate in the Doha process by participating in UN-led working groups on counternarcotics and the economy.<sup>171</sup> State said that the United Nations would decide whether it would be appropriate to continue with additional large-group meetings.<sup>172</sup>

In February, a representative from State’s Afghanistan Affairs Unit (AAU) participated in the second, virtual meeting of the UN-led Doha Process Working Group on Counternarcotics.<sup>173</sup> Also in February, representatives from State’s AAU attended the virtual UN-led Private Sector Working Group meeting. The meeting focused on the current investment climate in Afghanistan and the challenges facing Afghanistan’s private sector, as well as technical topics related to countering money laundering and terrorist finance, integrating Islamic finance in the banking system, and improving regional trade connectivity.<sup>174</sup>

In March, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) until March 17, 2026.<sup>175</sup> In remarks to the UN Security Council, U.S. Mission to the United Nations Chargé d’Affaires Dorothy Shea said the extension ensures that UNAMA remains a partner for the people of Afghanistan and that it was “up to the Taliban” to show its willingness to take the necessary steps to meet its counterterrorism commitments and respect Afghanistan’s international legal obligations.<sup>176</sup>



## United States Calls for Women's Rights in Afghanistan, Terminates Most Assistance for Women and Girls

During the quarter, State officials continued to press the Taliban to respect the rights of women and girls and to reverse the edicts restricting access to education, work, and the ability to move freely outside the home. State reported that despite internal and external calls to reverse these edicts, including from diplomatic actors, rights advocates, and the Afghan diaspora community, the edicts continued throughout the reporting period.<sup>177</sup>

In her March remarks to the UN Security Council, Ambassador Shea said that Afghanistan cannot achieve self-reliance and stability as long as the Afghan people remain subject to oppressive Taliban restrictions that strangle the economy. She also said that the situation for Afghan women and girls was particularly devastating, given more than 80 edicts directly targeting their access to education, commercial activities, and overall participation in society. Shea warned that the Taliban's ban on women attending institutes offering medical training will have dire consequences for all Afghans.<sup>178</sup>

**Education:** On March 22, schools in Afghanistan reopened for the new academic year, but the Taliban continued to ban Afghan girls from attending secondary school for the fourth year in a row. According to the UN Children's Fund, more than 4 million Afghan girls will have lost the opportunity to attend school beyond the primary level if the ban persists until 2030.<sup>179</sup>

Following State's foreign assistance review, all but two active USAID Afghanistan awards, one of which directly supported education for women and girls, were canceled.<sup>180</sup>

The Women's Scholarship Endowment, a \$50 million program implemented by an American university, pays tuition and associated costs for the recipients.<sup>181</sup> It had funded 207 scholarships, including 81 in Oman and the remainder online at the American University in Afghanistan.<sup>182</sup> On



Roza Otunbayeva, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, briefing the Security Council meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. (UN Photo)

February 28, the 81 Afghan women pursuing graduate and post-graduate courses in Oman were notified that they had to return to Afghanistan within 2 weeks, after their program was terminated according to USAID.<sup>183</sup> The students were subsequently notified that they could stay in Oman until June 2025.<sup>184</sup> Students studying online at the American University of Afghanistan were initially informed that their program would be terminated immediately.<sup>185</sup> The program was subsequently reinstated through the end of the semester in June 2025.<sup>186</sup>

**Protection:** State reported that protection risks for women and girls remain acute in Afghanistan.<sup>187</sup> Following the foreign assistance review, a USAID program to provide shelter, protection, grants, and other livelihood support to women, girls, and other vulnerable populations was under a stop-work order.<sup>188</sup> Another USAID program to help civil society counter trafficking in persons was terminated.<sup>189</sup>

## Administration Moves to Terminate VOA Pashto Service

On March 14, the Administration ordered the U.S. Agency for Global Media, the agency that oversees Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Asia, to eliminate all functions that are not statutorily mandated.<sup>190</sup> Media reported that journalists employed by VOA, which includes VOA's Pashto services, were placed on administrative leave.<sup>191</sup>

Since its launch in 2006, VOA Deewa (meaning "light" in Pashto) provided a credible news source, broadcasting into areas that American personnel could not reach for security reasons.<sup>192</sup> As of the end of April, VOA's Dari service was still active, State reported.<sup>193</sup>

Following the foreign assistance review, a USAID program to provide shelter, protection, grants, and other livelihood support to women, girls, and other vulnerable populations was under a stop-work order.

## TALIBAN ENGAGEMENT

### Taliban Continues to Seek International Recognition

In a March 10 briefing to the UN Security Council, Roza Otunbayeva, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, said that it is the Taliban's responsibility to take the necessary steps for Afghanistan to be reintegrated into the international system.<sup>194</sup> She noted that Taliban leaders have so far treated Afghanistan's international obligations selectively, rejecting some on the basis they allegedly impinge on the country's sovereignty or violate their traditions.<sup>195</sup>

Additionally, during a March meeting with U.S. officials in Kabul, a Taliban spokesperson stated that the Taliban requested the handover of Afghanistan's embassy in Washington, D.C., according to press reporting.<sup>196</sup> In March, a Taliban spokesperson encouraged both the United States and European countries to reopen embassies in Afghanistan, noting that the security of embassies and diplomatic missions in Kabul would be ensured, media reported.<sup>197</sup>

During the quarter, in a UN-led donor working group on strengthening the Afghan private sector, the Taliban also continued to press for Afghanistan's reinstatement in international organizations, State reported.<sup>198</sup>

**During the quarter, in addition to meeting with the U.S. delegation in Kabul, the Taliban met with a wide range of diplomats both in Kabul and overseas.**

State said that while no country has publicly announced that it recognizes the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan, 22 countries have allowed Taliban members to take up diplomatic posts in their respective capitals.<sup>199</sup> China, Uzbekistan, and the United Arab Emirates have accepted the credentials of Taliban members at the rank of ambassador.<sup>200</sup> In March, the Taliban officially placed a diplomat at Afghanistan's embassy in Oslo, Norway, primarily to handle consular affairs.<sup>201</sup>

During the quarter, Russia moved closer to recognizing the Taliban-led government. On March 24, Moscow's foreign and justice ministries submitted an appeal to Russian President Vladimir Putin urging the Taliban's removal from Russia's list of terrorist organizations, media reported. After the quarter ended, on April 17, Russia's Supreme Court removed the Taliban from its list of banned terrorist groups in a step toward recognition. While Russia has agreed to host a Taliban ambassador in Moscow, the Kremlin has not officially recognized the Taliban-led government, media reported.<sup>202</sup>

## Taliban Expands High-level Diplomatic Engagements

During the quarter, in addition to meeting with the U.S. delegation in Kabul, the Taliban met with a wide range of diplomats both in Kabul and overseas. Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met with Taliban Foreign Minister Muttaqi in Dubai in January to discuss Afghanistan-India bilateral relations, State reported. This was India's highest-level engagement with the Taliban since the fall of Kabul in 2021. Both countries expressed interests in establishing development projects in Afghanistan and strengthening Afghan-India trade.<sup>203</sup> In March, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar indicated that India was ready to strengthen its relationship with the Taliban, media reported.<sup>204</sup>

In January, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi made an official visit to Kabul, the first visit by an Iranian foreign minister to the Afghan capital since 2017.<sup>205</sup> Media reported that he met with senior Taliban officials and discussed narcotics, water rights, and border security.<sup>206</sup> Media also reported that Araghchi stated that Iran remains committed to repatriating millions of Afghan migrants. Iran does not formally recognize the Taliban government in Afghanistan but maintains political and economic ties with Kabul and allows the Taliban to manage Afghanistan's embassy in Tehran, media reported.<sup>207</sup>

On February 17, Taliban Deputy Economy Minister Abdul Latif Nazari traveled to Japan to meet with Japanese Special Representative for Afghanistan Toshihide Ando for unofficial talks sponsored by a Japanese NGO to discuss business investment and economic assistance. Although the Japanese government does not recognize the Taliban, they have a mission in Kabul and are active in economic investment and assistance programs there. Japanese officials emphasized the importance of security, the eradication of corruption, and the need for a favorable environment for investors, media reported.<sup>208</sup>

Also in February, Taliban Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghani Baradar led a high-level Taliban delegation to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, meeting with Uzbekistani Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov and Deputy Prime Minister Jamshid Khodjaev to discuss strengthening trade and transit relations and expanding investment in Afghanistan.<sup>209</sup>

## Enduring Welcome

Enduring Welcome (EW) is a whole-of-government effort to relocate and resettle eligible Afghan allies and their families from Afghanistan to the United States. The previous interagency effort to relocate Afghan allies, Operation Allies Welcome, formally ended on September 30, 2022, and was replaced with EW.<sup>210</sup>

Congress established the EW administrative expense 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 individuals at risk if they remain in Afghanistan, including travel and other related expenditures.<sup>211</sup> State reported to Congress that as of December 31, 2024, it had \$1.1 billion available for EW expenses. This included \$984.4 million remaining in the EW administrative expenses account and \$124.7 million from all the previous EW appropriations and transfers outside the EW account. State told Congress that based on current spending trends, it anticipates fully obligating all EW funding by the end of FY 2025, requiring additional funding by the start of FY 2026.<sup>212</sup>

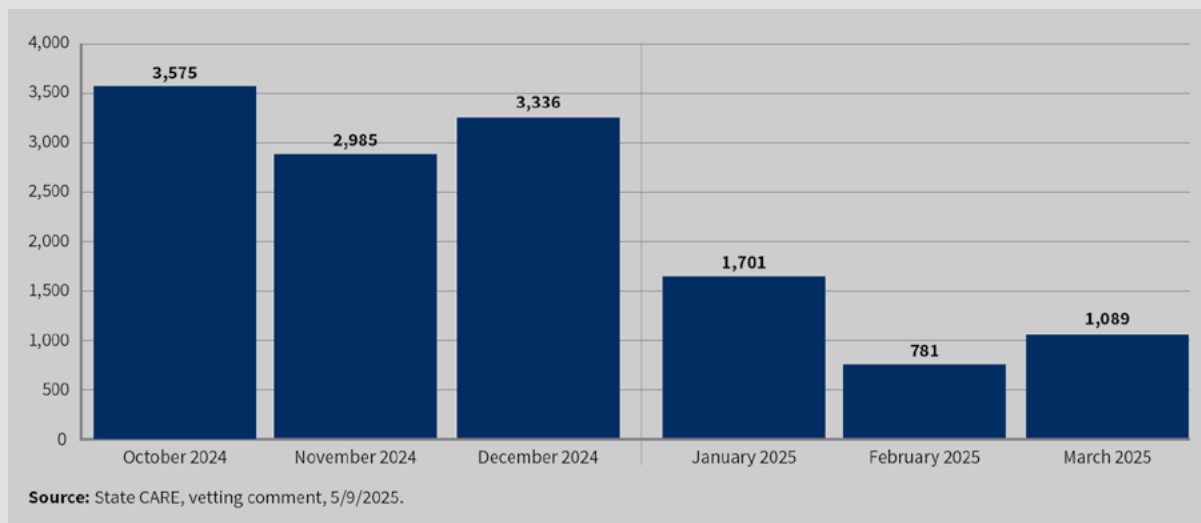
### SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISA ISSUANCES DECLINE

In the first half of FY 2025, State issued 13,497 Special Immigrant Visas (SIV). Of these, 74 percent (9,926), were issued between October 1 and December 31, 2024. State continued to issue SIVs during the quarter, but at a much slower pace compared to previous quarters.<sup>213</sup> (See Figure 2.) The decline followed the suspension of relocation assistance out of Afghanistan.<sup>214</sup>

State reported that Afghan SIV processing continued during the quarter.<sup>215</sup> However, while consular interviews and interagency security vetting at U.S. embassies and consulates around the world continued, the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE) was told to develop a paper setting out options for the residual populations of Afghans who were relocated by the U.S. Government to U.S.-managed platforms in Qatar and Albania.<sup>216</sup> A decision on CARE would not affect the ability to process SIV applications by consular sections worldwide, though the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act established December 31, 2025, as the deadline for submitting an initial SIV application.<sup>217</sup>

Figure 2.

### Special Immigrant Visa Issuances, October 2024–March 2025





State reported that to enhance the security of the Chief of Mission process, its Afghan SIV Unit (ASIV) implemented additional technological improvements during the quarter. One improvement was designed to streamline the entry of case lookout information into consular systems. Case lookouts provide additional data to consular adjudicators about individuals who may pose a risk to the United States or have a work history that warrants further scrutiny. The other improvement was designed to further strengthen ASIV's ability to identify trends among applications for Chief of Mission approval. ASIV reported that in the past quarter, it issued an average of 929 Chief of Mission decisions per week, a 5.1 percent increase from the previous quarter.<sup>218</sup>

### **REFUGEE PROGRAM SUSPENDED; PROCESSING CONTINUES UNDER COURT INJUNCTION**

Executive Order 14163 suspended entry of refugees into the United States through the USRAP as of January 27.<sup>219</sup> On February 25, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington granted a preliminary injunction on implementing sections of the Executive Order related to the suspension of refugee processing.<sup>220</sup> To comply with the preliminary injunction, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) resumed final decisions on refugee applications, petitions, and other requests.<sup>221</sup> Before the Executive Order, USCIS had interviewed approximately 5,300 Afghan aliens for refugee status in FY 2025, as of March 7.<sup>222</sup>

USCIS continued to process EW-related asylum applications during the quarter while handling surges of credible fear referrals (when individual will be found to have a credible fear of persecution if returned to their country) at the U.S. southwest border, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reported.<sup>223</sup> In FY 2025, as of March 7, USCIS received and processed 307 asylum requests filed by Afghan aliens paroled into the United States under EW.<sup>224</sup>

### **VETTING OF AFGHANS THAT ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES**

The DHS's Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM) enables customers to utilize 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. The DHS OBIM stated that it did not match to any Afghan latent fingerprints during the quarter.<sup>225</sup>

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.<sup>226</sup> If any information of concern is found after an Afghan evacuee is admitted or paroled into the United States, DHS and law enforcement partners work together to determine appropriate next steps. Aliens who are a threat to national security, public safety, and border security are prioritized for apprehension and removal, the DHS stated.<sup>227</sup>

The Department of Justice (DoJ) stated that the FBI continued to work with interagency partners to vet Afghans intending to travel to the United States since August 2021 to determine if the FBI has an investigative interest in any such travelers. The FBI continued to coordinate with the intelligence community and the DoD to address threats to the United States and U.S. interests.<sup>228</sup>

The DHS reported that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered 71 Afghan "inadmissible non-citizens" at the U.S. southwest border ports of entry during the quarter.<sup>229</sup> This represents a more than 74 percent decrease compared to the 279 encounters reported last quarter.<sup>230</sup> The DHS reported that the CBP encountered 1,893 inadmissible Afghans in FY 2024, compared to 347 in FY 2023 and 68 in FY 2022.<sup>231</sup>

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.<sup>232</sup>

## ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

### Afghanistan Central Bank Assets in the U.S. Remain Frozen

State reported that the Afghanistan Central Bank asked for release of its assets at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and to be re-admitted to Financial Action Task Force-style regional bodies. State said that China, Iran, and Russia backed the Taliban's request to unblock the Afghan Central Bank assets.<sup>233</sup> The Taliban has raised these issues in bilateral meetings with the U.S. Government repeatedly over the past 3 years. State said that the technical working groups presented opportunities to remind the Taliban that Afghanistan's economic isolation is a result of the Taliban's poor decisions.<sup>234</sup>

Treasury said that it did not take any action this quarter to unfreeze Afghan Central Bank assets held in the United States. On January 15, then-President Joseph R. Biden continued for one year the national emergency underlying the freezing of Afghan Central Bank assets. Treasury said that this action was subject to a subsequent determination by President Trump.<sup>235</sup>

Although there were no U.S.-Taliban bilateral meetings related to the economy this quarter, State underscored at UN-convened meetings the importance of improving regional trade connectivity, as well as anti-money laundering efforts, and countering terrorism financing.<sup>236</sup>

On March 13, the Board of Trustees for the Afghan Fund, a charitable foundation with a mandate to use its assets for the benefit of the Afghan people, met for the eighth time since November 2022 to determine decisions on the Afghan Fund's governance.<sup>237</sup>

As of March 31, the Fund's assets totaled \$3.98 billion. Any future disbursement decisions by the Afghan Fund's Board would consider the Afghan Fund's mandate to support Afghanistan's macroeconomic and financial stability. The Fund has not made any disbursements beyond administrative expenses, State reported.<sup>238</sup>

### Methamphetamine Supply in Afghanistan Largely Unaffected by Narcotics Ban

State INL said that preliminary findings suggest that Taliban efforts to reduce poppy cultivation, both via deterrence and eradication, have been effective and comparable to the prior two cultivation cycles.<sup>239</sup>

While opiate trafficking out of Afghanistan has declined in recent years, methamphetamine supply appears to be largely unaffected by the narcotics ban. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime said that since the Taliban returned to power, methamphetamine seizures in Afghanistan have increased quarterly by 75 percent. The United Nations said that a coordinated effort on counternarcotics is needed among UN agencies, regional and intergovernmental organizations, and donor countries.<sup>240</sup>

State INL reported that it is conducting reviews of its foreign assistance programs in Afghanistan as directed by recent executive orders and will be able to provide programmatic updates when the reviews have been completed. State INL reported that during the quarter, prior to the foreign assistance pause, it disbursed \$307,570 under the Counternarcotics Public Information Interagency Agreement with the U.S. Agency for Global Media.<sup>241</sup>

**Treasury said that it did not take any action this quarter to unfreeze Afghan Central Bank assets held in the United States.**

**In 2025, Afghanistan remained one of the most landmine- and explosive ordnance-contaminated countries in the world, with more than 500 children killed or seriously injured in 2024, according to the UN Children's Fund.**

## State Suspends Mine Clearance Operations in Afghanistan, Other Donors Follow Suit

In 2025, Afghanistan remained one of the most landmine- and explosive ordnance-contaminated countries in the world, with more than 500 children killed or seriously injured in 2024, according to the UN Children's Fund.<sup>242</sup> State said that two factors reduced mine clearance during the quarter. First, the United Nations Mine Action Service ran out of funding to support its Mine Action Program for Afghanistan operations. Second, State suspended all clearance operations effective January 24, and subsequently terminated all mine clearance-related awards in Afghanistan.<sup>243</sup>

As State was the largest bilateral donor to mine clearance in Afghanistan, limited operations are expected in the future, State said. Other international donors also paused financial support of the Mine Action Program, and are unlikely to continue funding operations, State said.<sup>244</sup>

According to State, no waivers were granted for mine clearance programs in Afghanistan. As of the end of the quarter, State had terminated \$26.2 million in demining awards.<sup>245</sup> An additional \$6.6 million in awards expired in January.<sup>246</sup>

State said that no funds for demining assistance programming were obligated or disbursed during the quarter or prior to the January 24 stop-work order.<sup>247</sup> State also said that it had no contact, discussion, or coordination with the Taliban or associated entities related to demining during the quarter.<sup>248</sup>

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

While the United States has been the largest donor to Afghanistan for more than 2 decades, the U.S. envoy to the United Nations said in March that it was “well past time” that the Taliban take responsibility for responding to the needs of the Afghan people.<sup>249</sup> The Taliban should be investing in basic public services such as health, education, job training, and development, she said.<sup>250</sup>

The U.S. Government has provided more than \$2 billion in predominantly humanitarian assistance to support the people of Afghanistan since the fall of Kabul in 2021, State said.<sup>251</sup> Prior to the termination of programs in Afghanistan, the U.S. Government was the largest humanitarian donor to the Afghanistan Response, committing more than \$233 million in humanitarian assistance in FY 2025.<sup>252</sup> (See Table 3.)

As of January 1, USAID BHA had 16 active programs in Afghanistan totaling \$765 million.<sup>253</sup> As of March 21, USAID BHA had obligated \$29 million in FY 2025 funding for Afghanistan-related assistance.<sup>254</sup> USAID BHA did not provide information that USAID OIG requested on which awards remained active or were terminated, pending final report of the foreign assistance review.<sup>255</sup>

During the quarter, State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) said that it obligated more than \$32 million in funding for humanitarian assistance programs prior to the assistance pause, but no funds were disbursed. The bureau did not obligate additional funds once the pause went into effect. In late March, State PRM disbursed more than \$7.8 million for expenses incurred by its partners prior to the January 24 pause of foreign assistance.<sup>256</sup>

# Millions of Afghans Require Emergency Assistance as Funding Sources Disappear

**Food Security:** In February, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) was providing food aid to 6.2 million people, prioritizing vulnerable groups like malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women.<sup>257</sup> As of late March, approximately 15 million people in Afghanistan—nearly one-third of the population—needed emergency food assistance, with 80 percent of families unable to afford a basic nutritious diet.<sup>258</sup> As of late March, USAID BHA had not obligated additional funding to the WFP in FY 2025.<sup>259</sup>

**Infectious Diseases:** Afghanistan faces a surge in infectious diseases such as dengue, malaria, and measles, while humanitarian agencies struggle to maintain health services amid global funding shortages, according to USAID BHA.<sup>260</sup> As of March 11, more than 190 health facilities had closed in 26 Afghan provinces, potentially cutting off care for 1.7 million people.<sup>261</sup> The closures have particularly affected community-based and mobile health services in underserved areas.<sup>262</sup> Remaining facilities lack resources to meet rising health needs, and the UN World Health Organization (WHO) warned that 80 percent of its supported facilities could shut down by June without additional funding, leaving millions—including women and children—without critical care.<sup>263</sup>

**Flooding:** Since late February, severe flooding across 11 provinces in Afghanistan has killed at least 30 people and affected around 15,000 others.<sup>264</sup> The floods damaged more than 1,200 homes, 2,800 acres of farmland, contaminated potable water sources, and destroyed nearly 40 miles of roads, disrupting livelihoods and aid delivery.<sup>265</sup> Affected populations face urgent needs for food, shelter, livelihoods, and other support.<sup>266</sup>

# Hundreds of Thousands of Afghans May Return Amid Regional Deportation, Repatriation Campaigns

State reported that more than 6 million Afghans might be deported from Pakistan and Iran this year. Returnees lacking livelihood opportunities in Afghanistan could fuel new waves of migration to Europe and North America or be exploited by trafficking organizations and terrorist groups, State said. These returning migrants—especially young, unemployed men—are vulnerable to recruitment by the TTP, ISIS-K, and narcotics trafficking groups, State said.<sup>267</sup>

State also reported that humanitarian organizations on Afghanistan’s border with Pakistan, as well as Taliban-controlled ministries, were preparing for hundreds of thousands of Afghan migrants and refugees to return from Pakistan in the coming months. In April, Pakistan relaunched large-scale repatriation campaigns and deportations of up to 500,000 undocumented Afghan migrants and up to 803,000 Afghan Citizenship Card holders, who had been protected from deportation since 2017. An additional 1.3 million Afghans who have held refugee-like status for decades could also face involuntary repatriation due to Pakistan policy changes, State said.<sup>268</sup>

Table 3.

## U.S. Government Humanitarian Funding for the Afghanistan Response in FY 2025, as of January 2025

USAID BHA	\$201,755,857
State PRM	\$32,100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$233,855,857</b>

**Note:** Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of January 17, 2025.

**Source:** USAID, “Afghanistan–Complex Emergency Fact Sheet,” 1/17/2025.



**In 2024, the United States was the largest contributor to the UN Humanitarian Needs Response Plan, providing \$735.7 million, or 47 percent of total funding, according to OCHA.**

In addition, 4 million Afghans may be deported from Iran. Iran reportedly announced that it would not renew the residence permits for 2.6 million Afghans and might begin deporting them at the end of March. These Afghans, whom Iran registered in mid-2022 with a form of refugee-like protection, include large numbers of Afghans who worked for the former Republic and would be at risk of Taliban retaliation if they returned to Afghanistan, State reported.<sup>269</sup>

In February, State reported that members of a border consortium of humanitarian organizations operating on Afghanistan's border with Pakistan have the infrastructure in place to provide services to a new wave of returnees and to scale up staffing quickly.<sup>270</sup> However, they stressed that their organizations lacked the financial resources to sustain assistance, especially as donors reassess their aid budgets, State reported.<sup>271</sup>

## Decreased Assistance Projected in 2025

During the quarter, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that without U.S. funding, millions fewer people will receive assistance in 2025. In 2024, the United States was the largest contributor to the UN Humanitarian Needs Response Plan (HNRP), providing \$735.7 million, or 47 percent of total funding, according to OCHA. As of February 9, the United States had contributed \$210 million toward the HNRP goal of \$2.1 billion, and other donors \$100 million. HNRP programs include food security and agriculture, nutrition, health, emergency shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene.<sup>272</sup>

As a mitigation measure, OCHA said that humanitarian partners were reprioritizing and focusing on areas with the highest levels of need. In Afghanistan, 68 percent of partners reduced their target, 45 percent reduced their geographical coverage, and 42 percent reduced their staff, according to a March OCHA survey.<sup>273</sup>

## Some International Donors Pledge Support After Pause in U.S. Humanitarian Assistance

In March, the UN Secretary-General's Representative for Afghanistan stated that despite the closure of health facilities across Afghanistan, she was encouraged by the World Bank's recent decision to provide an additional \$240 million to support the Afghan health sector until November 2026.<sup>274</sup>

During the quarter, Japan pledged \$14.3 million to the United Nations and the WFP for Afghanistan, according to State, citing media reporting. The aid will help with maternal and child healthcare, food insecurity, and improve Afghan livelihoods. Japan donated \$2.5 million in March to the UN Children's Fund to support Afghan children affected by natural calamities, State reported.<sup>275</sup>

The European Union announced its first humanitarian aid flight in 2025 to Afghanistan, which carried more than 100 metric tons of medical supplies, State said. The United Arab Emirates also reportedly pledged \$400 million in aid in January, and China provided aid to Afghans deported from Pakistan in February, State said.<sup>276</sup>

## USAID No Longer Conducts Third-Party Monitoring in Afghanistan

USAID Afghanistan's third-party monitoring award, Afghanistan Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Activity (AMELA), was terminated on February 26.<sup>277</sup> USAID reported that third-party monitoring in Afghanistan was designed to conduct project monitoring site visits for lifesaving health programs. Monitoring supports accountability and progress of life-saving U.S. Government foreign assistance funding and aid distributions and aims to ensure assistance is reaching its intended beneficiaries in Afghanistan to prevent diversion for illicit purposes.<sup>278</sup>

During the stop-work order and payment pause, prior to award termination, third-party monitoring visits were canceled or postponed, and January reports were neither finalized nor submitted.<sup>279</sup> However, third-party monitors did report Taliban interference with USAID-funded assistance during the quarter, while they were still operating. On January 19, AMELA monitors reported that the Taliban members from the Guzara district Governor's Office instructed WFP contractor staff to stop verifying female beneficiaries through fingerprints and biometrics, which was necessary for beneficiary verification prior to the distribution, and receipt from beneficiary after the distribution.<sup>280</sup> WFP staff could not proceed with the distribution without verification and had to cease the distribution process, resulting in 322 beneficiaries (143 male and 179 female) returning home without receiving assistance.<sup>281</sup>

During the quarter, Japan pledged \$14.3 million to the United Nations and the WFP for Afghanistan, according to State, citing media reporting.



# 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 (codified at 5 U.S.C. Sections 401-424), established in Section 419 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.

The Overseas Contingency Operations Joint Planning Group serves as a primary venue to coordinate audits, inspections, and evaluations of U.S. Government-funded activities supporting overseas contingency operations, including those relating to the Middle East.

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.

## APPENDIX C

# Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Report

This report complies with section 419 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (codified at 5 U.S.C. sections 401-424), 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 January 1 to March 31, 2025. 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

# Status of USAID and State Programs in Afghanistan

Table 4.

### USAID Afghanistan Activities Still Active as of March 31, 2025

Award Name Scheduled Duration Amount Obligated to Date	Activity Description
<b>Woman's Scholarship Endowment</b> 9/27/2023–9/26/2028 \$50,000,000	Assists Afghan women in obtaining a university or graduate education in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) 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.
<b>Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan</b> 1/1/2023–12/31/2026 \$27,284,620	Sustains access and improves retention in local, quality higher education opportunities for male and female students living in Afghanistan.
<b>Global Health Supply Chain Management</b> 4/20/2015–11/28/2026 \$9,099,998	Serves as the central procurement mechanism for USAID Missions worldwide to purchase high quality contraceptives and other essential public health supplies. This activity implements USAID's policy of centralized contraceptive procurement by providing a simplified mechanism for the transfer, obligation, and disbursement of all USAID funds designed for procurement.

Source: USAID Afghanistan, response to USAID OIG request for information, 4/30/2025.

Table 5.

### USAID Afghanistan Activities Terminated as of March 31, 2025

Award Name Scheduled Duration Amount Obligated to Date	Activity Description
<b>Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan's Recovery</b> 2/18/2021–9/30/2025 \$26,585,607	Supported household efforts to enjoy a sustained increase in agricultural productivity and income. The program supported individuals to live in more sanitary environments with durable access to safe water for domestic use and support conflict-affected children to cope with shocks and stressors.
<b>Inter-Agency Agreement with United States Institute of Peace "Information, Dialogue and Rights" Activity</b> 9/23/2022–9/1/2025 \$14,079,528	Protected Afghans access to independent sources of information, facilitate inclusive dialogue, and promote fundamental rights for all Afghan citizens, especially for women, girls, and religious and ethnic minorities.

(continued on next page)

Award Name Scheduled Duration Amount Obligated to Date	Activity Description
<b>Afghanistan Support Program</b> 9/16/2022–9/15/2025 \$25,884,633	Provided technical assistance and \$5 million in grants to support Afghans' basic rights to access independent sources of information and engage in civic activities. Empowered journalists, civic activists and human rights defenders to defend the basic civil rights and freedoms that underpin civic engagement and free media.
<b>Countering Trafficking in Persons</b> 10/1/2024–9/30/2027 \$8,250,000	Reduced vulnerabilities to trafficking in persons by empowering civil society organizations and providing support services to vulnerable communities. Supported local organizations use of innovative and contextually appropriate approaches to provide support services to counter TIP in the country. Conducted multi-dimensional public awareness campaign on trafficking in persons and provision of comprehensive trauma-informed protection.
<b>Exports, Jobs, and Market Linkages in the Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains</b> 1/31/2019–4/30/2025 \$14,935,752	Supported the Afghan carpet and jewelry sectors as drivers of broad-based economic growth and sustainable employment in Afghanistan. Created jobs and exports within the sectors, driving \$20 million in direct-to-market sales of finished Afghan carpet and jewelry products and supported 5,000 new jobs, particularly for women.
<b>Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity</b> 1/28/2020–4/26/2025 \$105,722,822	Promoted Afghanistan's sustainable, market-driven economic growth by enhancing the export competitiveness and market linkages of Afghan businesses.
<b>Afghan Value Chains Program</b> 6/9/2018–6/8/2025 \$75,672,170	Addressed food security crises and supported women in the agriculture sector.
<b>Engineering Support Program</b> 7/23/2016–8/1/2025 \$125,000,000	Provided quality assurance, monitoring, and other engineering analyses for the implementation of the Mission's construction projects since 2016. Provided engineering support as USAID terminates and winds down its entire infrastructure portfolio in Afghanistan including technical review and verification of past work such as construction documents, unpaid invoices, and termination costs.
<b>Women and Men in Agriculture</b> 10/1/2024–9/30/2029 \$59,910,649	Improved food security for all Afghans and expanded women's empowerment and benefit by supporting sustainable agricultural livelihoods. Focused 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.
<b>Engineering Services for SEPS Completion and NEPS-SEPS Substations</b> 3/7/2018–9/30/2025 \$20,151,240	Provided quality assistance, monitoring, and engineering analyses for the implementation of the Southeast Power Systems (SEPS) completion and Northeast Power System (NEPS)-SEPS Connector Substation construction project since 2018. Provided engineering support as USAID terminates and winds down its entire infrastructure portfolio in Afghanistan.

Award Name Scheduled Duration Amount Obligated to Date	Activity Description
<b>Accessible and Quality Basic Education</b> 10/1/2023–9/30/2028 \$79,249,987	Provided safe, equitable access to quality learning for primary school-aged girls and boys, secondary school-aged girls. Improved the delivery of quality instruction in foundational skills and delivery of the support for student well-being by educators. Reinforced community school management and family engagement to sustain access to safe public and community-based education. Increased transition rate of community-based education students into public primary schools and sustained secondary education engagement and learning opportunities for adolescent girls.
<b>Young Women Lead</b> 9/28/2023–9/27/2025 \$4,935,797	Expanded post-secondary education opportunities and increased access in fields of study where females are allowed at the post-secondary education level such as allied health, education, agriculture, and information technology. Allied health fields included anesthesia, dental prosthesis, medical technology, midwifery, nursing, and pharmacy. YWL increased the number of young Afghan women enrolled in short post-secondary education opportunities, enhanced job readiness skills and professional networks for young Afghan women.
<b>Mission Buy-in DECODE (Field Support)</b> 2/1/2024–9/30/2028 \$800,000	Implemented an external evaluation of USAID/Afghanistan's Accessible and Quality Basic Education activity.
<b>Afghanistan Integrated Youth Activity</b> 10/1/2024–9/30/2029 \$62,000,000	Improved learning outcomes and livelihood opportunities for young women and men. Improved post-secondary technical and vocational education or learning opportunities for youth, with a focus on market-relevant, skills-based learning within agricultural sector and its related value chains. Additionally, supported youth, particularly, girls and young women, to acquire market-relevant skills to improve livelihood opportunities and engage in climate resilient agricultural value chains in their home, community, or other settings.
<b>Assistance to Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive</b> 7/10/2020–7/9/2025 \$117,000,000	Improved the quality of primary and secondary health and nutrition services in targeted rural areas; increased access to high-impact and evidence-based health and nutrition services; enhanced adoption of optimal health and nutrition behaviors by communities and households; and collaborated with partners to plan, finance, and manage the public health system.
<b>Urban Health Initiative</b> 10/14/2020–10/13/2025 \$104,000,000	Supported filling gaps in access to and quality of essential health services in five urban cities. Focused on health of women, children, and other vulnerable populations such as internally displaced persons and communities living in slums.
<b>WHO Polio and Immunization Grant II: Polio Eradication Surveillance and Response (Field Support)</b> 2/2/2022–9/30/2031 \$28,500,000	Monitored 16 priority epidemic-prone diseases and pregnancy-related deaths under an indicator-based surveillance component.

(continued on next page)

Award Name Scheduled Duration Amount Obligated to Date	Activity Description
<b>Local Health System Sustainability</b> 10/1/2022–7/31/2025 \$13,999,997	Provided financial and technical support to the Afghanistan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO) to strengthen the organization's impact and sustainability. ASMO is a local, social marketing organization which promoted family planning, diarrhea prevention and management, and nutrition by nationally distributing health products at an affordable price and motivating Afghans to use these products through social and behavior change.
<b>Afghanistan Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Activity</b> 3/13/2019–3/12/2025 \$44,848,003	Contributed to ensuring USAID's development programs in Afghanistan achieved their intended results through strong performance management service provision in an efficient and cost-effective manner, focusing on evaluation technical support services, monitoring and technical support services, learning and adaptive management services, and program support services. AMELA was a nationwide activity and available to offer monitoring, evaluation, learning and program support services across USAID/Afghanistan's offices.

Source: USAID Afghanistan, response to USAID OIG request for information, 4/30/2025.

Table 6.

#### USAID Afghanistan Activities Under Stop-Work Orders as of March 31, 2025

Award Name Scheduled Duration Amount Obligated to Date	Activity Description
<b>Support for Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls</b> 7/18/2022–7/17/2025 \$30,000,000	Responded to the immediate needs of women, girls, and vulnerable populations by providing comprehensive support services in the areas of protection, women's rights, and livelihoods. As per the UN Women's model, support would be implemented through local NGOs to provide immediate assistance for women's shelters/protection, grants to women-led CSOs, and livelihoods.
<b>Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security</b> 7/15/2022–7/14/2026 \$80,000,000	Improved food security crisis and emergency level affected population groups in rural areas of Afghanistan; to help minimize the impacts of economic disruption and instability, drought and other recent shocks on vulnerable, and at-risk agriculture-based communities and livelihoods; and help minimize negative effects on productive agricultural assets in targeted provinces and districts of Afghanistan.
<b>Rural Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene</b> 6/24/2020–6/23/2025 \$35,841,332	Addressed WASH needs in Afghanistan such as acute water and needs in underserved, rural, and peri-urban areas; equal sanitation facilities for girls and boys in schools; lack of adequate WASH facilities in healthcare facilities; service delivery and operations support to sustain critical WASH structures, including community-level structures; and issues related to the transmission of COVID-19 virus in schools and their surrounding catchment communities in high-risk COVID-19 areas.
<b>Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund</b> 9/29/2020–12/31/2025 \$174,404,114	Administered by the World Bank, a multi-donor pooled trust fund mechanism and Category 2 Public International Organization (PIO). ARTF provided a vehicle for donors to pool resources and coordinate their basic human needs support in Afghanistan. USAID directly supported five activities under the ARTF in the health, education, WASH, community resilience, and private sectors.

Source: USAID Afghanistan, response to USAID OIG request for information, 4/30/2025.



Table 7.

**State Humanitarian Programs Terminated as of April 11, 2025**

<b>Unnamed implementer</b> 9/1/2024–2/26/2025 \$34,560,000	Supported critical emergency health interventions, prioritizing maternal health, safe deliveries, midwifery training and emergency supplies in 32 out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan.
<b>Unnamed implementer</b> 1/1/2025–4/6/2025 \$15,500,000	Provided emergency health care and medical vocational training.
<b>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</b> 1/1/2025–4/5/2025 \$14,476,495	Provided emergency shelter for displaced Afghans, distribution of non-food items.
<b>International Organization for Migration</b> 9/30/2024–4/5/2025 \$13,500,000	Provided emergency medical services, transportation support to move returnees away from unsafe borders between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.
<b>IOM-Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan</b> 1/1/2024–4/5/2025 \$7,380,000	Supported reintegration activities including health assistance and sanitation support for Afghan returnees.
<b>Norwegian Rescue Committee</b> 9/30/2024–3/5/2025 \$3,000,000	Provided shelter, livelihoods, legal rights, access to essential services, and protection.
<b>International Medical Corps</b> 9/30/2024–4/5/2025 \$2,931,552	Supported water, sanitation, and hygiene programs, and protection of women and children from violence in Afghanistan.
<b>International Rescue Committee</b> 11/1/2024–4/5/2025 \$2,831,348	Provided health care and sanitation to prevent disease. Protection from violence for women and girls.

**Source:** State PRM, response to State OIG request for information, 4/11/2025; State PRM, vetting comment, 5/12/2025.

Table 8.

**State Non-Humanitarian Programs Terminated as March 31, 2025**

Program Award Value	Program Description
<b>Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Weapons and Removal Abatement (PM/WRA)</b>	
PM/WRA Humanitarian Assistance 8 programs \$27,855,369	Supported mine clearing, victim assistance, and monitoring and evaluation of the other programs.
<b>Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy (SCA/PPD)</b>	
Higher education (3 programs) \$3,500,000	Supported access to higher education for Afghans.
Media capacity building (1 program) \$1,000,000	Strengthened the capacity of Afghan journalists and media in Afghanistan.
Afghan Alumni Engagement (1 program) \$1,000,000	Supported virtual programming among U.S.-Government alumni funded exchange programs.
Employment Support for Women \$3,250,000 (5 programs)	Supported employment solutions for Afghan women and business expansion for women's small businesses in Afghanistan.
<b>Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)</b>	
4 programs \$14,819,751	Supported building accountability and justice documentation in investigating atrocity crimes against women, ethnic and tribal communities, and anti-Taliban resistance groups. Promoted children's rights in Afghanistan. Supported media reporting safely in Afghanistan

**Source:** State DRL, response to State OIG request for information, 4/25/2025; State PRM, response to State OIG request for information, 4/11/2025; State PM/WRA, response to State OIG request for information, 3/31/2025; State SCA/PPD, response to State OIG request for information, 4/14/2025.

## APPENDIX E

# Completed Oversight Projects

From January 1 to March 31, 2025, the Lead IG and partner agencies issued two 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 LEAD IG AGENCIES

#### DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

##### ***Classified Inspection of Embassy Doha, Qatar***

ISP-S-25-12, March 25, 2025

State OIG conducted this inspection to evaluate the programs and operations of Embassy Doha. This report is classified. Details can be found in the classified appendix to this report.

### FINAL REPORTS BY PARTNER IG AGENCIES

#### SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

##### ***Public International Organizations in Afghanistan: State and USAID Agreements with PIOs Need Strengthening to Ensure U.S. Funds are Not Diverted to Terrorist Groups***

SIGAR-25-16-AR; March 10, 2025

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) conducted this audit to determine if monitoring policies and practices that public international organizations (PIO) use in Afghanistan align with leading monitoring practices; identify U.S. policies and guidance that might limit efforts to monitor U.S. assistance to the Afghan people; and assess the extent to which State and USAID have procedures in place to help identify and prevent Taliban interference with and diversion of U.S. assistance.

SIGAR determined that from August 2021 through September 2023, State and USAID funded 86 agreements across 18 PIOs, with a total project cost of approximately \$3 billion. SIGAR selected 9 of the 18 PIOs through a judgmental sample to analyze the PIOs' monitoring practices. SIGAR determined that these nine PIOs have policies that generally align with the Government Accountability Office's leading monitoring practices. However, some PIO policies are missing key monitoring practices. For example, the World Food Programme lacks a requirement to develop a written monitoring plan in both its agency-wide strategic plan and its Afghanistan Country Strategic Plan. Without monitoring plans, oversight may not align with program goals and objectives, increasing program risks.

Additionally, SIGAR determined that State and USAID did not always add additional monitoring practices. For example, agreements between PIOs and State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration did not require implementing partners to submit performance reports.

SIGAR made four recommendations to the Secretary of State to improve monitoring and oversight of U.S. assistance provided through PIOs to the Afghan people and to reduce aid diversion. In addition, SIGAR made four recommendations to the Acting USAID Administrator, including to improve monitoring and oversight by developing a standard process for assessing risks associated with projects prior to giving U.S. taxpayer funds to PIOs. State neither concurred nor non-concurred with the recommendations but did provide steps it intends to take or has taken regarding three of four recommendations directed to State.

## APPENDIX F

# Ongoing Oversight Projects

Tables 9 and 10 list the titles and objectives for Lead IG and partner agencies' ongoing oversight projects related to OES.

Table 9.

### Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OES by Lead IG Agencies, as of March 31, 2025

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
<p><b><i>Audit of the DoD's Management of the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program Contract for the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts at Camp As Sayliyah</i></b></p> <p>To assess the effectiveness of the DoD's management of the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) V contract in support of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts (CARE) Doha at Camp As Sayliyah (CAS).</p>
DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
<p><b><i>Inspection of Embassy Doha, Qatar</i></b></p> <p>To evaluate the programs and operations of the U.S. Embassy in Doha, Qatar.</p>
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
<p><b><i>Audit of USAID's Efforts to Safeguard Implementers and Activities in Afghanistan</i></b></p> <p>To assess USAID's efforts in Afghanistan to safeguard implementers and activities by 1) mitigating security and safety risks and 2) managing the impact of Taliban interference.</p>

Table 10.

### Ongoing Oversight Projects Related to OES by Lead IG Partner Agencies, as of March 31, 2025

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
<p><b><i>National Snapshot of Recent Trends in the Refugee Resettlement Program</i></b></p> <p>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.</p>
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
<p><b><i>Review of Asylum Application Adjudication Processing in Response to Ahmed vs. DHS</i></b></p> <p>To determine whether missed aliases or incomplete resolution of potential matches to derogatory records have increased following the Ahmed vs. DHS settlement agreement.</p>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of DHS' Monitoring of the End of Immigration Parole</i></b></p> <p>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 United States after parole expiration or revocation.</p>
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
<p><b><i>Federal Bureau of Investigation's Participation in Operation Allies Refuge and Operation Allies Welcome</i></b></p> <p>To assess the effectiveness of the FBI's coordination with its Federal partners to support Operation Allies Refuge and Operation Allies Welcome.</p>



***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 G

### Hotline and Investigations

#### HOTLINE

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 referred 1 case related to OES or Afghanistan. State OIG received 4 allegations and referred 3. USAID OIG received 46 allegations. In some instances, a case may contain multiple allegations.

#### 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. Two referrals were made to the Department of Justice during this quarter.

The Lead IG agencies and their partners coordinate investigative activities, deconflict potential or common targets, and interact for logistical and legal support. The investigative partner agencies consist 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.

## ACRONYMS

Acronym	
AAU	Afghanistan Affairs Unit
AMELA	Afghanistan Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Activity
AQIS	al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
ASIV	Afghan Special Immigrant Visa
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
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
DCIS	Defense Criminal Investigative Service
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
EO	Executive Order
EW	Enduring Welcome
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FY	fiscal year
INL	State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
ISIS-K	ISIS-Khorasan
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
Lead IG	Lead Inspector General
Lead IG agencies	DoD, State, and USAID OIGs
OBIM	DHS Office of Biometric Identity Management

Acronym	
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OBIM	DHS Office of Biometric Identity Management
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OES	Operation Enduring Sentinel
OFS	Operation Freedom's Sentinel
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OUSD(C)	Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller)
PIO	Public international organizations
PRM	State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
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
HNRP	UN Humanitarian Needs Response Plan
U.S.	United States
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
USRAP	U.S. Refugee Admissions Program
VOA	Voice of America
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	UN World Health Organization



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