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4.3.2. Armed conflict (international or internal)

COMMON ANALYSIS

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Over the summer months of 2021, the Taliban's offensive advanced rapidly and resulted in them taking over almost all of the country. ANDSF personnel often withdrew from positions without engaging in confrontations. In their statements following the takeover of Kabul in August 2021, the Taliban declared the war to be over [[Security September 2021](#), 1.1.1, p. 11].

As of spring/summer 2022, the Taliban were in control of all the country's 34 provinces [[Security 2022](#), 2.1.1, p. 36].

Two insurgencies have been resisting Taliban rule with armed force: one is driven by resistance groups, including the NRF and AFF, and one is driven by ISKP. These groups have remained active in some areas, but none has been able to hold significant territory or to form a serious threat to the Taliban rule [[Country Focus 2023](#), 1.1., pp. 17-18].

The NRF, the primary and most developed anti-Taliban resistance movement, declared in February 2022 that its goal was to fight the Taliban and has made attempts to seize direct control of territory from the Taliban government. NRF and affiliated groups have been active mainly in Panjshir Province and adjacent northern areas [[COI Update 2022](#), 3., p. 6; [Security 2022](#), 2.2.1., p. 46]. While these groups proclaimed identical or very similar goals and had the ability to carry out attacks and create insecurity around some roads, sources indicated that they have not been able to merge into one larger resistance movement and lack coordination and resources to seriously contest Taliban rule [[Country Focus 2023](#), 1.1., pp.17-18; [Security 2022](#), 2.2., p. 45].

Apart from NRF, ISKP also continued to be active in the country. Activity of the ISKP has traditionally been concentrated in Kabul and in the country's eastern provinces, notably Kunar and Nangarhar, and some northern areas. After the Taliban takeover, ISKP launched several attacks targeting both Taliban and civilians, and causing numerous deaths. The deadliest attacks attributed to or claimed by ISKP have however been directed against certain ethno-religious groups, in particular the Shia Hazara community [[Country Focus 2023](#), 2.2.2., pp. 32-33].

Given the interpretation of the concept of ‘internal armed conflict’ by the CJEU, and based on the COI, it can be concluded that two main parallel internal armed conflicts, in the meaning of [Article 15\(c\) QD](#), take place in the territory of Afghanistan: between the Taliban de facto government and resistance groups, including the NRF and AFF; and between the Taliban de facto government and the ISKP.

Confrontations and incidents in relation to these conflicts primarily affect certain provinces and cities in Afghanistan, however, the situation remains fluid.

With regard to the provinces where confrontations and incidents take place, the assessment has to proceed to examine whether the remaining criteria under [Article 15\(c\) QD](#) are also (cumulatively) met.