

2.2. Armed groups, and armed confrontations

2.2.1. Activities of resistance groups

Armed resistance groups emerged in Afghanistan as a response to the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021. These groups are aligned with the former government, and the main groups have been the NRF and the AFF, 577 although a number of other groups announced their existence in April 2022.578 No armed resistance groups currently control territory in Afghanistan,579 and according to the Afghan analyst none had overt presence in the country as of October 2024.580 In his reporting covering 1 August 2024–31 October 2025, the UN Secretary-General noted activity of the NRF, AFF, Afghanistan Liberation Movement, the People's Sovereignty Front, the National Mobilization Front, the National Battle Front, and the Islamic Liberation Front.581 While many other groups have previously proclaimed their existence, their actual capacity has in some cases not extended beyond social media announcements.582

NRF claims to have a strength of 5 000 men, present in 20 provinces,583 while other groups have previously been described as smaller than NRF.584 It was not possible to corroborate NRF's claim of their size, and no information on the size of other resistance groups was found within the time constraints of drafting this report. Some sources have, however, suggested that resistance groups have been almost completely defeated in the NRF's former strongholds in Panjsher Province and the district of Andarab in Baghlan Province.585 While resistance groups have still engaged in sporadic irregular attacks,586 Ruttig told ACCORD in October 2024 that recent attacks had been 'relatively marginal and rarely noticed in the region'. Meanwhile journalist Emran Feroz stated in January 2025 that attacks by the NRF and AFF were increasing but underreported due to censorship.587

The UN Secretary-General's report assessed that the armed opposition poses no significant challenge to the de facto authorities hold on territorial control. In the period 1 August 2024–31 July 2025 the UN could verify 277 attacks by armed opposition groups, including the NRF (165 attacks), AFF (55), the Afghanistan Liberation Movement (4), and the People's Sovereignty Front (2). At least 32 additional attacks remained unattributed.588 However, in recent reporting covering the reporting period 1 May–31 October 2025, the UN Secretary General could verify 38 additional attacks, but did not provide a breakdown of the data.589

Event details of ACLED data covering the reference period of this report, suggest that armed resistance groups were the perpetrating actors in 'battles' and 'explosions/remote violence'. Such events were recorded in the provinces of Kabul (61 events), Kunduz (59), Herat (33), Takhar (25), Parwan (15), Kapisa (13), Baghlan (12), Badghis (11), Farah (9), Badakhshan (8),

Faryab (6), Balkh (5), Panjsher (5), Kandahar (1), Laghman (1), and Nimruz (1). ACLED data indicated that only the de facto security forces were being targeted by resistance group.590 UNAMA however reported on, *inter alia,* the NRF harming civilians in 'deliberate' attacks.591 In their reporting covering 1 October 2024–30 June 2025, UNAMA mentioned six attacks carried out by the NRF, the AFF and Afghan Liberation Front wounding 37 civilians and killing one.592 UCDP recorded 5 civilian deaths in connection to events involving the de facto government and resistance groups within the reference period of this report.593

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