

2.2.2. Activities of the ISKP

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The UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team estimated the strength of the ISKP to 2 000 individuals in 2025, and described the group as ‘scattered across the northern and northeastern provinces’.[594] Sources suggest that the ISKP has not had any overt presence in Afghanistan under the de facto government.[595] The group reportedly operate through scattered decentralised networks[596] of cells scattered across the country.[597] Many ISKP cells have moreover relocated from former strongholds to Pakistan and northern Afghanistan.[598] The UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team reported on sympathisers and supports increasing ‘significantly’ in the provinces of Badakhshan and Kunduz, including in retaliation for the de facto authorities poppy eradication campaign.[599] AW reported on ISKP attacks as well as counteroperations by the de facto authorities ‘intensifying’ in the north of Afghanistan in the first quarter of 2025, with five attacks being claimed in the provinces of Baghlan, Takhar, and Kunduz, and counteroperations taking place in the provinces of Sar-e Pul, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, and Samangan.[600]

The number of ISKP attacks have significantly decreased since peaking in 2022.[601] The group’s operational capacity has reportedly been weakened following intense counter-operations[602] in which the de facto authorities captured and killed several ISKP commanders and dismantled numerous ISKP cells.[603] International Crisis Group noted that the ISKP had shifted its operations to targets abroad,[604] although other sources noted that sporadic ISKP attacks have continued in Afghanistan, mainly targeting the de facto authorities,[605] but also religious minorities:[606] on 21 November 2024 the ISKP attacked the Sufi community in Nahrin District (Baghlan Province),[607] and on 14 June 2025 a Shia imam was shot and beheaded in Nusay District (Badakshan Province) by unknown individuals leaving behind an ISKP flag.[608]

The UN Secretary-General’s report assessed that the ISKP poses no significant challenge to the de facto authorities’ territorial control.[609] In the period 1 August 2024–30 January 2025 the UN recorded at least 12 attacks.[610] In subsequent reports covering the reporting period 1 February–31 October 2025, the UN Secretary-General states that attacks continue without providing any numbers,[611] adding that they have decreased in number and scale since 1 May 2025.[612] Although the ISKP claimed no attack in 1 May–31 July 2025, the UN Secretary-General noted that the de facto GDI and the de facto security forces had carried out several operations killing alleged ISKP members in Kabul City, and the provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar, and Badakhshan, and that the ISKP had attacked de facto security forces in Darah-i Nur District (Nangarhar Province) on 15 June 2025, and clashed with de facto security forces in Alingar District (Lagman Province) on 8 July 2025.[613] Within the reference period of this report, ACLED

recorded 13 events in which the ISKP was the apparent perpetrating actor in the provinces of Baghlan (3 events), Nangarhar (3), Kabul (2), Ghor (1), Kunar (1), Kunduz (1), Laghman (1), Takhar (1).614

According to the UN Secretary-General reporting on 6 December 2024, IEDs and suicide attacks, primarily claimed by the ISKP, were the leading cause of civilian casualties in the period 1 August–30 October 2024. The source recorded 87 civilian casualties caused by such attacks, including 16 deaths and 71 injured.615 In a subsequent publication covering the period 1 November 2024–30 April 2025, the UN Secretary-General reported on 88 civilians killed in attacks, and 150 civilians wounded, but did not always specify the actor behind the attacks or the means of the attack.616 No IED attack was mentioned in the UN report covering 1 May–31 July 2025.617 According to UCDP, events involving the ISKP caused 20 civilian deaths within the reference period of this report.618

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