

4.2. Persons formerly affiliated with foreign forces

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This chapter should be read in conjunction with section 4.1. Officials of the former government.

The general amnesty extends to individuals affiliated with foreign forces.1176 Many of these individuals were evacuated from Afghanistan soon after the Taliban takeover in 2021,1177 and those who remain have reportedly been living in hiding,1178 including interpreters.1179 In an interview with Radio Sweden in January 2024, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan described people who used to serve foreign forces as particularly vulnerable to human rights violations, perceived as having worked 'for the enemy'.1180 Similarly, Professor de Jong noted that the de facto authorities perceive those who served foreign forces as 'traitors', with interpreters being prime targets. The same source emphasised that the amnesty was not being felt among this group, nor among those serving the former security forces.1181

A major data leak from the British Ministry of Defence in 2022 revealed the names of over 18 000 Afghans who worked for the British forces and some of their family members. Following the leak, the UK evacuated 4 500 former Afghan allies believed to be at risk of retribution in a secret resettlement programme.1182 As of 16 July 2025, the British Defence Secretary had no information on Afghan allies being killed following the data breach,1183 while Afghans whose names were on the list and remained in Afghanistan stated that they were living in hiding and moving frequently, fearing for their lives.1184 Research published by the organisation Refugee Legal Support in October 2025 found that among 350 Afghans affected by the data breach, 21 reported on family members remaining in Afghanistan being killed because of the breach, and 28 on former colleagues being killed. Additionally, the de facto authorities had conducted house searches in 210 instances (including of family members' homes), and 99 persons had received direct death threats. Respondents included former members of Afghan special forces, the Afghan National Army (ANA), the ANDSF, and the NDS, as well as interpreters, guards, and GardaWorld contractors.1185 Moreover, the anonymous caseworker who raised the alarm of the data breach compiled a dossier with 200 names of individuals allegedly killed following the breach, including former Afghan special forces soldiers, and in some cases their family members. According to the caseworker, a special unit of the de facto security forces, 'Yarmok 60', was hunting down people on the list.1186

A joint media investigation recorded over 110 killings and several cases of torture of former ANDSF members since 2023 until mid-2025. The investigation noted that these cases were likely

an undercount; many other cases were not included as they could not be corroborated. Among those killed were former security officials who worked in special forces funded or supported by US and British troops. Some killings were attributed to ‘unknown gunmen’ while others died following torture in detention by the de facto authorities. According to the investigation, three former soldiers of the special forces were tortured in attempts to extract contact details of their former colleagues.1187 Freelance journalist Beth Bailey, who is engaged in the evacuation of Afghans who supported US troops, said that she receives accounts of revenge killings of American allies in Afghanistan on a monthly basis.1188

Professor de Jong cautioned against relying on the number of recorded killings to assess the situation of Afghans who served foreign forces. She noted that many of them, especially interpreters, have been evacuated – meaning that the potential targets are no longer present in Afghanistan. Moreover, those remaining in the country have adopted survival strategies, such as living in hiding apart from their families, but they are unable to lead a normal life.1189

Although Professor de Jong noted that anyone who had a role associated with Western forces could be a potential target, she also mentioned that individual circumstances may impact a person’s exposure – including the sensitivity of the mission that they were involved in (e.g. security, intelligence, combat versus less sensitive development projects). Some staff were moreover recruited from outside the area of operation, which in some cases could potentially lower their exposure to be targeted if they were to return to their area or origin. Professor de Jong noted that those recruited locally were often people carrying out ‘unskilled’ labour such as cleaners, drivers, and guards. While these people might not be ‘prime targets’, they may at the same time be ‘known targets’ as they were part of the local communities in which the operations took place.1190

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