

4.8.9. Salafists

4.8.9. Salafists

Most Salafists oppose the IS, but Salafism is the religious approach adopted by the group.[1896](#) In their suppression of the ISKP in the months following their takeover, the de facto authorities violently targeted Salafist communities in Nangarhar and Kunar.[1](#)

More information is available in section [4.3.2. Suspected ISKP affiliates](#).

Most victims of the de facto government's initial crackdown on the ISKP were reportedly ethnic Pashtuns, although a significant number of Uzbeks and Tajiks adhere to Salafism in northern Afghanistan.[1898](#) The Salafi identity is distinct from the Hanafi identity. Salafists, as other ethnoreligious minority groups, reportedly also experience a lack of true representation, including on district and village level, as only Taliban sympathisers have been appointed.[1899](#)

The Salafi community has been facing some limitations on practicing their religion, including, as mentioned, pressure on Salafi *madrassas* in eastern Afghanistan to conform with Hanafi doctrines.[1900](#) and on praying 'Salafi-style' in mosques.[1901](#) The Afghan researcher stated in 2024 that in areas where Salafists are in minority, they are in general not allowed to do their prayer as they want, and that some people had been arrested for praying 'Salafi-style'. The same source highlighted hostility from southern Taliban commanders, heavily influenced by Sufism, in southern Afghanistan (e.g. the provinces Paktya, Paktika, Khost, Kandahar, Helmand, Nimroz). For example, to pray the way Salafists do in Kandahar would not be acceptable, and such an individual would not even be allowed to enter the mosque.[1902](#) Afghanistan expert Antonio Giustozzi, as cited by the Danish COI unit, also described 'a hostility towards the Salafis in general', primarily from the Deobandi and Sufi communities in the southern parts of Afghanistan.[1903](#)

The de facto authorities have closed multiple Salafi *madrassas*[1904](#) and reportedly also Salafi mosques.[1905](#) There have also been cases in which *madrassas* taken over by Hanafis, or Hanafi imams have been appointed to mosques.[1906](#)

[1896](#)

International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan: A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

[1](#)

RFE/RL, Senior Clerics Caught In The Crossfire Of The Taliban's Intensifying War With IS-K, 24 August 2022, [url](#)

[1898](#)

[1899](#)

Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 26–27

[1900](#)

Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 22–23, 25 27, 31

[1901](#)

International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023; UNAMA, De Facto Authorities’ Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 13; Afghan researcher, online interview, 12 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the COI units at the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and the Swedish Migration Agency.

[1902](#)

Afghan researcher, online interview, 12 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the COI units at the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and the Swedish Migration Agency

[1903](#)

Denmark, Centre for Documentation and Counter Extremism, Afghanistan, Ahl-e Hadith, October 2023, [url](#), p. 11

[1904](#)

Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23; Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 30

[1905](#)

Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23

[1906](#)

Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 30–31