

4.8.9. Salafists

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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

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