

# AFGHANISTAN INTELLIGENCE REPORT

SECURITY ASSESSMENT FOR EXPATRIATES, AID WORKERS,  
BUSINESS TRAVELERS, AND DIPLOMATS

**APRIL 2025**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Afghanistan remains under consolidated Taliban control. While no significant changes are expected, operational conditions remain volatile due to the influence of hardliners, the persistent ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) threat, and a deepening humanitarian crisis. There is a reduction in the frequency of mass-casualty attacks in urban areas compared to the pre-2021 period, but security risks remain high, particularly in contested areas.

This report provides a structured, practical assessment of the current situation in Afghanistan, with emphasis on travel routes, security dynamics, accommodation options, and operational realities for organizations and individuals on the ground.

### Key Findings:

- The Taliban maintains effective nationwide control and oversees functioning airports and border posts
- ISIS-K remains the primary terrorist threat, with a continued intent to target and disrupt.
- NGOs and international actors face unpredictable enforcement and bureaucratic interference which need managing carefully.
- Kabul is “more secure” than before 2021 in some respects, but risks remain acute and complex

## CURRENT SITUATION

### Political Control

The Taliban, operating as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, maintains de facto control of the country. Internal divisions exist between pragmatic and ideological factions, but governance remains centralized and largely uncontested by armed groups.

### Security Environment

Security in urban areas like Kabul has improved in terms of reduced street crime and fewer mass-casualty attacks. However, the rise of ISIS-K as a resilient insurgent force presents an ongoing threat. High-profile attacks, such as the May 2024 killing of Spanish tourists in Bamyán, underscore the risks to foreigners.

### Humanitarian Crisis

Roughly half of the population (22.9 million people) requires aid. The banking sector is barely functional. Food insecurity, health system collapse, and Taliban-imposed restrictions on aid agencies compound the crisis.

## International Positioning

The Taliban seeks formal recognition, but international isolation continues. Engagement by China, Russia, and the Gulf states is increasing, primarily for strategic and economic reasons.



## TRAVEL & BORDER ENTRY

### Air Travel

Flights to Kabul are available via:

- **Kam Air** (from Dubai, Islamabad, Tashkent, Istanbul, Abu Dhabi, Doha)
- **Emirates and Fly Dubai** (from Dubai)
- **Turkish Airlines** (from Istanbul)

Security screening at Kabul Airport is comprehensive. Arrive 2–3 hours before departure.

### Land Borders

Operational border crossings:

- **Pakistan:** Torkham and Spin Boldak (open, unpredictable)
- **Iran:** Islam Qala (functional)
- **Uzbekistan:** Hairatan (open)
- **Tajikistan:** Shir Khan (visa-on-arrival, \$150)

Taliban forces inspect documents thoroughly at all crossings. Delays and arbitrary enforcement are common.



## SECURITY SNAPSHOT: KABUL POST-2021

### Improvements:

- Reduced suicide bombings
- Lower general crime rates
- Unified Taliban security forces
- Organized checkpoints

### Emerging Risks:

- ISIS-K attacks remain a serious concern
- Kidnapping and arbitrary detention of foreigners
- Limited diplomatic or consular support

### Risk Zones in Kabul:

- Diplomatic compounds
- Hotels known to host foreigners
- NGO offices and international schools



# ACCOMMODATION & SECURITY

## Hotels commonly used by visiting foreigners

- **Kabul Serena Hotel** – Central, formerly highly secure, now Taliban-managed
- **Baron Hotel** – Near airport, fortified, used by contractors
- **Park Star Hotel** – Moderate security, mid-range pricing
- **Golden Star Hotel** – Basic security, lower profile

## All offer:

- Controlled entry/exit
- Perimeter security
- Armed guards and scanning systems

*This does not constitute a recommendation by Sicuro Group. We encourage a risk assessment in advance of any trips, with regular ongoing reviews.*



# OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

## NGO / Aid Operations

- Taliban restrictions on female staff (esp. post-Dec 2024)
- Multi-ministerial registration and approvals
- Inconsistent monitoring by Taliban departments

## Provincial Travel

- Permits required (approx. \$12 per province)
- Taliban checkpoints frequent; permits must match declared travel
- Register with local Information & Culture office

## Business Operations

- Registration with Ministry of Commerce
- Cash-based operations dominate
- International transfers limited

## Communications

- Mobile networks (Roshan, MTN, AWCC) unreliable
- Internet is slow, occasionally censored or disrupted
- Assume communications are monitored

# CONTINGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## Evacuation:

- Maintain emergency funds and flight plans
- Identify exit routes (land and air)
- Establish relationships with local fixers

## Comms Failure:

- Use check-in systems
- Set comms blackout procedures and signals

## Medical:

- Have full medical kits and evacuation insurance and understand how to use both
- Know local medical facility locations

# CITY PROFILES

## Kabul:

Central hub for foreigners. Managed risk. ISIS-K active.

## Mazar-i-Sharif:

Moderately secure. Uzbek influence. Key border crossing.

## Herat:

Iranian-influenced. Better infrastructure. Border town dynamics.

## Kandahar:

Taliban heartland. High surveillance. Strict enforcement.

## Bamyan:

Hazara region. Tourist destination (relative to locale). Recent ISIS-K attack.

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

- Nearly 23 million people in need of aid
- <25% of required humanitarian funding met (as of March 2025)
- Restrictions on women's participation in aid delivery
- Ongoing climate shocks impacting food security

## CONCLUSION

Afghanistan's operational environment remains high-risk despite improved surface-level security in major cities. ISIS-K remains active. The Taliban's governance style and regulatory unpredictability add further complexity.

Foreigners must adopt strict movement discipline, remain politically neutral, and prepare for both bureaucratic and physical contingencies.

Despite the challenges, aid and commercial activity continue. Success depends on maintaining a low profile, partnering with trusted local contacts, and staying ahead of fast-changing ground realities.

*This report was prepared as a basic overview for international personnel operating in Afghanistan as of April 2025.*



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