

AFGHAN LINKS

ISSUE – 13 – 10th April 2005 (TOTAL NO. 22)

Afghan Links is a free newsletter for readers who have a keen interest in Afghanistan, its history, people and culture. It invites news and articles from anyone who wishes to create and maintain constructive links between Afghanistan and other countries by sharing their expertise, information and ideas in any field.

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CHILDREN

Afghan city mourns its lost children, looks back to Taliban

In the photograph, 12-year-old Mohammed Tahir looks barely conscious. A bloodied rag covers his left hand, where the kidnappers hacked off his finger and sent it, along with the picture, to his family.

"We are not Muslims. We don't know God, so don't ask us for sympathy. Just send us money," the ransom note read.

His family begged and borrowed the 10,000 dollars the kidnappers asked for, but two days after they left the money in an abandoned school in the southern city of Kandahar, his battered body was found nearby.

In another incident blamed on the same gang, 13-year-old Nakibullah's body was unrecognisable when he was found nine days after his family paid kidnappers the same amount for a ransom. Wild animals had destroyed his face and right arm, and only the missing finger on his left hand showed who he was.

"When we went there and I saw my son, whatever my feelings only I know, my heart knows and my God knows," said the boy's father Haji Bismillah, sitting in a room he has barely left since his son was found dead last month.

The boys were among six children kidnapped since the new year in Kandahar, once the spiritual heartland of the fundamentalist Taliban regime, according to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC).

The disappearances have sparked a political firestorm in the deeply conservative city. Many people have begun to feel life was better under the harsh Islamic law of the Taliban, because they could at least guarantee the safety of their children.

On March 7 more than 3,000 people took to the streets of Kandahar demanding the resignation of the governor and the police chief, accusing police of collusion with the kidnappers and demanding a restoration of law and order.

The protest turned violent. Three people were shot and another 15 were injured according to security sources and hospital doctors in the city.

Demonstrators have in part achieved their ends. On March 16, President Hamid Karzai ordered a sweeping shake-up of provincial police leaders and sent Kandahar's police chief Khan Mohammed to the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Karzai is right to be worried. The Taliban came to power in Kandahar after a similar spate of child kidnappings, when the now fugitive leader of the movement intervened to stop a fight between two militia commanders who were battling in the streets over a boy they wanted to sodomise. According to one of the many urban legends surrounding the regime, the Taliban soldiers freed the boy and were welcomed by residents of the city.

But now people are worried about their children again.

"Three of the boys were abused and then murdered in the most violent ways. Two of them had been raped," Shamsuddin Tanrir, director of the Children's Rights Section at the AIHRC said about the latest spree of abductions.

According to Tanrir's records a further nine boys were kidnapped last year, and he suspects many more children were snatched but their parents have kept quiet after their offspring were returned once they had paid a ransom.

"A lot of children go missing. And Kuchi or Baluchi children whose parents are nomads and not part of the system are probably never traced," a western security source in Kandahar told AFP.

Afghan Independent Radio, which broadcasts a program in Kandahar city, reports that missing children declarations are the most commonly placed adverts on the show.

"We get about four or five missing children a month. About 20 percent of them are found before we hit the air," said Ismael Tahir, director of radio programming at the station.

However, others are taken for child labour, or abuse, or are runaways, Tahir said, adding that the station is planning to log their names and addresses to help with investigations.

The radio station is at the front line of the search for missing children because public confidence in the police has sunk so low. Even the newly appointed police chief, Lieutenant General Mohammed Ayoub Salangi, concedes that there was probably official corruption behind the kidnappings.

"It seems as if local militia or tribal commanders were involved," he told AFP.

For Mohammed Tahir's family their nightmare had only just begun when they lost their son. Police arrested two of the child's uncles, keeping one of them, Abdul Zahir, for 18 days and torturing him to try and force him to admit to the crime.

"I couldn't admit it because I haven't done anything, but now our whole family wants to leave Kandahar because we think there were powerful people involved," he said.

No police investigators have been to look at the pictures the kidnappers sent to try to find out who might be behind the killings, he added.

"It should be possible to work out where this was developed and try to trace the kidnappers that way," he said holding out a picture of his dead nephew.

Salangi said that police were still investigating the case, but while a handful of people were arrested and later released, no one has been charged.

"One of the biggest problems we face here is police corruption and judicial corruption. If the police can't find the real killer they will often arrest an innocent man and try and get him to confess," said AIHRC's Tanrir.

Abdul Zahir said he hopes things will improve under the new police chief Salangi, who is a Tajik from northern Afghanistan, rather than an ethnic Pashtun like the majority in Kandahar.

"We don't care if he's Pashtun, Tajik or an animal. We just want him to bring security," he said.

Source: AFP - Sunday April 10, 2005.

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DDR

DDR Facts And Figures

Officers and soldiers disarmed as at	7 April	46,923 ¹
Total Personnel demobilised as at	4 April	42,130
Personnel commencing reintegration options as at	4 April	41,001
Personnel's Reintegration options by choice as at	4 April	
	Options	%
	Agriculture	43.7
	Vocational Training and Job Placement	27.5
	Business options	21.0
	Demining	3.1
	ANA	1.6
	Police	0.5
	Contractors	1.2
	Teacher Training	0.6
	Others	0.5
	Non participating	0.4

Heavy Weapons

Number of repairable and operational HW's cantoned as at 7 April 8,873

DDR Focus

With 77 days to go before the disarmament phase of DDR concludes, efforts are underway to ensure that the 20,000 personnel entitled to join the Reintegration Program do so. ANBP's Mobile Disarmament Units are working throughout the country to disarm the remaining AMF Units to enable the personnel to formally demobilise and commence their personal reintegration training options.

Shortly, efforts will gravitate back to Kabul and Parwan to focus on the remaining AMF Units. Work is now in hand to verify the individuals from those Units to ensure that they join the Program before it closes to any further personnel at the end of June.

BACKGROUND

Current and (original) ANBP estimates of Afghan Military Forces participating in the DDR programme 50,000 (100,000)

¹ As at 27 March, 76,744 personnel have been definanced saving \$70m in wages for the GoA.

Breakdown of DDR figures within previous phases

No. AMF Disarmed	6271 Regional pilot phase	24 10 03 – 17 05 04
	8551 National main phase 1	17 05 – 12 09 04
	6840 National main phase 2	13 09 – 09 10 04
	22752 National main phase 3	10 10 - 20 03 05

No. AMF Demobilised	6242 Regional pilot phase	24 10 03 – 17 05 04
	8435 National main phase 1	17 05 – 12 09 04
	6530 National main phase 2	13 09 – 09 10 04
	x National main phase 3	10 10 - 20 03 05

AMF Reintegrating	6019 Regional pilot phase	24 10 03 – 17 05 04
	7829 National main phase 1	17 05 – 12 09 04
	6172 National main phase 2	13 09 – 09 10 04
	x National main phase 3	10 10 - 20 03 05

Est number of illegal armed gangs not addressed by the DDR programme 1,000²

Actual number of personnel in the Afghan National Army that are trained and or (under training) as at 2 April 21,334 (3,851) 25,185³

Heavy Weapons

The current total for those heavy weapons classified as operational or repairable represents a large increase over the original figure originally indicated in the national survey. The survey suggested that there were some 4,300 HW's but also included the caveat that more may be identified with time.

HW's are stored in regional Cantonment sites in the following AMF / ANA Corps' areas - 1 Corp – Jalalabad. 2 Corp – Kandahar. 3 Corp – Gardez. 4 Corp – Herat. 5 Corp – Parwan. 6 Corp – Konduz. 7 and 8 Corp – Mez. 9 Corp – Bamyan.
Central Corp –Kabul. [home](#)

HUMANITARIAN NEWS

Radio Helps Save Lives from Natural Disaster

April 6, 2005: Disaster from a recent flood in Ghazni City, caused by a collapsing dam, may have been partially averted because of the work of radio journalists. Early on March 29, the old Sultan Dam in Ghazni River, just upstream from Ghazni City, collapsed. The ensuing flood washed away homes and shops in this ancient town, two hours south of Kabul.

Earlier that morning, one of the *Salaam Watandar* journalists received a call from the station manger at Radio Ghaznawiyaan in Ghazni, describing the situation and the impending collapse. Ghaznawiyaan is one of the network partners that broadcasts *Salaam Watandar* every morning and evening. The *Salaam Watandar* team called the governor of Ghazni Province, who issued a statement over the national radio program to the people of Ghazni and surrounding villages: "We are worried that the water pressure may break the dam and in that case it will destroy a number of villages on its way, especially Khwaja Omari and Ghazni City."

The journalist asked, "What is your message to the people now?"

Governor: "I am informing all the residents living near the river of Ghazni that they should immediately leave with their families and children and go as far as they can. We have instructed our police department to help the people."

² 442 personnel from independent commanders Ammanullah Khan (314); Herat Mujahideen (18); Militia Forces Charbolak (110) have been voluntarily DDR'd to date but only received food packages. ANBP is not mandated to include them within the DDR "R" programme. The number of Illegal Armed Gangs was stated at 1,000 by the UN Sec General in his report to the Security Council 22 / 3/ 05.

³ Both the AMF and ANA are recognised operational forces funded by the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The AMF is being DDR'd to break down the historic command and control structures and patriarchal allegiances that exist between the personnel and the factional leaders. In parallel, personnel are being recruited and professionally trained for the ANA to create a modern deployable and ethnically representative Army, that is commanded by the MoD and loyal to GoA. The ANA should reach 43,000 before Dec 05 and be at its full complement of 70,000 before Dec. 07.

This interview and report from Radio Ghaznawiyaan opened the *Salaam Watandar* daily program before the water broke the dam.

By the time *Salaam Watandar* journalists were able to get on the scene, the dam had already broken, but not without thankful people in Ghazni. One of the town's residents said, "I was listening to the Radio Ghaznawiyaan and when it started to talk about the Sultan Water Dam, I turned the volume up and I understood that we have to run."

The collapse of the Sultan Dam completely destroyed the village of Zamin Kola, but thankfully there none lost their lives; they had left the village because they were informed by *Salaam Watandar* and Radio Ghaznawiyaan minutes before. Hundreds of shops in Ghazni Bazaar and nearby houses were also destroyed by the water, with minimal loss of life.

Later, Radio Ghaznawiyaan continued to connect the two sides of the city divided by the flooding river.

For more information, please contact Mirwais Social, *Salaam Watandar* Managing Editor at mirwais@internews.org or David Trilling, Acting Country Director, at david.trilling@internews.org [home](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Watch – World Report 2005 – Afghanistan

Despite some improvements, Afghanistan continued to suffer from serious instability in 2004. Warlords and armed factions, including remaining Taliban forces, dominate most of the country and routinely abuse human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls. The international community has failed to contribute adequate troops or resources to address the situation, and basic human rights conditions remain poor in many parts of the country, especially outside of Kabul.

Progress was made in stabilizing Afghanistan's system of governance. Afghans began exercising their right to participate in the political process by approving a new constitution in January 2004, and selecting Hamid Karzai to a five-year term as president in a generally peaceful election in October—the country's first universal suffrage, direct vote for the presidency. Afghans, including notable numbers of women, participated widely in both processes, but the legitimacy of both processes suffered due to inadequate preparation by the international community and the absence of sufficient security and monitoring.

These advances are offset by the blossoming Afghan drug economy and the continuing effects of widespread poverty. Afghanistan was the largest worldwide producer of opium and heroin in 2004. Escalating drug profits stifle efforts to reestablish rule of law and increase reconstruction and development efforts. Average per capita expenditures for Afghans—the amount of money an average Afghan spends on food and essential non-food items in one year—is only U.S. \$165. Literacy rates and school enrollment rates countrywide climb, but still remain extremely low, especially for women. And the country continues to suffer from extremely high levels of preventable morbidity and health problems.

U.S. forces operating against Taliban insurgents continue to generate numerous claims of human rights abuses against the civilian population, including arbitrary arrests, use of excessive force, and mistreatment of detainees, many of whom are held outside the protection of the Geneva Conventions. **Please see attachment 3.13 for the full section on Afghanistan.**

Source: Human Rights Watch – World Report 2005 - <http://hrw.org/wr2k5/> [home](#)

LEGAL SYSTEM

UNDP – The Justice Programme Media Advisory - Press Briefing - Seminar on "Afghanistan's Legal System: Challenges and Solutions"

When: Today Sunday 10th April 2005, 16:00 hrs. (4 pm) to Tuesday 12th April 2005.

Where: Ballroom, Inter-Continental Hotel, Kabul

From Sunday 10th to Tuesday 12th April, the Ministry of Justice of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is going to hold a seminar, to discuss and exchange views on the current justice system, and the challenges and solutions facing it. This will be an internal conference, for which the Minister has invited about 150 justice sector staff from around Afghanistan in order to apprise them of current justice sector activities including PRR, provincialization, law reform, etc. Scheduled attendees include H.E. Sarwar Danish, Minister of Justice; H.E. Mawlana Fazl Hadi Shinwari, Chief Justice and Director General of the Supreme Court; and H.E. Abdul Mahmood Daqeeq, Attorney General. On Sunday 10th, the event will also attract international personalities involved with justice reform, including senior UN officials and diplomats from donor countries.

At the end of the first day of activity, national and international media representatives are invited to a press briefing. H.E. Sarwar Danish, Minister of Justice, along with some of the other seminar participants, will brief the media on the event's progress, and will be able to answer questions. Refreshments will be offered.

UNDP's Justice Programme is sponsoring this seminar as part of its support to Afghanistan's permanent justice institutions, under the project "Rebuilding the Justice Sector in Afghanistan" - which aims to rebuild and strengthen Afghan justice institutions, to develop Afghan law faculties, and enhance overall access to justice in the country. The project's major donors are Italy, Canada, and the UK. For more information, please call +93-(0)79-229203 or +93-(0)70-249865, or email publicinfo.justice.af@undp.org.

Source: Communications and Public Information Unit (Justice) - UNDP Afghanistan.

Email: publicinfo.justice.af@undp.org **Tel:** +93-79-229203

Please visit <http://www.undp.org.af/>

[home](#)

SECURITY

• **Warden Message**

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul reminds American citizens living and traveling in Afghanistan that potential remains for attacks against U.S. citizens and interests in Afghanistan. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. Terrorist actions may include rocket attacks, suicide operations, assassinations, hijackings, shootings or bombings. Potential target areas include key national or international government establishments, international organizations and other locations with expatriate personnel, and public areas popular with the expatriate community.

At this time, the Embassy is concerned about threats involving areas where foreigners are known to congregate, particularly restaurants. From time to time, the Embassy places areas frequented by foreigners off limits to its personnel depending on current security conditions. Currently, the Elbow Room restaurant remains off limits due to an incident that allegedly originated at that location which resulted in an attack on a member of the expatriate community.

The Embassy also remains concerned about threats involving the kidnapping of American citizens in Afghanistan. U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. The Embassy recommends that all Americans living and working in Kabul continue to restrict their movements, observe the strictest of security measures, and defer any unnecessary travel around the city. We again caution against movements in other potential target areas, such as:

- Key national or international government establishments
- National or international military facilities, including ISAF.
- Locations popular with the international community, including restaurants and Internet cafes.
- Areas with high population density, i.e. bazaars

Americans in Afghanistan are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. As the Embassy continues to develop information on any potential security threats to U.S. citizens in Afghanistan, it will share them with the American community via the Warden System. We take this opportunity to remind the community of the continuing threats outlined in the current Travel Warning for Afghanistan and Worldwide Caution Public Announcement. The full text of each can be found at <http://travel.state.gov>. Updated information may also be obtained by contacting the American Embassy in Kabul at usconsulkabul@state.gov or by calling the Consular Section on 020-230-0436.

The Department of State also shares information through its consular information program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. In addition to information on the Internet, U.S. travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-317-472-2328. **Source:** Russel J. Brown, Consul, United States Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan. [home](#)

- **OXFORD • RESEARCH • GROUP - International Security Monthly Briefing – March 2005 Professor Paul Rogers**

Afghanistan

When the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was terminated towards the end of 2001, there was an expectation of two consequences. One would be a substantial if not terminal weakening of the capabilities of al-Qaida and its associates. Given that al-Qaida had training and logistical functions centred largely on Afghanistan, the assumption was that removal of these functions would have a fundamental impact on its potential for further action. Indeed, this was seen in Washington as the appropriate and relevant response to the 9/11 attacks. In the event, the al-Qaida phenomenon has since undergone a series of transformations. The many associates remain active across the world, the overall level of activity has been higher than before 9/11, and the detention or killing of some leadership elements has had little effect as new cohorts have come forward. In some parts of the world, most notably Southern Thailand, there has even been a recent upsurge in activity.

The second expectation was that Afghanistan would be aided to make major and rapid progress in post-war reconstruction, aided by appropriate security support and very substantial development assistance. Whatever else might happen, this would ensure that Afghanistan would not regain its status as the world's primary source of heroin.

Over three years later, the situation remains complex, but it cannot be said that progress has been even remotely as strong as had been hoped.

There are three aspects to the current situation across the country. On a positive note, there is an established government under Mr Karzai, the security situation in Kabul and some other major cities has improved, even if still unstable at times, and a degree as attracted back to the country a large number of exiles. Even so, Afghanistan remains hugely dependent on international aid, and the government of Mr Karzai controls very little of the overall budget. Of the \$4.75 billion budget for the new year, over 90% comes from donors and less than 10% from internal revenue raising. Furthermore, the government controls less than a quarter of this budget, the great majority being fed through to nongovernmental organisations and projects run directly by foreign governments. There are currently over 2,000 nongovernmental organisations registered in Afghanistan, with many engaged in development projects.

As they frequently employ western specialists at high salaries, there remains considerable ill-feeling over the siphoning off of aid into relatively few non-Afghan hands.

The second aspect, that also affects development projects is that the background insurgency in parts of southern and eastern Afghanistan has continued through a fourth winter, with some 17,000 US combat troops involved in counter-guerrilla warfare and other security functions. Their activities have included large-scale detentions without trial, with these functions apparently conducted without any form of control or oversight by the Karzai administration.

Beyond this is the more substantial national and international issue of Afghanistan's regaining its place as the world's leading source of heroin. This has been directly contrary to the development plans advocated by some coalition governments. In one particular period of Taliban rule, 2000-2001, there were determined and often brutal methods introduced to control opium poppy growing, leading to the almost total collapse of poppy cultivation. The turnaround since then has been remarkable, with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime reporting that Afghanistan now accounts for 87% of world-wide illegal production of heroin.

The Afghan opium export market is now worth \$2.8 billion and production is close to the peak years of the early 1990s, including a 64% increase last year. The basis of production is particularly robust in that the poppies are grown on around 330,000 plots by small farmers, so much so that about one in ten of the entire Afghan population has some kind of involvement. Given the levels of poverty in Afghanistan, recently listed in 173rd place out of 178 in the Human Development Index, the key issue is that opium poppy cultivation, where soil and climatic conditions are favourable, is hugely more profitable than other crops. Typically, an opium poppy crop will yield 12 times the gross income of wheat.

Although the illicit drug industry in Afghanistan has not reached the levels of control of some South American cartels, drawing profits from all four stages in the process (production, processing, trafficking and retailing), there are indications that existing warlords and new drug entrepreneurs are beginning to adopt similar policies. The US government has recently announced an intensive anti-drug programme for implementation in Afghanistan, but it is highly unlikely that this will prove effective unless in the context of much greater support for rural

development. That, for the moment, is simply not forthcoming on the scale required. **For the full briefing covering the Bush Administration, Insurgencies and Iraq see attachment 2.13.**
Source: Professor Paul Rogers - OXFORD • RESEARCH • GROUP – March 2005. [home](#)

TOURISM

Hinterland Travel Offer Tours in Afghanistan for 3rd Year Running



AFGHANISTAN

We are revisiting Afghanistan after the years of International and internal conflict in this starkly beautiful country. Some people will think that this is a little premature given that there is still so much internal dissension and that is certainly the British Government Foreign Office advice. But we prefer to state that it is at the Cutting edge of Adventure tourism. As an organisation, Hinterland or rather its predecessor, Hann Overland travelled through Afghanistan frequently in the seventies and eighties. Geoff Hann in November 2002 personally checked out the route that we intended to use and have been successful with our Road tour in 2003 and now our tours in 2004.

The country is desperately poor, frankly it needs any help that we or anyone can give it. The vast sums promised by the International Community have only just trickled in or have yet to be fulfilled or are just promises. At least we can make a direct contribution to local people with the use of their services. The roads are just diabolical. The good news is that the importance of these trade routes has been recognised by the International community and road reconstruction is beginning. The Afghan people are friendly and cheerfully welcoming although wary until we can prove that we are travellers and not something else. The ancient past and recent history is scattered everywhere, from Buddhist stupa to burnt out tanks.

Our tours are not so steeped in excavated ancient remains as for example is our Iraq tour and they are a more scenic, peoples tour but with as many religious and historical sites as we can fit in. Herat, for example, is full of Islamic remains. We, despite our adventurous natures, have to be sensible so our basic road itinerary takes in as much as the first time visitor could hope to fit in, in 3 weeks.

For this last August 2004 we also initiated, very successfully, our Exploratory Central and the North Afghanistan tour - see our 2005 date.

THE ROAD TOUR

The expected itinerary - we also operate the tour back to back - on one date we enter Afghanistan from Pakistan and exit into Iran and reverse it for the next tour using our own vehicle and driver/tour leader.

Iran - Afghanistan – Pakistan

Departure date - 16 April 2005

Itinerary

Day 1	Depart London arrival Tehran (Iran)
Day 2	Depart Tehran - and arrival Mashad (am)
Day 3	Taybad border crossing to Herat(Afghanistan)
Day 4/5	Herat City walking tour/excursion to Gazagarh
Day 6/7	Drive to Kandahar
Day 8	Day excursion to Lashqar Gar - Arch of Bost
Day 9	Drive to Ghazni
Day 10	Drive to Kabul
Day 11	Kabul

Day 12/13/14/15	Bamiyan and Bandi-I-Mir excursions, via Salang Pass - Pol I Khumari
Day 16/17	To Mazar Shariff/excursion to Balkh
Day 18	Return to Kabul
Day 19	Kabul/drive to Jalalabad
Day 20	Over Khyber Pass to Peshawar
Day 21	Peshawar
Day 22	Dept for Rawlpindi/Islamabad (Flight connections)

**Reverse itinerary Pakistan - Afghanistan - Iran
Departure Dates - 28 September 2005
Expected Schedule.**

Day 1	Depart London - arrival Islamabad next day
Day 2	Arrival Islamabad - transfer to Peshawar
Day 3	Peshawar
Day 4	Drive over Khyber Pass to Jalalabad (Afghanistan)
Day 5	Drive through Kabul Gorge to Kabul
Day 6	Kabul City excursions
Day 7/8/9	Bamiyan and Bandir-I-Mir excursion
Day 10	Via Salang Tunnel/or bypass road via Pul I Khumri to Mazar Sharif
Day 11/12	Mazar - Balkh excursion
Day 13	Return to Kabul
Day 14	Drive to Ghazni
Day 15	Drive to Kandahar
Day 16	Lashqar Gar - Arch of Bost excursion.
Day 17/18	Drive to Herat
Day 19/20	Herat plus excursions - Gazarqarh
Day 21	Drive to Mashad
Day 22	Mashad/Tehran/London - flight connections

Please note that many things can conspire to change/enhance or delay our schedules Every trip will have its own special experience. Road and weather conditions vary as do security problems. But we always try to add something different and refine the trip.

Road tour basic costs - Ground cost £1,580 plus visas for Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Not included International/internal flights, lunch or dinner, personal insurance, individual airport transfers. Included in ground cost - Hinterland midibus-driver/tour leader, guards when required. Many excursions. Group airport transfers. Accommodation and breakfast.

Note for 2006 - we will have 4 Road tours.

http://www.hinterlandtravel.com/afghan_upcoming.htm

NOTE WELL: Before booking your tour to Afghanistan – it would be sensible to read the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice BELOW! Likewise – the two articles on security ABOVE. Jeanne [home](#)

- **Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice for Afghanistan Current Today – 10th April 2005**

This advice has been reviewed and reissued with amendments to the Summary and In Kabul section. The overall level of the advice has not changed.

SUMMARY

We strongly advise against all but essential travel to Kabul and against all travel to other parts of Afghanistan.

On the evening of 7 March 2005, a British national was shot and killed by unknown attackers as he drove home after dinner in a Kabul restaurant. The motives for the attack are unknown and the police are investigating. The attack happened in what was thought to be a relatively well-policed district of the city. Until more is known, it would be sensible for those in Kabul to keep a low profile, and avoid all but essential travel after dark. You should always ensure car doors are locked and windows closed, and if possible maintain radio or telephone communications to report your movements.

On 3 February 2005 a Kam Air plane flying from Herat to Kabul crashed in bad weather 17 miles outside of Kabul, killing all passengers and crew on board in the country's worst air disaster.

Three UN election workers (an Irish/British dual national, a Kosovo-Albanian, and a Filipino) were kidnapped by armed men in Kabul on 28 October 2004. They were released unharmed on 23 November after 27 days in captivity. The threat from kidnapping to employees of NGOs and foreign companies throughout Afghanistan remains.

Information on specific and urgent threats is circulated via the Warden network within Afghanistan. It is therefore important that you register with the British Embassy in Kabul on arrival (see below for contact details).

The security situation in Afghanistan remains serious and the threat to Westerners from terrorist or criminal violence, including kidnappings, remains high. There have been a number of attacks against the UN, NGOs, ISAF, coalition forces and individuals.

You should be aware that there is a widespread danger from mines and unexploded ordnance throughout Afghanistan.

If you believe that your visit is essential, we strongly recommend seeking local advice before undertaking your journey.

We strongly recommend that comprehensive travel and medical insurance is obtained before travelling. **Source:** Hinterland Travel.

Be sure to check the FCO website below before you go and make sure you make an informed decision. Jeanne

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket%2FXcelerate%2FShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618385513> [home](#)

If you want further information on any of the above subjects please email Jeanne Bryer at Afghanlinks@aol.com

NB. All information contained here identifies the source and is shared with readers in good faith. If you find any incorrect details please let me know and they will be rectified immediately. *Afghan Links* is produced by Jeanne Bryer who formerly worked for the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and who currently works for Khorasan Orphanage in Kabul and the Kathy Evans Afghan Education Trust. If you no longer wish to receive the Afghan Links Newsletter please send an email to Jeanne Afghanlinks@aol.com and your address will be removed.

