



**Province: Wardak**  
**Governor: Muhammad Halim Fidai**  
**Provincial Police Chief: Mozafaradeen Wardak**

<b>Population Estimate:</b> 506,300	Urban: 2,400	Rural: 503,900
Area in Square Kilometers	3,745	Capital: Kowt-e Ashrow
Names of Districts: <sup>1</sup>	Chak, Day Mirdad, Hisa-I-Awal Bihsud, Jalrez, Markezi Bihsud, Maydan Shahr, Nirkh, Saydabad	
Composition of Population:	<u>Ethnic Groups:</u> Hazara, Tajik, Pashtun, Kuchi, Qizilbash	<u>Religious Groups:</u> Shia and Sunni Islam <u>Total # Mosques:</u> 2,684
		<u>Tribal Groups:</u> Pashtun: Wardak, Kharoti, Hotak
Occupation of Population	Major: Day labor, agriculture, timber	Minor:
Crops/Farming/Livestock:	Apples, apricot, beans, potato, wheat, rice, maize, beans, barley, onion, carrots, tomato	Cows, sheep, goats
Literacy Rate Total:	21% <sup>2</sup>	
Number of Educational Institutions: 341 <sup>3</sup>	<u>Schools:</u> Primary/Secondary: 235/106	<u>Colleges/Universities:</u>
Number of Security Incidents, Jan-Jun 2007: 7 <sup>4</sup>	January: 0 February: 0	March: 2 April: 1 May: 2 June: 2
Poppy (Opium) Cultivation: <sup>5</sup> 0% of Afghan Total	2006: 0 ha	2007: 0 ha Percent change: 0%
NGOs Active in Province:	DACAAR, MADERA, SCA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, etc.	
<u>Provincial Aid Projects:</u> <sup>6</sup> Total Projects: 795 Planned Cost: \$8,178,944 Total Spent: \$4,136,415	Total PRT Projects: 3 Planned Cost: \$240,186 Total Spent: \$240,186	Other Aid Projects: 792 Planned Cost: \$7,938,758 Total Spent: \$3,896,229
Transportation:	<u>Primary Roads:</u> Main Kabul-Kandahar highway intersects the province Maydan; a provincial road crosses the province from east to west. Secondary roads connect each district center with Maydan. <sup>7</sup>	
Electricity:	<u>Estimated Population w/access:</u> 42% <sup>8</sup>	
Health Facilities:	<u>Hospitals:</u> 6	<u>Clinics, etc.:</u> 65
Primary Sources/Availability of Potable Water: <sup>9</sup>	Wells, springs, karezes, rivers, streams	
Rivers and Bodies of Water:	Helmand, Kabul, Logar, and Maydan Rivers; one dam on the Logar River at Chak and Band Dana reservoir.	
Significant Topographic Features:	Wardak is a very mountainous province with the Kott-I Baba Range in the north and the Paghman Range in the east. The majority of the province is used as rangeland with some areas of irrigated and rain fed crops. <sup>10</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> Based on various maps.

<sup>2</sup> UNDP Afghanistan, *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007*

<sup>3</sup> Regional Rural Economic Regeneration Strategies (RRERS), *Provincial Profile for Wardak*, (2006), at <http://mrrd.gov.af/ENGLISH/GRM/Wardak%20Provincial%20Profile.pdf>, accessed on 4 October 2007.

<sup>4</sup> BBC Monitoring. Limited to incidents reported in the press. Not inclusive of all incidents occurring, but provides an excellent cross-section of events.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Annual Opium Surveys and Annual Winter Rapid Assessment Surveys*, available at <http://www.unodc.org/afg/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> ISAF and CJTF 82, *Afghanistan Comprehensive Stability Project*, June 2007. The PRT project data for Khost suggests a discrepancy in actual amounts spent. Despite indicating that zero dollars were spent on the 16 PRT projects, each project is indicated as complete.

<sup>7</sup> Nelles Verlag, *Afghanistan*, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Altai Consulting, *CEE: Cognitive Effects Evaluation*, 9 March 2007.

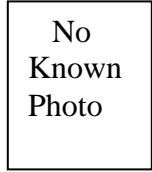
<sup>9</sup> UNHCR Sub-Office Jalalabad, *District Profiles*, October 2003.

### **Political Landscape:**

“Due to its proximity to Kabul, Wardak plays a major part in political and military developments in the capital.”<sup>11</sup>

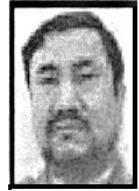
### ***Political Leaders:***

#### **Governor Muhammad Halim Fidai (aka Halim Fedayee):**



Pashtun. Appointed governor in July 2008. Fidai holds a master degree in Public Relations and was born in Paktika province. He is 38-years old and served as the South Asia Free Media Association country director in Afghanistan.

#### **Deputy Governor Mohammad Basir:**



Appointed deputy governor in October 2006. Approximately 47 years old. Little else is known about Mohammad Basir.

#### **Chief of Police: Mozafaradeen Wardak**

Little information is available on Mozafaradeen at this time.

#### **National Security Directorate Chief Abdul Ruve (aka Abdul Rauf, Abdul Roof, Zukria):**

Appointed October 2006. Previous to his current assignment he was the NDS Chief in Oruzgan province. Has some university level education.

#### **Abdul Karim Khalili:**



Hazara Shia. Born in 1950 in Qol-e-Khesh Behsud in the Wardak province, Khalili is the current Second Vice President to Hamid Karzai and leader of the Hezb-e Wahdat. Khalili was the Economic Minister of Afghanistan from 1993-1995. Despite formerly disbanding the militia connected to the Wahdat party, Khalili retarded the effectiveness of the disarmament program among the Hazara in Bamiyan.<sup>12</sup> He was active in opposing the Soviet occupation and protecting the Hazarajat from the incursion of the Taliban. Following the collapse of the Taliban regime his loss of support from the Hazara population likely can be attributed to two factors: the splintering of his party resulting in the ascendancy of Hajji Mohammad Mohaqeq, and because his position as vice president has distracted him from focusing on issues important to the Hazara population.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Hajji Mohammad Mohaqeq:**



Hazara Shia. Current member of the Wolesi Jirga, elected from Kabul. He is the leader of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Elsami Mardom-e Afghanistan, a breakaway from the original Hezb-e Wahdat. Mohaqeq was born in Balkh province and claims to have a degree in religious studies. He was a commander during the fighting between mujahedin militias during the 1990s and was a deputy to Abdul Ali Mazari, the first leader of Hezb-e Wahdat. As a militia leader he

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<sup>10</sup> AIMS, *Afghanistan Paktika Province Land Cover Map*, April 2002 and Nelles Verlag, *Afghanistan*, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Mirwais Wardak, Idrees Zaman, and Kanishka Nawabi, “The Role and Functions of Religious Civil Society in Afghanistan: Case Studies From Sayedabad & Kunduz,” *Cooperation for Peace and Unity*, (July 2007): 9, at [www.cpau.org.af](http://www.cpau.org.af), accessed 10 August 2007.

<sup>12</sup> David Zucchini, (Afghan Warlords Find Limits to Power,” *Los Angeles Times*, (November 18, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Global Security, *Karim Khalili*, at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/khalili.htm>, accessed on 26 September 2007 and Institute for War and Peace Reporting, at [http://iwpr.net/index.php?apc\\_state+hensabrina%20sageb&s=o&o=afghan\\_elect\\_2005\\_profiles.html](http://iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state+hensabrina%20sageb&s=o&o=afghan_elect_2005_profiles.html), accessed on 26 September 2007.

contributed to the bloody fighting to keep the Taliban out of the Hazarajat. After the collapse of the Taliban regime, Mohaqeq became a deputy to Hamid Karzai and Planning Minister in the transitional government. He kept his ministerial post until March 2004. It is unclear whether he resigned the post or was sacked by Karzai. Mohaqeq alienated Khalili when he ran for president without the official endorsement of the Hezb-e Wahdat. This rift led to the formation of a new and separate Hezb-e Wahdat under the leadership of Wahdat.<sup>14</sup> As a member of the Wolesi Jirga and party leader, Mohaqeq has increased his popularity among the Hazara by focusing on issues relevant to the Hazarajat and the Hazara population.<sup>15</sup>

### **Wolesi Jirga Members:**

#### **Abdul Reza Rezaee:**



A Hazara Shia associated with the Wahdat political party. Communications committee. May have earned a BA. Former political official with Wahdat.

#### **Ahmad Hassain Sangar Dost:**



A Hazara Shia associated with the Wahdat political party. Armed Services committee. Finished secondary school. He was a senior Hazara commander under the Taliban. He was formerly associated with Harikat-e Islami.

#### **Hajji Mosa Hotak:**



A Pashtun Sunni associated with the Harakat-e Islami political party. Secretary of the Internal Security committee. Graduated from university with a BA. Major business player in the province's oil and gas transport. He is a former governor of Kabul, former mujahedin commander and former ally of the Taliban. Under the Taliban regime he was a deputy planning minister.

#### **Sediq Mubariz:**



A female Hazara Shia associated with the Wahdat party, but may be independent. Secretary of the Health committee. Graduated from university with a BA. Former refugee in Iran.

#### **Doctor Roshanak Wardak:**



A female Pashtun Sunni associated with the political party of Pir Ishaq Gailani. Health committee. She comes from a politically active family in the province and has a record of NGO work.

### **Meshrano Jirga Members:**

#### **Al-Haj Sulalman Yari:**

Hazara Shia. Leader of Support for People's Rights (Hamayat az Hoquq-e Mardom) political group. Armed Services committee. He is the head of the Kabul-based Hazara council. Former member of the Wolesi Jirga in the 1970s.

#### **Sami Jan Shirzada:**



Member of the Rules committee. University educated.

#### **Kubra Mustafawi:**












A female Hazara Shia associated with Misaq-e Melli. Chair of the Provincial Councils. University educated. She was a refugee in Iran.

### **Provincial Council Members:**

<sup>14</sup> Institute for War and Peace Reporting, at [http://iwpr.net/index.php?apc\\_state+hen-sabrina%20saqeb&s=o&o=afghan\\_elect\\_2005\\_profiles.html](http://iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state+hen-sabrina%20saqeb&s=o&o=afghan_elect_2005_profiles.html), accessed on 26 September 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Open Source Center, *Political Leader Welcomes Council of Minister's Decision on Nomad Withdrawal*, 18 July 2007; and Open Source Center, *Conspiracy Under Way to Lead Afghan Hazarajat Area to Chaos-Mohaqeq*, 23 June 2007, both at <https://www.opensource.gov/>, accessed on 26 September 2007.

	Mohammad Hussain Fahimee		Sultan Hussain Razi
	Mohammad Mikhles Mikhles		Rahila Wardak
	Shair Shah		Rabia Amini
	Hajji Mohammad Hazrat Janan		Bas Bibi
	Sayed Mohammad Saeedi		

**Primary Political Parties:**

**Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan):**

Began as a Shia umbrella party led by Abdul Ali Mazari. Abdul Ali Mazari died under mysterious circumstances while in custody of the Taliban. During the Soviet invasion the party received support from Iran. The party “remains the primary political force among the Hazara.”<sup>16</sup> During the period of Taliban rule, the party held on to the Hazarajat against the attempted blockade by the Taliban. It is currently led by Mohammad Karim Khalili, who is currently the Second Vice President to Hamid Karzai. For a time Hajji Mohammad Mohaqeq was the military leader of the party under the political leadership of Khalili. Mohaqeq and Khalili had a falling out, however, over Mohaqeq’s decision to run for president without the official approval of the party. Subsequently, Mohaqeq split away and formed his own party, Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Mardom-e Afghanistan.<sup>17</sup> The original Wahdat party has begun to lose influence and support among the Hazara, in part because of the pull of Mohaqeq’s new party and likely because Khalili’s position as Second Vice President distracts from his efforts to look after the needs of the Hazara.<sup>18</sup>

**Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Mardom-e Afghanistan (Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan):**

The party is led by Hajji Mohammad Mohaqeq, a member of the Wolesi Jirga, and split from Khalili’s Hezb-e Wahdat. The party seems to be in ascendancy compared to Khalili’s party. Exact political differences between the two parties are difficult to surmise, but it appears that it is more a matter of leadership than of significant differences in political platforms. Mohaqeq seems more focused on issues affecting the Hazara and the Hazarajat than his rival Khalili.<sup>19</sup> As late as November 2005, Mohaqeq’s party was party of Yunus Qanuni’s 14 party alliance.<sup>20</sup>

**Harakat-e Islami:**

A Shia party originally led by Muhammad Asif Muhsini, the Harakat-e Islami fought the Soviets with support from Tehran. Known for having many Hazara as well as non-Hazara members, this Shiite party refused to join the Hazara coalition Hezb-i Wahdat in the ensuing civil war. Since 2005 they have been led by Hojjatolislam Seyyed Muhammad Ali Jawed, a minister in Karzai’s first cabinet.

<sup>16</sup> US State Department Afghanistan Culture and Ethnic Studies, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Institute for War and Peace Reporting, at [http://iwpr.net/index.php?apc\\_state+hen-sabrina%20sageb&s=o&o=afghan\\_elect\\_2005\\_profiles.html](http://iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state+hen-sabrina%20sageb&s=o&o=afghan_elect_2005_profiles.html), accessed on 26 September 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Global Security, Karim Khalili, at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/khalili.htm>, accessed on 26 September 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Open Source Center, *Political Leader Welcomes Council of Minister’s Decision on Nomad Withdrawal*, 18 July 2007, at <https://www.opensource.gov>, accessed on 26 September 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Open Source Center, *Afghanistan: 7 Contenders in Running for Post of Parliamentary Speaker*, 13 November 2005, at <http://www.opensource.gov/>, accessed on 26 September 2007.

**Ittihad-e Islami (Sayyaf):**

This fundamental party is under the guidance of one Abdul Rasool Sayyaf, and has been since the anti-Soviet campaign. Despite ideological and cultural similarities with the Taliban, Sayyaf did not join them (for personal reasons) and went with the Northern Alliance. He follows strict Wahhabi interpretations of Islam, and is not known for tolerance. In the past this party has been known for its foreign supporters and followers; the former often Arab, the latter from places as diverse as the Southern Philippines, Chechnya, and Bosnia. In February 1993 government forces and members of the Ittihad-e Islami massacred over 700 Hazara in the Afshar district of West Kabul.

**Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HiG):**

The party of former Mujahid and Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, HiG was famous for its shifting loyalties, and was the favorite party of Pakistan's ISI until the rise of the Taliban. Former members continue to wield considerable influence in the province. Faizanullah Faizan was a HiG commander during the civil war. Several of the Wardak Pashtun religious leaders in the Wardak province have indicated membership or association with HiG.<sup>21</sup>

**Hezb-e Islami Khalis (HiK):**

Originally a mujahedin group which split with Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami under the leadership of Yunus Khalis. HiK was dominant in Nangarhar. Khalis died in 2005 or 2006, resulting in an internal power struggle for control of the party between Khalis' son Anwarul Haq Mujahid and Hajji Din Mohammad. It appears that Mohammad was successful in consolidating his control over much of the party. Recent and active political players in Nangarhar have connections to HiK. Led by Hajji Din Mohammad, current governor of Kabul.

**Mahaz-e Melli (Pir Gailani):**

Primarily (but not exclusively) a Pashtun party, followers of the Sufi holy man Pir Sayed Ahmed Gailani have a reputation for moderate thought and the traditional mystical and introspective religious currents that characterize Sufism in that sect.

**Hezb-e Afghanistan Naween (New Afghanistan Party/Qanuni):**

Led by Mohammad Yunus Qanuni. Part of a political alliance called Jabahai Tafahim Millie or National Understanding Front. Qanuni was the primary contender against Karzai for the presidency. He is a Tajik who has been a mujahideen, spokesman for Ahmed Shah Massoud, and Minister of Interior and Education. He was elected to parliament in 2005 and was chosen to lead the Wolesi Jirga. Support for him and his party may be a political counter-weight to Karzai.

**Jamiat-e Islami (Islamic Society of Afghanistan):**

Led by Burhanuddin Rabbani. It is predominately a Tajik political party which was active in the anti-Soviet jihad and a major political player in the Northern Alliance. Today Rabbani supports Karzai. Yunus Qanuni's Hezb-e Afghanistan Naween broke away from Jamiat-e Islami. Some of the religious leaders in Wardak have been or are associated with Jamiat-e Islami.

**Public Attitudes toward Political/Religious Leaders:**

According to survey data, district authorities are most respected political leaders with 33% support. Mawlawis were considered most respected by 19%, maliks by 18%, shuras/elders by 17% and the provincial government by 13%.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Mirwais Wardak, Idrees Zaman, and Kanishka Nawabi, "The Role and Functions of Religious Civil Society in Afghanistan: Case Studies From Sayedabad & Kunduz," *Cooperation for Peace and Unity*, (July 2007): 16, at [www.cpau.org.af](http://www.cpau.org.af), accessed 10 August 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Altai Consulting, *CEE: Cognitive Effects Evaluation*, 9 March 2007.

## **Human Terrain:**

### ***Pashtun:***

The largest single ethnicity of Afghanistan, the Pashtun, and in particular the largest tribe of said, the Ghilzai, formed the backbone of the Taliban movement. Traditionally beholden to the moral code of *Pashtunwali* (“the way of the Pashtun”), they can easily be deeply offended by breaches of the code and carry the grudge for generations. The Pashtuns are fiercely independent and often view themselves, as the largest ethnicity in the country, as the rightful leaders of Afghanistan. That being said, they suffered much during the Soviet invasion, and must be included in any effort to secure and develop the country. Many of the Pashtuns in Bamyan are Kuchis, nomads who have traditionally been accused of poaching Hazara land, especially during the Taliban era.

### ***Wardak Pashtun:***

Some leaders of the Wardak Pashtun were notorious for their opposition to the British in 1879-1880. The Wardak tribe is subdivided in the Mayar, Mirkehl (which may be the same as the Amir Khel), and the Nuri.<sup>23</sup> There is some disagreement whether the Wardaks are Karlanri or Ghilzai Pashtun. Most evidence suggests they are Karlanri. The various Wardak sub-tribes live in each of the province’s districts except for Hesa Awal Behsood and Markazi Behsood. Currently several Wardak Pashtuns hold important posts in the central government, including the Ministry of Defense (General Abdur Rahim Wardak), the Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth (Abdul Karim Khoram), and the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. It is also important to note that “several Islamic radicals emerged from Wardak who helped to promote and implement Taliban’s conservative interpretation of Islam.”<sup>24</sup>

### ***Ghilzai (Hotak and Kharoti):***

The largest single tribe of the Pashtun ethnicity, the Ghalji or Ghilzai, and in particular the Hotaki clan, formed the backbone of the Taliban movement. Long resentful of the power the Duranni tribe (of which Karzai and Zahir Shah are members), the Ghilzai are fiercely independent and often view themselves, as the largest grouping of Pashtuns in the country, as the rightful leaders of Afghanistan. That being said, they suffered much during the Soviet invasion, and must be included in any effort to secure and develop Ghazni Province. Hotak Ghilzai reside in Jalriz and Nerkh districts; Kharoti Ghilzai live in Jalriz district.

### ***Other Pashtun in Wardak:***

Various other Pashtun clans live in Maydan district and throughout the province.

### ***Qizilbash:***

In Wardak, the Qizilbash primarily reside in Hesa Awal Behsood and Day Mirdad districts. The Qizilbash are an Imami Shia group thought to be descended from Persian “mercenaries and administrators left behind by the Safavid Emperor Nadir Shah Afshar to govern the Afghan provinces.”<sup>25</sup> After the demise of the Safavid Empire in Afghanistan, the Qizilbash, due to their higher levels of education and experience as administrators, remained influential in the Afghan court and government bureaucracies. Their Shia faith combined with their disproportionate political influence often resulted in resentment by large portions of the Sunni majority within Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> Also, they were used by the shahs as personal bodyguards and assigned to put down uprisings among the populace, which further alienated them from the Pashtun majority. Due to the persecution, religious and political, the Qizilbash frequently resorted to the use of *taqiyya*, the practice of precautionary dissimulation or the adoption of a dual religious identity. In order to play a role in

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<sup>23</sup> Adamec, Vol. 6, 802-803.

<sup>24</sup> Mirwais Wardak, Idrees Zaman, and Kanishka Nawabi, “The Role and Functions of Religious Civil Society in Afghanistan: Case Studies From Sayedabad & Kunduz,” *Cooperation for Peace and Unity*, (July 2007): 9, at [www.cpau.org.af](http://www.cpau.org.af), accessed 10 August 2007.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Afghanistan*, found at <http://countrystudies.us/afghanistan/50.htm>, accessed on 25 September 2007 and Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980): 331-32.

<sup>26</sup> World Culture Encyclopedia, *Qizilbash*, found at <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Qizilbash.html>, accessed on 25 September 2007.

government and society, the Qizilbash, like other Imami Shia, publicly portrayed themselves as Sunnis or Pashtuns while they privately maintained their Shia faith.<sup>27</sup> In present day Afghanistan, the Qizilbash continue to practice *taqiyya* making it difficult to gain accurate census data. It appears that they largely reside in urban centers and “tend to be predominantly urban professionals—doctors, teachers, engineers, and lawyers.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Tajik:**

The Tajiks in Wardak live around the capital Maydan and in Hesa Awal Behsood district. Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, after the Pashtuns and comprise between 25-30% of the population. The Tajiks in Afghanistan tend to live in settled communities as opposed to a nomadic lifestyle. They are of Iranian descent and primarily speak Dari. The majority of Tajiks are Sunni Muslims. Tajiks made up the majority of the Northern Alliance, both in terms of membership and leadership. Tribal ties have largely broken down among the Tajiks; therefore, social organization is defined primarily by geography. Despite their lack of cohesiveness the Tajiks are often brought together due to the perceived common threat posed by the Pashtuns.<sup>29</sup>

### **Hazara:**

The Hazara in Wardak reside primarily in the Markezi Behsood, Jaghatu, Nerkh, and Day Mirdad districts. The Hazara, a distinct ethnic and religious group within the population of Afghanistan, have often been the target of discriminatory and violent repression. Most likely descended from the Mongols of Genghis Khan, (there is also a strong argument that they are of Eastern Turkic origin), the Hazara are noticeably different in physical appearance when compared to the Pashtun majority. In terms of religion, the vast majority of the Hazara are of the Shia Muslim faith, again in contrast to the Pashtuns who are Sunni Muslim. Due to these differences, “the Hazara have experienced discrimination at the hands of the Pashtun-dominated government throughout the history of modern Afghanistan.”<sup>30</sup> As the traditional underclass of Afghan society, Hazara were exploited and made to work as servants and laborers. As a result there tends to be an anti-government and anti-Pashtun bias among the Hazara. In present day Afghanistan, the Hazara are divided geographically into two main groups: the Hazarajat Hazara and those who live outside the Hazarajat. The Hazarajat is located in the Hindu Kush Mountains in central Afghanistan and is “centered around Bamiyan province and include[s] areas of Ghowr, Uruzgan, Wardak, and Ghazni province.”<sup>31</sup> The Hazara living outside of the Hazarajat live in and around Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e Sharif and Samangan province. Due to atrocities committed against them by the Taliban, the Hazara by and large are opposed to the Taliban. In August 1998, the Taliban massacred approximately 4,000 Hazara in Mazara-e Sharif; this massacre was followed by another the next month when the Taliban killed another 500 Hazara in Bamiyan. The Hezb-e Wahdat (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan) is an umbrella political organization which commands the support of large numbers of Hazara. The Hazara are also often at odds with the Kuchi population within the Hazarajat.

### **Kuchi:**

The Kuchi in Wardak reside in the Jalriz, Hesa Awal Behsood, Markazi Behsood, Nerkh, and Day Mirdad districts. Involved in a constant and centuries old range war with the Hazara, the Kuchi are Pashtun nomads. Drawn primarily from the Ghilzai tribe, the Kuchis have moved across Afghanistan and Pakistan for generations, and only since Pakistani independence were banned from Pakistani territory. Dispersed and well-traveled, they often receive news from distant relations in far-away provinces relatively quickly. The self-declared “leader” of the Kuchis is one Hashmat Ghani Ahmadzai. Partially settled by the king and the following socialist governments, they were strong supporters of the Taliban, both ideologically and pragmatically, as they came into possession of many Hazara lands thanks to the repression of the Shiite

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<sup>27</sup> Etan Kohlberg, “Some Imami-Shi’i Views on *Taqiyya*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (July-September 1975): 395-402 and Louis Dupree, “Further Notes on *Taqiyya*: Afghanistan,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (October-December 1979): 680-682.

<sup>28</sup> World Culture Encyclopedia.

<sup>29</sup> US State Department Afghanistan Culture and Ethnic Studies, 2004.

<sup>30</sup> US State Department Afghanistan Culture and Ethnic Studies, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> US State Department Afghanistan Culture and Ethnic Studies, 2004.

Hazara by the Taliban. There are estimated to be around three million Kuchi in Afghanistan, with at least 60% remaining fully nomadic.<sup>32</sup>

### **Security Landscape:**

#### ***General Level of Security:***

The threat level in Wardak is has increased considerably since 2007. Insurgent groups continue to ambush and destroy convoys particularly along the stretch of Highway 1 that runs through the Sayadabad district. In one month, 51 trucks were burned along Highway 1 in Wardak (July 2008)<sup>33</sup>. Kidnappings have also plagued the province. One high-profile abduction involved two German engineers and their five Afghan colleagues being taken by criminals dressed in police uniforms that later turned the group over to a criminal network aligned with the Taliban. One of the German nationals was murdered by his abductors while the other was bargained for the release of an imprisoned Taliban official<sup>34</sup>.

The Taliban have repeatedly launched IED and ambush attacks in the Sayadabd district including one deadly attack in June, 2008 that killed three US soldiers and a local-interpreter. Insurgents dragged away one of the corpses and so badly dismembered it that the QRF that arrived shortly after the incident reported finding the remains of two men, not one, in a nearby field.<sup>35</sup> The governor of neighboring Ghazni province narrowly escaped an assassination bid after his convoy struck a roadside bomb in Wardak this summer.<sup>36</sup> Locals now say the Taliban control six out of eight districts in Wardak province.<sup>37</sup>

#### ***Public attitudes toward security:***

Relatively positive attitudes toward security in the province by those surveyed. Only 16% of the respondents indicated that they feel unsafe. 45% of those surveyed indicated that the district head/officials best provides security to their area.<sup>38</sup>

#### ***Public attitudes toward FF:***

Only 7% of those surveyed think the coalition and foreign forces are bringing peace and security to the province.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "Afghan Nomads Say U.S. Bombing Killed Nine," Associated Press, September 25, 2003

[http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20030925\\_221.html](http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20030925_221.html) and Paul Garwood, "Poverty, violence put Afghanistan's fabled Kuchi nomads on a road to nowhere," Associated Press, May 14, 2006, <http://www.rawa.org/nomad.htm/>.

<sup>33</sup> Alastair Leithead "Taleban at Kabul's doorstep," BBC, August 13, 2008,

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7555996.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7555996.stm)

<sup>34</sup> "Taliban figure released in exchange for German hostage," People's Daily Online, October 23, 2007,

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/6289260.html>

<sup>35</sup> Carlotta Gall, "Insurgency's Scars Line Afghanistan's Main Road," New York Times, August 13, 2008,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/14/world/asia/14highway.html>

<sup>36</sup> Sher Ahmad Haidar, "Governor survives Taliban attack." Pajhwok, August 10, 2008,

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