

April 13, 2009

Province: Zabul
Governor: Mohammad Ashraf Nasser
Provincial Police Chief: Colonel Mohammed Yaqoub

Population Estimate: 249,100	Urban: 9,200	Rural: 239,900 ¹	
Area in Square Kilometers: 17,343		Capital: Qalat (formerly known as Qalat-i Ghilzai)	
Names of Districts:	Arghandab, Baghar, Day Chopan, Jaldak, Kaker, Mizan, Now Bahar, Qalat, Shah Joy, Shamulza'i, Shinkay		
Composition of Population:	<u>Ethnic Groups:</u> Majority Pashtun	<u>Religions:</u> Predominately Sunni Islam	<u>Tribal Groups:</u> Tokhi & Hotaki Ghilzais, Noorzai & Panjpai Durranis
Occupation of Population	Major: Agriculture (including opium), labor, animal husbandry		Minor: Trade, manufacturing, smuggling
Crops/Farming/ Livestock: ²	Poppy, wheat, maize, barley, almonds, grapes, apricots, potato, watermelon, cumin		Sheep, goat, cow, camel, donkey
Language: Overwhelmingly Pashtu, although some Dari can be found, mostly as a second language			
Literacy Rate Total: 1% (1% male, a few younger females) ³			
Number of Educational Institutions: 80	<u>Primary & Secondary:</u> 168 (98% all male) 35272 student (99% male), 866 teachers (97% male)		<u>Colleges/Universities:</u> None, although some training centers do exist for vocational skills
Number of Security Incidents, 2007: ⁴	January: 3 February: 4 March: 3 April: 11	May: 6 June: 8 July: 8 August: 5	September: 7 October: 7 November: 10 December: 5
Poppy (Opium) Cultivation:	<u>2006:</u> 3,210ha	<u>2007:</u> 1,611ha	
NGOs Active in Province:	Ibn Sina, Vara, ADA, Red Crescent, CADG		
Total PRT Projects: 40 Planned Cost: \$8,283,665 Total Spent: \$2,997,860	Other Aid Projects: 573 Planned Cost: \$19,983,250 Total Spent: \$1,880,920		
Transportation: 1 Airstrip in Qalat "PRT Air" – 2 flights week. ⁵	<u>Primary Roads:</u> The ring road from Ghazni to Kandahar passes through Qalat and Shah Joy. Mizan district has the worst roads – virtually non-existent.		
Electricity: extremely rare	Only more frequent than flush toilets, electricity is very rare. ⁶		<u>Estimated Population w/access:</u> 2% ⁷
Health Facilities: 38	<u>Hospitals:</u> 3		<u>Clinics, etc.:</u> 18 clinics / 17 doctors' office
Primary Sources of Drinking Water/Availability of Potable Water:	89% of the population live reasonably close to their primary source of water, but 83% have reported shocks to drinking water supply in the last year ⁸		

¹ Afghan Information Management Services, *2003-2004 Population Statistics*, available from <http://www.aims.org.af/> (accessed September 17, 2007).

² Regional Rural Economic Regeneration Strategies (RRERS), *Provincial Profile for Zabul*, (2006), at <http://www.aisa.org.af/Downloads/ProvincialProfiles/Zabul.pdf> (accessed December 7, 2007).

³ *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007*, United Nations Development Program, 2007, 164.

⁴ Based on BBC Monitoring Reporting.

⁵ USAID, "First Airstrip in Zabul Province", *US AID Afghanistan*, September 1, 2006, <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Article.73.aspx> (accessed February 15, 2008).

⁶ "Provincial Profile," *Zabul*, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the National Area Base Development Programme, 2006, <http://www.mrrd.gov.af/> (accessed February 29, 2008).

⁷ This figure seems extremely high (*Altai Public Opinion Info*, Altai Consulting, 2007).

<p>Rivers: Arghandab River—flows from Arghandab to Daichopan to Shah Wali Kot and then to Kandahar; Tarnak River—flows from Moqor to Navar to Shah Joy through Qalat to Shahr-i-Safa eventually joining the Arghandab River; a number of seasonal rivers⁹</p>	
<p>Significant Topographic Features</p>	<p>28.1% Flat, 22.7% mountainous, hilly 29.1%, not reported 19.2%¹⁰</p>

Political Landscape:

Political Leaders:

Governor Mohammad Ashraf Nasser



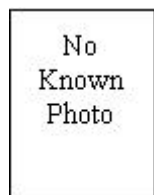
Mohammad Ashraf Nasser replaced longtime Zabul governor Delbar Jan Arman Shinwari in late March, 2009. An ethnic Kuchi Pashtun from Paktia Province, Naseri separated from the Ittihad-e Islami under Sayyaf (presumably Abdul Rasul Sayyaf) in 1992 or 1993 and is now politically unaffiliated.

He has a BA in science from Kabul University. He was a teacher in *Dawat wa Jihad* University in Peshawar (Sayyaf), an employee of UNOffice on Project Services (UNOPS), an employee of the UN Development Program (UNDP), Advisor Minister for Refugees and Repatriation (under Azam Dabar), a policy committee director of the Counternarcotics

Ministry, and a presidential advisor.

He reportedly has a good reputation in Paktiya, and WJ members from Badghis were positive about his role during his tenure as governor.

Deputy Governor Gulab Shah Alikheil



A Pashtun from Ghazni, Gulab Shah Alikheil was formerly Governor Uruzgani’s Chief of Staff as well as Spokesman. He was appointed to his current position on March 20, 2008.

Chief of Police Colonel Mohammed Yaqoub



From Shah Joy District in Zabul, Col. Yaqoub has been Chief of Police since August, 2007.

National Directorate of Security Chief Hajji Nazer Ali






Originally from across the border in Kandahar, Hajji Nazer Ali has been the NDS Chief since December of 2007.

Profile,” *Zabul*, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the National Area Base Development Programme, 2006, <http://www.mrrd.gov.af/> (accessed February 29, 2008).



⁹ Regional Rural Economic Regeneration Strategies (RRERS), *Zabul Provincial Profile*.

¹⁰ “Provincial Profile,” *Zabul*, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the National Area Base Development Programme, 2006, <http://www.mrrd.gov.af/> (accessed February 29, 2008).

Wolesi Jirga Members:¹¹

	Haji Mullah Abdul Salam Raketi	Male Sunni Pashtun	Earning his name during the anti-Soviet Jihad, Roketi was later a Taliban commander in Nangarhar. He has also been a commander for Sayyaf. He is now on the Internal Security Committee
	Hameedullah Khan Tokhi	Male Sunni Tokhi Pashtun	Former governor of Zabul, this complicated figure now sits on the Internal Security Committee
	Toorpekai	Female Sunni Suliemankhel Pashtun	A high-school graduate, she has worked with UNAMA in the health-care arena and currently sits on the Communications Committee.

Meshrano Jirga Members:¹²

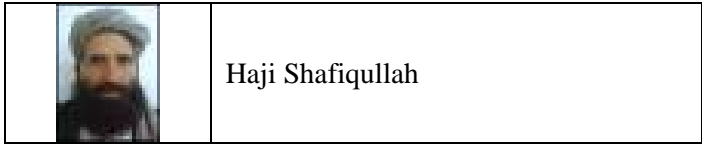
	Doctor Zalmai	Male Sunni Tokhi Pashtun	Chair of the Petitions Committee
	Pir Sayed Ibrahim Gailani	Male Sunni Pashtun	Currently chair of the Tribal Affairs Committee, Gailani has a Masters' degree.
No photo available	Haji Mohammad Hassan Hotak	Male Sunni Hotaki Pashtun	A member of the Solh Aworan political group, Hotak is a member of the National Economy Committee.

Provincial Council Members:

	Abdul Salam Khan Shamalzai		Ghazi Mohammad Zargai
	Haji Mohammad Hashem Khan		Rajbia
	Ahmad Shah Khan Sarhadi		Fawzia

¹¹ US Embassy Kabul Afghanistan Election Observation Team and Joint Election Management Board, 2005.

¹² US Embassy Kabul Afghanistan Election Observation Team and Joint Election Management Board, 2005.



Human Terrain:

Alikozai (Durrani): The Alakozai (Alikozai; Alokzai) belong to the Durrani confederation, and can be further divided into the Khalozai (or Khan Khel), the Yarizai, the Surkani, the Kotezai, the Dadozai, the Khanizai, the Daolatzai (which are also found in the North of Afghanistan due to forced relocations in centuries previous), the Nasozai, and the Bashozai. The Alokzai people stretch from Farah to Zabul.

Hotak (Ghilzai): This is Mullah Omar of Taliban fame's tribe. One of the main divisions of Ghilzais, the Hotak, or Ohtak, often lived next to and competed with the Popalzai and Tokhi for resources. Controlling the more mountainous areas of "Pashtunistan," they often got income from trading snow, wood, and higher altitude crops with their lowland compatriots. As the tribe of Mir Wais, in olden times they received a special stipend from the king in Kabul as the "Badshah Khel" ("the king's sub-tribe"). They have had a *long* rivalry with the Popalzai Durrani, dating to the 1729 destruction of the Hotaki dynasty at the hands of the Persian Nadir Shah and his Abdali (later renamed Durrani) allies.

Kakar: Descended from Qais through Gurgust, the Kakar are primarily found in present-day Baluchistan, where they still make up the majority of indigenous Pashtuns. In the sixteenth century, the most famous Kakar to-date, Sher Khan ("Lion King;" later to coronate himself Sher Shah, or "Lion Emperor") served the first Mughal emperor Babur as governor of Bihar in present-day India before rising against Babur's son, Humayun, and essentially taking over the Mughal Empire. Only after Sher Shah died was Humayun's son Akbar able to restore the Mughal dynasty. Thus Sher Shah was arguably the most powerful Pashtun in history. The Kakar divisions include Musa Khel (including Shamsheer Khel), Zulfo Khel, Ya'qub Zai, Jadraam, Sargarai, Saam Khel, Taaran, Jalal Khel, Khatan Khel, Charmi Khel, Targharai, Yunus Khel, Isa Zai, Da Marhbado Khel, Hussain Khel, Surani, Makran, Tafoot, Pandaar (Pindaar), Zanakh Zai, and Sher Dad. In Zabul they primarily inhabit the Southern districts.

Kharoti (Powindah Ghilzai Kuchi): The Kharoti Powindah Ghilzais are Kuchi nomads. The Kharoti clan is the second largest Ghilzai Pashtun tribal group. Generally, they do not cooperate with anti-coalition militias or participate in their activities. Their political stance and support for the government is in part, at least, due to their rivalry with the Suleimankhel and the Waziris. Notable members of the Kharoti clan include Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Harakat, both of Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HIG). Overall, however, the Kharoti are not supportive of HIG. Former Paktika provincial governor, Ghulab Mangal, considered the Kharoti among the most reliable of Ghilzai tribal groups.¹³

To be a Kuchi is not who one is, or what one does, but what one is. More than a vocation and less than a race, the Kuchi are more appropriately thought of as a caste of nomadic herdsman. Their four main animals are sheep, goats, camels and donkeys. They cross boundaries with ease. They have a very high illiteracy rate.¹⁴ Involved in a constant and centuries old range war with the Hazara, the Kuchis have moved across Afghanistan and Pakistan for generations. 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 Shi'ite Hazara by the Taliban. There are estimated to be around three million Kuchi in Afghanistan, with at least

¹³ US State Department Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team Political Officer Reporting, 2004.

¹⁴ "Afghanistan," 2007 CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html> (accessed June 8, 2007), and Marc Herold, "War and Modernity: Hard Times for Afghanistan's Kuchi Nomads," *Cursor*, <http://www.cursor.org/stories/kuchi.html#5> (accessed June 8, 2007).

60% remaining fully nomadic and over 100,000 displaced in the South of Afghanistan due to drought in the past few years.¹⁵

In Zabul, the Kuchi population frequents the Southern districts of the province, including Shamalzai, Day Chopan, and Shah Joy, in numbers slightly over 50,000 in winter, and slightly under the same in summer.

Shinwari: Shinwari are Paktu speakers. They have a history of opposing the British and the central government in Kabul. They are known to have been a major thorn in the side of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan during the 1880s. Shinwaris are classified as Eastern, Sarbani Pashtuns. Their tribal brethren are found much further south, in the Baluchistan area. They are very esteemed, proper Afghans. Historically they have formed alliances with the Mohmand, Safi and Afridi tribes and feuded with the Khogiani.¹⁶ The Shinwaris can also be found in the Khyber Agency in Pakistan.

Suleiman Khel (Ghilzai): Part of the Ghilzai confederation, the Suleimankhel is one of the largest sub-tribes. The bias of some sub-tribes toward the Taliban in part may be explained by their proximity to the Pakistan border and the influx of insurgents and the radical politics. They have been allied with the Hotaki in the past, and their traditional rivals include the Karoti.¹⁷ Principal sub-divisions of the Suleimankhel include the Alizai, Sulemanzai, and Jalalzai. Other sub-divisions include the Alikhel, the Nizamkhel, and the Shakhel. It is interesting to note that the Alikhel sub-tribe, which primarily lives in the northwest of Paktika, has been more cooperative with the central government and coalition forces. The Nizamkhel and Shakhel also remain more supportive of the government, which may be explained in part by their rivalry with the Jalalzai.¹⁸

Taraki: Subdivided into six khels: the Firoz, Suhail, Gurbuz, Badin, Saki, and Na. The most famous Taraki, of course, has been Nur Mohammad Taraki, president of Afghanistan from April 1978 until his death by acute asphyxiation in September 1979. He was the leader of the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) and within that, the Khalq ("Masses") faction, in opposition to the Parcham ("Banner") faction.¹⁹ Their powerbase has traditionally been Southern Ghazni.²⁰

Tokhi (Ghilzai): A Ghalji (Ghilzai) tribe found throughout southern and western Afghanistan, although most heavily concentrated in Zabul and Uruzgan. Two main sub-tribes are the **Muhammadzai** (the largest) and **Shamulzai** (Shimalzai); other divisions include the Jalazai, Babakrzai, Miranzai, Jaffri, Pirozai (Pir Khel), and Kishaini.

Wardak (Ghilzai): 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.²¹ There is some disagreement whether the Wardaks are Karlanri or Ghilzai Pashtun. Most evidence suggests they are Karlanri. 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

¹⁵ "Afghan Nomads Say U.S. Bombing Killed Nine," Associated Press, September 25, 2003 http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20030925_221.html (accessed June 8, 2007), 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/> (accessed June 8, 2007).

¹⁶ Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, London: Kegan Paul International, 2000, 234.

¹⁷ US Department of State Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team Political Officer Reporting, 2004.

¹⁸ US Department of State Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team Political Officer Reporting, 2004.

¹⁹ "Afghanistan: Focus on nomads and the drought," *IRIN*, March 20, 2002, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=18233> (March 18, 2008).

²⁰ David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, pp. 32.

²¹ Adamec, Vol. 6, 802-803.

radicals emerged from Wardak who helped to promote and implement Taliban's conservative interpretation of Islam."²²

Security Landscape:

General Level of Security:

Much of Zabul, outside of Qalat and Tarnak Va Jaldak, has high levels of insecurity. Much of the insecurity is as a result of a spill-over effect from Uruzgan, Kandahar, and Ghazni in the north, or Pakistan in the south. BBC Monitoring reported 77 security incidents in 2007,²³ which although high, is significantly less than neighboring provinces. A number of districts are off limits to NGOs, including main access roads - Kandahar Qalat - used for transportation of resources and personnel. Continuous instability affects the human resources available in Zabul. They are severely suffering from lack of skilled and educated human capital to provide long term educational and development resources. While opium cultivation is relatively limited when compared to neighboring provinces, trafficking is a large part of the economy, and the security problems that plague the province.

The districts of primary concern are:

Shamalzai District, Zabul's one border district, is home to no official border crossing, but with over 100 kilometers of rough border-line, it is known for a vibrant smuggling economy. Far from any main roads, Shamalzai is inaccessible to many. A deceptively low number of reported security incidents there may imply otherwise, but this remote district is a cause for concern.

Similarly, Mizan and Arghandab find themselves remote and facing increasing violence, especially against police targets. Finally, the capital Qalat itself is seeing a sustained effort by anti-coalition militias to disrupt the functions of government, killing religious leaders and attacking government targets. The local population of Qalat has also taken to the street to protest perceived U.S. insensitivity to local customs by snatching suspects and entering homes uninvited.

Public attitudes toward security: Generally, it would seem that the residents of Zabul consider the security situation bearable, although that is, of course, subject to change. All in all, one's impression of Zabul is that it is a good province trying to fly straight in what may very well be the most dangerous. Buffeted in the South from Pakistan, in the North from Uruzgan, and tied down in the middle by the great Ring Road - Zabul, fifty years earlier part of a greater Kandahar province, is in a precarious position.²⁴

²² 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, accessed 10 August 2007.

²³ Afghan Information Management Services, *District Profiles*, available from <http://www.aims.org.af/> (accessed August 3, 2007).

²⁴ *Altai Public Opinion Info*, Altai Consulting, 2006.

DISTRICTS

The districts of Zabul Province are Kakar, Day Chapan, Mizan, Arghandab, Shah Joy, Qalat, Tarnak va Jaldak, Shinkay, Atghar, Now Bahar, Shamalzai.

