



**Province: Nuristan**  
**Governor: Jamaluddin Badr**  
**Provincial Police Chief: Asil Tuta Khail**

<b>Population Estimate:</b> ~300,000		Urban: 0	Rural: ~300,000 <sup>1</sup>
Area in Square Kilometers: 22,915		Capital: Parun	
Names of Districts:		Bargi Matal, Doab, Kamdesh, Mandol, Nurgeram (Nuristan), Wama (Parun), Waygal	
Composition of Population:	<u>Ethnic Groups:</u> 99.3% Nuristani, 0.6% Gujar (seasonal), 0.1% Tajik, 0.0% Pashtun	<u>Religious Groups:</u> majority Sunni Muslim; rumored animists	<u>Tribal Groups:</u> Kata, Mumo, Kom, Khsto-Dungulio, Vasi, Kalasha, Tregami, Sa Nu, Gramsa Na, Ashku
Occupation of Population	Major: Agriculture, remittances, animal husbandry		Minor: day labor
Crops/Farming/Livestock:	Corn, wheat, beans		Cows, sheep, goats
Literacy Rate Total: 3 <sup>2</sup> -14% <sup>3</sup>			
Number of Educational Institutions: 91	<u>Schools:</u> 91 Primary: 74 Secondary: 3	<u>Colleges/Universities:</u> 0	
Number of Security Incidents, Jan-Jun 2007: <sup>4</sup> 9	January: 1 February: 1	March: 0 April: 3	May: 2 June: 2
Poppy (Opium) Cultivation: 0	<u>2006:</u> 1,516 ha	<u>2007:</u> 0	
NGOs Active in Province:	Afghanaid (Dfid), UNHCR, PMS, IFRC, Madera, WFP, WHO		
<u>Provincial Aid Projects:</u> <sup>5</sup> Total Projects: 290 Planned Cost: \$876,862.10 Total Spent: \$4,290,735.64	Total PRT Projects: 5 Planned Cost: \$0 Total Spent: \$0	Other Aid Projects: 285 Planned Cost: \$876,862.10 Total Spent: \$4,290,735.64	
Transportation:	<u>Primary Roads:</u> Nil. Lack of roads in Nuristan and the difficulty in transport is a massive problem province wide. Neighboring districts often take a week to reach, often via other provinces		
Electricity:	Little access to electricity outside of Parun, most electricity private	<u>Estimated Population w/access:</u> 86% <sup>6</sup>	
Health Facilities:	<u>Hospitals:</u> 0		<u>Clinics, etc.:</u> 8
Primary Sources of Drinking Water/Availability of Potable Water:	Rivers, springs		19%
Rivers: Kunar (called the Chitral in Pakistan), Alingâr, and Pech.			
Significant Topographic Features	Mountains and river gorges; the entire province is extremely difficult to access, and often impossible in winter. <sup>7</sup>		

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

<sup>2</sup> *Nuristan Altai Public Opinion Info*, Altai Consulting, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007*, United Nations Development Program, 2007, 164.

<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> ISAF and CJTF 82, *Afghanistan Comprehensive Stability Project*, June 2007.

<sup>6</sup> This figure seems extremely high (*Nuristan Altai Public Opinion Info*, Altai Consulting, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007*, United Nations Development Program, 2007, 166.

**Political Landscape:**

***Political Leaders:***

**Governor Jamaluddin Badr**



Jamaluddin Badr assumed the role of governor of Nuristan province sometime between the accidental death of Nuristan governor Hazrat Din Noor on September 5, 2008 and January 2009.

**Former Governor Dr. Hazrat Din Noor (*Deceased*)**



Dr. Hazrat Din Noor served as Nuristan's governor between July 2008 until his untimely death on September 5, 2008. Noor, along with three of his close companions, died in a car wreck along the Kabul-Jalalabad highway's notorious Mahipar Pass.

**Former Governor Mohammad Tamim Nuristani (Governor 2005-2008)**



A Nuristani of the Kata Tribe, 47 year old Nuristani has spent considerable time abroad as a student in Germany and in the restaurant business in Brooklyn and California. His family is one of the most famous in Nuristan; four uncles were killed by the communists, and another uncle is a fugitive HiG commander. He is reportedly urban and well spoken, and has the support of much of his province. Leaving his family in the U.S. after 9/11, Nuristani was elected to the Emergency Loya Jirga and the Constitutional Loya Jirga. Prior to the national elections, Nuristani made it a priority to establish security in his province. Nuristani's goal is to improve the infrastructure (particularly roads) and welfare of his province. Nuristani was relieved of his duties by President Karzai in July 2008 and he was succeeded by governor Hazrat Din Noor.

**Deputy Governor Mamour Abdul Halim (AKA Mamir Halem)**



Born in the Parun Valley but raised in Kabul, little is known about Mamour Abdul. He is regarded as powerful in Nuristan.

**Chief of Police Brigadier General Asil Tuta Khail (AKA Amir Muhammad Khan; Asil Totakhail)**



A Pashtun, born in 1952, he received training at military college and is a police officer by profession.

**National Directorate of Security Chief Khushai Atikhan**



He has personally spoken at mosques exhorting the populous to support their popularly elected government.

**Wolesi Jirga Members:**<sup>8</sup>



Haji Dad Mohammad Khan

Nuristani Male

Associated with Jamiat (Qanooni) and Hazrat Ali. Former Commander (28th Div) - DDRed but still has base. From Nangaraj.



Hawa Alam NOORISTANI

Pashtun Female

Has a B.A. in Journalism. Attacked shortly before elections - hospitalized at Bagram & US. Prior Pashto-language news presenter for Afghan state TV. Prior clerk in Ministry of Women's Affairs. 20 years of experience in journalism.

**Meshrano Jirga Members:**<sup>9</sup>



Al-haj Shair Mohammad Nuristani

Nuristani Male



Noorullah Ma'amar

Nuristani Male

Associated with Hamnazar

**Provincial Council Members:**



Mawlawi Mohammad Gul



Rahmatullah Rashidi



Mawlawi Taj Mohammad



Bibi Narges



Ahmadshah Wakilzada



Gulalai



Munawar Nizami



Bibi Zarmina Atiqan



Mamur Haqdad

**Primary Political Parties:**

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

Led by former Prime Minister 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

<sup>8</sup> US Embassy Kabul Afghanistan Election Observation Team and Joint Election Management Board, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> US Embassy Kabul Afghanistan Election Observation Team and Joint Election Management Board, 2005.

Qanuni's Hezb-e Afghanistan Naween broke away from Jamiat-e Islami. The party is particularly popular in Wama and Parun districts. According to Altai surveys it comes in at 18% of the province.

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

The party of former Mujahed 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. According to Altai surveys it comes in at 8% of the province. The Kanta tribal chief, Hajji Ghafour, is a former HiG commander.

### **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.

### **Hamnazar**

One of the most important parties of the Meshrano Jirga, Hamnazar (Alliance) mainly consists of pro-Karzai MPs, who are Western sympathizers. The group numbers some thirty parliamentarians and is led by Amin Zai. A doctor by profession, he is closely allied with Karzai who strongly supported him for this position.<sup>10</sup>

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

- Most respected leaders in area: Mawlawi 80%, Shura/Elders 9%, and Mullah 6% according to Altai surveys.

### **Human Terrain:**

#### ***Nuristani Tribes:***

The Nuristani in Afghanistan primarily live in high elevations in northeast Afghanistan. They trace their genealogy back to either the Greek forces of Alexander the Great or to the tribes of Mecca which rejected Islam. For centuries the Nuristanis were known as "kafirs," or infidels (this is still a pejorative term for them). This has changed as most converted to Islam at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. There are fifteen Nuristani tribes with numerous sub-groups. Five languages and numerous dialects are spoken by the Nuristani. They do not have overly positive relations with other Afghans or Pakistanis and a strong animosity toward Arabs. Two of the largest tribes, the Kamozi (or Kam) and the Kushtaz, have had a series of conflicts since the fall of the Taliban. Additionally, for over two decades foreign-funded Wahhabi preachers have been working to convert the tribes to their more hard-line interpretation of Islam. Nuristanis, however, remain protective of their distinctive culture. The tribes speak Dardic languages, often mutually unintelligible. Due to what many Nuristanis claim is Greek blood left over from the mighty armies of Alexander, many Nuristanis have distinctly European features, blue and green eyes, and blond or red hair. Since being conquered by the "Iron Amir" (Abdul Rahman Khan) in 1893, there has been some intermingling with Pashtuns, forced or otherwise.

#### ***Gujjar:***

So very little about the Gujjars is known that the mere mention of them sends one scrambling for dust-covered manuscripts of the British Raj. It is thought they were initially encountered by Alexander during his thrust into India, although this and every theory about the Gujjars remains in dispute. They speak a tongue wholly unrelated to any Indo-European language, although many have by now learned local languages for commercial purposes. They roam with their herds, usually of cows, from the high Himalayas in India to the Hindu Kush of Afghanistan,

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<sup>10</sup> "The New Parliament: an Afghan Way to Democracy," *CeMiSS Quarterly*, Centro Militare di Studi Strategici, April 2006, available from [www.difesa.it/NR/rdonlyres/0FA44F42-56BC-4D58-9F93-46A7F42CC8DE/11177/quart\\_spring\\_06.pdf](http://www.difesa.it/NR/rdonlyres/0FA44F42-56BC-4D58-9F93-46A7F42CC8DE/11177/quart_spring_06.pdf) (accessed September 25, 2007).

although rarely are they seen in Afghanistan anymore, as Pakistan has hindered their passage through its territory and most preferred to stay within India. Some in India remain Hindu, although further west many are Muslim. Often they can be recognized by their avoidance of others, and their brightly hennaed beards. They are proud, fierce, and loyal. Their traditions are millennia old, and they have preserved them well in the face of great adversity.<sup>11</sup> They are somewhat related to Nuristanis, although exactly how is a subject of conjecture. Similar to Nuristanis, some genetic root gives many Gujjars a distinctly European appearance, up to and including blond hair and blue eyes.

### ***Tajik:***

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.

### **Security Landscape:**

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

Despite being the first province to rise against the communists in 1978, Nuristan has traditionally had a quiet reputation, although this seems to be changing. Isolated and difficult to traverse, Nuristan is a fugitive's dream. The Taliban and Hekmatyar's Hizb-e Islami (HiG) are both operating in the province, having some experience there, and foreigners may be hiding there with their assistance. With back-door access to Pakistan's Chitral area across mountain passes and hunting trails, Nuristan has seen Taliban activity for some time. Thankfully, Nuristan has one of the highest levels of police per capita of all Afghanistan, although there have been problems ensuring said police are paid. Infrastructure is essentially nonexistent, and the population is concentrated in certain valleys, leaving much of the territory empty, ungoverned space. Both the Taliban and HiG use strategically located districts such as Kamdesh as rear positions for operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Conflict between tribes is minimal, although blood-feuds have been known to go on for the better part of a century. Recently the Taliban killed a popular member of the provincial council, Hajji Younis, earning them the enmity of many Nuristanis.<sup>12</sup>

Moderate Risk: Doab (possibly part of Mandol), Parun (also known as Wama), and Bargi Matal districts.

Significant Risk: Mandol, Nurguram (also known as Nuristan), Waygal, and Kamdesh districts.

#### **The districts of primary concern are:**

**Kamdesh:** Contiguous with Kunar Province and Pakistan, this district has seen more violence than any other district in Nuristan. ANA, Taliban, and NATO have all had lethal confrontations here. There are smuggling routes into Pakistan here, and further tribal conflicts between the Kamdesh and Kushtuz tribes have left 600 Kushtuz families homeless a decade ago. Following the establishment of a US forward operating base in Kamdesh in 2007, episodes of violence rose steadily until a massive swarm attack against FOB Keating on October 3, 2009 left 8 US soldiers dead the base completely destroyed. Preceding the attack, US forces had decided to withdraw from the upper portion of the Kamdesh district and shut down FOB Keating and COP Fritsche.

**Bargimatal:** Although ranking as a moderate as opposed to significant risk district, this district also borders one of the wilder and least accessible regions of Pakistan, and deserves careful watch. The former Taliban district governor, Mullah Afzal, enjoyed sizable support from the Arab world and Pakistan, and encouraged many radical preachers to come into the district.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, afterwards he went on to lead the jihadist Lashkar-i Taiba in

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<sup>11</sup> William Dalrymple, *In Xanadu*. London: HarperCollins, 1989, 110-117.

<sup>12</sup> Afghan Information Management Services, *District Profiles*, available from <http://www.aims.org.af/> (accessed August 3, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, 300.

Pakistan, an extremely violent paramilitary organization intent on conquering Indian-held Kashmir. Ergo, numerous militants are familiar with the region, if not personally at least tangentially.

Waygal: Consistently scores highest on Taliban interaction, and lowest on favorable opinions towards security and foreign forces.

**Public attitudes toward security:** On average, 53% of the province feels the security situation is “bad” (highest in Waygal District at 62%) and 79% feel unsafe. 4% of the populous feels the ANA abuses their power, and 16% believe the ANP does; in both cases the worst perceptions exist in Parun.

**Public attitudes toward FF:** Nuristan has the worst opinion of Foreign Forces of 14 surveyed provinces, 49% of the province believing that FF do not bring security. 27% of the province actually believes they bring insecurity, as 47% believe FF to be unfair, 35% believe they’re poorly trained, and 28% believe FF under-equipped.

**Public attitudes toward Taliban:** Despite low reporting numbers, indicators paint a different picture; namely that there is a larger Taliban influence and presence than reported. Only 3% of the province reports a Taliban presence (highest in Waygal District at 4%), and 33% of the province reports having no fear of the Taliban (the Taliban is most feared in Waygal District by 69% of the population).

Even worse, there is an extremely high level of belief in Taliban missives at 24% (highest in Waygal at 26%). The only plus to public opinion in Nuristan is that 68% percent of television viewers watch Indian television, which means they are exposed to international viewpoints (although Al Jazeera still commands the largest audience).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Nuristan Altai Public Opinion Info*, Altai Consulting, 2007.

## NURISTAN DISTRICTS

The seven districts of Nuristan Province are Mandol (incorporating what was formerly Doab District), Nuristan (also known as Nurgram), Wama (which may or may not have split with a new Parun District), Waygal, Bargi Matal, and Kamdesh. Mandol was officially mandated as a district in February 2009 and a district administration was established by the provincial government.<sup>15</sup>



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<sup>15</sup> “New district established in Nuristan,” *Pajwhok Afghan News*, February 21, 2009.