



Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

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Hazara Asylum Seekers from Afghanistan: the increasing dangers they would face if they return

Supplementary update: 12th February 2013

*Graeme Swincer¹ for Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group,
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The following updates have been published since the original release of this paper.

- Collection of new material: 8th November 2012
- Supplementary update: 12th February 2013
- Supplementary update: 19th May 2013
- Supplementary update: 28th February 2014

All of these papers are available on our website:

bmrsg.org.au/research-material/afganistan/

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Introduction

In the 3 months since “new material” was documented there have been several new general reports, but I have found no new accounts of large scale attacks. Hazara asylum seekers say that most attacks are small scale, though nonetheless deadly or severe in terms of property damage, and go unreported. The following three reports seem especially important in adding new material and insights.

These reports all have special relevance in relation to the Complementary Protection criterion of “real and foreseeable risk”. It is well established that the Hazaras are the primary target of persecution by the Taliban and related Pashtun groups and this persecution is bound to escalate in the foreseeable future. The considered predictions of the majority of informed commentators on the future situation in Afghanistan converge on this point.

1. “On Relocation to Kabul of Members of the Hazara Minority in Afghanistan”

Professor William Maley
19th November 2012

www.facebook.com/labor4refugees/posts/382792781806801

Quotation #1

I visited Kabul most recently in October 2012, and carried out interviews in western districts of the city (notably in the Dasht-e Barchi district, scene of violent attacks on 13 August 2010) in which members of the Hazara ethnic group are concentrated.

Quotation #2

In my view, it is a serious mistake to conclude that Kabul is safe for Hazaras.

Quotation #3

In the light of the December 2011 bombing, *any ‘country information’ suggesting that Hazara Shia are not at risk of persecution for reasons recognised by the 1951 Convention is outdated and irrelevant.*

Quotation #4

Guidelines on the viability of relocation

The issue of an internal flight or relocation alternative (IFA/IRA) was addressed by UNHCR in the *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-seekers from Afghanistan* (Geneva: HCR/EG/AFG/10/04, 17 December 2010). These stated (at p.39):

Whether an IFA/IRA is “reasonable” must be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking fully into account the security, human rights and humanitarian environment in the prospective area of relocation at the time of the decision. To this effect, the following elements need to be taken into account: (i) the availability of traditional support mechanisms, such as relatives and friends able to host the displaced individuals; (ii) the availability of basic infrastructure and access to essential services, such as sanitation, health care and education; (iii) ability to sustain themselves, including livelihood opportunities; (iv) the criminality rate and resultant insecurity,

particularly in urban areas; as well as (v) the scale of displacement in the area of prospective relocation.

In a footnote to (iii), the *Guidelines* added:

Afghans originating from rural areas, with few marketable professional skills beyond agriculture and animal husbandry, may have more difficulty reintegrating elsewhere. They have few savings and no property (because property has been destroyed, looted or left behind during displacement), no social support networks in the places of relocation and perhaps even communications difficulties, due to language or dialect limitations.

For Hazaras whose origin lies outside Kabul, it is (i), (iii) and (iv) that are most immediately relevant. In my assessment, these would make Kabul an *unviable* place of relocation *in virtually all cases*.

As Professor Alessandro Monsutti, the leading European specialist on Hazaras, has bluntly remarked: 'In Afghanistan, people are linked to their families and social networks. If you are from one place, you cannot readily relocate elsewhere. The state does not provide strong services. In a society where the state provides so little support, life is organised around social networks and face-to-face relations. If someone returns to Afghanistan, he or she could not live outside his or her traditional or family area' (Alessandro Monsutti, *The Situation for Hazaras in Afghanistan*, 9 August 2010, para.55).

Quotation #5

An Hazara who is returned to Kabul without social connections is likely to end up destitute, or be exposed to gross exploitation or criminal predation.

Quotation #6

Young Hazaras are especially vulnerable in this respect. Their survival skills may be even less developed than those of older people, and their youth can make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation. . . . A government that forcibly returned vulnerable young Afghans to such an environment could at worst be seen as complicit in their exploitation.

2. Oppression of Hazara in Afghanistan

Habib Ahmadi

5th December 2012.

<http://www.wahdatnews.com/archives/1100>

This brief historical survey contains recent general observations including:

- *The apparently insensitive Afghan government is still perceived by Hazaras as discriminating against them. An example of this insensitivity is their granting to another Afghan tribe the right to graze their animals on the precious Hazara land.*
- *Ethnic minorities in Afghanistan, including Hazaras, are extremely uneasy at the current Afghan president's expressed desire to have dealings with the Taliban.*



3. The Hazaras

Julian Burnside AO QC

21st January, 2013

<http://rightnow.org.au/topics/asylum-seekers/the-hazaras/>

This article highlights the background to the large numbers of Hazara people fleeing Afghanistan over the past decade and more. The key up-to-date points are:

- ***Recently the Taliban have declared it their duty to kill Hazaras. The Taliban are engaged in ethnic cleansing of the Hazara people. As a result, many Hazaras have left Afghanistan; north to Iran, east into Pakistan, or (using people smugglers) to Europe, America or Australia.***
- ***Allied forces have announced that they will withdraw from Afghanistan in 2014. It is a certainty that Taliban attacks on Hazaras will increase uncontrollably when that happens.***