



Afghanistan Policy Page

A one-page brief from the [Afghanistan Congressional Communications Hub](#) on a major issue concerning U.S. policy and engagement in Afghanistan.

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Province Profile - Kabul

Take Aways

- **Kabul is a strategic center of gravity in Afghanistan: it is the seat of the national government and the location of the ISAF-NATO command headquarters.**
- **Insurgents try to attack Kabul on a regular basis as a direct challenge to the national government's legitimacy and ability to protect itself.**
- Kabul's population is largely urban and more educated than the rest of Afghanistan, and tribal associations are typically weaker.
- Kabul holds the majority of Afghanistan's limited commercial sector, and it sits on major regional trade routes with Pakistan and Central Asia.

Key Facts

- **Governor of Kabul Province:** Haji Din Mohammad
- **Provincial Capital:** Kabul (city)
- **Mayor of city of Kabul:** Abdul Ahad Sahebi
- **Size:** 1,723 square miles (a bit smaller than Delaware). Half is classified as mountainous.
- **Members of Parliament:** 33 including 9 women, out of 249 total *Wolesi Jirga* members.

Total Kabul Province Population: 3.45 million

- Four fifths live in the urban areas of Kabul City.
- Around 60% speak Pashtu.
- Around 40% speak Dari.
- Around 33,000 refugees returned last year.

Literacy and education in Kabul is much higher than the rest of Afghanistan:

- Two thirds of men in Kabul are literate.
- Around half of women in Kabul are literate.
- Afghanistan as a whole has a literacy rate of under 30%.
- Around half of all boys and girls in Kabul are enrolled in school.
- Three fifths of teachers are female.

Infrastructure in Kabul Province:

- 83% have access to electricity.
- Two thirds have access to safe drinking water.
- Around one quarter have sanitary toilet facilities; 70% use traditional latrines, the remainder use open areas.

Key Issues

Afghanistan's National Government – Kabul is home to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government, as well as the Afghan government's two dozen ministries which correspond to cabinet positions.

- Over 100,000 people are employed by the government in Kabul.
- For many Afghans, Kabul is a very important symbol of the national government's perceived presence, competence, and corruption.

Kabul's Security Environment – Kabul has a large security presence, although it does not have a "Green Zone." Some analysts note there have been remarkably few major insurgent attacks given Kabul's very porous and sprawling low-rise character.

- The Afghan National Army (ANA) 201st Corps is headquartered in Kabul and the ANA Air Corps has a base at Kabul's airport.
- Regional Command – Capital operates out of Kabul International Airport with around 6,000 soldiers. Command rotates between Turkey, France, and Italy. It is currently headed by Brigadier General Levent Çolak (Turkey).

International Presence – Kabul now hosts tens of thousands of foreigners, including UN officials, NGOs, embassies, contractors, and ISAF headquarters personnel.

- More than 2,200 coalition soldiers are at the NATO-ISAF headquarters downtown.
- The large foreign presence in Kabul can antagonize many Afghans, especially if invasive convoys disrupt the city's already chaotic traffic patterns.
- Furthermore, a "brain-drain" has been caused by the many foreign entities recruiting educated local staff, often to the detriment of the Afghan civil service.

Allegations of Corruption – The Mayor of Kabul was found guilty of corruption in December 2009 for awarding a contract for a city project without competition.

- An Afghan court sentenced Abdul Ahad Sahebi to four years in jail and ordered him to pay more than \$16,000. He remains free on bail pending his appeal and continues to act as mayor of Kabul.
- This was the first major conviction of a senior Afghan official since President Karzai came under pressure to tackle corruption following his re-election.

Private Sector – Kabul is a major hub for Afghan trade and commerce; it connects to the country's ring road and two major highways to Pakistan.

- 90% of urban households and 75% of rural households derive income from trade and services, manufacturing, or non-farm labor.
- Kabul hosts the production of industrial commodities such as cotton, tobacco, and sugar extracts. Carpet, jewelry, pottery, and textiles are major handicraft industries.

Education – Kabul has above average literacy and educational access for Afghanistan, with many families allowing female educational access.

- For the approximately 750,000 students in Kabul there are around 20,000 primary and secondary school teachers, approximately one teacher per 38 students.
- Kabul has nine public higher educational facilities, as well as several private universities, vocational schools, and teacher training institutes.

In the News

On 26 February a coordinated attack by insurgents targeted foreigner-used guesthouses. Kabul had been relatively quiet since 18 January, when Taliban bombers and gunmen killed 12 people when attacking government targets. [BBC](#)

Possible Questions

- What is being done to increase Kabul's security from insurgent attacks?
- How are the transitions between the commanding nations of Regional Command Central facilitated?
- How successful are the liaisons between NATO-ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces in Kabul?

Further Reading

[MRRD](#)
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