



# OFS IN BRIEF

The 13<sup>th</sup> quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) summarizes the quarter's key events and oversight of the two complementary U.S. missions in Afghanistan: counterterrorism operations and building the capacity of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

## Update: South Asia Strategy *pp. 12-29, 44*

- U.S. commanders said they are **“talking and fighting”** as they worked toward negotiations amidst active hostilities.
- The U.S. Army 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade **expanded training and advising** of Afghan forces at the tactical level.
- Deadly violence continued as the **Taliban** launched its **spring offensive**. Taliban fighters continued to **attack ANDSF checkpoints** and **foreign forces**.
- Despite heavy fighting, there was **no significant change in control** of territory: **65%** of Afghans lived in areas under government control, **12%** under the Taliban, and **23%** in contested areas.
- **Civilian deaths** during the first six months of the year were the **highest recorded** for that period of a year in the conflict.
- **Pakistan** has not taken necessary actions to expel Taliban fighters.
- The Senate confirmed **LTG Austin Miller** as the next U.S. commander in Afghanistan, the 17th since 2001.

## ANDSF Challenges Persist *p. 31, 38-42, 55*

- Total **ANDSF force strength** was **313,728** personnel in June, **11% less** than the 352,000 positions authorized.
- ANDSF **struggled to recruit high-skilled personnel** for critical positions, such as pilots, aircraft mechanics, technical specialists, and special operations forces.
- Of the **\$6.5 billion annual operating cost** of the ANDSF, the **Afghan government pays \$507 million**, the U.S. pays \$5.2 billion, and other international donors pay \$767 million.

## ISIS-K Lost its Leader and Stronghold

*pp. 4, 24*

- U.S. and Afghan forces killed **ISIS-K leader** Qari Hekmatullah in an airstrike.
- U.S. special operations forces completed a 2-month operation to **clear ISIS-K** from Deh Bala, the group's **local capital** in Nangarhar province.
- ISIS-K **recruited new fighters** and **continued attacks** in northeastern Afghanistan but did **not gain territory**.

**“Chaos and progress can coexist and that is exactly what we feel is happening in Afghanistan.”**

–DoD spokesperson

*p. 12*

## Peace Talks Elusive Despite Temporary Ceasefire

*pp. 13-14, 43*

- Afghan government and international forces enacted a **19-day ceasefire** to mark the end of **Ramadan**; the Taliban honored a 3-day ceasefire.
- The ceasefire **raised hopes** among Afghans and the international community that peace is possible.
- Taliban leaders continued to **spurn** President Ghani's **offers for peace talks** “without conditions.”
- Taliban **resumed attacks** at the end of the quarter, targeting **voter registration** locations ahead of elections scheduled for October 20, 2018.

## Oversight

*pp. 62-68*

The Lead IG agencies and partners completed **8 audits and evaluations**, including reviews of DoD accounting of costs in support of OFS, DoS building facilities at the embassies in Kabul and Islamabad, and oversight of fuel in Afghanistan.

## Investigations

*pp. 68-70*

Lead IG investigations resulted in **1** arrest, **2** criminal charges, **4** criminal convictions, **1** suspension, fines and recoveries of **\$295,000**, and forfeitures of **\$104,000**.

## Humanitarian Situation Worsened by Drought

*pp. 47-51*

- A **severe drought** has critically affected **1.4 million** Afghans; a number that could rise to **2.2 million** in the coming months.
- The number of Afghans **displaced by violence** grew by more than **50,000** this quarter.
- This year, **362,499** Afghans returned from Iran, many expelled by the government; **17,007** Afghans **returned from Pakistan**, which threatened to discontinue visas for Afghan refugees.