

NATO-Afghanistan relations



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NATO is strongly committed to its mission in Afghanistan. NATO's support to Afghanistan is focused on three main areas:

- the NATO-led Resolute Support mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions;
- funding of the Afghan security forces as part of a broader international effort;
- and the NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership, which is being developed jointly with the Government of Afghanistan.

Resolute Support Mission

Resolute Support is a NATO-led, non-combat mission. It was launched on 1 January 2015, following the conclusion of the previous NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, and the assumption of full security responsibility by the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF). The mission was launched at the invitation of the Afghan government and in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2189 of 2014. Its purpose is to help the Afghan security forces and institutions develop the capacity to defend Afghanistan and protect its citizens in a sustainable manner.



The Resolute Support Mission currently consists of around 16,000 troops from 39 NATO Allies and partners. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are also joining this NATO-led mission. This is a strong symbol of continued global support to the government and the people of Afghanistan.

The Resolute Support Mission operates with one 'hub' (Kabul/Bagram) and four 'spokes' (Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, Herat in the west, Kandahar in the south, and Laghman in the east). It carries out training, advice and assistance activities in support of the Afghan government's four-year security roadmap (launched in 2017), which aims to increase the effectiveness and accountability of the Afghan national security forces and institutions. The roadmap focuses on leadership development, fighting capabilities (with an emphasis on the Afghan special operations forces and the air force), unity of command and fighting corruption.

The mission also performs supporting functions in several areas. These include: operational planning; budgetary development; force generation process; management and development of personnel; logistical sustainment; and civilian oversight in order to ensure the Afghan security forces and institutions act in accordance with the rule of law and good governance.

Our Resolute Support troops primarily work in security related ministries and with the army, air force, special operations, and police forces. The Commander of the mission has a degree of flexibility in the use of personnel and assets at his disposal. This ensures that training, advice and assistance are delivered most effectively and where they are most needed.

The legal framework for Resolute Support Mission is provided by a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which was signed in Kabul by the Afghan President and NATO's Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan and later ratified by the Afghan Parliament in late 2014. The SOFA defines the terms and conditions under which Allied and partners' forces are deployed in Afghanistan as part of the Resolute Support Mission, as well as the activities that they are set to carry out under this agreement.



At the NATO Summit in Warsaw on 8-9 July 2016, Heads of State and Government decided to sustain the Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016, using a flexible, regional model, which would continue to deliver training, advice and assistance to Afghanistan's security institutions, as well as the army, police, special operations and air forces. They also committed to keeping the mission and its design under review.

At their meeting on 25 May 2017, NATO leaders reaffirmed the decisions taken in Warsaw; and at their meeting on 9 November 2017, NATO Defence Ministers agreed to increase the size of the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission from around 13,000 to around 16,000 troops over the course of 2018.



Financial support for the Afghan security forces

The responsibility for financial support of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces rests with the Afghan government. At the Chicago Summit in 2012, the Afghan authorities agreed to provide at least 500 million USD per year initially, with this contribution increasing steadily over time. At the same time, NATO and partner nations continue to play an important role in financially supporting the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces.

One of the main pillars of this effort is the NATO-run Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund, first established in 2007. The ANA Trust Fund is one of three funding streams used by the international community to channel its financial support to Afghanistan's security forces and institutions. The other two are the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United States Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). LOTFA is mainly used to pay the salaries of police and correction personnel but also helps to build the capacity of the Afghan Ministry of Interior and the police. The ASFF is subject to a US-Afghan bilateral agreement and pays for equipping and running Afghanistan's security forces.

Following a decision made at the NATO Summit in Chicago, the ANA Trust Fund has been adapted to make it more flexible, transparent, accountable and cost-effective. The total contributions to the NATO-run Afghan National Army Trust Fund to date amount to more than 2.4 billion USD.

At the Warsaw Summit on 8-9 July 2016, NATO Allies and Resolute Support Mission partners committed to giving financial support to the Afghan security forces, including until the end of 2020, as part of the broader effort by the international community. The Afghan authorities will continue to maintain and increase financial contributions to support their army and police forces. At the next NATO Summit on 11-12 July 2018, in Brussels, Allies and partners are expected to confirm their commitment to continue supporting financially the Afghan security forces through 2024



NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership

The Enduring Partnership is NATO's political partnership with Afghanistan. It was set up in 2010 at the NATO Summit in Lisbon. At the 2016 Summit in Warsaw, Allies decided to strengthen and enhance the Partnership, within and alongside the Resolute Support Mission, through political dialogue and practical cooperation. The enhanced Partnership recognises the strategic importance of NATO's engagement in Afghanistan and underscores the commitment to global partnerships outlined in the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept. Within this framework specific activities are being conducted, including workshops on defence education and on improvement of governance within the Afghan national defence structures. In the longer term, a traditional partnership with Afghanistan remains NATO's goal.

NATO and its partners remain committed to Afghanistan and its people as they pursue a secure and stable future, as part of the efforts of the broader International Community.



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