

Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF): Training and Development



ANSF Meets Targets

The current strength of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) is over 306,000 (over 170,500 Afghan National Army and over 135,500 Afghan National Police). In June 2011, the Security Standing Committee of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board agreed on an increase of the Afghan National Army (ANA) growth target to 195,000 by November 2012 and for the Afghan National Police (ANP) to 157,000 by November 2012. Since November 2009, 115,000 soldiers and policemen have been added to the force.

Afghan National Army and Air Force

The Afghan National Army is comprised of six Corps Headquarters and a Capital Division. The ANA was, by necessity, originally built as an infantry-centric force. However, over the past year, the NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan (NTM-A) has focused on helping the Afghans develop enabling capabilities - such as military police, intelligence, route clearance, combat support, medical, aviation, and logistics - needed to provide the ANA fighting elements with the necessary support functions. Training schools and Afghan National Security University Branch Schools - all 12 of which are now functioning - are also cornerstones of ANA development.

Created in 2007, the Afghan Air Force (AAF) currently numbers nearly 4,900 personnel and 67 aircraft, including 33 Mi-17 transport and gunships, 11 Mi-35 attack helicopters, 14 C-27 transport aircraft and 3 CT-182T aircraft. Work is ongoing to recruit, train and employ Afghan personnel to allow the transition of aviation functions from ISAF to the Afghan authorities. It is on its way to becoming a professional, operationally capable and sustainable force of 145 aircraft and more than 8,000 personnel by 2016. Airlift and air power are essential elements of the Afghan counter-insurgency, while combined helicopter gunship and, eventually, close air support, fixed-wing capability will allow Afghan security forces to conduct largely independent operations. The Afghan Air Force has also established an airborne medical evacuation capability, providing specialised emergency medical care in remote areas. In addition, search and rescue operations allow life-saving help to reach victims of natural disasters, such as following the Salang Pass avalanche and during the floods in Kandahar.

Afghan National Police

The primary branches of the Afghan National Police include:

- The Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) is the police force designed to provide basic law and order services to the people in villages and districts. They are assigned to Police Districts and Provincial and Regional Commands. The AUP also includes Traffic Police, Fire and Rescue and a United Nations Protective Force. The current AUP end strength is approximately 96,400 personnel.
- The Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) is the premiere counter-insurgency (COIN) force. It is a nationally deployable police force that works closely with the Army as part of its COIN mission and maintains the rule of law and order utilising proportionate armed capabilities. There are approximately 12,600 ANCOP.
- The Afghan Border Police (ABP) provides the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) with a general law enforcement capability at international borders, entry points and in the Border Security Zone, which extends approximately 50 km into Afghan territory. In addition, the ABP controls pedestrian and vehicular traffic at border crossing points, deters and detects illegal entry and other criminal activity along the border, and is responsible for airport security at five international airports. ABP currently numbers 20,800 of the total police forces in Afghanistan.
- The Government of Afghanistan established an Afghan Local Police (ALP) force in August 2010 under the control of the Ministry of Interior. The ALP is an Afghan-led programme, which provides community based security in areas with little or no ANSF presence. ALP is established in selected areas with the full approval of the local populace and following validation by the Afghan government. ALP recruits are vetted and approved by local shuras (committees) and district police chiefs. ALP sites are partnered with international forces and monitored by the local shura, the District Chief of Police, District and Provincial Governors and the Ministry of Interior. Essentially ALP provides for small, community-based self-defence units under the MoI's chain of command, represented by the District Chief of Police. The units are representative of, and accountable to, the community, and have no arrest or investigative authorities.



Afghan National Police

“Quantity is important, but quality is imperative.”

Over the course of the past year, NTM-A has placed a greater emphasis on quality. Focus has been placed on leadership training – 2,760 ANA instructors have been trained and certified, together with 1,000 ANP instructors to lead police training. Emphasis has been placed on training Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs), and on increasing literacy. In 2009, there was no mandatory literacy training programme and 86% of new recruits were illiterate. Since then, just under 136,000 ANSF have completed some combination of 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade literacy exams. Another 90,000 are currently in training with an aim for the ANSF to achieve over 60 % first grade literacy by January 2012.

Recruitment and Vetting

“The goal of the vetting process is to deny the insurgents the anonymity they need.”
– Lt Gen Caldwell, Commander NTM-A

Recruitment follows an eight-step vetting process. Upon signing an enlistment contract agreement, the recruit must get two individuals (village elder, Mullah, or other local government representative) to sign and vouch for the recruit. These individuals are held responsible if any discrepancy in the contract is found. The recruit’s paperwork and government ID are reviewed and basic biometric and medical information (iris scan, fingerprints, height, age, and weight) is collected, added to the recruit’s personnel file and accompanies the recruit to training. The biometric data is then checked to see if the individual has any known criminal or insurgent links. Recruits are also tested for drugs - approximately 6% of applicants are screened out for either drug use or medical conditions. Also currently ongoing is a nation-wide programme to screen and re-validate every ANSF member already in service. It is envisaged that this screening will be completed by spring 2012.

It is worth noting that to date, there are no known cases in which a recruit has joined the ANSF – or was directed by the Taliban to join – with the express intent to harm coalition forces. However, there may have been incidents where ANSF members were co-opted by the Taliban after joining. More common is insurgent impersonation of ANSF soldiers and policemen, since ANSF uniforms are readily available on the black market. However, the Afghan government has launched an initiative to counter this, confiscating uniform items from shops and threatening to arrest those who sell them. There are known incidents of ANSF soldiers or policeman opening fire on ISAF troops due to combat stress or personal animosity. Training has increased allowing Afghan leaders to better recognise signs of combat stress, and the introduction of more predictable leave and deployments for ANSF soldiers and police has helped in this regard.

A Representative Force

There are approximately 1,500 women in uniformed positions across the Afghan National Security Forces, which comprises less than 1% of Afghan army and police personnel strength. However, this remains a historic milestone for Afghan women who up until just ten years ago had been deprived of their basic rights. Considerable efforts have also been invested in building an inclusive army that provides a cadre of women soldiers and reflects the overall ethnic make-up of the country. The ANP has just over 1,200 women in the ranks. Currently there are 320 women in the ANA, of which 215 are officers, and five female pilots in the Afghan Air Force. The Ministry of Defence has developed special recruitment drive to increase the level of southern Pashtun participation. This has been on a constant rise, representing approximately 3% of new ANA recruits since April 2010.

Retention and Attrition

Reducing attrition is essential for the long-term viability of the ANSF, especially with respect to retaining quality personnel. Average monthly attrition rates are 3.3% in the ANA and 1.5% in the ANP. The ANSF’s goal is to reach an attrition rate of less than 1.4%. On average, the ANSF consistently gets 5,000-7,000 recruits every month.



Afghan National Police being trained by Czech Military Police

Embedded Partnering

Under an initiative called Embedded Partnering, international forces and Afghans live together; train together; and plan and execute missions together, sharing the risks and responsibilities. Embedded Partnering occurs at every echelon from the ministry to unit, jointly planning and conducting all operations. Combining ANSF and international force capabilities creates a synergy that develops ANSF capability and combats the insurgency.

NATO’s Mentoring Teams

Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and Police OMLTs (POMLTs) are an important part of NATO-ISAF’s contribution towards the development of the ANSF. Each POMLT and OMLT is normally deployed with an Afghan unit for a minimum of six months.

OMLTs provide a bridge from the collective training received at the Kabul Military Training Centre to follow-on training in the field. OMLTs consist of 11-28 personnel (depending on the type and function of the ANA unit with which it is partnered) from one or several countries. Nations contributing full OMLTs, as of 02 December 2011, are:

- Albania: 1
- Australia: 7
- Belgium: 1
- Bulgaria: 4
- Croatia: 3
- Czech Republic: 1
- Denmark: 1
- France: 7
- Germany: 7
- Greece: 1
- Hungary: 1
- Italy: 9
- Latvia: 1
- Norway: 1
- Poland: 5
- Portugal: 2
- Romania: 3
- Slovakia: 1
- Slovenia: 1
- Spain: 5
- Sweden: 1
- Turkey: 6
- United Kingdom: 7
- United States (ETTs¹): 76
- Multinational: 5²

1 US Embedded Training Teams perform the same functions as OMLTs: providing ANA units with comprehensive mentoring.

2 Armenia, Netherlands, Finland and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name) contribute to multinational OMLTs.

POMLTs coach, teach, mentor, and when necessary, support the operational planning and employment of the ANP unit to which they are partnered.

POMLTs are composed of 15-20 personnel from one or several countries.

Nations contributing full POMLTs, as of 02 December 2011, are:

- Croatia: 2
- Denmark: 1
- France: 5
- Germany (PMTs): 12³
- Italy: 4
- Lithuania: 1
- Netherlands: 6
- Norway: 1
- Poland: 8
- Spain: 2
- Turkey: 1
- United Kingdom: 12
- United States (PMTs): 279⁴

Funding

The main mechanisms to channel funds in support of the ANSF include Trust Funds run by UN and NATO as well as bilateral programs. The US Afghan Security Forces Funding represents the most significant bilateral initiative. The Law and Order Trust Fund established by the United Nations Development Programme supports the Afghan National Police Force, whereas the NATO ANA Trust Fund allows donor countries to support the capacity and capability development of the Afghan National Army.

NATO-ANA Trust Fund

Created in 2007 and its scope gradually expanded over time, the NATO-ANA Trust Fund provides a mechanism for ISAF nations to support the following activities:

- The long-term sustainment of the ANA,
- ANSF long-term literacy, English language training and professional military education,
- Transportation and installation costs for equipment donations by ISAF nations to the ANA, purchase of ANA equipment and services for engineering infrastructure projects, in- and out-of-country training.

In concrete terms the NATO ANA Trust Fund helps for instance to pay for salaries, equipment, health care, communication equipment, vehicle maintenance and other sustainment costs of the Afghan National Army. The sustainment cost requirement for the ANA in 2011 is assessed to be just over 2.8 billion USD. The overall sustainment cost of the ANSF is expected to decrease significantly post 2014. It will be vital that the International Community continues to help sustain the ANSF beyond 2014, until such support is no longer required.

Contributions and pledges as of June 2011 (€):

- Bulgaria 160,000
- Czech Republic 389,024
- Denmark 4,250,000
- Estonia 210,000
- Germany 126,000,000
- Italy 7,400,000
- Lithuania 40,000
- Luxembourg 12,126,000
- Netherlands 37,600,000
- Norway 23,720,674

- Slovenia 230,000
- Spain 4,000,000
- Turkey 1,500,000
- United Kingdom 4,540,006
- Australia 150,000,000
- Finland 1,700,000
- Japan 25,829,177
- South Korea 36,131,514
- Sweden 3,988,138
- Switzerland 131,118
- UAE 7,078,143
- Other 672,507
- TOTAL: 447,696,301 Euro

NATO Equipment Donation Support Programme

The NATO Equipment Donation Programme in support of the Afghan National Security Forces was created in 2006. NATO's Allied Command Operations (ACO) coordinates equipment donations on behalf of ISAF contributing nations.

Completed equipment donations since 2006:

- Bulgaria 50 mortars, ~21 million rounds of small arms ammunition (of different types) and 500 binoculars
- Canada 2,500 small arms, ~6 million rounds of ammunition and equipment
- Czech Republic 12 helicopters (attack and utility)
- Estonia ~ 4,300 small arms and ~5 million rounds of ammunition
- Finland ~1,400 field telephones and ~60 generators
- France personal equipment
- Germany clothing and equipment
- Hungary ~21,000 small arms and 150,000 rounds of ammunition
- Lithuania ~ 4 million rounds of small arms ammunition
- Luxembourg ~2,000 body armour kits, ~2,000 helmets
- Montenegro ~ 1,600 small arms and 250,000 rounds of ammunition
- Norway 100 field weapons, 100 mortars and ~400,000 rounds of ammunition (of different types)
NATO heaters, cargo nets
- Poland uniforms; 4 million rounds of ammunition, weapon spare parts
- Slovenia 60 mortars, ~10,000 small arms and ~2.2 million rounds of ammunition
Compact 200 Bridge, tools, equipment & training including TPT
- Switzerland 3 fire trucks, spares, medical equipment
- Turkey 24 howitzers, ammunition, clothing equipment and academy supplies
950 mortars, 144 machine guns, boots

Transportation for the above equipment donations was facilitated by the following countries: Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Additional support was provided by NATO, members of the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS)⁵ and through the ANA Trust Fund.

³ Germany currently provides Police Mentoring Teams (PMTs), which cooperate with ISAF, but for legal reasons, are not under ISAF's command.

⁴ US provides Police Mentoring either through PMTs or via partnering units.

⁵ The following SALIS members contributed with their SALIS flying hours: Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

History

At the April 2009 Strasbourg-Kehl Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government decided to expand the ISAF mission to oversee higher-level training for the ANA, and training and mentoring for the ANP. To meet this goal, NATO established the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) on 21 November 2009.

NTM-A draws together enhanced NATO and national efforts to train ANA and ANP to increase coherence and effectiveness. It works in close partnership with the Afghan Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior, as well as in collaboration with the European Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) and the European Gendarmerie Force.

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