



Afghanistan

Crossroads between East and West



NATIONAL FLAG



NATIONAL EMBLEM



H.E. HAMID KARZAI
President

Ahmad Shah DURRANI unified the Pashtun tribes and founded Afghanistan in 1747. The country served as a buffer between the British and Russian Empires until it won independence from notional British control in 1919. A brief experiment in democracy ended in a 1973 coup and a 1978 Communist counter-coup. The Soviet Union invaded in 1979 to support the tottering Afghan Communist regime, touching off a long and destructive war. The USSR withdrew in 1989 under relentless pressure by internationally supported anti-Communist mujahedin rebels. A series of subsequent civil wars saw Kabul finally fall in 1996 to the Taliban, a hardline Pakistani-sponsored movement that emerged in 1994 to end the country's civil war and anarchy. Following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C, a U.S Allied, and anti-Taliban Northern Alliance military action toppled the Taliban for sheltering Osama BIN LADIN. The UN-sponsored Bonn Conference in 2001 established a process for political reconstruction that included the adoption of a new constitution, a presidential election in 2004, and National Assembly elections in 2005. In December 2004, Hamid KARZAI became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan and the National Assembly was inaugurated the following December. Karzai was re-elected in November 2009 for a second term. Despite gains toward building a stable central government, a resurgent Taliban and continuing provincial instability particularly in the south and the east - remain serious challenges for the Afghan Government.

Geography

- LOCATION:** Southern Asia, north and west of Pakistan, east of Iran; Landlocked
- GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES:** 33 00 N, 65 00 E
- AREA:** Total: 652,230 sq km; Country comparison to the world: 41
- MARITIME CLAIMS:** None (Landlocked)
- COASTLINE:** 0 km (Landlocked)
- LAND BOUNDARIES:** Total: 5,529 km
Border Countries: China 76 km, Iran 936 km, Pakistan 2,430 km, Tajikistan 1,206 km, Turkmenistan 744 km, Uzbekistan 137 km
- CLIMATE:** Arid of semiarid; cold winters and hot summers
- ELEVATION EXTREMES:** Lowest point: Amu Darya 258 m
Highest point: Noshak 7,485 m
- NATURAL RESOURCES:** Natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones
- NATURAL HAZARDS:** Damaging earthquakes occur in Hindu Kush mountains; flooding; droughts
- ENVIRONMENT - CURRENT ISSUES:** Limited natural fresh water resources; inadequate supplies of potable water; soil degradation; overgrazing; deforestation (much of the remaining forests are being cut down for fuel and building materials); desertification; air and water pollution
- ENVIRONMENT - INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS:** Party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection
Signed, but not ratified: Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation
- STANDARD TIME:** GMT +4:30 hours





People

NATIONALITY:	Afghan
POPULATION:	29,121,286; Country comparison to the world: 42
POPULATION GROWTH RATE:	2.471% (2010 est.); Country comparison to the world: 31
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH:	44.65 years; Country comparison to the world: 221
HIV/AIDS - ADULT PREVALENCE RATE:	0.01% (2001 est.)
COUNTRY COMPARISON TO THE WORLD:	168
HIV/AIDS - PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS:	NA
HIV/AIDS - DEATHS:	NA
MAJOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES:	Degree of risk: High Food or waterborne diseases: Bacterial and Protozoal Diarrhea, Hepatitis A, and Typhoid fever Vectorborne disease: Malaria Animal contact disease: Rabies <i>Note: Highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza has been identified in this country; it poses a negligible risk with extremely rare cases possible among US citizens who have close contact with birds (2009)</i>
ETHNIC GROUPS:	Pashtun 42%, Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkmen 3%, Baloch 2%, other 4%
RELIGIONS:	Sunni Muslim 80%, Shia Muslim 19%, other 1%
LANGUAGES:	Afghan Persian or Dari (official) 50%, Pashto (official) 35%, Turkic languages (primarily Uzbek and Turkmen) 11%, 30 minor languages (primarily Balochi and Pashai) 4%, much bilingualism.
LITERACY:	28.1%

Government

COUNTRY NAME:	Afghanistan; Official name - Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GOVERNMENT TYPE:	Islamic Republic
HEAD OF THE STATE:	H.E. Hamid Karzai
HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:	H.E. Hamid Karzai
CAPITAL:	Kabul
INDEPENDENCE:	19 August 1919 (from UK control over Afghan Foreign Affairs)

- CONSTITUTION:** Constitution drafted 14 December 2003-4 January 2004; signed 16 January 2004; ratified 26 January 2000
- LEGAL SYSTEM:** Based on mixed civil and Sharia Law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction
- SUFFRAGE:** 18 years of age; Universal

Economy

ECONOMY - OVERVIEW: Afghanistan's economy is recovering from decades of conflict. The economy has improved significantly since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 largely because of the infusion of international assistance, the recovery of the agricultural sector, and service sector growth. Despite the progress of the past few years, Afghanistan is extremely poor, landlocked, and highly dependent on foreign aid, agriculture, and trade with neighboring countries. Much of the population continues to suffer from shortages of housing, clean water, electricity, medical care, and jobs. Criminality, insecurity, weak governance, and the Afghan Government's inability to extend rule of law to all parts of the country pose challenges to future economic growth. Afghanistan's living standards are among the lowest in the world. While the international community remains committed to Afghanistan's development, pledging over \$57 billion at three donors' conferences since 2002, the Government of Afghanistan will need to overcome a number of challenges, including low revenue collection, anemic job creation, high levels of corruption, weak government capacity, and poor public infrastructure.



- GDP (OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE):** \$13.47 billion (2009 est.)
- GDP - REAL GROWTH RATE:** 3.4% (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 52
- GDP -PER CAPITA (PPP):** \$800 (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 219
- POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE:** 36% (FY08/09)
- INFLATION RATE (CONSUMER PRICES):** 30.5% (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 221
- AGRICULTURE - PRODUCTS:** Opium, wheat, fruits, nuts; wool, mutton, sheepskins, lambskins
- INDUSTRIES:** Small-scale production of textiles, soap, furniture, shoes, cement, fertilizer, apparel, food-products, non-alcoholic beverages, mineral water, handwoven carpets, natural gas, coal, copper
- INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION GROWTH RATE:** NA%
- ELECTRICITY - PRODUCTION:** 285.5 million kWh (2009 est.); Country comparison to the world: 168

ELECTRICITY - CONSUMPTION: 231.1 million kWh (2009 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 176

ELECTRICITY - EXPORTS: 0 kWh (2008 est.)

ELECTRICITY - IMPORTS: 230 million kWh (2007 est.)

OIL - PRODUCTION: 0 bbl/day (2008 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 114

OIL - CONSUMPTION: 5,000 bbl/day (2008 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 165

OIL - EXPORTS: 0 bbl/day (2007 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 140

OIL - IMPORTS: 4,404 bbl/day (2007 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 162

OIL - PROVED RESERVES: 0 bbl (1 January 2009 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 99

NATURAL GAS - PRODUCTION: 30 million cu m (2008 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 84

NATURAL GAS - CONSUMPTION: 30 million cu m (2008 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 108

NATURAL GAS - EXPORTS: 0 cu m (2008 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 45

NATURAL GAS - IMPORTS: 0 cu m (2008 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 70

NATURAL GAS - PROVED RESERVES: 49.55 billion cu m (1 January 2009 est.)
Country comparison to the world: 65

EXPORTS: \$547 million (2009 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 164

EXPORTS - COMMODITIES: Opium, fruits and nuts, handwoven carpets, wool, cotton, hides and pelts, precious and semi-precious gems

EXPORTS - PARTNERS: India 23.5%, Pakistan 17.7%, US 16.5%, Tajikistan 12.8%, Netherlands 6.9% (2008)



- IMPORTS:** \$5.3 billion (2008 est.);
Country comparison to the world: 108
- IMPORTS - COMMODITIES:** Machinery and other capital goods, food, textiles,
petroleum products
- IMPORTS - PARTNERS:** Pakistan 36%, US 9.3%, Germany 7.5%, India 6.9% (2008)
- EXCHANGE RATES:** Afghanis (AFA) per US dollar - 50.25 (2008), 50 (2007), 46 (2006),
47.7 (2005), 48 (2004)

Communication

- TELEPHONES - MAIN LINES IN USE:** 460,000 (2008);
Country comparison to the world: 101
- TELEPHONES - MOBILE CELLULAR:** 8.45 million (2008);
Country comparison to the world: 69
- BROADCAST STATIONS:** Radios: 48 (station types NA) (2009)
Televisions: 16 (1 state-run station and 15 registered private
stations) (2009)
- INTERNET TLD:** .af
- INTERNET HOSTS:** 47 (2009); Country comparison to the world: 208
- INTERNET USERS:** 500,000 (2008); Country comparison to the world: 107
- INTERNATIONAL DIALING CODE:** +93

Transportation

- AIRPORTS:** 51 (2009);
Country comparison to the world: 90
- HELIPORTS:** 11 (2009)
- PIPELINES:** Gas 466km (2009)
- ROADWAYS:** Total: 42,150 km; Country comparison to the world: 87
Paved: 12,350 km;
Unpaved: 29,800 km (2006)
- WATERWAYS:** 1,200 km; (chiefly Amu Darya, which handles vessels up to 500
DWT) (2008); Country comparison to the world: 59
- RAILWAYS:** NA
- PORTS AND TERMINALS:** Kheyraabad, Shir Khan

Issues

- INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS:** 132,246 (mostly Pashtuns and Kuchis displaced in south
and west due to drought and instability) (2007).