



## Center for Strategic & Regional Studies

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Weekly Analysis is one of CSRS’ publications, which significantly analyses weekly economic and political events in Afghanistan and the region. The prime motive behind this is to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision-making institutions and individuals in order to help them to design best policies. Weekly Analysis is published in local languages (Pashto and Dari) and international languages (English and Arabic).

#### **In this issue:**

Preface.....	2
<b>Afghan forces’ casualties on the rise: a challenge to the Afghan govt.....</b>	<b>3</b>
• Casualties of the Afghan security forces after 2001.....	4
• Increase in the fatalities of the Afghan forces in 2016.....	5
• F Fall of the districts and government controlled territories.....	6
• Factors behind the higher casualty rate.....	7
<b>Increasing poverty in Afghanistan.....</b>	<b>8</b>
• Poverty and poverty rate worldwide.....	9
• Poverty in Afghanistan (2001-2016).....	9
• The future situation of poverty in Afghanistan.....	13
<b>Seminar: the NUG’s current situation and future.....</b>	<b>14</b>

## Preface

The casualty rate of Afghan security forces have challenged the Afghan government in the past several years and are increasing every day. The recent report of Special Inspector General for Afghanistan's Reconstruction (SIGAR) shows that in 2016, the casualties among Afghan security force is on the rise compared to the past years.

The NATO commander in Afghanistan had also expressed concern about the fatalities of the Afghan forces last week; but the question remains what are the statistics about the Afghan security forces' casualties in the past one and half decade? And what are the main reasons behind the casualties of these forces? In this regard you would read in the first part of the analysis.

In the second part of the analysis you would read about poverty in Afghanistan. The World Bank has announced \$120m in aid to Afghanistan in order to reduce the poverty rate in the country and increase access to clean water.

After insecurity and worse economic situation, fighting poverty is a challenge that Afghans have to deal with and currently one third of the population in the country lives below the poverty line. According to international institutions, the average income of an Afghan is \$630 annually.

Besides the above two issues, you would also read the report of the Center's monthly seminar which discussed the current and future situation of the NUG.

## Afghan forces' casualties on the rise: a challenge to the Afghan govt



In its recent report, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) has stated that, compared to 2015, in 2016, the casualties of the Afghan security forces have remarkably increased.

After the publication of this report, the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has stressed on ending these casualties and has stated that measures and proper plans must be undertaken to end these fatalities<sup>1</sup>. In response to this report, the Afghan Ministry of Interior has said that given the intensification of the attacks of the government's armed opposition in this year, the fatalities of the Afghan forces have not had considerable increase<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the President, Ashraf Ghani's Speech in a security conference, Nov 1 2016, see it online: <http://president.gov.af/fa/news/188177>

<sup>2</sup> Read more here: <http://salamwatandar.com/Article.aspx?a=27554>

After the end of the NATO's military mission and beginning of its consulting and training mission in Afghanistan, it is almost two years since the Afghan security forces are responsible for maintaining security in the country but their casualties are increasing. The statistics of the Afghan security forces' casualties in the past one and half decade and the main reasons behind increase in these casualties in 2016 are analyzed here.

### **Casualties of the Afghan security forces after 2001**

After 2002, the Afghan forces had casualties every year. In 2007, 2008 and 2009 respectively 966, 983 and 931 Afghan soldiers were killed. In 2010, when the war was unprecedentedly intensified, 2113 Afghan soldiers were killed. Although the number of Afghan soldiers' death decreased in 2011 and fell to 1080 but in the years after that, this number was rapidly on the rise<sup>3</sup>.

In 2011, security transition to Afghan forces began and, thus, after 2011, the fatalities of the Afghan force increased. In 2012, 2013 and 2014<sup>4</sup> the fatalities of Afghan forces was respectively 2765, 4350 and 4634. But in 2015, 7000 Afghan soldiers were killed and 12000 others were injured.<sup>5</sup> (Chart-1)

In 2015, the casualties of the Afghan security forces marks a 27% increase<sup>6</sup>. Fall of Kunduz, security transition to Afghan forces, intensified Taliban attacks and vast operation of the Afghan forces against the armed oppositions of the Afghan government were the main reasons behind the rise in these casualties.

Between 2007 and 2015, a total number of 24820 Afghan soldiers were killed and if we add the deaths of the first eight months of 2016 to this number, it rises to 30000 while tens of thousands others are injured during this period.

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<sup>3</sup> Read more about the Afghan security forces' casualties (2007-2011) here: <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R41084.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> For more information click on this link:

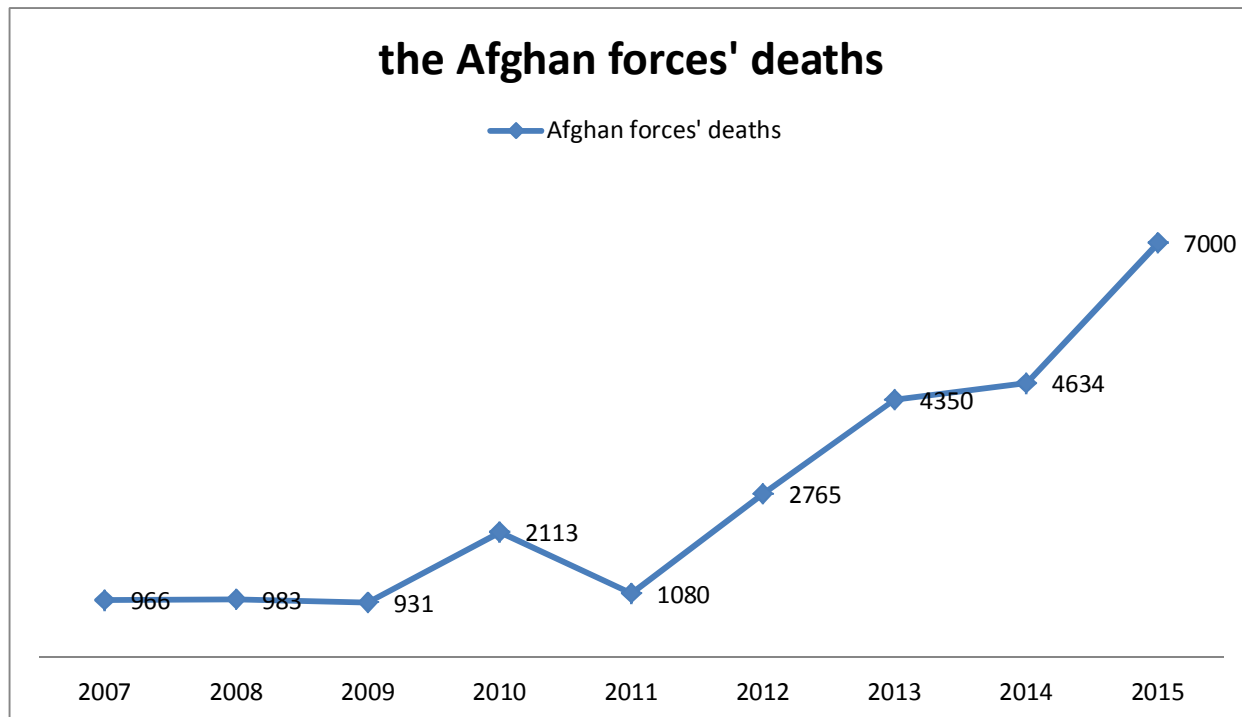
[http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/2014/11/141106\\_mar\\_nato\\_secretary\\_kandahar\\_herat](http://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/2014/11/141106_mar_nato_secretary_kandahar_herat)

<sup>5</sup> read more here:

<http://da.azadiradio.com/a/27491120.html>

<sup>6</sup> Enhancing security and stability in Afghanistan, US Department of Defense, December-2015:

[http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/1225\\_Report\\_Dec\\_2015\\_-\\_Final\\_20151210.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/1225_Report_Dec_2015_-_Final_20151210.pdf)

**Chart-1: casualties of the Afghan security forces**

Source: BBC, Radio Azadi, and FAS

### **Increase in the fatalities of the Afghan forces in 2016**

In its recent report released on 30 October 2016, SIGAR has announced that from 1 January to 19 August 2016, 5523 Afghan soldiers are killed and 9665 others are injured which signifies 9% increase compared to the casualties in the same period in 2015. In the same period in 2015, around 5000 Afghan soldiers were killed and around 15 thousand others were injured. Given the continuation of the attacks of the Afghan government's armed opposition, the fatalities of the Afghan security forces would probably further increase<sup>7</sup>.

According to SIGAR's report, the number of security incidents had also increased compared to last year and based on the statistics of the United Nations, from May 20 to August 15 (88 days), there were 5996 incidents in the country which signifies 7.4% increase compared to the same period last year.

<sup>7</sup> SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, October 30 2016, see it online: <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2016-10-30qr.pdf>

## **Fall of the districts and government controlled territories**

As in this year, war in 2015 was also intensified and many districts, therefore, fall into the hands of the Taliban. According to a report of the Long War Journal in October 2015, from 398 districts in the country, 31 were under the Taliban control and in 36 others; the Taliban controlled the districts except its center which was under the government control.

The report had stated that the Afghan government does not sincerely report the situation in the districts. Chardara and Dasht-e-Archi in Kunduz, Kuhistan in Sar-e-Pol, Jund in Badghis, Nava in Ghazni, Yamgan in Badakhshan, Nawzad and Khanshin in Helmand, Want Waygel in Noristan, Ghurmach in Faryab, Tala-wa-Barfack and Dand-e-Ghori in Baghlan were districts that fell at the hands of the Taliban last year. Improper government policies such as forming militia forces, improper behavior of the local police with local residents and poor management were factors that facilitated the fall of these districts.

Currently, as in report of SIGAR, 33 districts in 16 provinces of the country are under control or influence of the government's armed oppositions and war continues in many others.

According to the report, 63.4% of the Afghan soil is under government control, and only in the past three months the Afghan government has lost control over 2% of its territory. In the meanwhile, General John Nicolson the Commander of the US forces in Afghanistan had said in September this year that the Afghan government controls 68 to 70% of its territory. Thus, it means that almost one third of Afghanistan's soil is under the control of the government's armed oppositions and, according to SIGAR, that is why the main challenge on the way of construction efforts are armed violence by the Taliban and other armed groups.

## Factors behind the higher casualty rate

Various factors were behind the increasing casualties of the Afghan forces in the past several years, the most important of which are as such:

**Security transition:** Prior to 2010, when the foreign forces were responsible for military operations in most of the regions in the country, the Afghan security forces had lesser casualties, but after 2011, when security responsibilities were gradually transiting to Afghan force, and after the complete security transition to Afghan forces in 2015, the role of Afghan forces increased in the battlefield and thus their casualties also increased.

**Intensification of war:** in recent years not only war is intensified in the country, but it also expanded to the regions that were relatively secure in the past and the Taliban appeared in the battlefield with more preparation and carried out many attacks.

**Lack of equipment:** due to lack of equipment and ammunition, the Afghan security forces were surrounded by the armed oppositions of the government in many areas and suffered high casualties. Today, due to lack of equipment and ammunition, the Afghan army is one of the poorest in the region and world. In the past fourteen years, vast amounts of aid were infused in Afghanistan particularly in security sectors, but still, in terms of ammunition and equipment, the Afghan security forces are far from well-equipped.

**Lack of coordination and poor management:** the US Commander in Afghanistan General John Nicolson had warned last week that “failure and weakness” in management and leading the Afghan security forces has increased their casualties.

## Increasing poverty in Afghanistan



The World Bank has contributed \$120m for reduction of poverty, increasing access to hygienic potable water and improvement of financial system. Because of this, more than 3.5 million afghan will have now an access to clean water.

36% of population in Afghanistan live below poverty line, and according to the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, 15% of the people do not have enough food even to feed themselves.

What does poverty mean? What is the rate of poverty in Afghanistan and the world? What will be the poverty rate in Afghanistan in the future? These are the questions that are answered here.



## Poverty and poverty rate worldwide

Economists have various views regarding to the definitions of poverty and its measurement; for instance according to some economists those who eats less food than 2000-2500 calories per day is considered to be poor.. But the World Bank has created another indicator earning of \$1.25 per day to define poverty, according to the World Bank; those with less than \$1.25 daily income are in extreme poverty and those with an amount of income less than \$2 are in moderate poverty. There are also other determiners to define poverty, for instance, life expectancy, children death, the amount of food-energy intake, safety and etc.

There are different statistics about the amount of people living below poverty line; according to the World Bank, currently 10.7% of the world's population earns an income of less than \$1.90, which means 767 million people currently live below poverty line in all over the world.

Since the past few decades, poverty rate is declining worldwide. In 1990, 35% of the world population (1.85 billion people) had an income bellow \$1.90 per day, and in 2012, 12.4% of the world population (881 million people) gained less than \$1.90 per day<sup>8</sup>.

## Poverty in Afghanistan (2001-2016)

Afghanistan is one of the low income countries; and one of the characteristics of such countries is the high rates of poverty. Although there are no exact statistics of poverty rate in years during and before cold war in Afghanistan, but certainly the Soviet invasion and civil war increased poverty in Afghanistan; because in this period, many Afghans migrated to Pakistan and lost the sole source of income they had before the soviet invasion.

After 2001, security was maintained for few years and foreign aids increased, and some social and economic sectors also developed; but still the World Bank

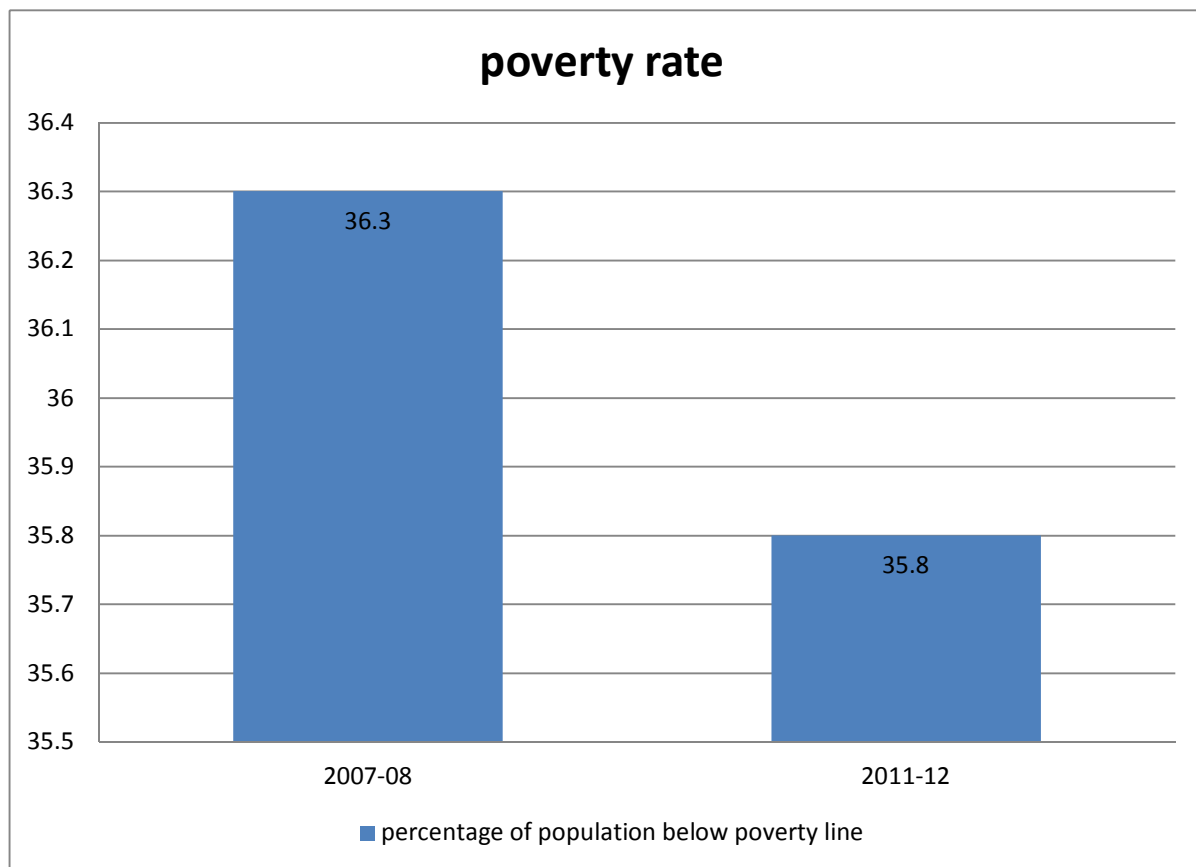
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<sup>8</sup> You can find the statistics of World Bank regarding poverty here:  
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>

statistics indicates that, compared to the world poverty rate, the poverty rate in Afghanistan is remained almost constant and has not reduced.

In post-2001 years, it was one of the shortcomings of the free market capitalism in Afghanistan that all the wealth was poured into the pockets of only few individuals. In 2007 and 2008, 36.3% of the population in Afghanistan lived below poverty line. Although, in 2011 and 2012, poverty decreased in Afghanistan but still it can be presumed almost constant. In 2011, 35.8% of the Afghan population lived below poverty line which means 9 million Afghans lived in extreme poverty (3 out of 8 Afghans were poor)<sup>9</sup>. (Chart-1)

**Chart-1: poverty rate in Afghanistan**



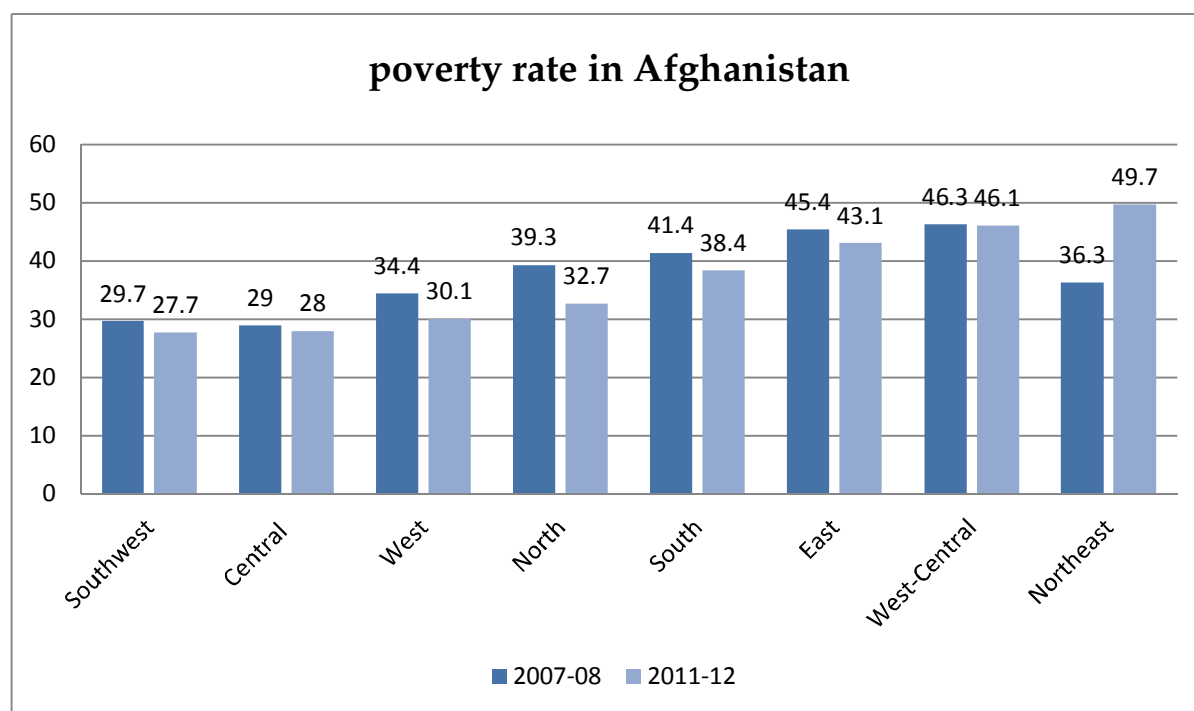
Source: World Bank and the Afghan Ministry of Economy

<sup>9</sup> The joint survey and reach of the World Bank and the Afghan Ministry of Economy; Afghanistan Poverty Status Update: An analysis based on National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007/08 and 2011/12, Oct 2015, see it online: < <http://moec.gov.af/Content/files/Poverty%20Status%20Update%20Report%20-%20final%20english%203.pdf> >

The majority of Afghans live in remote areas and the poverty rate among population living in these areas and villages is high. According to the joint survey of the World Bank and the Afghan Ministry of Economy, four out of each five individuals in remote areas live in poverty. In addition, more than a half (51.8%) of the children in these areas lives below poverty line<sup>10</sup>.

The highest rates of poverty in the country was in Northeastern, West-Central, Eastern and Southern provinces while the lowest rates of poverty was in Central and Southwestern provinces. However, compared to 2007, in 2011 the poverty rate declined in all over the country (except Northeastern regions). (See chart-2).

**Chart-2: poverty rate in various parts of Afghanistan (2007-2012)**



Source: the joint research and survey of the World Bank and the Afghan Ministry of Economy-2011

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

**Note:** Classification of provinces by regions is as follows: **Southwest:** Nimroz, Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul, Urozgan; **Central:** Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan, Wardak, Logar, Panjsher; **West:** Badghis, Herat, Farah; **North:** Samangan, Balkh, Jawzjan, Sar-e-Pul, Faryab; **South:** Ghazni, Paktika, Paktya, Khost; **East:** Nangarhar, Kunarha, Laghman, Nooristan; **West-central:** Ghor, Bamyan, Daykundi; **Northeast:** Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, Kunduz.

The highest rate of poverty was recorded in Kabul where more than one million people lived below poverty line. The poverty rate in other provinces is brought in chart-3.

**Chart-3: poverty rate in the provinces of Afghanistan**

Province	Number of poor	Percentage of poor population	Poverty headcount
Kabul	1033730	11.37	24.4
Nangerhar	663455	7.3	38.2
Herat	660397	7.26	35.3
Takhar	610028	6.71	65.4
Badakhshar	588060	6.47	62.7
Ghazni	582792	6.41	45.8
Kunduz	398554	4.38	40.2
Ghor	378068	4.16	53.0
Laghman	310730	3.42	63.8
Sar-e-Pol	308048	3.39	59.1

Source: the joint survey of the World Bank and the Afghan Ministry of Economy-2011

## The future situation of poverty in Afghanistan

53% of the children less than 15 years of age in Afghanistan also live below poverty line which signifies extreme condition. If the Afghan government provides education to these kids, the poverty rate would become far reduce in the country; because 75.6% of people, older than 15 years of age, living in poverty are illiterate. Only 7.1% of poor people more than 15 years of age have completed primary schools. In the meanwhile 8.4% of poor population is unemployed and 41.1% is relatively unemployed<sup>11</sup>.

On the other hand, from every 1000 babies born in Afghanistan, 66 die in the first year of their birth<sup>12</sup> and according to the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, 40% of are food insecure<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, the poverty rate can only be reduced by paying attention to economic development, education, employment and agriculture sector.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> ADB, Poverty in Afghanistan, see it online:< <https://www.adb.org/countries/afghanistan/poverty>>

<sup>13</sup> Although, the World Food Organization say this number to be 9.3 million and also 1.1 million children are malnourished. Read more here:

<http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ep/wfp269062.pdf>

and the report of Deutsche Welle :

<http://www.dw.com/fa-af/%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AA-%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA-%DB%B4%DB%B0-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%BA%D8%B0%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%AF/a-36079205>

## Seminar: the NUG's current situation and future



Two years ago, after the long disputes between the two leading candidates of the presidential elections, National Unity Government (NUG) was formed with the mediation of the US Secretary of States John Kerry and in the past two years it experienced many challenges. After two years the NUG has now reached a stage that its continuation has become a challenge.

In the series of its monthly academic debates, the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) discussed this issue on 3 November 2016 where besides the speakers some scholars had also participated.

The first speaker of the seminar and head of the High Commission to Oversee the implementation of the NUG political agreement Mohammad Nateqi said in his

speech that the main reason behind the current disputes between the government officials is failure of the NUG's two leaders in fulfilling their promises and their disagreements in appointing government officials; he also added that there is no political will to implement the NUG agreement.

Mr. Nateqi said that until now, four documents were signed between the two camps of the government, but only less than 40% of the promises made in these documents were implemented. According to Nateqi, there are still 16 points of disagreements between the two leaders and efforts are being made to address these disagreements including efforts to bring electoral reforms, distribution of electric ID cards, preparing draft to amend the constitution, Loya Jirga to amend the constitution, selecting the leader of opposition and etc.

According to Nateqi, although the NUG is not fundamentally founded in accordance with the provisions of the Afghan constitutions, but 150, 130 and 50, articles of the Afghan constitution, to some extent, justified the legality of this government and hence it saved the country from a probable crisis. He said: "after the formation of the NUG, 13 powers of the President, from all the powers that the constitution had preserved to him, were given to the Afghan Chief Executive".

Another speaker of the seminar, Dr. Misbahullah Abdul Baqi termed the current government as the coalition government of the two electoral teams; because he said that we can call it the NUG when in critical conditions all parties of the nation come together and reach a consensus. He said that the crisis during the election was also artificial and was extended only to prepare Afghans to accept such a government. He said that the foreigners wanted to pursue their objectives, which was impossible if there was a powerful central government in the country, for the same reason efforts were made to form such a government in 2009, but failed. He said that they wanted to increase the power stakeholders in the country in order to be able to use them against each other.

Dr. Misbahullah added that, although the government was illegitimate since ever the beginning but now this problem is expanding even more, because besides the executive branch, the legislative branch is also faced with the legitimacy crisis.

According to Dr. Misbahullah, the NUG's achievement did not meet people's expectations. For instance, during their campaigns the leaders of the NUG kept saying that they would even sacrifice themselves to bring peace, but now we see that war has intensified and doors for peace are closed. He said that, the current government followed the path of the previous government regarding peace process and instead of direct talks with Afghans it turned towards Pakistan.

Dr. Misbah said: "it seems that the current government would thus complete its five years term, and there is not much hope for reforms, except that the two leaders make serious and fundamental efforts to solve problems."

Other participants of the seminar asked questions and discussed the issue and stated that this government is more like a 'conspiracy' and has challenged national interests. The participant said that the law was violated in order to form the NUG but in case of peace talks law is always the red line that cannot be crossed.

The end

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**Note:** Please let us know your feedback and suggestions for the improvement of Weekly analysis.

