

**Province: Bamyan**

**Governor: Habiba Sorobi**

**Provincial Police Chief: Ghulam Ali Wahadat**

<b>Population Estimate:</b> 391,700 <sup>1</sup> -438,250 <sup>2</sup>		Urban: 11,500		Rural: 380,200 <sup>3</sup>	
Area in Square Miles: 6,757 <sup>4</sup>					
Names of Districts:		Kahmard, Sayghan, Sheber, Bamyan, Yaka Walong, Panjab, Waras			
Capital: Bamyan					
Composition of Population:		<u>Ethnic Groups:</u> 67.4% Hazara, 16.0% Sadat, 15.7% Tajik, 0.5% Tatar, 0.2% Qizilbash, 0.1% Pashtun, 0.0% Sayid		<u>Religious Groups:</u> Majority Shiite, but large minority Sunni. Some Ismaeli.	
Occupation of Population		Major: Agriculture, animal husbandry			Minor: Day labor, remittances
Crops/ Livestock:		Wheat, barley, potato			Sheep, goats, horses
Literacy Rate Total: 24% <sup>5</sup>					
Number of Educational Institutions: 279		<u>Schools:</u> 161 Primary: 146 Secondary: 14		<u>Colleges/Universities:</u> 1	
Number of Security Incidents, Jan-Jun 2007: 0 <sup>6</sup>		January: 0	February: 0	March: 0	April: 0
Poppy (Opium) Cultivation: 0		2006: 17 ha	2007: 0		
NGOs Active in Province:		Solidarites, MSF, IMC, Shuhada, Lepco, DHSA, FOCUS, ICRC, CCA, CCF, AWCP, Save the Children, Oxfam, Zulfruk, IBN, NCA, CAWC			
<u>Provincial Aid Projects:</u> <sup>7</sup> Total Projects: 1269 Planned Cost: \$25,316,253.84 Total Spent: \$9,488,040.53		Total PRT Projects: 96 Planned Cost: \$12,257,503.55 Total Spent: \$370,744.00		Other Aid Projects: 1173 Planned Cost: \$13,058,750.29 Total Spent: \$9,117,296.53	
Transportation: Auto, riding, and foot. Airstrip at Bamyan		<u>Primary Roads:</u> From the provincial center, main roads run to Yakawlang District and Baghlan, Parwan, and Day Kundi provinces. From Yakawlang two tracks go over the Hindu Kush.			
Health Facilities:		<u>Hospitals:</u> 30		<u>Clinics, etc.:</u> 23	
Potable Water Availability:		21% <sup>8</sup>		From: Rivers, springs, wells	
Significant Topographic Features		The Hindu Kush Range that forms the central massif of Afghanistan bisects Bamyan, forming its most notable feature.			

<sup>1</sup> Afghan Information Management Services, *2003-2004 Population Statistics*, available from <http://www.aims.org.af/> (accessed September 7, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> "Bamyan Provincial Government," *Afghanistan Cultural Profile*, British Council Afghanistan, available from: <http://www.culturalprofiles.org.uk/Afghanistan/Units/77.html> (accessed September 14, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Afghan Information Management Services, *2003-2004 Population Statistics*, available from <http://www.aims.org.af/> (accessed September 7, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> "Bamyan Provincial Government," *Afghanistan Cultural Profile*, British Council Afghanistan, available from: <http://www.culturalprofiles.org.uk/Afghanistan/Units/77.html> (accessed September 14, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007*, United Nations Development Program, 2007, 164, and Afghan Information Management Services, *District Profiles*, available from <http://www.aims.org.af/> (accessed August 3, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> According to *BBC Monitoring Service*.

<sup>7</sup> ISAF and CJTF 82, *Afghanistan Comprehensive Stability Project*, June 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Afghan Information Management Services, *District Profiles*, available from <http://www.aims.org.af/> (accessed August 3, 2007).

## Political Landscape:

### *Political Leaders:*

#### **Governor Habiba Sarabi**



The first female governor in Afghanistan, the multi-lingual Professor Sarabi was appointed in March of 2005. She hails from Mazar-e Sharif, is a fifty-one year old wife and mother of three. Being a woman and a Hazara has irritated a certain element within Bamyan and there have been protests against her, allegedly due to her lack of focus on security. Given Bamyan's relatively good security, she has instead focused on health and infrastructure issues. She has been repeatedly offered the position of Minister of Women's Affairs in Kabul.

#### **Deputy Governor Muhammad Ibrahim Akbari**



Born in Yakawlang District, Akbari is a Shi'a Hazara. He has a degree in literature, and before becoming deputy governor in June of 2005 he was an environmental coordinator with the Joint Environmental Management Board. During the Taliban era he left the country. He speaks, Dari, Pashtu, and English.

#### **Chief of Police Ghulam Ali Wahadat**



Little is known about Wahadat, although he has been publicly criticized by Governor Sarabi for corruption.

#### **National Directorate of Security Chief Brigadier General Waziq**



General Waziq is a Shi'a from Parwan with many years experience and professionalism at the National Directorate of Security. He came to Bamyan during the anti-Soviet campaign to fight the communists. He was formerly the director of the NDS political party in Kabul, and is also the political director for the Harikat Party.

#### **Wolesi Jirga Members:**



**Ustad Mohammad AKBARI**

Male Shi'a Hazara

Former Commander. Most senior Hazara leader working w/Taliban; prior fought with Massoud.



**Sayed Mohammad Jamal Fokori BEHISHTI**

Male Shi'a Hazara

Son of first Hazara jihadi leader. Commander. From Waras. Served under Taliban.



**Mohammad Sarwar JAWADI**

Male Shi'a Hazara

Writer for VP Halili's party; VP campaigned for him. Served as district gov for Waras.



**Safora YALKHANI**

Female Shi'a Hazara

Teacher; worked for UNAMA. Brother is Chief of Police Gen. Ghulam Ali Wahdat. English around 2 level. Coordinator for NDI women's caucus.

### Meshrano Jirga Members:

No photo

**Ustad Qurban Ali Urfani**

Shi'a male Hazara

Teacher of Law and Islamic studies,  
Chairman of Hezb-e Wahdat. Mullah.  
From Yakawlang district of Bamyan.



**Hedayatullah Riahi**

Male

Has taken a baccalaureate



**Hajji Doctor Mohammad  
Zaman Bahlol**

Male

BA - Military Medicine

### Provincial Council Members:



Hajji Nawroz Etemadi



Jawad Zahak



Mohammad Hussain Wafayee



Aaqila



Mohammad Sajjad Muhsini



Aarifa Aabid



Mohammad Ehsani



Latifa Nasiri



Mohammad Ishaq Poya

### Primary Political Parties:

#### **Harakat-e Islami (NUF):**

A Shi'a party originally led by Muhammad Asif Muhsini, the Harakat-e Islami fought the Soviets with support from Tehran. Known for having many Hazara as well as non-Hazara members, this Shiite party refused to join the Hazara coalition Hizb-e Wahdat in the ensuing civil war. Since 2005 they have been led by Hojjatolislam Seyyed Muhammad Ali Jawed, a minister in Karzai's first cabinet. National Directorate of Security Chief Brigadier General Waziq is a large player in this party.

#### **Ittihad-e-Islami (Sayyaf):**

This fundamental party is under the guidance of one Abdul Rasool Sayyaf, and has been since the anti-Soviet campaign. Despite ideological and cultural similarities with the Taliban, Sayyaf did not join them (for personal reasons) and went with the Northern Alliance. He follows strict Wahhabi interpretations of Islam, and is not known for tolerance. In the past this party has been known for its foreign supporters and followers; the former often Arab, the latter from places as diverse as the Southern Philippines, Chechnya, and Bosnia. In February 1993 government forces and members of the Ittihad-e-Islami massacred over 700 Hazara in the Afshar district of West Kabul.

#### **Hizb-e Wahdat (Mohaqqeq):**

The Shiite umbrella party, Hizb-I Wahdat is composed of seven of the eight Shiite parties (minus the Harakat-e Islami) that existed in Afghanistan from the time of the anti-Soviet campaigns. Now led by Wolesi Jirga member (and former planning minister) Hajji Muhammad Mohaqqeq, the party continues to represent both Shiites and Hazaras. During the period of Taliban rule, the party held fast in the Hazarajat whilst the Taliban tried through blockade to bring the Hazaras to their knees through starvation.

## **Human Terrain:**

### ***Hazara:***

The Hazara, a distinct ethnic and religious group within the population of Afghanistan, have often been the target of discriminatory and violent repression. Most likely descended from the Mongols of Genghis Khan, (there is also a strong argument that they are of Eastern Turkic origin), the Hazara are noticeably different in physical appearance when compared to the Pashtun majority. In terms of religion, the vast majority of the Hazara are of the Shi'a Muslim faith, again in contrast to the Pashtuns who are Sunni Muslim. Due to these differences, "the Hazara have experienced discrimination at the hands of the Pashtun-dominated government throughout the history of modern Afghanistan."<sup>9</sup> As a result there tends to be an anti-government and anti-Pashtun bias among the Hazara. In present day Afghanistan, the Hazara are divided geographically into two main groups: the Hazarajat Hazara and those who live outside the Hazarajat. The Hazarajat is located in the Hindu Kush Mountains in central Afghanistan and is "centered on Bamyan province and include[s] areas of Ghowr, Oruzgan, Wardak, and Ghazni province."<sup>10</sup> The Hazara living outside of the Hazarajat live in and around Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e Sharif and Samangan province. Due to atrocities committed against them by the Taliban, the Hazara by and large are opposed to the Taliban. In August 1998, the Taliban massacred approximately 4,000 Hazara in Mazara-e Sharif; this massacre was followed by another the next month when the Taliban killed another 500 Hazara in Bamyan. The Hezb-e Wahdat (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan) is an umbrella political organization which commands the support of large numbers of Hazara.

### ***Tajik:***

Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, after the Pashtuns and comprise between 25-30% of the population. The Tajiks in Afghanistan tend to live in settled communities as opposed to a nomadic lifestyle. They are of Iranian descent and primarily speak Dari. The majority of Tajiks are Sunni Muslims. Tajiks made up the majority of the Northern Alliance, both in terms of membership and leadership. Tribal ties have largely broken down among the Tajiks; therefore, social organization is defined primarily by geography. Despite their lack of cohesiveness the Tajiks are often brought together due to the perceived common threat posed by the Pashtuns.

### ***Tatar:***

The first Central Asian Muslims to come under the Russian yoke, Tatars still retain their own republic within the Russian Federation. During the colonial era they were often used as spies and guides for Russian and later Soviet efforts, and are renowned for their commercial prowess. In Afghanistan, many of the Tatars settled after either trying to escape the Russians, or as traders. In Bamyan, they are primarily found in Sheber District.

### ***Qizilbash:***

The Qizilbash are an Imami Shia group thought to be descended from Persian "mercenaries and administrators left behind by the Safavid Emperor Nadir Shah Afshar to govern the Afghan provinces."<sup>11</sup> After the demise of the Safavid Empire in Afghanistan, the Qizilbash, due to their higher levels of education and experience as administrators, remained influential in the Afghan court and government bureaucracies. Their Shia faith combined with their disproportionate political influence often resulted in resentment by large portions of the Sunni majority within Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> Also, they were used by the shahs as personal bodyguards and assigned to put down uprisings among the populace, which further alienated them from the Pashtun majority. Due to the persecution, religious and political, the Qizilbash frequently resorted to the use of *taqiyya*, the practice of precautionary dissimulation or the adoption of a dual religious identity. In order to play a role in government and society, the Qizilbash, like other Imami Shia, publicly portrayed themselves as Sunnis or Pashtuns while they privately maintained their Shia faith.<sup>13</sup> In present day Afghanistan, the Qizilbash continue to practice *taqiyya* making it

---

<sup>9</sup> US State Department Afghanistan Culture and Ethnic Studies, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> US State Department Afghanistan Culture and Ethnic Studies, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Library of Congress, *Country Studies: Afghanistan*, found at <http://countrystudies.us/afghanistan/50.htm>, accessed on 25 September 2007 and Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980): 331-32.

<sup>12</sup> World Culture Encyclopedia, *Qizilbash*, found at <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Qizilbash.html>, accessed on 25 September 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Etan Kohlberg, "Some Imami-Shi'i Views on *Taqiyya*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (July-September 1975): 395-402 and Louis Dupree, "Further Notes on *Taqiyya*: Afghanistan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (October-December 1979): 680-682.

difficult to gain accurate census data. It appears that they largely reside in urban centers and “tend to be predominantly urban professionals—doctors, teachers, engineers, and lawyers.”<sup>14</sup>

***Pashtun:***

The largest single ethnicity of Afghanistan, the Pashtun, and in particular the largest tribe of said, the Ghilzai formed the backbone of the Taliban movement. Traditionally beholden to the moral code of *Pashtunwali* (“the way of the Pashtun”), they can easily be deeply offended by breaches of the code and carry the grudge for generations. The Pashtuns are fiercely independent and often view themselves, as the largest ethnicity in the country, as the rightful leaders of Afghanistan. That being said, they suffered much during the Soviet invasion, and must be included in any effort to secure and develop the country. Many of the Pashtuns in Bamyan are Kuchis, nomads who have traditionally been accused of poaching Hazara land, especially during the Taliban era.

***Kuchi:***

Involved in a constant and centuries old range war with the Hazara, the Kuchi are Pashtun nomads. Drawn primarily from the Ghilzai tribe, the Kuchis have moved across Afghanistan and Pakistan for generations, and only since Pakistani independence were banned from Pakistani territory. Dispersed and well-traveled, they often receive news from distant relations in far-away provinces relatively quickly. The self-declared “leader” of the Kuchis is one Hashmat Ghani Ahmadzai. Partially settled by the king and the following socialist governments, they were strong supporters of the Taliban, both ideologically and pragmatically, as they came into possession of many Hazara lands thanks to the repression of the Shiite Hazara by the Taliban. There are estimated to be around three million Kuchi in Afghanistan, with at least 60% remaining fully nomadic.<sup>15</sup> In Bamyan, they are primarily in the South.

***Sayyid:***

Claiming descent from the family of the Prophet (PBUH), the Sayyids hold a revered place in Afghanistan. These Arabs almost exclusively interbreed. What makes them of particular interest in Bamyan is that for the most part they are Shi’a Muslims, where as in the rest of Afghanistan they are primarily Sunnis. The few that do inhabit Bamyan live for the most part in Kahmard. These are often referred to as **Sadat**, a word that traditionally “in the northern Hejaz area and in British India [was] applied indifferently to the posterity of Hasan and Hussein [the first Shi’ite martyrs], sons of Ali and Grandsons of Mohammad.”<sup>16</sup>

**Security Landscape:**

***General Level of Security: Good***

Bamyan is one of the safest provinces in Afghanistan. The Hazara, greatly oppressed by the Taliban, are eager for development. Being a religious minority as well they have developed a good deal of tolerance. Additionally, their women are more educated than most in Afghanistan and lead more public lives. This has allowed more school teachers, doctors and the like. By this inclusion of all segments of society (literate women working, children in school), Bamyan is recovering well from its previous extreme deprivations during the wars, and has remained stable.

***Public attitudes toward Taliban:*** Due to the Taliban massacres of Hazaras, the forced conversions, and the rapes, the Hazara and most residents of Bamyan have nothing but hate for the Taliban. There is some disappointment that it was only upon the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamyan that world attention became focused on the province.

---

<sup>14</sup> World Culture Encyclopedia.

<sup>15</sup> “Afghan Nomads Say U.S. Bombing Killed Nine,” Associated Press, September 25, 2003 [http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20030925\\_221.html](http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20030925_221.html) and Paul Garwood, “Poverty, violence put Afghanistan's fabled Kuchi nomads on a road to nowhere,” Associated Press, May 14, 2006, <http://www.rawa.org/nomad.htm/>.

<sup>16</sup> Sir Richard Francis Burton, *Pilgrimage to Meccah*, Volume ii, London: Lawrence and Adelphi Presses; 1873, 263.

## **BAMIYAN DISTRICTS**

The seven districts of Bamyan Province are Bamyan, Yakawlang (or Yaka Walong), Panjab, Waras, Sayghan, Khamard, and Sheber.

