

TRIBE: ORAKZAI

PRIMARY LOCATIONS:

The Orakzai tribe live primarily in the Orakzai and Khyber Agencies, with some holdings in Kohat and Peshawar districts, particularly in the Hangu region.

RELIGION/SECT:

The Orakzais are predominantly Sunni but they also include Shi'a Muslims, primarily in the Muhammad Khels clan. The Sunni and Shi'a communities are separated by a natural boundary, the Mastura River, with the Shi'a living on the River's south end.

Among the Shi'a, the Saiyid (Syad) takes the place of the Mullah. The influence that a Syad yields among his disciples is extraordinary. The Syads is deemed to be sacred and his curse is considered dreaded.¹



FEUDS/POTENTIAL TRIBAL FRACTURE LINES:

There are bitter feelings between the Sunni and Shi'a sects of the Orakzai.

The Massuzai clan of the Orakzai has a longstanding feud with the Chamkannis who border them on the west.²

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Their chief source of Orakzai wealth lies in their flocks and herds of animals and they trade mostly in Peshawar. Additionally, many Orakzais are weavers specializing in *mazarai* (dwarf palm) which is cut during August and September. They use *mazarai* to make ropes, grass sandals, bed strings, nets, matting, baskets and grain-bins.

The Orakzai territory is bound on the north by the Shinwaris and Afridis, on the east by the Afridis and Bangash, on the south by the Bangash, and on the west by the Chamkannis and Zaimukhts.

MAJOR CLANS:

The Orakzais are usually considered to be divided into six main clans, and four hamsaya (alienated) clans. There were originally seven main clans; however, one is practically extinct.

- Ismailzai

PROGRAM FOR CULTURE & CONFLICT STUDIES

- Lashkarzai
- Massuzai
- Daulatzai
- Muhammad Khel
- Sturi Khel or Alizai

In addition to the Orakzai clans, there are four hamsaya clans:

- Ali Khel
- Malla Khel
- Mishtis
- Sheikhs

CURRENT HOT SPOTS:

- Khadezai village .
- Kundi Sheikhan and Ghaljo villages (occupied by Taliban, Shariah Law enforcement centers)
- List of Taliban controlled villages (January 2009): Mamozai, Akhonkot, Tor Samat, Baghbani Killay, Jabah, Mirkalamkhel, Farid Garhi, Ghaljo, Kundi Sheikhan, Ghundako Killay, Saifal Darra, Yakh Kando, Tor Kani and Takht areas.³
- Adezai area.

KEY INSURGENT LEADERS:

Akhunzada Aslam Farooqi- Farooqi is a lead Taliban sympathizer and close associate of the Taliban's Mullah Mohammad Omar. He held meetings with leading Taliban insurgents (Mauluvi Abdul Kabir) in 2001 to develop a strategy against the coalition forces attacking Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks. Farooqi is currently 39 years old.⁴

Abdullah Azzam Brigade: A shadowy group appearing to be made up of Taliban members from the Commander Tariq Group who merged with some Arakzai-based elements of Ayman al Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad. A spokesman named Amir Muawiya, who is also a leader in the Commander Tariq Group, said the Abdullah Azzam Brigade was behind a terror assault in Peshawar.⁵

Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (LiJ): Formed in 1996, Lashkar-i-Jhangvi represents an anti-Shi'a terror group that has integrated with al Qaeda and the Taliban in Pakistan's tribal areas. LiJ began as an offshoot of the sectarian radical group Sipah-e-Sahaba (the Army of Mohamed's companions) Pakistan (SSP). The SSP was founded by the cleric Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi in the 1980s with the goal of establishing a Sunni Muslim state. Jhangvi was assassinated in 1990, allegedly by a Shi'a terrorist group. Attacks between the two sects have intensified ever since.⁶ The Lashkar-i-Jhangvi has an extensive network in Pakistan and serves as the muscle for terror attacks.

Commander Tariq Group: This group is considered the most powerful contemporary terrorist group in Orakzai. Commander Tariq Afridi is the *amir* of the group which is based in Darra

Adam Khel. The Commandner Tariq Group conducts attacks on Pakistani security forces in Arakzai, Kohat, Peshawar, and Hangu and took credit for beheading the Polish geologist Piotr Stanczak in 2009.⁷

Ghazi Force: This group is named after Ghazi Abdul Rasheed, the brother of former Red Mosque leader Maulana Abdullah Aziz. Ghazi was killed when Pakistani troops assaulted the Red Mosque in July 2007. The Ghazi force runs a terror training camp in Guljo in Hangu and has conducted suicide attacks in Islamabad. The group is led by Maulana Niaz Raheem, a former student of the Red Mosque.

Hakeemullah Mehsud: Hakeemullah Mehsud was the TTP regional commander, controlling the Orakzai Agency in 2007 and later operating in the Lower Kurram Valley, where most of the inhabitants are Sunnis. Hakeemullah, who had succeeded Baitullah Mehsud as TTP commander, was reportedly killed in or as a result of a drone strike in South Waziristan Agency in January 2010.⁸ According to Mukhtar A. Khan, writing in the “Terrorism Monitor” in November 2009, The Taliban’s 28-year old commander, Hakeemullah Mehsud, [was] a tough and ruthless militant who became the new Taliban chief after his predecessor Baitullah Mehsud was killed in a U.S. drone attack in South Waziristan. Hakeemullah was a close confidant of Baitullah, serving as his driver, spokesman and then commander of strategically important tribal areas like Khyber, Kurram and Orakzai agencies. It was in these tribal agencies that his strong military skills and ambitions came to the fore. In 2007, Hakeemullah established his military strength when he took some 250 Pakistani soldiers hostage for more than two months in South Waziristan. However, it was in Khyber, Kurram and Orakzai that he took an independent role and used the power of the media to get himself recognized as the new top leader of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It was Hakeemullah who disrupted the NATO fuel supply lines in Khyber and Peshawar and took responsibility for destroying more than 600 NATO vehicles and containers (The News [Islamabad], September 1 [2009]).

Hakeemullah Mehsud [was] believed to be behind all the major suicide attacks in Pakistan. He [had] accepted responsibility for the majority of attacks against the military and other security forces. Hakeemullah [was] also blamed for killing Shi’a Muslims in Orakzai and Kurram agencies. He [had] close links with the banned anti-Shi’a sectarian group Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and its militant wing Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ).⁹

Hakeemullah Mehsud is also the cousin of Qari Hussein, the top suicide-bomb facilitator for the TTP.¹⁰



Maulvi Noor Jamal: Maulvi Noor Jamal is also known as Maulvi Toofan. He is a feared Taliban commander operating in Kurram and is known for his brutality. He denied rumors that he had taken control of the Pakistani Taliban after Hakeemullah Mehsud was reported killed in late January 2010. Toofan claimed Hakeemullah is still alive and has appeared in several short video clips beating young and old men with a whip following their “infractions” against Islam.

Fazal Saeed Utezai: He is a deputy to Hakeemullah and leads Taliban fighters in the Kurram tribal agency. He and his fighters have committed a series of sectarian attacks against Shi'a residents in Kurram. He is one of several commanders on the Pakistan's "most-wanted list" and currently has a \$61,500 bounty out for information leading to his death or capture.

MAJOR TOWNS:

- Abdur Rahim
- Baqar Garhi
- Chappar
- Mandati
- Mishti Kadh
- Nika Mela
- Tarali (in Kurram Agency)
- Tindo (in Kurram Agency)

KEY TERRAIN FEATURES:

VALLEYS: Khanki, Mastura, Kharmana, Bara.

PLAINS: N/A

MOUNTAINS: Karagh Ghar

RIVERS: Khanki, Mastura, Kharmana

WEATHER:

The climate of the Orakzai Agency is hot from May to September with June as the hottest month. The high temperature ranges between 80° F and 105° F in the summer and between 38° F and 65° F during the winter.

MIGRATORY PATTERNS:

Every autumn, the majority of sections move from summer quarters in upper valleys and glens to winter quarters in the main and lower valleys. A certain number migrate into the Miranzai Valley.

INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP:

The Maliks have very little influence over their tribesmen. Whatever power he possesses is due to his personal influence or the length of his purse and not to his position as Malik. Tribesmen render obedience to the tribe's natural leaders during crisis.

Orakzai pay more respect to Mullahs, who wield their influence by refusing to perform marriage ceremonies or funeral rites. The more influential Mullahs can raise an army of followers, called *mullayan lashkar*, composed of their Talibs, or Sheikhs, and other devoted adherents.¹¹

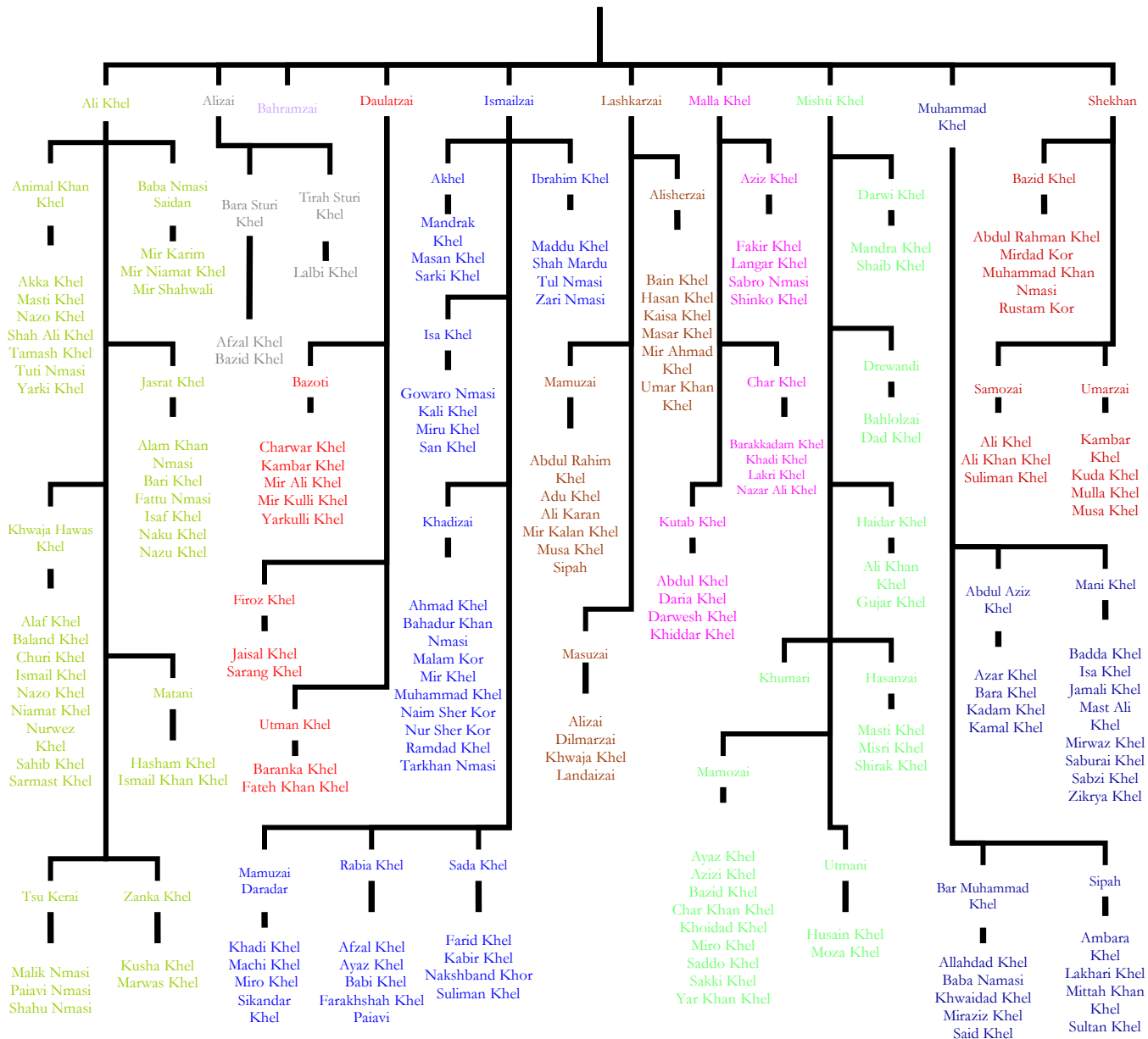
HOSPITALITY WITH TALIBAN/AQ:

Local opinions of the Taliban have traditionally been low. Pakistani Taliban factions moved into the Agency by force in 2007. In January 2008, local residents formed militias against the Taliban but abandoned the effort a few months later following a lack of support by the Pakistani government. In May 2008, a Taliban *jirga* ordered all non-governmental organizations to leave the agency and banned girls' schools; further alienating local residents.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN.:

The Shi'a sect is an important factor in Orakzai politics, and due to their minority status, are more likely to seek the support of the government.

ORAKZAI TRIBAL TREE



¹ Tribal Hierarchy & Dictionary of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. (First Edition). NGA Office of Counterterrorism, 2005.

² Ibid.

³ Mahmood, Syed Hassan, "TTP sets up courts in upper Orakzai Agency," *The International News*, January 5, 2009. (available at http://thenews.jang.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=155606)

⁴ "Orakzai Taliban chief extends full help," *Dawn*, 6 November, 2001. (available at <http://www.dawn.com/2001/11/06/nat19.htm>)

⁵ Bill Roggio, "Taliban torch village in Arakzai," *the Long War Journal*, January 5, 2010. http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/01/taliban_torch_villag.php

⁶ Anthony Keats, "In the spotlight: Lashkar I Jhangvi," CDI Terrorism Project, March 3, 2003. <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/lj.cfm>

⁷ Bill Roggio, "Taliban torch village in Arakzai," *the Long War Journal*, January 5, 2010. http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/01/taliban_torch_villag.php

⁸ Kristen Chick, "Pakistani Taliban Leader Hakeemullah Mehsud is Dead, say Officials," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 10, 2010, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/terrorism-security/2010/0210/Pakistani-Taliban-leader-Hakeemullah-Mehsud-is-dead-say-officials>.

⁹ Mukhtar A. Khan, "The Hunt for Pakistan's Most Wanted Terrorists," *Terrorism Monitor*, 7/34, November 13, 2009, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=Hakimullah&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35728&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=734a9306a3.

¹⁰ Khadim Hussain, "Orakzai Agency: the stronghold of Hakeemullah Mehsud ," September 5, 2009. <http://www.airra.org/documents/Orakzai%20Agency.pdf>

¹¹ Wylly, H.C. From the Black Mountain to Waziristan. Sang-e-Meel Publications, Lahore, Pakistan 1912.