

Annex C: APRP Kandahar Case Study

The Kandahar Provincial Peace Secretariat opened in April 2011. However, the Provincial Peace Council (PPC) was not established until June 2011 due to conflicts between Ahmed Wali Karzai and PG Tooryalai Wesa over composition. AWK favoured a council with a solid representation by provincial powerbrokers, arguing that only these individuals had the strength to broker and enforce reconciliation, especially in terms of providing security guarantees for potential re-integrees. AWK advocated tribal representation, whereby the eight largest tribes in Kandahar would have two seats each on the council, with a final seat representing minority tribes.

Wesa and the High Peace Council were pushing for a council with strong representation from academics and religious authorities in a move to head off the patron-client politics of a powerbroker-led council (no matter how carefully individual tribes were apportioned). Wesa convened three meetings over the summer of 2011, from which he compiled his own list of prospective PPC members. After Wesa and AWK failed to reach a compromise, the head of the Kandahar Peace Secretariat, Omar Sutti (Nurzai), took both lists to the HPC and asked the High Council to decide the matter. The Kandahar PPC that was formed was thus a compromise of AWK and Wesa's choices—a compromise reached only after AWK was assassinated. To accommodate both lists, the Kandahar PPC was expanded to include 39 members, the only council in the nation of this size.

In the eight months since its establishment, the PPC has reconciled 133 fighters from nine different insurgent groups. After a period following the death of HPC Head Rabbani in which insurgents broke off contact with the Kandahar PPC, the rate of re-conciliation increased from late November 2011 onwards. Officials attribute this to several factors: a deterioration in US-Pak relations following the 26 November border strike, which some in Kandahar say convinced fence-sitting fighters to return to Afghanistan and reconcile; and the establishment of a Taliban political office in Qatar.

There are no confirmed cases of recidivism among reconciled fighters. Three former insurgents have been killed; a fourth was recovering from a gunshot wound sustained in Nahiya 11 of Kandahar City. Four of nine commanders had been living in Quetta with their immediate families and have since moved to Afghanistan. The majority of cell commanders are now living under NDS protection in Kandahar City. The PPC has also secured the release of 21 insurgents from Pul-e Charki and Bagram, with a continuing case load of 63 prisoners.⁶⁹

Reconciled fighters are being paid 5,000 AFN/month for three months; commanders are receiving 10,000 AFN/month for three months. Maulawi Nur ul Aziz, touted by Kandahar officials as the most prominent commander to be reconciled thus far, was receiving 65,000 AFN/month for one year paid directly by the National Peace Secretariat. Reconciliation talks with Nur ul Aziz began even before the PPC was established, and initially the idea of making Nur ul Aziz the head of the nascent PPC was discussed. However, when the Provincial Head of the Religious Affairs Department was murdered,

⁶⁹ Figures are from June 2011 to February 1, 2012. Twenty of the released prisoners are from Kandahar, one is from Uruzgan. Mullah Tor Jan (23), Mullah Azizullah Agha (12), Mullah Nur ul Aziz (40), Mullah Mohamed Jan (7), Mullah Sherullah (4), Mullah Abdul Sattar (10), Taj Mohammed (12), Mullah Qudrutullah Agha (12), Mullah Abdul Kadir (14), another 8 unarmed individual fighters surrendered to Panjwai DG Fazluddin Agha. These figures were provided to the lead research by peace officials during the first week of February 2012.

PG Wesa and AWK lobbied successfully for Nur ul Aziz's appointment to this post. The appointment of a Taliban Maulawi to GIROA's highest religious post in Kandahar represents the only substantive case of political re-integration in Loya Kandahar to date...if it is true.

Maulawi Nur ul Aziz claims to have been the shadow governor of Kunduz, however our extensive research of insurgent networks in the north failed to turn up even a mention of his name.⁷⁰ He also claims to be a close associate and perhaps the deputy of Hafiz Majid (Sayed), the Taliban Regime Kandahar Chief of Police, and leading insurgent commander/governor for the province post-2001. Yet this relationship is also a matter of question, and many with intimate knowledge of the Kandahari Taliban insurgency say that while Nur ul Aziz was a Taliban, he was no higher than any of the other mid-level *mahaz* commanders who have reconciled, but has only marketed himself better—a strategy that has gotten him a government post and fat pension but also at least one targeted bomb blast.

The second highest ranking insurgent to be reconciled is Mullah Tor Jan, of Arghandab district. However, officials privately admit that no substantial Quetta-based Taliban—mainly old garde regime members from Taliban heartlands such as Greater Panjwai—have been reconciled; a reality that is well understood on the Kandahar Street.

⁷⁰ A February 2012 New York Time's article also raised questions about Nur Al Aziz's stature within the Taliban insurgency. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/world/asia/imposters-arise-in-afghanistans-struggle-with-taliban.html>