

Forced to leave his home, former President Hamid Karzai remains in Kabul despite the risks.

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Aug. 23, 2021

Last week, former President Hamid Karzai stood outside his home in Kabul to record a video message, surrounded by his daughters, and said that he would stay in the Afghan capital with his family to try to coordinate with the Taliban for a peaceful transition.

But even as he has tried to position himself as a mediator at this crucial moment, his ability to play that role is tenuous. By the time Mr. Karzai appeared in a second video — recorded in the garden of the former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah — he appeared less confident and his speech was stilted. Mr. Abdullah stood beside him in silence.

Mr. Karzai found refuge with Mr. Abdullah, two Afghan officials said on Monday, after the Taliban disarmed his guards and took over security of his compound several days ago.

Mr. Karzai, who since retiring in 2014 has lived in a well-guarded government house beside the presidential palace, remained in Kabul after many officials left. He had said that he was forming a council of Afghan leaders to negotiate an inclusive interim government with the Taliban.

But he and Mr. Abdullah are in an increasingly strained situation, said Muslem Hyatt, a former military attaché for the government of Afghanistan to London. The pressure on Mr. Karzai and Mr. Abdullah raises questions about their ability to work freely to help form a new government despite Taliban suggestions that former officials would be pardoned as the group seized control of the country.

Saad Mohseni, the director general of MOBY Media Group, which owns the independent news channel Tolo TV, said that he had been in touch with Mr. Karzai and Mr. Abdullah and that his impression was that the meetings between the Taliban and the former leaders were little more than show.

“They are consulting them on general things,” he said — “national unity, reassuring the Afghan public, building national consensus, but nothing substantive on the future government.”

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An Afghan official who is outside the country said he had been told that Mr. Karzai’s wife and children were also with him at Mr. Abdullah’s house.

Both Mr. Karzai and Mr. Abdullah were on a Taliban list of wanted people, and former government officials said they were concerned for their safety as the Taliban intensify their search for members of the Afghan government security services.

“We are very worried,” Mr. Hyatt said, noting that he had learned the circumstances of the takeover of Mr. Karzai’s home from people still in Kabul. An aide to Mr. Abdullah reached by telephone said that he was not available to speak to the news media.

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Who are the Taliban? The Taliban arose in 1994 amid the turmoil that came after the withdrawal of Soviet forces from

Afghanistan in 1989. They used brutal public punishments, including floggings, amputations and mass executions, to enforce their rules. Here's more on their origin story and their record as rulers.

Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, a former finance minister who met with Taliban leaders on Sunday in Kabul alongside Mr. Karzai and Mr. Abdullah, said that no official negotiations had begun. The meeting was more about “building trust” and “mutual introduction,” he said, rather than negotiations over the future of the country.

He said he had urged the Taliban to begin the talks sooner rather than later and that a new government should be formed within a month to lessen the uncertainty.

“Security wise, Kabul is safe, but mentally people are worried about the future,” he said, adding that the economy was getting worse by the day. “I walked around the city today, and the image that I have is — disappointment,” he said.

“The Taliban have won militarily — they can announce their government now — but politically they need to include others to form an inclusive government acceptable to the people of Afghanistan and the world,” he added. “They haven’t announced their government yet, which shows they understand the need for a political settlement.”