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## 3.5. Individuals perceived as members or supporters of the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP)

### COMMON ANALYSIS

Last update: May 2024

With reference to ISKP as a potential actor of persecution or serious harm, see [Islamic State Khorasan Province \(ISKP\)](#), section 2.2 of this common analysis.

### COI summary

The Taliban launched operations to restrain ISKP, and instances of targeting of individuals perceived as supporting ISKP were reported from Nangarhar Province, including killings, cases of enforced disappearances, torture, and ill-treatment [[Targeting 2022](#), 1.4., pp. 49-50]. In the reporting period between 15 August 2021 – 15 June 2022, UNAMA recorded 59 extrajudicial killings, 22 arbitrary arrests and detentions, and 7 incidents of torture and ill-treatment of accused ISKP affiliates. Human rights violations against individuals accused of ISKP affiliation still occurred in Nangarhar as of 31 May 2022, although the frequency was less than the previous year [[Targeting 2022](#), 1.4., pp. 49-50].

Since their takeover in August 2021, the Taliban have generally acted harshly against the Salafi community due to their perceived ties to ISKP. The Afghan Salafi community has been a recruitment ground for ISKP. Despite that, many Salafis in the country were opposing the group. According to some analysts, the ISKP has tried to provoke the Taliban to pursue indiscriminate security policies towards the Afghan Salafi communities to gain from this in the long run. This has allegedly already resulted in ill-conceived policies of the Taliban, including collective punishment of Salafis suspected of ties to ISKP. Whole Salafist communities in the provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar were subjected to night raids, disappearances, summary executions and detentions of men and sometimes boys, even if they had no relation to ISKP [[COI Update 2022](#), 3., p. 7; [Targeting 2022](#), 6.6.6., p. 155]. In July 2022, Human Rights Watch released a report on extensive killings of alleged ISKP affiliates in eastern Afghanistan. The investigation suggested that only in the Darunta Canal in Nangarhar Province, over 100 bodies were dumped between August 2021 and April 2022 [[COI Update 2022](#), 3., p. 7].

The Taliban's efforts to restrain ISKP has impacted the situation of the Salafist communities in Nangarhar and Kunar. Most attacks were recorded in October and November 2021, including killings, beheadings, mutilation, and torture. Recorded cases have decreased since, but the topic is severely underreported and single cases of violations have continued to be reported [[Country Focus 2023](#), 4.3.2., pp. 67-68].

The Taliban's approach towards Salafists has varied in different locations, with efforts to distinguish between members with or without links to ISKP. Social and communal profiling mainly took place in the above-mentioned provinces but has also occurred in Kunduz and Badakhshan. Moreover, according to one source, Salafists in Nangarhar stated that they avoided praying in certain ways and going to the Salafi Mosque. An international analyst stated that violations against Salafists occurred in 2023 as well, and that women and children had been arrested without charges [[Country Focus 2023](#), 4.3.2., pp. 68-69].

However, in October 2023, a source reported that, in Nangarhar, the *de facto* security forces had adopted a much more conciliatory approach, with Salafi madrassas re-opening in an attempt to prevent Salafists having no other option to protect themselves from supporting ISKP [[Country Focus 2023](#), 4.3.2., p.69].

There were also instances of targeted violence against the Ahmadiyya community in November and December 2021. 28 members of the Ahmadiyya community were reportedly detained by the Taliban in Kabul in November and December 2021, falsely accused of being members of ISKP [[Targeting 2022](#), 6.6.5., p. 154].

In addition, there have been some arrests of teachers and students at Kabul University which had suspected links to ISKP [[Country Focus 2023](#), 4.3.2., pp. 68-69].

## Conclusions and guidance

### Do the acts qualify as persecution under Article 9 QD?

Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. arbitrary arrest and detention, ill-treatment, torture, execution).



### What is the level of risk of persecution (well-founded fear)?

For individuals perceived by the Taliban as being involved with or as supporting ISKP well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated. The individual assessment whether the applicant would be perceived to have such an affiliation could take into account their religious affiliation (especially the Salafi community), province of origin (especially Nangarhar and Kunar), as well as additional individual elements implicating the applicant as being supportive of ISKP.



### Are the reasons for persecution falling within Article 10 QD (nexus)?

Available information indicates that persecution of this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion and/or religion.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile (see the chapter [7. Exclusion](#)).