

Province: Herat

Governor: Eng. Muhammad Yousuf Nuristani

Provincial Police Chief: Gen. Muhammad Juma Adil

Population Estimate: 1,762,157	Male: 883,782	Female: ¹ 878,375	
Rural/Urban population	Rural: (77%) 1,356,860	Urban: (23%) 405,296	
Area in Square Kilometers:	54,778	Capital: Herat	
Names of Districts:	Adraskan Farsi Gozareh Kuhestan Owbi Zende Jan	Chest-e Sharif Ghuryan Herat Kushk Pashtun Zarghun	Enjil Golran Karakh Kushk-e Kohneh Shindand
Composition of Population:	<u>Ethnic Groups:</u> Pashtun Tajik Hazara Taimuri Qala Nau Chahar Aimak Firozkohi Jamshedi Karkar Kuchis	<u>Religious Groups:</u> 15% Shia 84% Sunni 1% Various others	<u>Tribal Groups:</u> Pashtun: Durrani Zirak Nurzai Alizai Panjpai Barakzai Alikozai Achakzai Ghilzai
Occupation of Population	Major: agriculture, animal husbandry, day labor	Minor: Urban commercial and industrial ventures exist in the city of Herat. Although, an estimated 70% of the city's population is unemployed.	
Crops/Farming/Livestock:	Wheat, opium, peas, carrots, melons, fruit, nuts	Sheep, cows, goats, camels, donkeys, fisheries, horses, poultry	
Literacy Rate Total:	Total: 36% Male Population: 43% Female Population: 28%		
Number of Educational Institutions:	<u>Schools:</u> Primary: 361 Male 33 Female Secondary: 109 Male 41 Female	<u>Colleges/Universities:</u> University of Herat: Disciplines: Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture, Literature, Religious Law, Political Law, Economics, Arts, Education, and Science.	
Number of Security Incidents by month 2007:	January: 5 February: 4 March: 2 April: 14	May: 4 June: 2 July: 1 August: 6	September: 2 October: 9 November: 4 December: 0
Poppy (Opium) Cultivation:	2006: 2,287 ha	2007: 1525 ha	
NGOs Active in Province:	CARITAS, UNICEF, World Vision, IOM, Action Contre la Faim, WFP, WHO, MSF, MDM, Order of Malta, CHA, IbniSina,		

¹ Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, *Herat Provincial Profile*, available from <http://www.mrrd.gov.af/nabdp/Provincial%20Profiles/Herat%20PDP%20Provincial%20profile.pdf> (accessed May 17, 2008).

	HRS, ICRC, UNHCR, Iranian Red Crescent, Ockenden Int'l, IMC, DACAAR, NPO/RRAA, UN Habitat, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee,	
<u>Provincial Aid Projects:</u> Total Aid Projects: 1028 Completed Projects: \$ 16.7 m Planned/Ongoing: \$ 16.6 m	<u>ISAF PRT Projects:</u> Total PRT Projects: 473 Completed Projects: \$ 24 m Planned/Ongoing Cost:\$ 21.6 m	Other Aid Projects: n/a
Transportation: 56% of provincial roads accessible year round. Only 9% of the province has no road access.	<u>Primary Roads:</u> The main East-West road runs from the border with Iran, following the course of the Hari Rud, to the border with Ghowr. The major North-South road runs from Turkmenistan through the cities of Kushk, Herat, and Adraskan, before it forks near the district border between Adraskan and Shindand. The Southeast fork runs through the city of Shindand before exiting into Farah while the Southwestern fork runs in that direction and exits into Farah.	
Electricity:	Electricity is provided by a single power station, with energy imported from Iran and Turkmenistan.	<u>Estimated Population w/access:</u> Total: 22% Urban: 74% Rural: 6%
Health Facilities:	<u>Hospitals:</u> 4 District and 1 Provincial	<u>Clinics, etc.:</u> 31 basic centers and 24 comprehensive clinics
Primary Sources of Drinking Water/Availability of Potable Water:	Rivers and wells. 31% have access to safe drinking water. 36% in urban areas, 30% in rural areas.	85% have direct access to water.
Major Rivers: Harirud, Harut, Gushky		
Significant Topographic Features	Herat is bounded by the Khorasan deserts in the west, the Hindu Kush in the east, and the Band-i-Baba mountains in the North. The central feature of the province, and most populous region within it, is the fertile tract that contains the districts of Heart, Ghuryan, Owbi, and Karokh. Thirty nine percent of the province is either mountainous or semi-mountainous, and the remainder is flat or interspersed with gently rolling hills.	

Political Landscape:

Political Leaders:

Governor: Eng. Muhammad Yousuf Nuristani



Source: Pajhwok Afghan News

Engineer Nuristani was appointed governor on January 18, 2009.

Former Governor: Sayed Hussein Anwari



Source: RAWA

An ethnic Sayed Hazara from Ghowrband, Parwan Province, he is politically aligned with *Harakat-e Inqilab Islami* of Ayatullah Muhsini. Having received formal training in Kabul at the Teacher's Training College, he worked for the Helmand Construction Company until 1978 and served as the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and part of a 10-member shura between 1992 and 1995. He then served as Minister of Agriculture from 2001 through 2005. He is considered a moderate who supports the disarmament program.

Deputy Governor: Haji Abdul Khaleq Mir



Chief of Police: Gen. Muhammad Juma Adil



Gen Muhammad Juma Adil replaced Sahfiq Fazli as the provincial police chief for Herat province on September 21, 2007.² Adil formerly served as the police commander at Kabul International Airport before being transferred to Herat.³

National Directorate of Security Chief: Habibullah Habib



Wolesi Jirga Members:⁴

² New Herat police chief asserts commitment to improving security, available from <http://paropamisus.wordpress.com/2007/09/21/new-herat-police-chief-asserts-commitment-to-improving-security/> (accessed October 8, 2008).

³ Gen. Ihsas takes charge as Kabul police chief, Pajhwok Afghan News, available from <http://www.afgha.com/?q=node/4405> (accessed October 8, 2008).



Fauzia Gailani



Haji Mawlawi Gul Ahmad



Sayyad Mohammad Shafiq



Qazi Nazir Ahmad



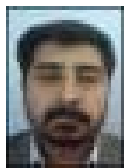
Doctor Mohammad Salih Saljoqi



Haji Zarin

	Ahmad Behzad		Haji Mohammad Arif Tayab		Haji Aziz Ahmad Naadim
	Abdul Hadi Jamshidi		Ahmad Waheed Khan Tahiri		Haj Aqayee Jibraili
	Abdul Salam Qazizada		Shahnaz Hemati		Saadat Fatahi
	Al-haj Rahima Jami		Najla Dehqan Nizhad		

Meshrano Jirga Members:⁵



Al-haj Doctor Mohammad Omar Samim

Senator Pohanyar Al-Haj Dr. Mohammed Umar Samim, son of Haji Noor Ahmad, was born in 1961 in the village of Rowza in Guzara district of Herat province. He completed his primary and secondary education at Wazir Fatah Khan High School. He graduated with high scores in 1978. He received his degree from the Faculty of Medicine at Kabul University, where he studied between 1979 and 1985.

From 1986 to 1991, Sen. Samim worked for Swedish organization based in Peshawar, Pakistan. He established basic health clinics in remote areas under mujahideen control in Herat. Between 1992 and 1993, Sen. Samim worked as a doctor at the internal ward of Herat regional hospital, and from 1993 to 1995 served as a senior doctor in the same hospital. From 1996 to 1998, he headed the Noor Hospital in Herat. From 2001 to 2004, he worked as the director of the Department of Public Health in Herat.

⁴ Joint Electoral Management Body, *Wolesi Jirga & Provincial Council Elections Afghanistan 2005 Elections*, available from <http://www.results.jemb.org/province.asp?ProvinceID=24> (accessed May 20, 2008).

⁵ Meshrano Jirga, *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Assembly*, available from <http://www.parliament.af/pme/showdoc.aspx?Id=12> (accessed May 20, 2008).

From 1992 to 2005, in addition to his practice, he taught at the Faculty of Medicine at Herat University. He also founded a health magazine called “Health Message.”

During his 20 years of service, Sen. Samim participated in 21 conferences, workshops and academic seminars. He has participated in the following conferences Health management system in 1998 at Agha Khan University; Tropical diseases in 2003 at Shiraz University, Community-based response on HIV/AIDS at Chaing Mai University in Thailand; and Encouraging public cooperation for blood donation in 2003 in Zurich, Switzerland. He has also participated in locally-organized workshops and seminars on planning, basic medicine, tuberculosis, nutrition, psychological problems, management, budgeting and finance in Kabul, Jalalabad and Herat between 1993 and 2004.

In 1993 he received a second-class letter of appreciation. In 2003 and 2004, he also received third-class letters of appreciation from the Ministry of Public Health. He has published a book on digestive system diseases, a subject taught at the Faculty of Medicine at Herat University.

Sen. Samim was an elected representative to the Emergency Loya Jirga. He was indirectly elected to the Meshrano Jirga through the 2005 Provincial Council elections in Herat. He is not a member of any political party. He is married and has six children.

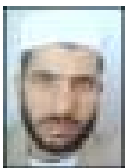
Senator Mohammed Nasser Attaey, son of Al-Haj Abdul Karim Atayee, was born in 1970 the village of Reg in Zindajan district of Herat province.

He completed his basic education in his home area, his intermediate education in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and his higher education at the International Islamic University in Islamabad of Pakistan, from where he received bachelor's and master's degrees in Arabic literature.

Sen. Atayee worked as an instructor in the Faculty of Arabic Language and Literature and Islamic Research in Peshawar, Pakistan from 1999 to 2000. From 2001 to 2002, he worked as an instructor at University of Herat. From 2003 to 2004, he worked as an Internet site reporter in Kabul. From 2004 to 2005, he worked for the International Organization for Development of Law (IDLO) in Kabul and later, he served as an instructor in the Faculty of Literature and Social Sciences of Herat University.

He has published articles in Arabic. Sen. Atayee has traveled to Iran, Pakistan, Egypt and Libya. He speaks Dari, Pashto, Arabic and English.

Sen. Atayee is the recipient of several letters of appreciation for his service. He was indirectly elected to the Meshrano Jirga through the 2005 Provincial Council elections in Herat. He is married and has two children.



Mohammad
Nasir Attayee

Provincial Council Members:⁶



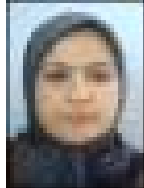
Haji Mir
Mohammad
Yaser Saadiq



Doctor Nazeer
Ahmad
Haidarzada



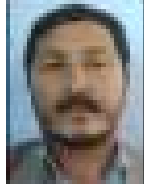
Haji Shaikh
Azizullah Najafi



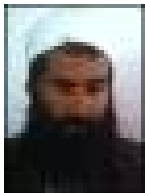
Jahantab Taheri



Dagarwal
Aminullah



Ghulam Ali Zaray
Haqjo



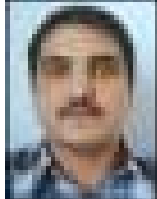
Mawlawi Saheb
Mullah Ghulam
Nabi Karimi



Nik Mohammad
Ishaq



Aqa Malang
Borani



Doctor
Mohammad
Hamayoon Azizi

Primary Political Parties:

Hizb-e Harkat-e Inqilabi-ye Islami wa Melli-ye Afghanistan:⁷

Ayatollah Muhsini established the Islamic Revolutionary Movement in 1978. A Shi'a party, "his followers played a conspicuous role in the uprising in Kabul in 1980," and is known for having many Hazara as well as non-Hazara members. Muhsini does not espouse the domination of religious figures over the government, "hence the expulsion of his organization from Iran and his willingness to cooperate with the Afghan Sunni resistance organizations in Peshawar," and refused to join the Hazara coalition Hizb-e Wahdat in the ensuing civil war.

Hizb-i 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

⁶ Joint Electoral Management Body, *Wolesi Jirga & Provincial Council Elections Afghanistan 2005 Elections*, available from <http://www.results.jemb.org/province.asp?ProvinceID=24> (accessed May 20, 2008).

⁷ California Digital Library, *Muhsini, Ayatullah Shaykh Mohammad Asif*, <http://www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft7b69p12h&chunk.id=s1.17.17&toc.depth=1&toc.id=appb&brand=eschol> (accessed on May 24, 08)

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.

Jamiat-e Islami (Islamic Society of Afghanistan):⁸

The Islamic Afghan Society, reputed to have approximately 60,000 supporters, is primarily endorsed by Tajiks in the northern region of Afghanistan. The leaders of the Islamic Afghan Society are Burhanuddin Rabbani, past president of the Islamic State, Abdul Hafez Mansur and Munawar Hasan.

Islamic Council of Herat:

The Islamic Council of Herat, which consists of scholars, religious figures, independent civic foundations and non-government bodies is a loose conglomeration created to voice concerns, particularly security issues, which they feel the provincial government is not adequately addressing.

Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HIG):⁹

This mujahideen party has been active since the Soviet invasion; and is led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. It is actively opposed to US-led and Afghan national forces and is politically active in the province. Hekmatyar is a Kharoti Ghilzai and, therefore, less influential among other religious and ethnic groups in the region, particularly the Shi'a.

Ismail Khan



Ismail Khan, an ethnic Tajik from Herat, was a former major in the Afghan army before leading a mutiny against Soviet political advisors in 1979¹⁰. He became a leading mujahideen leader during the Soviet-Afghan war and later became the governor of Herat following the communist regime's collapse in 1992. He fought against the Taliban during the mid-1990's before being captured and imprisoned by the Taliban in 1997. He escaped from their custody two years later and became a key force in western Afghanistan during the US-led invasion in 2001. He resumed his position as governor of Herat until 2004 when he was removed by President Hamid Karzai and made the Minister of Water and Energy in Kabul, a mostly symbolic position designed to marginalize Khan's incredible sway over the population in western Afghanistan. He is known as the Lion of Herat and the Amir of the West by his many followers.

Khan's time in power in Herat led to many successful reconstruction projects, paved roads, built park, erected monuments and paved streets¹¹. His influence is still prevalent among many Heratis.

Human Terrain:

⁸ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Country Fact Sheet AFGHANISTAN*, http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/publications/index_e.htm?docid=376&cid=0&sec=CH03 (accessed on May 23, 08)

⁹ Chris Mason, *Tora Bora Nizami Mahaz*

¹⁰ Thomas H. Johnson, "Ismail Khan, Herat, and Iranian Influence," *Strategic Insights*, Volume III, Issue 7 (July 2004) <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/jul/johnsonJul04.asp>

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Hazara:

The Hazara, a distinct ethnic and religious group within the population of Afghanistan; they 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."¹² As the traditional underclass of Afghan society, Hazara were exploited and made to work as servants and laborers. 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 around Bamiyan province and include[s] areas of Ghowr, Uruzgan, Wardak, and Ghazni province."¹³ 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 Mazar-e-Sharif; this massacre was followed by another the next month when the Taliban killed another 500 Hazara in Bamiyan. [Hazara Tree](#) (PDF)

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. [Tajik Tree](#) (PDF)

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.

Ghilzai:

The largest single tribe of the Pashtun ethnicity, the Ghalji or Ghilzai, and in particular the Hotaki clan, formed the backbone of the Taliban movement. Long resentful of the power the Duranni tribe (of which Karzai and Zahir Shah are members), the Ghilzai are fiercely independent and often view themselves, as the largest grouping of Pashtuns in the country and the rightful leaders of Afghanistan. [Ghilzai Tree](#) (PDF)

Durrani:

The Durrani constitute the dominant Pashtun tribe, and the one from which leaders of Afghanistan are traditionally drawn. Their origin is uncertain, but their likely foundation occurred in the

¹² US State Department Afghanistan Culture and Ethnic Studies, 2004.

¹³ US State Department Afghanistan Culture and Ethnic Studies, 2004.

mountains of Ghor. In 1747, under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Durrani confederation displaced the Ghilzai confederation from the Kandahar region into the mountainous areas along the eastern Afghan border. The current Afghan regime under President Karzai is represented disproportionately by men of Durrani lineage. [Durrani Tree](#) (PDF)

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 Shi’a Hazara by the Taliban. There are estimated to be around three million Kuchi in Afghanistan, with at least 60% remaining fully nomadic.¹⁴

Chahar Aimak:

The Aimak are a Persian-speaking nomadic or semi-nomadic tribe of mixed Iranian and Mongolian descent who inhabit the north and north-west highlands of Afghanistan and the Khorasan Province of Iran.¹⁵ They are closely related to the Hazara, and to some degree the Tajiks. They live in western Hazarajat in the provinces of Ghor, Farah, Herat, Badghis, Faryab, Jowzjan and Sar-e Pol. The term Aimak derives from the Mongolian term for tribe (Aimag). They were originally known as *chahar* or (the four) Eimaks, because there were four principal tribes: the Taimani (the predominating element in the population of Ghor), the Ferozkhoi, the Temuri, and the Jamshidi. Estimates of the Aimak population vary between 250,000 and 2 million. They are Sunni Muslims, in contrast to the Hazara, who are Shi’a. The best estimates of the Aimak population in Afghanistan hover around 1-2 million. The tally is made difficult since, as a consequence of centuries of oppression of the Hazara people in Afghanistan, some Aimagh Hazaras are classified by the state as Tajik, or Persian instead of Aimaks.

General Security Landscape:

Since the dissolution of Taliban control in the province, the security situation in Herat has been relatively quiet compared to the Southern and Eastern regions of Afghanistan. The current PRT is led by Italy. However, beginning in 2006 there has been a dramatic upswing in the number of incidents. The mass repatriation of Afghan refugees from Iran has contributed to the number of criminal incidents such as armed robbery, but the Taliban also appear to be increasingly active in the region as well. The abduction of prominent political and business figures is becoming more common, and ambushes and attacks utilizing small arms, IEDS, and indirect fire are occurring with growing regularity. One of the areas most affected is the Azizabad region of the Shindand district, where a series of insurgent attacks precluded the deadly Coalition airstrike on August 22, 2008 which killed at least 33 civilians initially thought to be Taliban fighters led by Mullah Siddiq¹⁶. Locals, Afghan government officials and a UN investigation maintain up to 90 civilians perished in the airstrikes and cited video footage shot on video phones showing scores of dead bodies as evidence. It is important to note that two Italian intelligence officers

¹⁴ Afghan Nomads Say U.S. Bombing Killed Nine,” Associated Press, September 25, 2003

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/>.

¹⁵ Janata, A. "AYMĀQ". *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Ed. Ehsan Yarshater. United States: Columbia University.

¹⁶ “US admits higher Afghan raid toll,” BBC, October 8, 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7660356.stm (accessed October 24, 2008)

were abducted by insurgents near the Azizabad in September, 2007¹⁷. They were rescued during a daring commando raid two days later in Farah province.

Primary targets appear to be members of the afghan provincial government, with attacks on foreign aid workers and ISAF personnel occurring less frequently. The abduction of prominent civic figures is being used as a tactic for intimidating those who would co-operate with ISAF and foreign aid agencies.

Additionally, violence between smugglers and Iranian personnel is rising dramatically and seems to be linked to increased opium production. It is becoming difficult to discern organized criminal activity from operations conducted by the Taliban as the interests of the two are often overlapping.

The generally deteriorating security situation in Herat has inspired the formation of groups such as the Islamic Council of Herat (ICH) who are highly critical of the provincial government. Rampant government corruption seems to be an endemic contributor to the growing sense of insecurity many Heratis now experience, and is one of the primary issues driving such groups as the ICH.

Preferred Opposition Tactics (2006-Present):

- 1) Attacks on fixed security installations (ANA, ANP, and ISAF checkpoints and facilities)
- 2) Road side Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)
- 3) Targeted ambushes
- 4) Kidnapping
- 5) Indirect fire
- 6) Suicide and Vehicle borne IED's

Recent Security Chronology:

October 2008: Several policemen surrender to insurgent commander Ghulam Yahya Akbari in the Guzra district. The second US investigation into the August 22 bombing raid against a Taliban compound in Azizabad (Shindand district) reveals up to 33 civilians died in the clash, not five as previously thought.

September: Gunmen kill 13 guards and contractors working on the Salam Dam (Chisht district). India, who is funding the construction of the dam, threatens to cease further work until the security situation improves.

August: Coalition forces raid the suspected compound of Taliban commander Mullah Siddiq in Azizabad, Shindand district. Heavy bombardments and gun fire kill up to 30 insurgents. Villagers' later claim up to 90 civilians died in the raid. An investigation led by the UN finds evidence of mass civilian casualties. US open second investigation. Earlier this month, five US soldiers were injured by an IED in Shindand.

July: Coalition airstrikes destroy several buildings thought to be occupied by insurgent arms dealers in the Farmakan and Bakhtabad villages of Shindand district. Locals claim up to 50 civilians died in the bombings.

June: A suicide bomber killed five and injured 25 civilians in Azizabad shortly after an ISAF convoy drove through the area.

Taliban/Insurgent Commanders in Herat:

Mawlawi Abdul Hamid- A lead Taliban leader in Herat's of Shindand district. It is believed Hamid orchestrated the 2007 abduction of two Italian soldiers from their patrol in the Azizabad area of Herat's Shindand district. Hamid conducts a wide array of anti-government acts throughout Herat.

¹⁷“Missing Italians freed in Afghanistan,” CNN, September 24, 2007

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/asiapcf/09/24/afghanistan.italians/index.html> (accessed October 24, 2008)



Ghulam Yahya Akbari (circled above)- Ghulam Yahya Akbari is an ethnic Tajik who formerly worked for the government in Herat city. Some reports indicate he was the first mayor of Herat appointed by the Karzai administration after the fall of the Taliban¹⁸. He was allegedly removed from his post over political or factional reasons and was later made head of Herat's Public Works department. He leads a modest band of loyalists under the name "the Mujahideen of Herat" and bases their operations in the Guzara district, particularly the village of Siwoshan. He and his fighters took credit for firing rockets at the UN compound in the Guzara district in June, 2008 as well rocketing the Herat airport. His group, while independent of the Afghan Taliban, is not opposed to sharing resources. Akbari has stated he openly supports foreign fighters entering Herat from Iran on their way to battlefields in the south and east of the country. *Update*: Akbari was killed during a US operation on his secluded hideout in the Guzara district on October 6, 2009. Akbari died in the battle alongside 12 of his fighters. Following his death, 68 gunmen said to be Akbari loyalists surrendered to provincial authorities. Akbari's field commander, **Samiullah Marouf, alias Salashur** (*photo below*), claims to have taken over command of "Al Fath,"¹⁹ what is left of Akbari's militia group.



Mullah Siddiq- Siddiq is an operational Taliban leader in the Shindand district. A US operation to kill Siddiq on August 22, 2008 resulted in numerous Taliban casualties which were later reported to be Afghan civilians. Several investigations were launched into claims that up to 90 civilians died in the strike aimed at killing Siddiq in Azizabad village, Shindand district.

¹⁸ "Police surrender to renegade commander in Herat," Pajhwok Afghan News, October 4, 2008. <http://pajhwok.com/viewstory.asp?lng=eng&id=63035> (accessed October 8, 2008)

¹⁹ Translation: victory, or conquest.

Malim Majid- A former government official, Malim was the head of the Herat airport before the Taliban came to power. His militia consists of around 50 to 100 fighters. Malim's group is now an ally of *Al Fath* though the two militias do occasionally clash.

DISTRICTS: Adraskan, Chest-e Sharif, Enjil, Farsi, Ghuryan, Golran, Gozareh, Heart, Karokh, Kuhestan, Kushk, Kushk-e Kohneh, Owbi, Pashtun Zarghun, Shindand, Zende Jan.

