

Afghanistan: Taliban 'de facto' power in many provinces, says report

By [Global Research](#)

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London, 8 Dec. (AKI) – The Taliban has strengthened its reach in Afghanistan and become the 'de facto' governing power in several provinces, an international think-tank said on Monday. The International Council on Security and Development said that the Taliban now holds a permanent presence in 72 percent of Afghanistan, up from 54 per cent a year ago.

According to a report released by ICOS in London, Taliban forces have advanced from their southern stronghold, where they are now the "de facto governing power" to western and north-western provinces, as well as provinces north of Kabul.

The report said the Taliban's permanent presence in the country had increased by a startling 18 percent.

"The Taliban are now controlling the political and military dynamic in Afghanistan," said Norine MacDonald, President and lead field researcher of ICOS.

"Despite increasingly dire levels of security in Afghanistan in recent months, there has been surprisingly little change in response from the international community," MacDonald said. "The insurgency continues to turn NATO's weaknesses into its own strengths."

The ICOS report documented the advance of the Taliban on Kabul, where it claimed three out of the four main highways into the capital were now compromised by Taliban activity.

The capital has plummeted to minimum levels of control, with the Taliban and other criminal elements infiltrating the city at will, the report said.

"The Taliban are closing a noose around Kabul, and there is a real danger that the Taliban will simply overrun Afghanistan under the noses of NATO," said Paul Burton, director of policy for ICOS.

Through its research, ICOS revealed the Taliban's presence across the country using a combination of publicly recorded attacks and local perceptions of Taliban presence.

ICOS' research model defines one or more insurgent attacks per week in an Afghan province as a "permanent Taliban presence".

"The current global security architecture is ill-equipped to deal with the problems that beset Afghanistan," said MacDonald. "Quite simply, the current rulebook on how the international community approaches these crises needs to be rewritten if we are to succeed in Afghanistan and in other conflict zones such as Iraq and Somalia."

ICOS said military intervention must be supported by job creation and development, as well as effective counter-narcotics policies, literacy, a free and open media

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