

One Day in Afghanistan

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The first death was soon after midnight, a policeman killed on night watch near the Tajik border. The bloodshed continued as the sun rose then set again, ending only as the day did.

Three beheadings at a school, and an airstrike around 11.30pm were the last conflict-related violence recorded in Afghanistan on June 30; the culmination of a day of murder and maiming, shootings, explosions, air strikes and one unclaimed political assassination.

For everyone except injured survivors, and the families of the dead, it was an unexceptional day in a war that much of the world appears to have forgotten. There were no major attacks in big cities, no key battles, no catastrophic air strikes, just the ceaseless grind of war.

On October 7, it will be 17 years since US troops and Afghan allies began their march to topple the Taliban in Kabul, launching the latest iteration of Afghanistan's civil war.

In the intervening years foreign troop numbers have surged and been cut back again; leaders in the US and the UK have declared "our war" in Afghanistan over, and "mission accomplished".

Yet the Taliban have kept fighting and a regional affiliate of Islamic State has joined them on the battlefield. Today insurgents control or threaten more territory than they have done since 2001, and civilian casualties are setting grim records.

In a bid to capture the relentless nature of the war, and the spread of violence around the country, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism and the Observer have compiled a list of all attacks reported on a single day, using unpublished official documents and on the ground reporting, to give a snapshot of the war today.

The snapshot details the death of at least 60 people, and the wounding of over a dozen more, in more than 50 different attacks spread across 16 provinces - nearly half the country. Every outbreak of violence that we could identify, from a few shots fired at a police station in eastern Ghazni, to an airstrike on Taliban positions in western Farah, is listed.

June 30 is particularly poignant because it was the first day of fighting after an unprecedented and unexpectedly successful three day ceasefire between government and Taliban forces ended. Desperately weary of war, many Afghans were hopeful that the truce would be extended. This is what they got instead:

01:00 Taliban fighters launched a night-time attack on a border police post in Dasht e Qala, just south of the river separating Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The police retreated to the

command post in nearby Chashma-e Aykhanim, then fought for several hours to take the border post back. Two policeman were killed, and a further two wounded. The insurgents got away with two police pickup trucks, a Humvee and some ammunition. According to a security source in the area who wished to remain anonymous, the insurgents also took five hostages with them.



Murad (photo on left) and Khawja (photo on right) died in the 1am attack on the border police post

02:00 The Taliban attacked a police position in Chakhansur district of Nimroz province. Seven policemen were killed. Another policeman was injured, shot both in the hand and hip.



Names of those killed in the 2am attack (from left to right): Sgt. Allah Dad, Assadullah, Obaidullah Khan, Khalil, Khalil Rokhshani and Habibullah. Abdul Karim also died, but we do not have his photo.

05:40 An Afghan police patrol in the Sangin district of Helmand came under heavy weapons fire.

06:45 Insurgents fired heavy weapons on an Afghan police command post in Qara Bagh district of Ghazni province

07:30 In the Mata Khan district of Paktika province, Taliban fighters ambushed the Afghan local police, a neighbourhood defence force funded by the Ministry of Interior. In the ensuing battle, which lasted for over an hour, three policemen – Dawlat Khan, Shadi Khan and Baz Mohammad – were killed. According to the local police chief, Shadi Khan had two daughters and a son under the age of 10, and was the only breadwinner in the family.



Baz Mohammed, Shadi Khan and Dawlat Khan were killed in the Mata Khan ambush

09:20 An Afghan forces convoy was attacked in Logar province. It was unclear whether the incident occurred from a direct attack or a roadside explosive device.

09:30 A firefight broke out in Nahrin district of Baghlan province – a local official said that this was driven by personal grievances. One person was killed and two local residents arrested.

10:00 Haji Mohammad Nadir Noorzai, a community elder known for mediating between different tribes as well as between the Taliban and the government, was assassinated while returning to Delaram district in Nimroz after working on a tribal dispute.

10:30 Afghan police on Ghazni highway came under heavy weapons fire.

10:45 Afghan security forces came under heavy fire in the Chamkani district of Paktia province. One person was reported wounded and taken to hospital, it is not clear whether they were one of the security forces or a civilian.

10:50 An Afghan police patrol in the province of Nangarhar, where Islamic State has a strong presence, came under heavy weapons fire

11:00 A firefight erupted in Zazai Midan district in Khost province. According to the governor of Khost, seven insurgents and three civilians were killed, though another local official denied this account.

11:25 Afghan local police in Alishing district in Laghman province came under heavy weapons fire. A local shopkeeper named Gulalai was shot in the leg during the fighting and was taken to Kabul for treatment.

11:30 In Charkh district in Logar there were clashes between two different Taliban groups. 12 people were killed.

11:35 Andar district headquarters in Ghazni province came under heavy weapons fire.

11:45 An Afghan army post in Andar came under heavy weapons fire.

12:10 An IED detonated in Pech district of Kunar province. No casualties were reported.

12:30 Assadullah, a policeman who worked as a bodyguard for the district governor, was assassinated while at the local market by men on a motorcycle.

14:00 Two insurgents were killed and three wounded during clashes in Ab Band district of Ghazni province.

14:05 A US airstrike hit Grishk district in Helmand province. Four insurgents were reported killed.

14:10 Insurgents fired heavy weapons in Pech district of Kunar province.

14:30 An IED exploded in Pech district of Kunar province, wounding an Afghan army soldier called Abdul Wahid.

14:50 A police convoy came under heavy fire in Sayed Abad district of Wardak province. One policeman was wounded.

15:00 A dispute between police and local residents erupted in Delaram district, Nimroz province. According to one local official, five shopkeepers were injured.

16:30 Insurgents fired heavy weapons at a police convoy travelling through the Muhammad Agha district of Logar province. An Afghan policeman called Ehsanullah was wounded - he later died from his injuries.



21:40 An improvised explosive device detonated on a government vehicle in Kota Sangi, Kabul.

22:00 The Taliban attacked Afghan police and army positions in the Khas district of Uruzgan province, wounding ten of the security forces. A US airstrike then reportedly killed scores of the insurgents.

22:15 The US-led NATO mission in Afghanistan posted a statement saying they had carried out more than 20 airstrikes across Ghazni, Helmand and Uruzgan provinces that day "targeting selective Taliban irreconcilables". The Afghan Air Force had carried out at least

two strikes in Uruzgan province, the statement said. According to the Afghan Ministry of Defence, six militants were killed in airstrikes in Uruzgan.

22:55 Three policemen were killed and two others were wounded after Taliban militants attacked a checkpoint in the Zanjeer area of Khashrod district.

23:00 Unidentified gunmen stormed a boys' school in the Khogyani district of Nangarhar. The gunmen torched the school library, put landmines in the classrooms, and beheaded three school attendants. One of them, Hazratullah, was filling in for his father on the shift. Another, Mohammed Qurban, had ten children. Malik Makee a tribal elder and local militia leader who was the first to arrive at the scene of the attack [said](#) "we sewed the heads back on the bodies" ready for the funerals.



Mohammad Qurban, Hazratullah and Ezatullah were killed by unidentified gunmen as they guarded a school



The school that was attacked in Nangarhar

23:05 An Afghan air strike hit a Taliban position in the district of Bala Buluk, in Farah province. Four members of the group were killed and four others injured.

An interactive version of this timeline can be found [here](#).

By its nature, this day-long snapshot is just a partial picture of the violence. Women and children represent over half of the civilians killed by the war in the first half of the year, according to the UN, yet on June 30 they appear to have escaped direct harm.

There were no attacks in major cities either, the bloody assaults on civilians as they study, work and relax, which have become the most high-profile face of the war.

There may be other unrecorded deaths and injuries, particularly from incidents in Taliban-controlled areas which are harder for even local reporters to reach or cover.

Even so, it is an important catalogue of forgotten violence. Only one of the dozens of attacks on June 30th was reported internationally, and just a handful of others featured in the Afghan press.

Until today, most have gone unnoticed beyond the military units or local communities they affected. As on so many other days, the bloodshed continued, the war churned on, and the world looked away.

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