

'SURGE IN ATTACKS ON AFGHAN ARMY'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Plea for help: Former Afghan interpreters for the U.S. and NATO forces at a demonstration in Kabul on Friday. AFPWAKIL KOHSAR

Deadly insider attacks against the Afghan Army jumped in the first quarter of this year as Taliban rebels took advantage of the coming American and NATO troop withdrawal, according to a U.S. government report on Friday.

The quarterly report of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said attacks on the Afghan security forces, mainly by the Taliban rebel group, surged 37% over the January-March period from a year earlier.

Notably, insider attacks — when security forces are targeted by Taliban infiltrators within their ranks — jumped 82%, and casualties from them doubled, according to the report, which did not specify the overall number of casualties, saying the data is classified.

But according to coalition figures, it said, 115 Afghan military personnel were killed and 39 wounded in 31 insider attacks in the first three months of this year.

But it made clear that the attacks threaten the stability of the Afghan government after the withdrawal of thousands of U.S. troops and civilian defense contractors by September, as ordered earlier this month by President Joe Biden.

It noted that the Afghan government and particularly Afghan security forces remain highly dependent on U.S. support, both financial aid and manpower.

"The basic risk facing the current and any potential post-peace Afghan government is whether future foreign assistance levels during this uncertain period will be sufficient to prevent its collapse," said John Sopko, the SIGAR head.

Meanwhile, dozens of Afghans who worked as interpreters in often deadly conditions with the U.S. military expressed fear on Friday of being targeted by the Taliban after American troops head home, and they urged Washington not to leave them behind.

'Don't leave us behind'

The interpreters gathered in Kabul on the eve of the beginning of Washington's formal troop withdrawal — although forces have been drawn down for months.

"The main thing we want is that we should be taken to the United States. That's what we were promised," said Mohammad Shoaib Walizada, an Afghan interpreter, who worked with U.S. forces between 2009 and 2013.

The pullout will involve around 2,500 U.S. service members, 7,092 other forces in the US-led coalition, and 16,832 civilian contractors for the Pentagon who were in the country at the beginning of April.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

crackIAS.com