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## Why are we there?

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Canada is in Afghanistan at the request of the democratically elected government, along with **36 other nations**, and as part of a **UN-sanctioned mission** to help build a stable, democratic, and self-sufficient society.

About **2500** members of the Canadian Forces (CF) are currently serving as part of Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF AFG). They play a key role in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission whose goal is to **improve the security situation** in Afghanistan **and assist in rebuilding the country**.

Canada's continued engagement in Afghanistan helps create the conditions for longer-term reconstruction. All CF operations in Afghanistan are conducted with the **consent and at the request** of the Afghan government to:

- Provide the people of Afghanistan with **the hope for a brighter future** by establishing the **security** necessary to **promote development** and an environment that is conducive to the **improvement of Afghan life**;
- Conduct operations **in support** of Afghan National Security Forces;
- Help strengthen and enhance Afghan Governance **capacity**;
- Help extend the **authority** of the Government of Afghanistan in the **South**;
- Facilitate the **delivery of programs and projects** that support the **economic recovery and rehabilitation** of Afghanistan; and
- Assist in **addressing humanitarian needs** of Afghans by supporting Canadian governmental organizations and NGOs whose efforts meet Canada's objectives.

The Afghan people are relying on the international community to help them **rebuild their lives and their country** after having suffered through decades of instability, oppression and insurgency.

By supporting the rebuilding of institutions such as independent courts, police and an army, Canada is on the ground **laying the foundation** for Afghans to govern themselves and secure a better future.

Canada has shown leadership by committing troops, resources, development and political effort to help the Afghan government secure a better future for its people. We have made a commitment to the Afghan people and we will stand by that commitment.

Helping Afghanistan continues the noble **Canadian tradition** of taking an active role to bring stability and lasting peace in a part of the world that has seen turmoil and upheaval.

Canada's efforts in Afghanistan are guided by the [Afghanistan Compact](#), which provides a five-year framework for coordinating the work of the Afghan government and its international partners by outlining specific outcomes, as well as the benchmarks and timelines for their delivery in the three areas of **security, governance, and development**.

Rebuilding a shattered Afghanistan is a slow and **complex** process in a country that is **emerging** from more than two decades of human rights abuses, terror, conflict, drought and poverty.

**We are making progress** – unthinkable only a few years ago – which is a testament to the will and fortitude of the Afghan people, as well as the commitment and engagement of the international community.

For example, a new Afghan constitution has restored the rule of law and respect for the human rights of every Afghan citizen, including those of women and children. Because of our efforts, the Afghan people

now vote, women and girls have rights and children are going to school.

However, Canada is in perhaps the most **troubled region** of the country, where the challenges of establishing security and stability are more pointed than in other parts of Afghanistan. We are there because the job has to be done, **if reconstruction and a better life** for the people in the southern region are to be a reality.

The biggest threat to rebuilding is continued violence and threats from the [Taliban](#) and al-Qaeda whose principle mission is to **disrupt** and **prohibit** Afghan men, women and children from going about their daily lives.

Terrorism remains a threat to global peace and security. Afghanistan has been used as a base for terrorists in the past. In the interests of our collective security, Canada and its international partners share a responsibility to help ensure that terrorism cannot again take root in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is not, nor has it ever been a traditional peacekeeping mission. There are no ceasefire arrangements to enforce and no negotiated peace settlement to respect. Negotiation is not an option with groups such as the Taliban nor al-Qaeda who are not interested in the kind of peace that the Afghan people seek. Their tactics are terrorism not talks aimed at establishing a truce.

Our mission is one of **nation building**. Our forces are doing exactly the type of work that **needs to be done** in Afghanistan. Our soldiers are the best in the world for this kind of mission. They are well trained, well led and have the best equipment on the ground.

We know the success of our mission cannot be assured by military means alone. No fewer than **19 UN agencies** are in Afghanistan working tirelessly to **help** the Afghan people and their national government **build a democratic and secure** society.

Canada has also deployed diplomats, development workers, civilian police, as well as experts in human rights, good governance, the rule of law and democracy building — all of whom come together in common endeavour in Afghanistan.

The CF commitment is an important aspect of the Government of Canada's whole of Government approach to assisting Afghanistan. For more information on Canada's commitment to Afghanistan visit the [Protecting Canadians Rebuilding Afghanistan](#) website.

## The situation today

The CF contribution to Afghanistan consists of approximately **2,500** personnel from units across Canada and is referred to as Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF AFG). The CF efforts in Afghanistan are subdivided into **three** distinct missions that work in concert with each other and have the same overarching goal of improving the security situation in Afghanistan, and assisting in rebuilding the country. The three missions currently underway are:

- [Op ATHENA](#) - The Canadian contribution to the UN-sanctioned and NATO led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) currently has **2,500** CF personnel committed to *Op ATHENA*.
- [Op ARCHER](#) – Consists of embedded CF staff officers at the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) in Kabul and a few liaison officers at Bagram Airfield supporting Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) as well as a small cadre of CF instructors involved in the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) at the Canadian Afghan National Training Centre Detachment (CANTC Det) in Kabul. The current Canadian contribution to *Op ARCHER* consists of about **30** CF personnel.
- [Op ARGUS](#) - The Strategic Advisory Team to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan currently has **15** Canadians working in Kabul in support of *Op ARGUS*.

## **Operation ATHENA: The Canadian Forces contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): approximately 2,500 CF personnel**

Overall, **2,500** CF personnel support the ISAF mission. CF personnel deployed as part of *OP ATHENA*

comprise the following units (all figures approximate):

- A Battle Group in Kandahar, primarily the 3rd Battalion, Royal 22e Régiment (3 R22eR) from the 5e Group-brigade mécanisé du Canada (5 GBMC), which includes:
  - Soldiers from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalion, Royal 22e Régiment based out of CFB Valcartier, as well as various Reserve units;
  - An engineer squadron from 5e Régiment du génie du combat (5 RGC) in Valcartier;
  - An artillery battery from 5e Régiment d'artillerie légère du Canada (5 RALC) in Valcartier;
  - An armoured reconnaissance troop, from The Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) in Petawawa and 12e Régiment blindé du Canada (12 RBC) in Valcartier; and
  - A Leopard tank squadron from the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) (LdSH(RC)) in Edmonton, Alberta;
- A Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (TUAV) unit comprised primarily of personnel from 438 Tactical Helicopter Squadron (438 ETAH) based in St-Hubert, Quebec, and members from 5 RALC in Valcartier;
- Health Service Support (HSS) personnel at the Multinational Medical Unit (MMU) at Kandahar Airfield comprised of personnel from 5e Ambulance de campagne (5 AMB C) in Valcartier, 1 Canadian Field Hospital (1 Cdn Fd Hosp) in Petawawa, and other Health Services units from across Canada;
- About 300 CF members with the National Command Element (NCE) at Kandahar Airfield. The NCE is primarily composed of personnel from 5 GBMC in Valcartier;
- About 300 CF members with the National Support Element (NSE) in Kandahar, primarily from the 5e Bataillon des service du Canada (5 BNS) in Valcartier;
- About 30 CF members with the Multi-National Brigade (MNB) Headquarters including Canadian Deputy Commander, Brigadier-General Marquis Hainse are assisting British Major-General Jacko Page in accomplishing his mission and exercising command and control over the MNB Regional Command (South) in Afghanistan;
- In Kabul, about 50 CF personnel at ISAF Headquarters, 15 personnel with a smaller NSE Detachment and 15 personnel working at the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) who work closely with at the Canadian Embassy;
- 250 CF members with the Theatre Support Element (TSE) in Southwest Asia.

### **The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT)**

Since August 2005, a Canadian [PRT](#) has operated in Kandahar City, where it will remain until February 2009. The PRT brings together elements from the [Canadian Forces \(CF\)](#), [Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada \(DFAIT\)](#), the [Canadian International Development Agency \(CIDA\)](#), [Corrections Services Canada \(CSC\)](#) and civilian police led by the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police \(RCMP\)](#) in an integrated Canadian effort known as the "Whole of Government" approach. Approximately 250 personnel are based at the PRT site at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar City under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Chamberlain.

The PRT helps reinforce the authority of the Afghan government in Kandahar Province, assisting in the stabilization and development of the region. It monitors security, promotes Afghan government policies and priorities with local authorities, and facilitates security sector reforms.

The PRT military component comprises personnel, drawn largely from Land Forces Quebec Area (LFQA). The PRT includes:

- The PRT Commander's Tactical Headquarters Group, which provides protection and mobility to the PRT Commander and his staff;
- In order to allow the PRT to enhance the reconstruction effort, an Infantry Company from primarily 3 R22eR is currently providing security to the various PRT detachments involved with various projects

outside of Kandahar City. This company from Quebec also provides a quick reaction force for Kandahar City and the vital aspect of defence and security tasks at the PRT Camp;

- Military project managers (military engineers) enhancing the PRT's capability to manage quick impact reconstruction and development projects;
- A Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) capability from LFQA;
- A Military Police Platoon consisting of members primarily from 5e Peloton de police militaire (5 PPM) in Valcartier;
- Health and medical support from 5 AMB C;
- Service and support elements drawn from across Canada; and
- Other specialized elements from various CF units across Canada.

### **Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLT)**

The Canadian Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLT), commanded by Col Stephane Lafaut, advises, mentors and assists the senior leadership of the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) in their capacity building. This professional development initiative enables the ANA to help secure peace and stability in Afghanistan and extend the legitimate authority of the Government of Afghanistan.

Currently the OMLT consists of approximately 150 Canadian Forces members, primarily from LFQA and various other units across Canada, who are assisting and helping influence and shape the mentoring and training of approximately 1000 ANA soldiers. These ANA soldiers form the 1st Brigade, 205 Corps at locations throughout Kandahar province and are broken down into three Kandaks (battalions) consisting of about 350 soldiers each. The overall objective of the OMLT is to progressively bring the ANA to a level where it can independently plan, execute and sustain operations to provide military security for Kandahar province. The OMLT, therefore, assists in providing the people of Afghanistan with the hope for a brighter future by helping Afghans establish the security necessary to promote development and an environment that is conducive to the improvement of Afghan life and help Afghanistan become a self-sufficient society.

On May 15, 2007, the OMLT took over the responsibility for the mentorship of the 1/205 Corps of the ANA from the United States Army during a Transfer of Authority (TOA) parade in Kandahar City. The US, UK, and Dutch are also involved in mentoring the ANA in RC (South) including in both Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces.

### ***Operation ARCHER (Approximately 30 Personnel)***

The Canadian contribution to the U.S.-led Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan is known as *Operation ARCHER*.

Since the fall of the Taliban in December 2001, the International Community has been rebuilding Afghanistan's infrastructure, institutions, government, and army. This effort involves more than just supplying weapons and equipment; Canada has contributed to the U.S. led effort to build a security infrastructure that includes operational forces, sustaining institutions, and the general staff and ministries to direct these organizations. The Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) (formerly the Office of Security Cooperation - Afghanistan) is currently re-forming and building both the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). The Canadian Forces currently has Brigadier-General Dennis Tabbernor and other CF personnel with CSTC-A in Kabul.

The CF also contributes 15 personnel to act as instructors involved in the training of the Afghan National Army at the Canadian Afghan National Training Centre Detachment (C ANTC Det) in Kabul.

### ***Operation ARGUS (15 Personnel)***

#### **Strategic Advisory Team – Afghanistan (SAT – A)**

Since September 2005 the Canadian Forces has, on a bi-lateral basis, provided a team of strategic military planners to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in developing key national strategies and mechanisms for the effective implementation of those strategies. The team is called the Strategic Advisory Team – Afghanistan, or SAT-A.

The Strategic Advisory Team consists of 15 Canadian Forces members and civilian employees, augmented by a CIDA officer to advise on development issues. The team includes a small command and support element, two teams of strategic planners, a defence analyst and a strategic communications advisor. The composition, size and capabilities of the team are adjusted as necessary.

The SAT-A works in consultation with [Arif Lalani](#), the Canadian Ambassador, the Head of Aid and a senior representative of the Afghan government in providing direct planning support to government ministries and working groups in the development and governance realms. To date, the team has worked extensively with the Afghanistan's National Development Strategy Working Group, Public Administration Reform, Civil Service Gender Equity Policy, and with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

The teams are embedded in their partner Afghan Government ministries and agencies and work under Afghan leadership. The basic method of operation is that the team assists working level officials integrate the substantive ideas of the Afghan leadership and international experts into cohesive strategic frameworks. Working closely with the Ambassador, CIDA and the Afghan Government, SAT-A is an example of the "whole of government" concept at work so that Canada can maximize the value of its contribution. The planning team members bring a very wide range of training, education, experience, and military strategic planning skills to bear on the resolution of complex civil problems.

**Date Modified: 2008-06-09**