

Brazil



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

RAIO Research Unit
August 2020

Brazil 101

Capital: Brasilia

Race/Ethnicity (2010):

- White: 47.7%
- Mixed Race: 43.1%,
- Black: 7.6%
- Asian: 1.1%,
- Indigenous: 0.4%

Land Area:

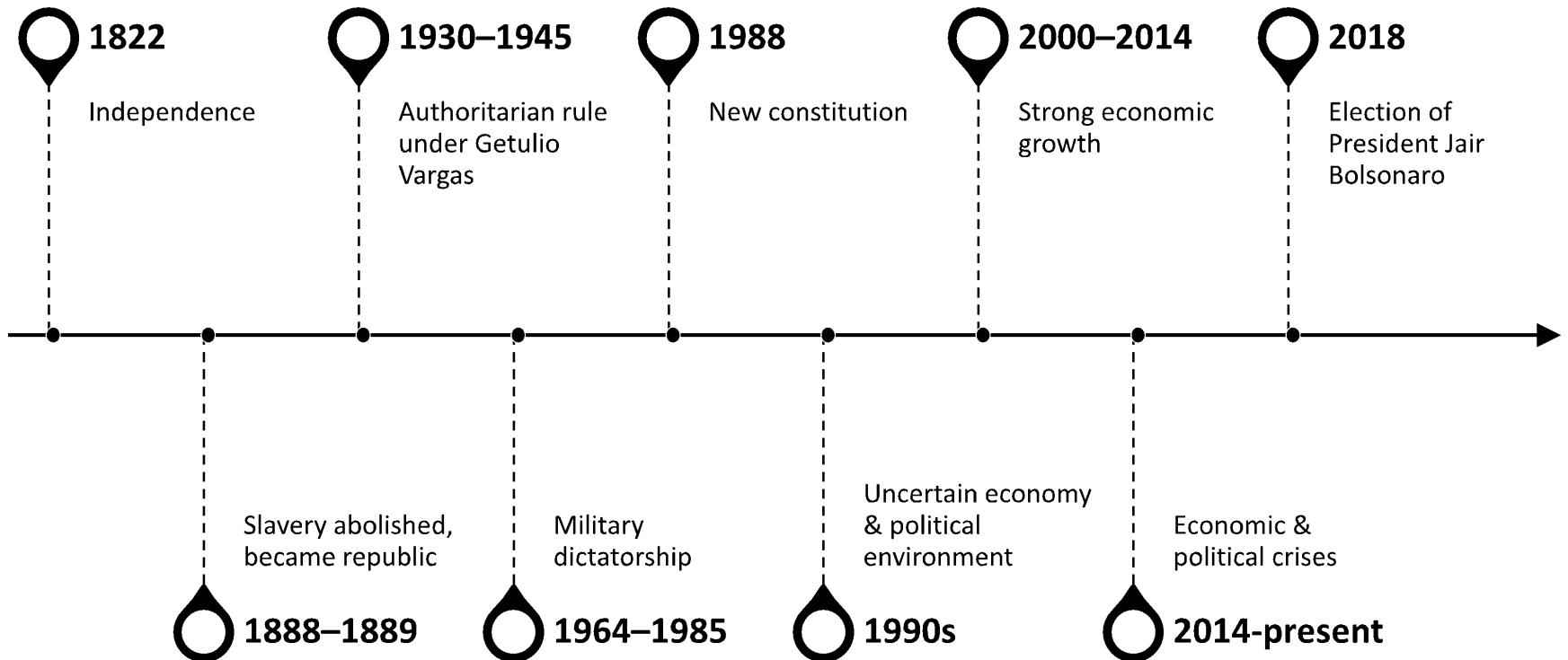
3.3 million square miles
(slightly smaller than
the U.S.)

Top Exports:

oil, soybeans, iron
ore, meat, and
machinery (2019)

Leadership:
President Jair
Bolsonaro

Historical Overview



Economy



2000-2014: commodities boom
2014-2017: recession
2017-2019: slow growth
2020: projected 5% drop in GDP

Politics

- 2014 *Lava Jato* (Car Wash) investigations
- Only 9% of Brazilians were satisfied with how democracy was working (2018)
- 2018 elections = anti-incumbent wave
- Jair Bolsonaro
 - Anti-corruption rhetoric
 - Hard-line security policy
 - Weakening of environmental protections
 - Interest in greater power



Political Parties

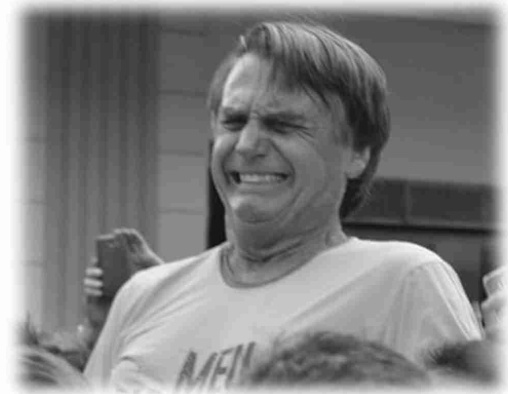
30 different parties won seats in Congress in 2018

Major political parties

- Workers' Party (PT)
- Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB)
 - Formerly the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB)
- Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB)
- Social Liberal Party (PSL)
- Alliance for Brazil (APB)

Political Violence

- 2018 Elections
- Targets
 - Journalists
 - Afro-Brazilians
 - LGBTI community
 - Political opponents of Bolsonaro
- Bolsonaro's supporters have called for a military takeover



Migration to the United States



Security Situation



Homicides



Geography of crime & violence

Urban areas

Favelas

Borders (Tri-Border Area)



Drug trafficking & consumption



Judicial system = “slow, corrupt, and generally ineffective”



Prisons



Availability of weapons

Organized Criminal Groups



First Capital Command (*Primeiro Comando da Capital* – PCC)

Largest & most powerful
criminal group

Franchise system &
imprisoned leadership

Up to 15,000 members
100,000 people
connected?

Based in São Paulo, but
likely present in all states
& internationally

Drug trafficking, bank
robbery, money
laundering, prostitution,
extortion, kidnapping, etc.

Protection for members
Social & territorial
control

Selective use of violence
(prefers to operate in the
shadows & use threats)

Targets:

- Members who break rules
- Police officers (in certain circumstances)
- Community members who commit serious crimes
- Members of rival criminal groups

Red Command (*Comando Vermelho* – CV)

Oldest & second most powerful criminal group

“Network of independent actors”
Prominent leaders

Unknown number of members
Recruitment of youth in favelas

Based in Rio de Janeiro
Various states
Bolivia & Paraguay

Drug & arms trade
Violent confrontations with security forces & rivals

Political connections
Involvement in state & local politics

Social leadership in favelas:

- Social services
- Employment
- Coercion
- Parallel systems of government

Targets:

- People who collaborate with rivals
- Former members
- Relatives of members
- Human rights defenders
- Community leaders

Regional & Local Criminal Groups

Family of the North (*Familia do Norte* – FDN)

- Third largest criminal organization
- Amazonas
- Conflict over drug trafficking routes with PCC & CV

Amigos dos Amigos

- Rio de Janeiro

Pure Third Command (*Terceiro Comando Puro*)

- Rio de Janeiro

Loan Sharks (*Agiotas*)



Provide credit to individuals & businesses



Charge abusively high interest rates *gota a gota* (“drop by drop”)



Inability or refusal to pay =
seizure of property/possessions,
threats, or violence

Use of firearms
Threats (including death threats)
Beatings
Surveillance/tracking



May be individuals or groups

Cases where current or former police officers
are involved

Police



State Police Forces

- States have most law enforcement responsibilities
- Military Police (*Polícia Militar*)
 - Everyday law enforcement
 - Maintain public order, patrol streets & deter and respond to crime
 - Militaristic structure, training & culture
 - Extremely violent = “war-like mentality”
 - Over 400,000 members
 - Some states have elite units
 - Ex. Special Police Operations Battalion (BOPE)

State Police Forces

- Civil Police (*Polícia Civil*)
 - Criminal investigations
 - Divided into district police stations that cover a specific geographic area
 - Specialized units
 - Over 123,000 members
 - Less power & responsibility than the Military Police
- Almost all policing in urban areas is conducted by the Military Police in each state
 - Little coordination & cooperation between the two forces

National & Local Police Forces

National police forces

- Federal Police (*Polícia Federal* - DPF)
- Federal Highway Police
- Federal Railway Police
- National Public Security Force (*Força Nacional de Segurança Pública* - SENASP)

Municipal Guards

Police Violence

Reputation = among the most violent police forces in the world

- Extrajudicial killings & excessive use of force

Police killings

- 6,220 civilians killed by police (2018)
- More civilians killed by police in São Paulo state than by police in the entire United States (1995-2015)
- Victims are overwhelmingly young, Afro-Brazilian males

Most are extra-judicial killings, despite claims of self-defense or legitimate use of force

- Justified as “killing resulting from police intervention” or “resistance followed by death”
- Police allege victims are involved in criminal organizations

Police Violence – Why?

- Culture of violence within security forces
- Police distrust the system = take matters into their own hands
- Lack of transparency & training
- Legacies of the military dictatorship
 - At “war” with a perceived enemy
 - Institutionalization of human rights violations during training (Military Police)
 - Rio de Janeiro’s elite military police unit offered classes in torture until 2006

Police Violence – Why?

- Public support for hardline security policies
 - Rise of the political right
 - 50% of Brazilians support the idea that “a good bandit is a dead one”
- President Bolsonaro - tough on crime rhetoric
 - Encouraged police to kill suspects
 - Criminals should “die like cockroaches”
 - Called for more impunity for police, including legal protections for those who kill on duty

Police Abuses

Torture & mistreatment during arrest & interrogation

Use of indiscriminate force & violence against peaceful protests

Organized crime & criminal activities

Corruption

Accusations of social cleansing & enforced disappearances

Police

- Impunity & limited oversight of police activities
- *“Brazil police kill a lot, and police die a lot”*
 - 343 officers killed in 2018
 - Contributes to reprisal violence
- Low salaries
 - May have a second job while off-duty
 - Private security – 700,000 personnel (2016)

Trust in the Police

- Reporting crimes = in person, online, hotlines, or via the Public Defender's office
- Many Brazilians prefer not to go to the police for assistance
 - Police abuses
 - High rates of impunity
 - Widespread police corruption
 - Threats, killings & forced disappearances of individuals who report crimes
 - May view the police as an enemy
- Only 26% trust the police (2017 survey)

Militias (*milícias*)

- “*part death squad, part criminal enterprise*”
- From vigilantism to criminal activities
- Members
 - Former & current members of security forces
 - Civilians
- Activities
 - Extra-judicial killings (of perceived criminals)
 - Extortion, theft, drug trafficking, etc.

Militias (*milícias*)

- Presence
 - Rio de Janeiro
 - Expanding, including to rural areas in strategic regions
 - Mostly local, but evidence of operations outside of their home communities
- Close ties or direct support from politicians
- Why do they exist?
 - Corruption
 - Social acceptance of violence against suspected criminals
 - Militarization of security strategies
 - Limited public security budgets
 - Tacit support from the Bolsonaro administration

Militias in Rio de Janeiro

- Control around 1/4 of the metropolitan area (inhabited by 2 million people)
- Force residents to pay for security & access to goods and services
- Politics
 - Support local politicians' campaigns
 - Require payment of “taxes” in order to campaign
 - Attack or harm politicians, parties or allies who refuse
 - “Sell” votes of communities
 - Threaten residents to vote a certain way & prohibit rivals from campaigning
 - Some leaders have been elected to political office

Witnesses & Witness Protection

- Assistance Program for Victims and Witnesses At Risk (PROVITA)
 - Managed by the states
 - Apply for protection - decisions made by a committee
 - Deficiencies
- Lack of funding - makes witness protection “non-viable” or “useless”
- Fear of retaliation from gangs, militias & police
 - “Law of silence”

Violence Against Women

- “Macho”/sexist cultural attitudes + high levels of violence
- One of the highest female homicide rates in the world
- Domestic violence = widespread
 - 1/3 of women & girls suffered some form of violence within the last year (2017)
 - Viewed as a private matter
- Sexual violence
- Recent trends
 - Informal feminist movements & awareness campaigns
 - Increase in violence against women in 2018
 - Traditional views of the family & gender roles have become more common

Violence Against Women: State Protection

Institutional & legal framework exists, but implementation is a problem

Legislation

- Maria da Penha Law (MPL) (2006)
- Femicide Law (2015)
- Poor implementation

Police

- Lack of training, capacity, resources & gender sensitivity
- Revictimization, blaming the victim, or failing to find victims credible
- Failure to take basic investigative steps
- Failure to protect victims who come forward (i.e. monitoring of restraining orders)

Violence Against Women: State Protection

Women's police stations

- Successful in reducing homicides
- Concentrated in major urban areas
 - Present in 600 out of 5,600 municipalities
- Closed during nights & weekends (peak hours for domestic violence)

Judges

- May view domestic violence as a private matter
- May refuse to issue restraining orders – do not want to break up families

Other state services

- Hotline, reference centers & shelters
- Not evenly distributed in rural & urban areas, and regionally

LGBTI

- An “extremely contradictory country” for LGBTI rights
- LGBTI rights & social acceptance
- Extremely high levels of violence
 - Murders & hate crimes becoming more frequent
- Societal attitudes – have become more conservative
 - Bolsonaro – regularly makes homophobic remarks



Afro-Brazilians

- Myth of “racial democracy”
- Over half the population
- Structural discrimination, racism & violence
 - *“are affected significantly more than the overall population by nearly every possible negative indicator”*
 - Intersectionality of race, power & class
 - Institutional racism (policing & the justice sector)
 - Crime & violence

- Quilombos



Indigenous Population

- Less than 0.5% of the population
 - 305 different ethnic groups
- Land rights
- Face threats, attacks & murders, typically related to land rights
- Societal attitudes



Land Rights & Conflict

- 1% of the population owns 45% of land
- Conflict over land in rural areas
- Landless Workers' Movement (MST)
- Indigenous & Quilombo land rights

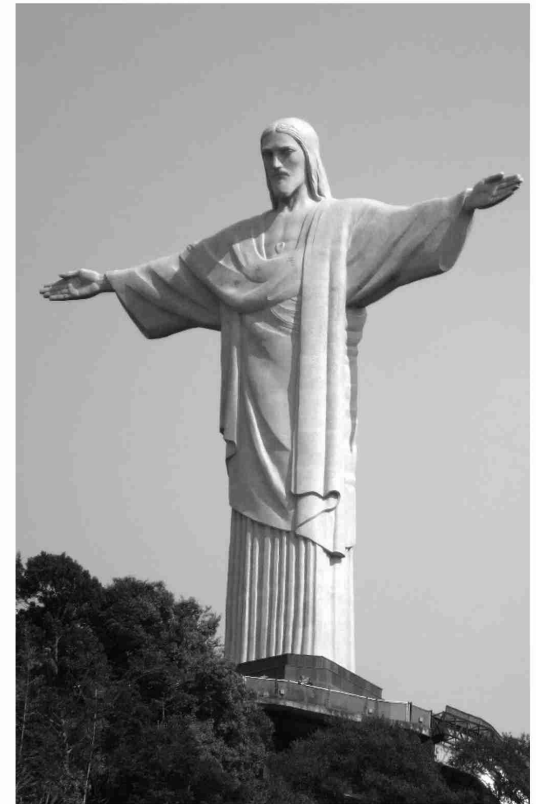


Environmental Defenders

- Illegal deforestation in the Amazon is driven by criminal networks
 - Illegal logging
 - Clear land for cattle or agriculture
- Defenders of the forest are threatened & killed
 - Local residents, public officials & indigenous peoples
- State protection
 - Impunity for crimes against environmental defenders
 - Program to protect human rights defenders exists, but offers little meaningful protection
 - Bolsonaro administration - steps to weaken environmental protections

Religion

- Increase in religiously-motivated violence
 - Attacks by religious criminal groups
- Indigenous & Afro-Brazilian religions have been targeted
 - Perceived as “evil”
 - Candomblé & Umbanda
- Evangelical gangs



Internal Displacement

- History of internal migration for economic reasons
- Internal displacement
 - Natural disasters
 - Development projects
 - Violence
- Information is limited (especially on displacement due to violence)
 - Since 2000, at least 7.7 million have been displaced due to natural disasters & development projects
- Government response = ineffective

Internal Displacement: Violence

- Urban areas
 - Gangs, militias & security forces
 - Violent conflict between groups and/or security forces
 - Targeting or punishment for breaking rules or having ties to rival groups
 - Nature of displacement
 - Short or long-term; intra or inter-city
 - Individual/family level
 - Invisible/hidden, with information largely anecdotal
 - “law of silence,” limited reporting, nature of displacement, etc.
- Rural areas
 - Violence related to access to land
 - 1.1 million forcibly displaced due to conflict over land since 2000

Contact Info

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AFGHANISTAN

Conflict and Human Rights Concerns

RAIO Research Unit

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

September 2020

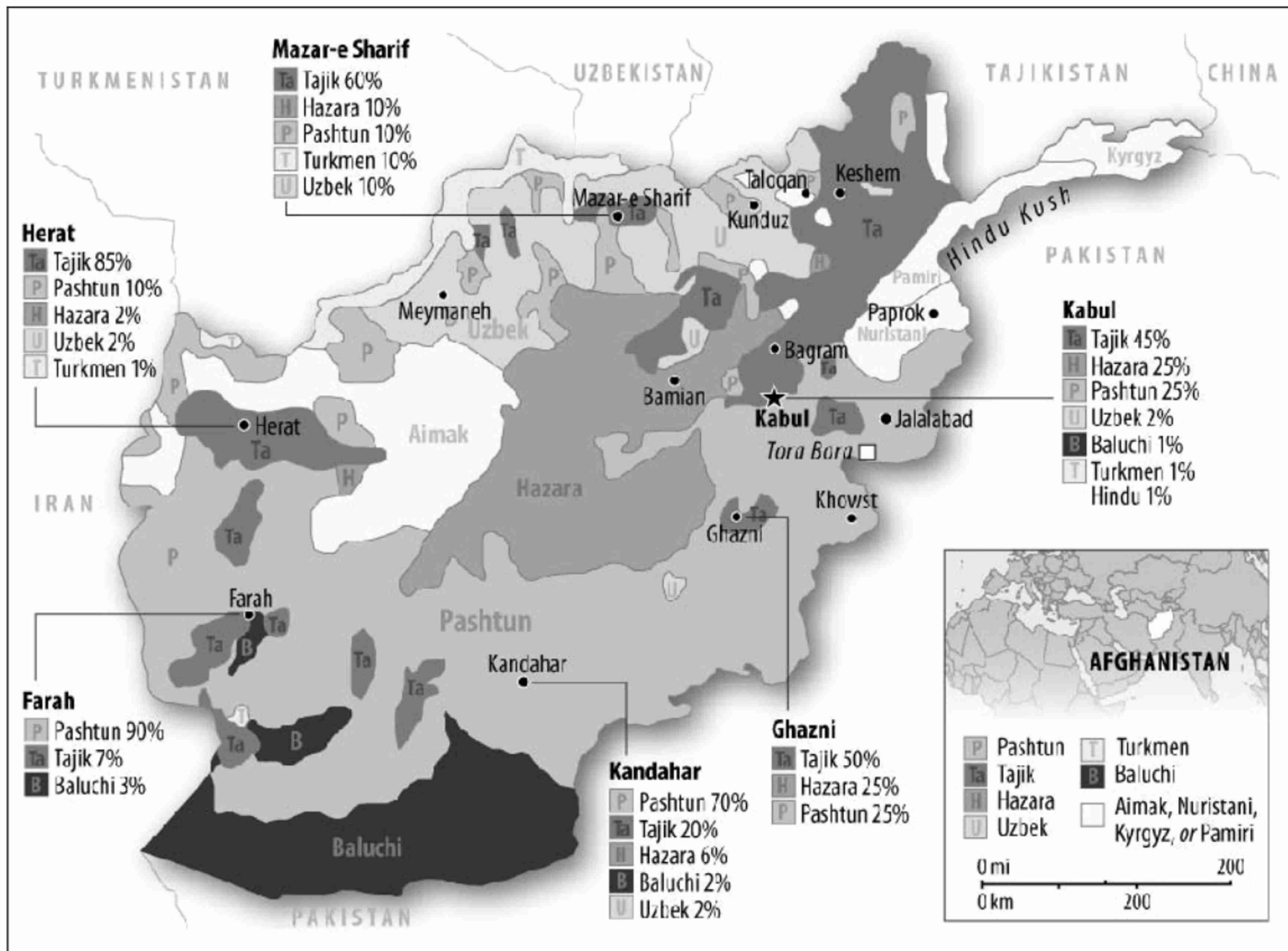




Topics

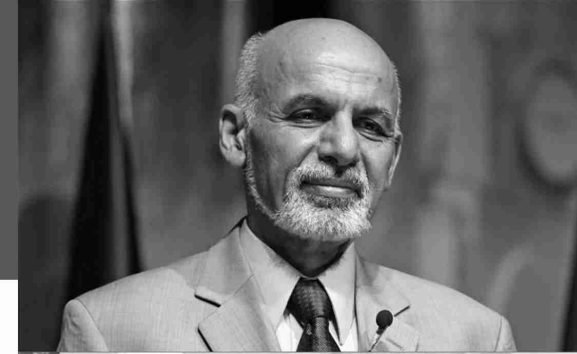
- Tribes and Ethnicity
- Security Overview & Timeline of Conflict
- Prior Military and Mujahideen
- Government Forces and Pro-Government Militias
- Current Non-state Armed Actors
- Human Rights Concerns
- Naming Conventions
- Resources

Figure A-2. Map of Afghan Ethnicities



Pashtuns

- Largest ethnic group (42%)
- Based in southern and eastern mountains, but minority in the north
- Predominantly in power
- Sunni
- Not monolithic, with varying degrees of connection to central government
- Includes Taliban, Hamid Karzai, Ashraf Ghani



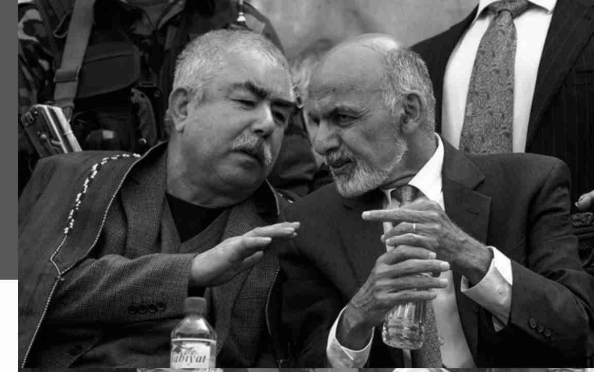
Tajiks

- Second largest group (27%)
- Northern and northeast location
- Most are Sunnis of the Hanafi Sect (some Shia)
- Predominant component of Northern Alliance
- Male-dominated society, but women have had less public restriction than women in other groups



Uzbeks

- Estimated 9%
- Concentrated in mountainous northern regions
- Hanafi Sunni Muslims (culturally)
- Component of Northern Alliance
- Small villages, often with Tajik neighbors
- Averse to Pashtuns who moved into their homelands in numbers sufficient to render them a minority by the 1960s



Hazaras

- Estimated 9%
- Central location, as much as 40% of Kabul
- Moderate Shiites
- Generally non-tribal, but growing consciousness of ethnic pride and solidarity
- Vulnerable and often marginalized
- Steady ascendance in society and politics, causing Pashtun resentment and conflict
- Targeted by Islamic State (and Taliban?)



Security Overview



Security Overview

- Overall trend is continuing violence and insurgent attacks throughout country (but some decrease)
- Ongoing insurgency (Primarily Taliban)
- Weak and corrupt Afghan governance
- United Nations: civilian deaths remain at "extreme levels"
- Peace talks (February US/Taliban agreement; May 2020 ceasefire)