

Survey of the Afghan people: some statistics about religion and politics

HRWF (18.11.2015) - The Asian Foundation has published "Afghanistan in 2015: A Survey of the Afghan People" (<http://bit.ly/1HZjmP1>) in which a short section is devoted to Politics and Religion:

Q-31. Some people say that politics and religion should be mixed. Other people say politics and religion should not mix. For example, some say religious scholars should only manage religion, and should not take part in politics. Which is closer to your view?

Most Afghans (61.3%) say that religious scholars should be involved in politics. Pashtuns (65.0%) and Tajiks (61.7%) are more likely to agree that religious leaders should be involved in political decisions, compared to 56.0% of Uzbeks and 52.6% of Hazaras. Accordingly, the regions with the highest percentage of residents who believe religious leaders should take part in political decisions are the regions with the highest concentrations of Pashtun and Tajik residents: the South West (73.2%) and East (73.3%) regions. Meanwhile, the regions with the lowest percentage of residents who say the same are the Central/Hazarajat (48.8%), North West (56.1%), and West (56.8%) regions. In all regions, the percentage of residents who support mixing religion and politics declined in 2015 compared to how Afghans answered the same question in 2014 (64.9%). However, responses to this question have varied considerably over the past 10 years.

There are slight differences in opinion between residents of urban (58.1%) and rural (62.3%) regions who support religious leaders' involvement in politics, and also between men (63.6%) and women (59.3%). Afghans who studied at the university level are less likely (55.9%) to support the involvement of religious leaders in politics compared to Afghans who did not attend school (61.7%). Residents of insecure areas who were polled using intercept interviews are significantly more supportive of the involvement of religious leaders in politics (73.3%).