



Program for Culture and Conflict Studies

## **SHINWARI TRIBE**

**The Program for Culture & Conflict Studies**

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Monterey, CA

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## PRIMARY LOCATION

A large portion of the Shinwari Tribe lives in the Landi Kotal region, at the Khyber Pass, in the Khyber Agency of the FATA. The tribe straddles the Durand Line, and tribal members carry out cross-border social and commercial exchanges with Shinwaris in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> Their home town is called Loargi, and they have three primary villages: Khuga Khel, Sheikh Mal Khel, and Man Sokai.<sup>2</sup>

## KEY TERRAIN FEATURES

The Khyber Agency is a hilly area with narrow valleys. Several mountain ranges meet here: Lacha Gar, Karagah Ghar, Surghar, Tor Ghar Morgah, and Kalauch. The famous Khyber Pass, at 1,180 meters (3,870 ft.) ASL, is the gateway to Afghanistan through the Kuh-e Sefid range.<sup>3</sup>

The Khyber Agency has two major rivers. The Bara River in the southern Khajuri plain provides for relatively arable farm land. The Kabul River forms the northern boundary, separating Khyber from Mohmand Agency.<sup>4</sup> Another river in the agency is the Chora, which flows east-northeast on the north side of the Surghar range.<sup>5</sup>

Valleys : Maidan, Rujgal, Bara, Bazaar, Choor, Wachpal and Tirah<sup>6</sup>

## WEATHER

Khyber Agency experiences hot temperatures during the summer season, May through August. Maximum temperatures may reach 104 degrees, while the lows average 79 degrees. During the cooler months of November through April, however, average high temperatures reach 64 degrees and lows dip to around 39 degrees. Average annual rainfall over the Khyber Agency is 15 to 16 inches.<sup>7</sup>

## RELIGION/SECT

The Shinwari Tribe belongs to the Sunni branch of Islam.

## IMPORTANT SHRINES

- Haji Gul Baba Darbar in Piro Khel
- Hazrat Kaka Jee in Ash Khel
- Shaheed Baba near Mirdad Khel
- Hamaish Gul Baba in Piro Khel

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<sup>1</sup> S. Iftikhar Hussain, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes Along the Pak-Afghan Border*, University of Peshawar and Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> S. Iftikhar Hussain, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes Along the Pak-Afghan Border*, University of Peshawar and Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany, 2000, 71.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fata.gov.pk/subpages/khyber.php>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fata.gov.pk/subpages/khyber.php>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.bookrags.com/wiki/Khyber\\_Agency#Chora\\_River](http://www.bookrags.com/wiki/Khyber_Agency#Chora_River)

<sup>6</sup> <http://waziristanhills.com/FATA/AgenciesFRs/KhyberAgency/tabid/79/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fata.gov.pk/subpages/khyber.php>

- Da Bukhara Haji Saib in Sheikh Mal Khel's Gur Guray region.<sup>8</sup>

## MIGRATORY PATTERNS

Some Shinwaris may observe seasonal migration to the Peshawar Plains.<sup>9</sup>

## ALLIANCES

The Shinwari Tribe has been known to form alliances with the Mohmands, the Safis, and the Afridis.<sup>10</sup> However, some sources indicate that the Mohmand Tribe is frequently in a state of conflict with the Shinwari Tribe.<sup>11</sup>

## FEUDS

The Shinwari Tribe has historically feuded with the Khogiani Tribe, which is a Karlanri sub-tribe.<sup>12</sup> There are some historical inter-tribal feuds over land.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Shinwari tribe falls under the Kansai branch and are Sarbani Pashtuns.<sup>13</sup> This tribe has a reputation for bravery.<sup>14</sup> During Britain's colonization of India, the Shinwari Tribe was known to oppose the British forces in the region, and it also gave the Afghan King Abdur Rahman Khan trouble in the 1880s.<sup>15</sup> In 1929, the Shinwaris' rebellion helped to topple Afghan King Amanullah Khan.<sup>16</sup> The people are described as being tall with a strong build and fair complexion.<sup>17</sup> They are also superstitiously religious and esteem pirs, faqirs, and mullahs.<sup>18</sup> Of the four Shinwari divisions, Mandezai, Sangu Khel, Sipah, and Ali Sher Khel, the Ali Sher Khel is the one predominantly on the eastern side of the Durand Line. The Ali Sher Khel clan has seven septs: Paset Khel, Autar Khel, Kall Khel, Par Khel, Sheikh Khel, Piro Khel, and Isa Khel.<sup>19</sup> The main occupations of the Shinwaris are transportation and spare-parts trade.<sup>20</sup> They are also involved in illegal narcotics

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<sup>8</sup> S. Iftikhar Hussain, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes Along the Pak-Afghan Border*, University of Peshawar and Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany, 2000, 74.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.khyber.gov.pk/Geography.php>

<sup>10</sup> Sir Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, Government of India Press, New Delhi, 1958.

<sup>11</sup> Ahmed, Akbar S., *Social and Economic Change in the Tribal Areas, 1972-1976*, Oxford University Press, London, UK, 1977.

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.nps.edu/programs/CCS/Docs/Tribal%20Trees/Khogiani\\_Tribe.pdf](http://www.nps.edu/programs/CCS/Docs/Tribal%20Trees/Khogiani_Tribe.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> S. Iftikhar Hussain, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes Along the Pak-Afghan Border*, University of Peshawar and Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany, 2000, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, p.295.

<sup>15</sup> Sir Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, Government of India Press, New Delhi, 1958.

<sup>16</sup> Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, p.295.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.fata.gov.pk/subpages/khyber.php>

<sup>18</sup> S. Iftikhar Hussain Shah, *Some Major Pukhtoon Tribes Along the Pak-Afghan Border*, University of Peshawar and Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany, 2000, 70.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

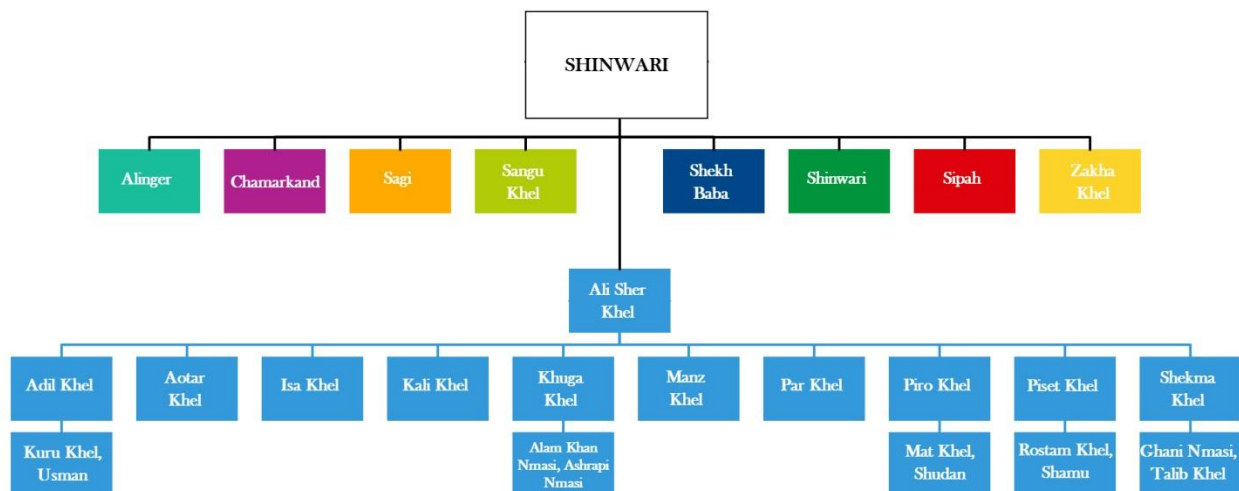
processing and smuggling.<sup>21</sup>

## UNITY & SECURITY

There are 24 Maliks on payroll in Khyber Agency, three of which are from the Shinwari Tribe.<sup>22</sup> There are also over 3,000 Khassadars in Khyber Agency, appointed by the Political Agent, but the number of Shinwari tribesmen in the Khassadars is unknown. These Khassadars are responsible for securing main roads and government utilities.<sup>23</sup>

## RELATIONSHIP WITH TALIBAN/AL-QAEDA

In January 2010, the Shinwari Tribe on the Afghanistan side of the Durand Line accepted \$1M from the US Government for community projects. In response, the tribal elders pledged support for the Afghan Government and promised to fight the Taliban. The elders have declared that any Shinwaris found to be supporting the Taliban will be fined and forced out of the tribe, their homes burned down.



<sup>21</sup> Pierre-Arnaud Chauvy, "Opiate Smuggling Routes from Afghanistan to Europe and Asia," in Jane's Intelligence Review, March 1, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/fata-khyber.htm>

<sup>23</sup> <http://waziristanhills.com/FATA/AgenciesFRs/KhyberAgency/tabid/79/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>