Najibullah Afghan Leader

From Ency. Brit.

Najibullah, also known as Mohammad Najibullah, (born 1947, Gardīz, Afghanistan—died September 27, 1996, Kabul), Afghan military official who was president of Afghanistan from 1986 to 1992.

The son of a prominent Pashtun family, Najibullah (who, like many Afghans, had only a single name) began studying medicine at Kabul University in 1964 and received his degree in 1975, but he never practiced medicine. He joined the Banner (“Parcham”) faction of the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in 1965, and he was twice imprisoned for political activities. In 1978 the PDPA staged a successful coup, but the People’s (“Khalq”) faction soon gained supremacy over the Banner faction. Najibullah was named ambassador to Iran in 1978 but was fired within months after being accused of plotting to overthrow the regime of [Hafizullah Amin](http://school.ebonline.com/levels/high/article/Hafizullah-Amin/384572). Najibullah went into exile in eastern Europe until the U.S.S.R. intervened in 1979 and supported a Parcham-dominated government.

Najibullah was made head of the secret police and became known for his brutality and ruthlessness. His methods proved invaluable to the regime in view of escalating guerrilla warfare of the Muslim mujahideen, but, as the [war](http://school.ebonline.com/levels/high/article/Afghan-War/3923) grew in intensity, the Soviet Union withdrew. Najibullah, who replaced [Babrak Karmal](http://school.ebonline.com/levels/high/article/Babrak-Karmal/384573) as president in 1986, attempted to gain support by relaxing Karmal’s strict control, but he was widely despised and was finally forced from office by the mujahideen rebels and mutinous groups within his own military in 1992. He took refuge in a United Nations compound, where he was sheltered for the next four years. Factional fighting continued, and, when the [Taliban](http://school.ebonline.com/levels/high/article/Taliban/383768) militia took over the capital, Kabul, in 1996, they summarily executed Najibullah