

THE ANSO REPORT

ANSO and our donors accept no liability for the results of any activity conducted or omitted on the basis of this report.
-Not for copy or sale-

COUNTRY SUMMARY

The year has gotten off to an unpromising start with NGO already involved in eight separate security incidents including six abductions (four cases), one robbery/assault, a serious death threat, one case of arson and one use of an IED in an NGO supported hospital.

The standard "winter lull" has failed to materialize this year and conflict remained higher in Dec/Jan than during even the peak of conflict 2007. During the first 15 days of January more than 200 AOG attacks incidents have been reported to ANSO resulting in approximately 19 civilian deaths as collateral damage.

Crime has been spiking with 48 serious incidents killing 23 civilians in this two week period.

Plans for reinforcement of IMF are progressing with a tentative confirmation of an additional 30,000 US troops made within this period. It is anticipated that Wardak and Logar will be among the first provinces targeted with the new forces.

ANSO recently released its fourth quarterly report for 2008 and the two main graphs on NGO trends and conflict are recreated below. Please note the provincial trackers in this report are up to Dec 2008 only.

Inside this Issue

Central Region	2-4
Northern Region	5-7
Eastern Region	7-9
Western Region	10-11
Southern Region	12-15
ANSO Info Page	16

ANSO is supported by

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid



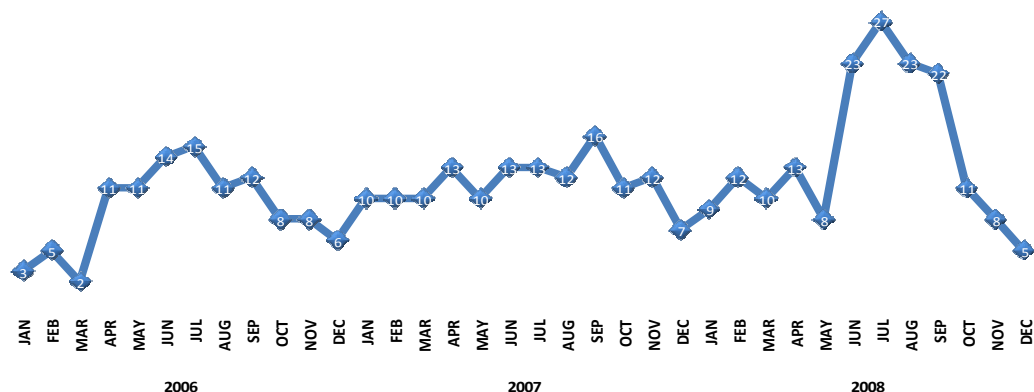
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



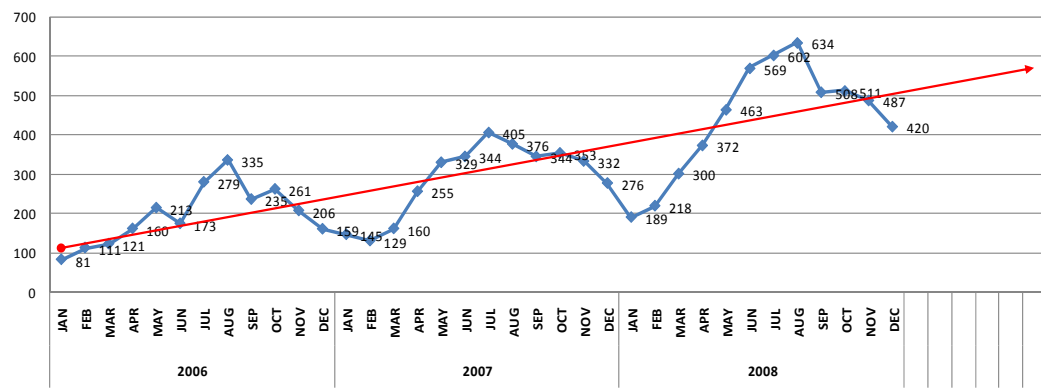
NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ANSO reported total NGO security incidents 2006-2008



AOG Initiated Attacks 2006-2008

(Includes only AOG Close Range, Indirect Fire and Suicide Attacks.
Does NOT include any criminal event or activity)



KABUL

An NGO received a letter accusing them of being involved in activities against the beliefs/practices of this country. The letter specifically targeted this NGO, which is faith based. While this incident does not suggest a wider threat to the NGO community, faith based NGO are particularly vulnerable to such threats due to the possibility of misunderstanding regarding their mission. All NGO are advised to assess community understanding of their work and attempt to address any concerns regarding their mission. This is especially important for faith based NGO. Obviously, take any threats seriously, and don't assume that previous responses will suffice in the current environment.

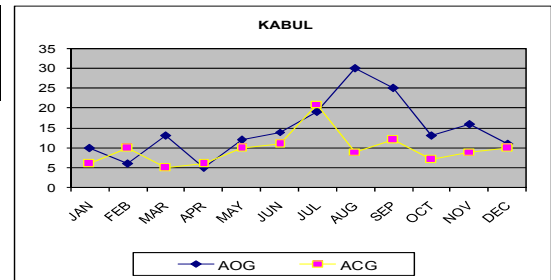
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Decreased security in and around city
- IEDs, suicide bombings, rocket attacks
- Abduction

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	2
This Report Period	2

Kabul city has a notable level of criminal activity, which is most likely to impact national staff, given that in almost all cases they have much more local interaction and freedom of movement than internationals do. During this period in District 9, an INGO local staff was assaulted and robbed by a taxi driver and accomplices. This scenario has played out before in the city, with NGO and UN staff falling victim to early morning robberies. Also this period a local UN staff member was threatened by a person demanding cash. While the street robbery was random, this incident was likely linked to the perception of the victim as a high values target due to his association with an international organization. International staff are also perceived as high value targets: Abduction is always an extant threat.

There were anecdotal reports this period that AOG are moving freely in Paghman and the area around Qargha Lake, areas that



have proven troublesome in the past. Surobi too remains a danger area that should also be avoided. While these two areas currently stand out, most districts outside Kabul city are the domain of AOG/ACG.

Threat traffic for Kabul city was thick with familiar reports (e.g. planned attacks on Darulaman Road and against high profile international targets, AOG in police uniforms prowling the city, plans to kidnap internationals). These likely gained the perception of credibility from circular reporting and the anniversary of the Serena attack (14 January). While the majority of reports are specious, the volume may serve as a rough gauge of the threat environment. At this time of year as AOG engagement with security forces slows, high profile attacks are a way for AOG to maintain their threat status and demonstrate power while undermining faith in security forces and the government. NGO should remain vigilant in their security precautions and situational awareness, and stay well clear of common targets such as security convoys.

WARDAK

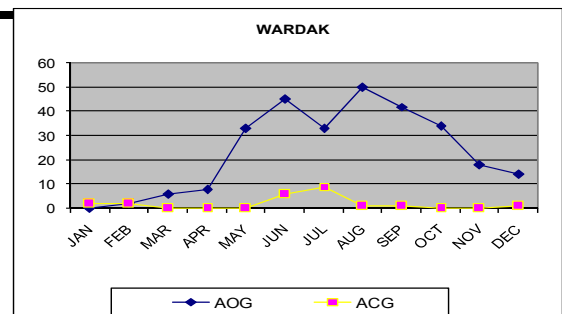
AOG incidents are low so far this month, mostly limited to a few attacks on security forces in Saydabad. During the winter

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Overall instability and frequent clashes
- Attacks on vehicles traveling the main road
- De-facto AOG control of most areas

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

months the majority of incidents will likely remain in Saydabad due to its long stretch of the Kabul-Ghazni highway and the presence of security forces. But other districts east of the Bihsuds should still be considered AOG strongholds that will become active again in the spring, if not before. Saydabad is the most obviously dangerous district for travel, but in general the Kabul-Ghazni road is monitored by AOG and should be assumed to be dangerous.



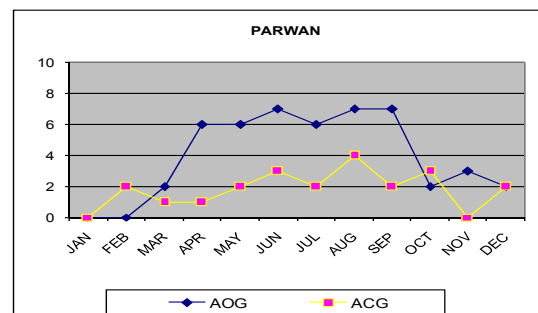
NGO travel is not recommended. Any travel through the district should be strictly low profile with staff and vehicles sanitized of materials and documents that may identify them with an NGO. Beyond the possibility of direct targeting, NGO face the prospect of collateral damage from clashes between AOG and military forces.

PARWAN

During the night on 11 January, someone tried to burn an NGO's tractor that was parked outside the NGO compound. Locals extinguished the fire before it caused serious damage. The perpetrators are unknown. Ghorband is known to have an AOG presence and some locals in the area may have AOG ties or sympathies. While the incident may have been directed at the NGO's activities, there had been no prior threat or indication of dissatisfaction with their operations. There are anecdotal reports that some villages oppose district officials and it is speculated that this may have been an attempt to undermine confidence in their ability to control the security in the area. Presently this does not seem to indicate a wider threat to NGO. However, NGO are advised to monitor and assess local support for their projects.

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	1

For two days the road between Parwan and Bamiyan was closed due to demonstrations in the Charhar Dar area of Ghorband. The demonstrations, which stemmed from local opposition to the district governor, have ended and the road re-opened. There have been no IED attacks between Charharikar and Bamiyan since September, so currently that threat appears to be minimal. As this is a key route between Kabul and Bamiyan, AOG can be expected to have an interest in exerting control of this road. Any travel through the area should be low-profile and driving near security vehicles and convoys should be strictly avoided.



AOG can be expected to have an interest in exerting control of this road. Any travel through the area should be low-profile and driving near security vehicles and convoys should be strictly avoided.

AOG are known to operate in pockets of the province—particularly Kohi Safi and areas west of Charharikar. A 29 December VBIED attack on a U.S. convoy in Charharikar city revealed that AOG have not completely abandoned operations for the winter. Beyond that incident, there is currently nothing to suggest an increased threat within Charharikar for NGO. During the winter months, AOG incidents will likely remain low with periodic attacks directed at police and military.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- History of IED incidents on road between Charharikar and Bamiyan
- Collateral damage from attacks on security forces
- Demonstrations on main road in Ghorband

BAMYAN

Bamiyan remained mostly quiet with a few local criminal incidents reported. AOG activity was evidenced by the discovery of three IEDs in the Tangi Moyak area of Kahmard District, which along with Sayghan and the northern section of Shibar is known to have a notable AOG presence and should be considered unsafe for NGO operations and travel. As in other provinces, there was a demonstration against the Israeli military campaign in Gaza. Currently, such demonstrations and the sentiments that spur them do not seem to pose any direct threat to NGO. However, as elsewhere, this could change depending on the duration and impact of the offensive. In any event, NGO should avoid any demonstrations.

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

with Sayghan and the northern section of Shibar is known to have a notable AOG presence and should be considered unsafe for NGO operations and travel. As in other provinces, there was a demonstration against the Israeli military campaign in Gaza. Currently, such demonstrations and the sentiments that spur them do not seem to pose any direct threat to NGO. However, as elsewhere, this could change depending on the duration and impact of the offensive. In any event, NGO should avoid any demonstrations.

onstration against the Israeli military campaign in Gaza. Currently, such demonstrations and the sentiments that spur them do not seem to pose any direct threat to NGO. However, as elsewhere, this could change depending on the duration and impact of the offensive. In any event, NGO should avoid any demonstrations.

DAYKUNDI

Unconfirmed reports indicate that a local warlord (Sadaqat) is building up support in Khadir District likely for the purpose of undermining the district and/or provincial government. Sadaqat's engagement in AOG activities is reportedly to be strictly related to a dispute with local government and not the national government.

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

However the dispute could contribute to instability and has the potential for impacting NGO with operations in the area.

The southern districts of Kijran, Giti, and Gizab are largely under AOG control and/or conducive for their free movement. From these areas there are periodic reports of AOG clashes with security forces and local populations as well as clashes between rival AOG groups. AOG movement north is largely prevented by local populations, but prior to the winter anecdotal reports suggested that AOG movement north was increasing. Currently, progress in this area is likely slowed by winter weather, but it may pick up again in the spring. If so, this will mean greater instability in the north and a riskier environment for NGO.

of AOG clashes with security forces and local populations as well as clashes between rival AOG groups. AOG movement north is largely prevented by local populations, but prior to the winter anecdotal reports suggested that AOG movement north was increasing. Currently, progress in this area is likely slowed by winter weather, but it may pick up again in the spring. If so, this will mean greater instability in the north and a riskier environment for NGO.

LOGAR

AOG incident levels have dropped significantly over the last two months, and Logar was mostly quiet this period. So far in January there have been only two AOG incidents reported: an ambush on security forces in Baraki Barak, and an IED attack on an IMF vehicle in Charkh. Security forces are active (mostly at night) and reported the capture of another prominent AOG commander. While such events are

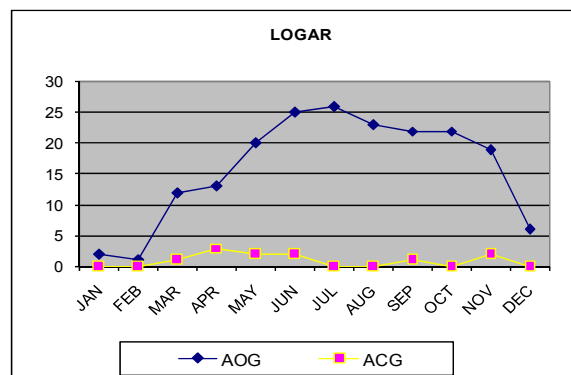
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG freedom of movement
- Clashes between AOG and security forces
- Abduction

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

notable, as mentioned in previous reports, at this time of year it is difficult to distinguish their impact on incidents from the usual seasonal slowdown, and benefits will likely prove short-lived.

There were no reports of overt AOG monitoring and check points on the main road to/from Kabul and overall activity has dropped off. However, a covert and informal AOG monitoring and reporting network should be assumed, and Logar should still be considered risky of NGO operations. NGO with operations in the province should only do so



with local support and evidence of AOG acceptance. Any travel through the district should be strictly low profile with staff and vehicles sanitized of materials and documents that may identify them with an NGO.

KAPISA

AOG incidents Kapisa have been low in January. The only report so far was a 9 January attack on ANP in Mahmudi Raqi. The low incident levels, though, are somewhat deceiving. Tagab, Alasay, and Nijrab are reportedly AOG strong-

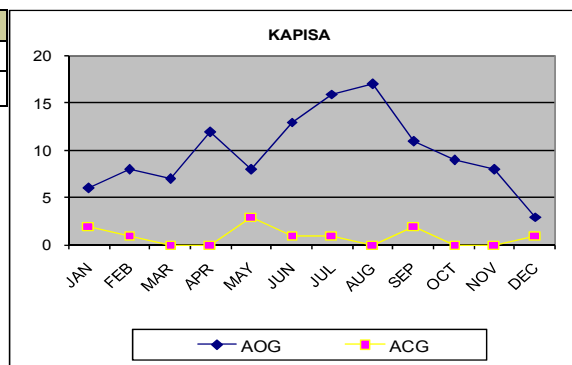
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Overall instability
- Collateral damage from security & AOG clashes
- Significant AOG presence in some districts

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

holds and other districts should be considered permissive for AOG movement.

Danger in the Tagab/Alasay area for those supporting government and/or military projects was highlighted this week by the abduction and murder of a contractor reported to have been working on an IMF road construction project. Tagab is the province's most active district for military operations, so it is likely that his death



was at least partially due to his association with the project.

PANJSHIR

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

Information from the area remains tightly controlled by authorities, but even if reports are contained and information guarded, Panjshir is still very quiet and safe in its own right. There are reports of possible inter-tribal tensions stemming from a fatal vehicle accident. If such tensions escalate, it could be significant in the insular context of the local population of Panjshir, but there is no indication this will pose a threat to NGO.

KUNDUZ

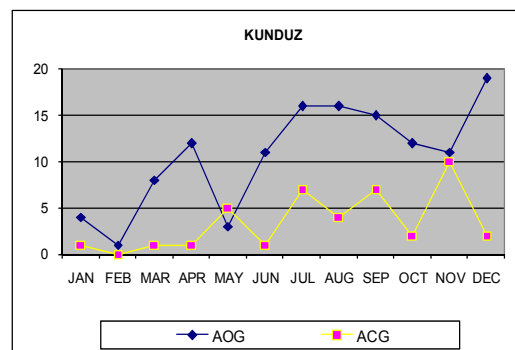
2008 in Kunduz has seen a significant increase in the amount of incidents without much shift in their nature or targeting. The volume of incidents increased almost five fold from 56 in 2007 to 243 as of 24 December 2008. The focus of AOG activity has consistently remained ANSF and IMF targeted with small arms fire, IEDs, VBIEDs, and BBIEDs. Within the realm of GoA installations targeted, police stations and checkpoints have generally been

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Attacks on ANSF and IMF
- Threats against NGOs
- Confluence of ACG and AOG activity

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

favoured but late 2008 also saw a number of incidents involving voter registration centres established for the upcoming 2009 elections. NGO incidents have increased dramatically, from 1 in 2007 to 13 in 2008, though this is partly attributable to better reporting. Most NGO incidents have consisted of threats, either verbal or written, and in both instances of murder there were extenuating circumstances beyond the individuals' involvement in NGOs that expedited their demise. The NGOs that bore the brunt of incidents were involved in NSP implementation and medical services provision and hence highly exposed. All affected NGOs have put significant effort into redou-



bling their acceptance efforts amongst their beneficiary communities and it remains to be seen whether this will bare fruit since AOG activities are split between open resistance and covert operations. While not directly involving NGOs, school attacks have also risen in 2009, reflecting the apparent broader AOG strategy of targeting anything related to the government. Amongst the northern provinces, in Kunduz AOG groups are more often carrying out their own attacks (though by no means always) rather than contracting with ACG elements to do so.

BAGHLAN

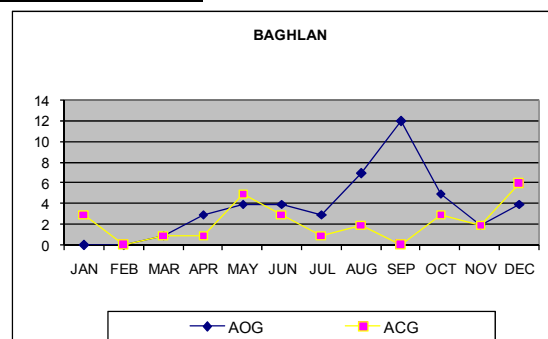
Compared to Kunduz, Baghlan has seen a more modest rise in incidents in 2008 (139 compared to 81 in 2007). For NGO activity, the prime areas of concern remain the Puli Khumri-Baghlani Jadid corridor. NGOs have been exposed in this area because it is a popular and relatively safe land route between Kabul and Kunduz, and the primary threat to their activity is from collateral damage in suicide or IED attacks targeting ANSF and IMF. Baghlani Jadid had the highest number of incidents for any district in Baghlan (47 in 2008, up from 26 in

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- Increased AOG activity in Baghlani Jadid and Puli Hisar

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

2007). The increase in incidents is partly due to a rise in AOG activity, but can also be explained by increased ANSF exposure. AOG activity has consistently occurred within two major zones, the aforementioned corridor and the remote eastern districts centering on Puli Hisar, where at least one local power broker has been attempting to assert influence. The rise in ANSF exposure has meant that installations such as ANP checkpoints have been placed in more remote areas and consequently are more vulnerable to attack as such targets had not existed previously. Seizures of weapons and discovery of weapons caches are also an important part of the increase, which could indicate increased ANSF competence, increased ANSF activity, or increased trans-



shipment of materiel on the part of AOGs. Another abiding concern for Baghlan is that larger AOGs based in the south will try to use the province as a staging ground for "spectacular attacks" that would be designed to grab media attention and create the impression of instability in the north. Examples of these include the 2007 sugar factory attack that killed parliamentarian Mustafa Kazimi and a BBIED attack in October 2008 on the police headquarters in Puli Khumri which killed or severely wounded over a dozen ANP and IMF personnel during an induction ceremony. While a cause for concern, the threat of such an attack remains too nebulous to affect NGOs' activities beyond the standard advisory

JAWZJAN

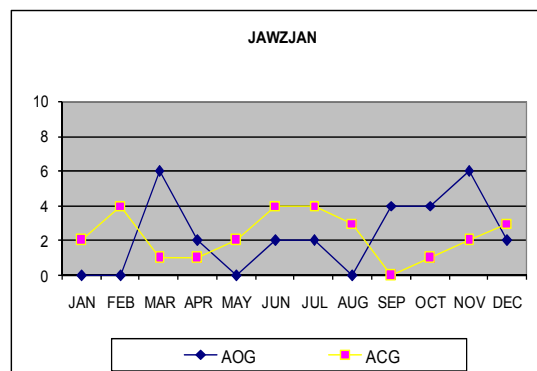
Reflecting wider patterns in the north, 2008 incidents in Jawzjan doubled on those of 2007 (up from 44 to 88). Also in line with the rest of the region, targeting and methods have not changed throughout this period. Incidents in Jawzjan have been spread evenly between the districts of Shibirghan, Khaniqa, Aqcha, Mardyan, Mingajik, and Fayzabad, and have substantially reduced in Qushtappa in 2008. In Jawzjan the line between AOG and ACG attacks is especially blurry and furthermore intermingled with ongoing competition between political factions. Events sponsored

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Political disputes
- Criminal activity

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	
This Report Period	

sored by ACGs or political actors are often made to appear AOG-motivated in order to influence a desired outcome. Conversely, AOG groups are often small in terms of numbers and support, and as a result contract their activities out to ACGs. In 2008 NGOs were caught in the fray considerably more often and experienced ten direct incidents in 2008 (as opposed to one in 2007). The primary motive in their targeting is related to political importance of aid in the local patronage-based political ecology. Political actors both tout and measure their success based on inflows of aid to a given area and hence a significant proportion of NGO incidents are best explained within the framework of political



interests constructing a threat to aid, against which they can then defend their constituents. Only one incident in 2008 (an IED targeting and NGO vehicle) appears to have been carried out with intent to murder while the others were set up so as to get maximum possible attention while causing as little actual damage as possible. While the rise of strong, independent, locally based AOGs is a possibility in Jawzjan, the main concern from the NGO community will probably continue to come from dynamics within the official political structure, especially in the run up to the 2009 elections.

BALKH

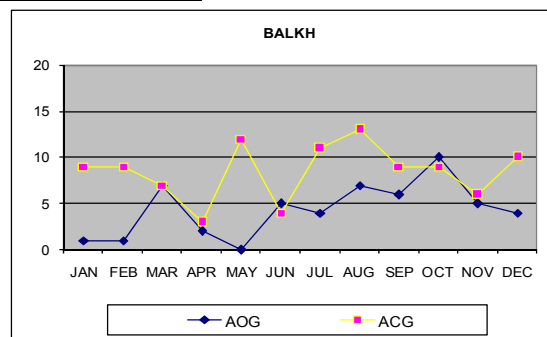
The increase in incidents in Balkh in 2008 (286, up from 156 in 2007) owes to a diverse set of circumstances and is spread throughout the province. The most significant increase is seen in Chahar Bolak district, where incidents more than tripled from 20 to 62 though they have not changed in terms of targeting or methods used. Threats, violence resulting from political conflicts,

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Criminal activity
- AOG sentiment in western districts

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

and occasional grenades and IEDs constitute the majority of activity in Chahar Bolak, where ethnic tensions underlie other socioeconomic factors such as poverty and illiteracy. The upsurge in incidents in Chahar Bolak has not disproportionately affected NGO activity. NGO incidents (nine in 2008, up from six in 2007) represent a diverse set of circumstances such as threats, targeted attacks and collateral damages (NGO workers' houses being robbed), which in turn reflects their broad exposure in the province, both geographically and in terms of projects. Throughout the rest of



the province AOG activity has increased in Chimalt and Sholgara districts while elsewhere incidents are mostly a manifestation of heightened ACG activity, specifically in Mazar, which saw a rise from 69 to 91 incidents.

FARAYAB

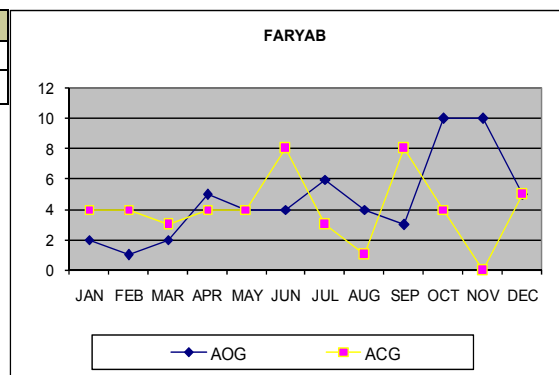
Faryab in 2008 saw a small increase in incidents over 2007 (from 139 to 158). Faryab in general has similar dynamics to Jawzjan with the exception of one western district, Qaysar, which borders upon the extremely volatile districts of Ghormach and Bala Murghab in Badghis province. In fact, the entire uptick in activity in Faryab can be accounted for by Qaysar district alone, where incidents have risen from 25 in 2007 to 42 in 2008.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG activity in Qaysar
- Roadside IEDs

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

The bulk of AOG-initiated incidents are concentrated along the Maymana-Qal'ai Naw road, which is currently under construction. In many of these instances the road construction worker have been the targets of AOG attacks such as earlier this week when seven employees were abducted. CDCs are also popular AOG targets due to their association with the National Solidarity Programme, one of the largest and most well know projects nationwide. Very few incidents in Faryab have involved NGOs for the reason that few NGOs are not presence and hence exposed in



the province's most volatile areas. The biggest concern to NGO activity in other areas of the province is the placement of IEDs along the Maymana-Andkhoy road but it should also be noted that most such attacks are unsuccessful in that local residents who observe the idea placement often report it to the authorities.

NANGAHAR

The use of a hand grenade to damage a NGO facility inside Jalalabad Public Hospital on the evening of 12 January illustrates the availability of munitions to criminal groups in the province. Six significant arms and ammunition finds in this period are further evidence of the risks prevalent in Nangarhar, and 3 recent, unconnected, murders in Jalalabad City are examples of the types of incident that are starting to regularly appear in security data collected. This reporting period has also shown how closely levels and types of AOG activity in the province are dictated by cross-

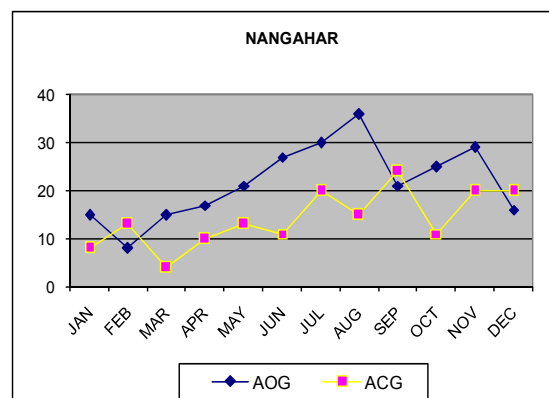
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Roadside IED
- Collateral damage in DAC attacks
- AOG prevalence in southern districts

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	1

border movement. The phased reopening of Torkham border crossing point has coincided with a clear rise in IED activity in the province. Coupled with the completion of a significant ANSF operation in some eastern districts, AOG have been able and well motivated to attempt numerous IED attacks. Almost all failed (10 of 11), either detonating early or being found and made safe by security forces. This failure rate may be partially due to a large number of arrests made in late December, removing several members of AOG who were said to be responsible for IED production. Elsewhere in the region IED finds by security forces have been followed by what appear to be AOG reprisals against the local population, but this has not yet happened in Nangarhar.

With the resurgence in IED use,



AOG have made less use of direct fire than in recent weeks, making a short-lived attack against Chaparhar DAC and another against Kuz Kunar DAC, both without causing any casualties.

An aborted attack against a company laying fibre optic cables through Khogyani resulted in the death of an employee who attempted to escape the attack. Elsewhere in Khogyani, the appearance of night letters posted around a local mosque provided a reminder that AOG have significant freedom to act in this and several other districts in the south of the province.

KHOST

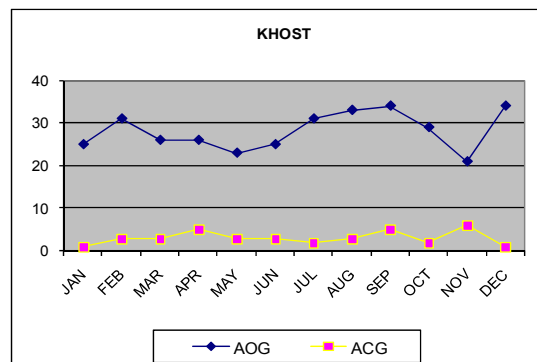
With overall incident and AOG initiated events at a similar level to the corresponding period in 2008, there has nonetheless been a rapid increase in AOG activity during the second week of January. The first week of the month saw two indirect fire attacks against Bak DAC and IMF air power being used against AOG operating in

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ☛ Suicide attack in DACs & Khost City
- ☛ Collateral damage in DAC attacks
- ☛ Abduction

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

the north of the province, close to Zambar DAC. The second week saw AOG activity levels, and the use of IEDs in particular, return to those experienced in late November and December. As in those months there has been a concentration of incidents in Khost itself, with 4 IED incidents inside the city, only one of which failed to detonate against a target. Outside the city, AOG also used indirect fire against Sabari DAC, and targeted Bak DAC for the third time this month. IEDs placed outside Khost in this pe-



riod have been found in the north and south of the province, in Sabari and Tani districts. This level of activity has added credibility to reports of a B/VBBIED circulating in Khost City and recalling the number of suicide attacks in October and November 2008, it is reasonable to expect another in the near future.

LAGHMAN

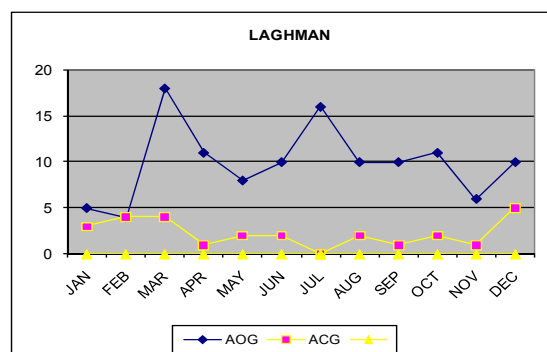
The year started with several AOG incidents being reported in the province; there were none in the corresponding period in 2008. An attack on an ANA patrol on the Kabul-Jalalabad road killed a soldier and occurred on the same stretch of road where an IM convoy was attacked in the previous reporting period. The third attack in the same area within a week occurred on 05 January when a doctor employed by a NGO was returning to Jalalabad alone in his car and was forced to stop by AOG. Having been searched and questioned he was eventually al-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ☛ AOG presence on Route 1 in Qarghayi
- ☛ IED in Alishing and Alingar Valleys

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

lowed to proceed, but the incident, which took place in daylight hours, again shows the continuing risks of travel along Route 1. Other activity has included the destruction of a wind turbine in Mihtarlam and an attack on an ANA patrol a few kilometres south of Mihtarlam. All of these incidents however took place in the first week of January. During the early hours of 07 January, IM conducted what has now been a well reported attack against AOG in Alishing. At least 1 AOG commander was killed in the attack, and early information suggested several civilians were also among the fatalities that numbered more than 30. Since the IM operation there have been no reported AOG initiated incidents in the province. Statements of support



for the IM operation by the provincial governor, and the lack of any public reaction to the event, would seem to be explained by the impact that the operation has had on AOG across Laghman.

KUNAR

Reported incident rates in Kunar during this period have been approximately 400% of those for the corresponding period in 2008.

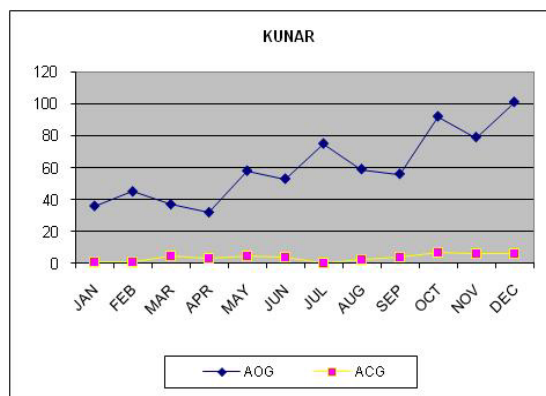
Any claims of the effectiveness of the sporadic military operation in Pakistan, that is now claimed to have more cross-border cooperation between security forces, have so far not been justified. AOG attack rates in Kunar in early January are now equal to those experienced in the height of summer 2008. AOG activity patterns remain similar and, unless one includes the level of activity itself, there is no indication that AOG in

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

Kunar, or indeed elsewhere in the eastern region, have been disrupted by the large-scale military operation in Pakistan.

Direct fire attacks against fixed security force locations accounted for a lower proportion of incidents than seen in other periods, as AOG in Kunar used a range of methods to attack different targets across the province. Indirect fire was used against military positions in Mano Gai on three occasions as well as single, unsuccessful attack on the home of an ANP officer. Attacks against security force patrols and convoys continued, with one engagement in Shegal on the afternoon 07 January lasting over 90 minutes.

Four instances of abduction have been reported in the first part of January. A journalist taken from a



village in Wata Pur on 02 January was released the next day. Two construction workers taken in Chapa Dara on the same day are still unaccounted for, as are two men accused of spying for IMF in Mano Gai. Elsewhere in Mano Gai, AOG abducted two villagers as retribution following an ANP find of an IED in the area. This is the second time in the Eastern Region during this reporting period that AOG have blamed and subsequently abducted local residents when an IED has been found and dealt with by security forces and is something that should be considered by all working in the area.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Abduction-particularly Chawkay & Nurgal
- IED in Sirkanay
- AOG-Security force clashes

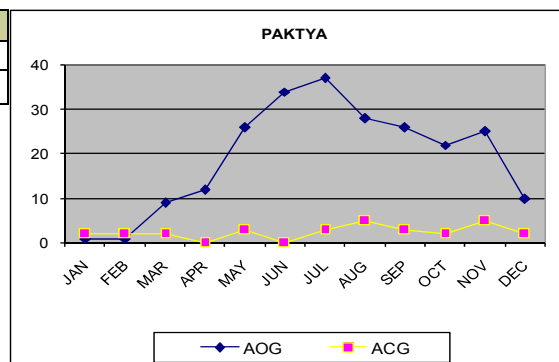
PAKTYA

In common with the corresponding period in 2008, early January has seen little or no reported activity attributable to AOG in Paktya. Recent months had witnessed significant levels of indirect fire, direct fire and IED incidents across the province, and particularly in the lower and milder district of Zurmat in western Paktya. Reported security force deployments into Zurmat have now

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

been followed by this drop in AOG activity levels.

Security forces working in the province have however made a number of arrests in different operations across Paktya in early January, detaining suspected members of AOG, seizing weapons and ammunition, illegal drugs, and detaining those believed to be responsible for robberies around Gardez in recent weeks. An IED placed outside the home of the Provincial Attorney General in Ahamadabad on 03 January is another indication of the resources available to criminal groups working in the eastern region.



KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Abduction
- AOG-Security force clashes in Zurmat
- IED in Gardez

FARAH

The increasing number of kidnappings in Farah point to the tactic being used by AOG and ACG alike in raising funds for their activities and profiteering from a ruse which has assumed industry like proportions. In spite of the many police operations regularly launched against the kidnappers,

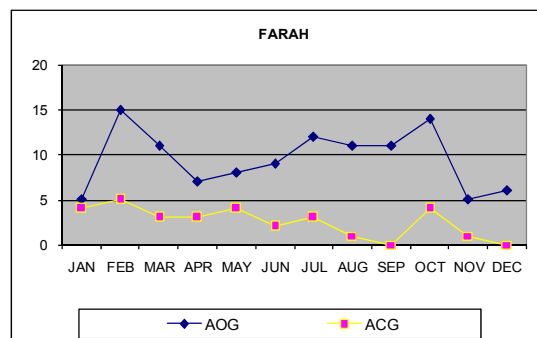
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Abductions
- ISAF/ ANA military operations

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

many of the fugitives seem to remain at large and operate in the open. NGO habituating the province need to take extra precautions to ensure that their movement plans remain undisclosed and the activities lack an established pattern.

The security forces operations against AOG in the Khaki Safed district and the death of two motorcycle riders in Bala Buluk city area while accidentally having



struck a landmine, are indicators of the heightened AOG activity in these districts.

GHOR

Adding to the challenge of negotiating snow covered passes on the road Herat-Chegcharan are the reports of AOG setting up check points between Darrah e Takht and Kaminj and conducting checks to establish identity of NGO transients travelling along the road. It may be wise for NGO to avoid travel on the road; especially on the stretch between Darrah e Takht and Kaminj. Keeping in view the AOG threats issued to populations in Heart and Ghor provinces with regard to employ-

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

ment with NGO and participation in the voter registration process, NGO may need to advise staff to sanitize identity with respect to NGO association and not carry documentation or other effects which may prove involvement with the voter registration process. The districts of Chist e Sharif in Heart and Sharak in Ghor have been witness to constant AOG movement and activity over the time. This may be partly due to the fact that these districts offer a viable passage for groups com-

muting on foot from the southern provinces of Helmand and Farah onwards to the Northern provinces of Badghis and Faryab. The reduction in incidents of kidnappings and robberies by armed criminal groups in these districts may also be attributable to the presence of more powerful actors in the form of armed opposition groups.

The surrender of a sizeable arsenal of small arms by a previous AOG commander in Dulayna district to the DIAG initiative is an encouraging sign in an otherwise unstable setting. The presence and availability of arms in an environment of highly unsteady and constantly shifting power alignments is of a great temptation to the non-state actors and criminal elements alike.

BADGHIS

The release of the civil engineer kidnapped earlier by an AOG in Muqur district through negotiations conducted by tribal elders, once again emphasises the influ-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Abductions
- AOG Attacks along road Heart-Qala e Now

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

ential role played by community elders in traditional social structures. NGO may see the possible advantages to be gained from alliances made with beneficiaries; especially with the objective of gaining larger acceptance in ethnically or tribally homogenous communities and the resultant security umbrella being offered by such

closely bonded traditional social structures.

The many reports of AOG seizing food supplies in the district point to the possible stocking of supplies in various locations for future actions against the security forces. Information also indicates the planning and deployment of AOG units in the Sabzak pass with the intent of ambushing security convoys. All this and the reports of police vehicles seized during the Bala Murghab ambush being equipped for a suicide attack in Herat, indicate the widening of operational base and raising of the level of military objectives by AOG.

HERAT

The public demonstration and the resulting road blockages in Kushk, Rabat Sanghi on 31 Dec 2008 representing against the unpopular administrative move of replacing the existing district governor and police chief served as a reminder that the population was undertaking an active interest in the running of the district's administrative affairs and would not hesitate in resorting to means of mass protests to enable restoration of the preferred status quo. The blocking of road access to NGO travelling through the area and the possibility of being caught up in situations when demonstrating crowds may turn into violent mobs should be of concern.

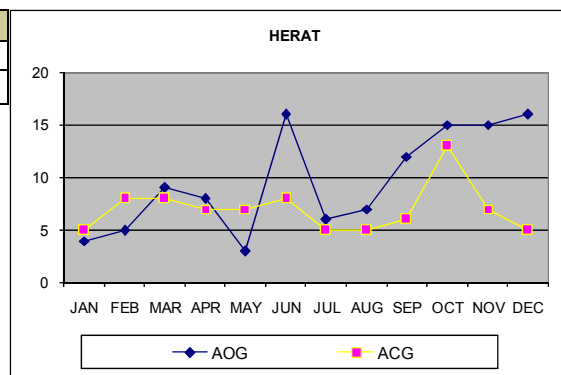
The threat of suicide bombings projected during the previous fortnight loomed ever stronger with another police convoy being attacked at Adarskan opposite the district headquarters. While the deadly toll stood at 2 ANP personnel killed and three seriously wounded, the audacity and determination of the attackers was highlighted by the fact that while the international police mentors present in the convoy preemptively fired at the attackers with small arms to ward off the oncoming attack, the attack still went through. The incident underscores the threat to passers-by and other motorists when inadvertently caught in such crossfire or the possibility of being struck

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	1

by stray projectiles. The incident highlights the need for NGO to be on the watch when negotiating high profile targets or assemblies prone to violent exchanges.

The kidnapping of the two INGO national staff in Pashtun Zargun points to the ever present threat from such tactics of the AOG. Though the facts of the incident in no way point to the possibility of it being a case of a deliberately planned act, it still bodes grave portents for staff operating or commuting to areas not under effective control of the GoA. There is a strong possibility that the staff were taken captive by the AOG as an opportunity to seize a much favoured four wheel drive vehicle, in which they were travelling. The establishing of a check point by the AOG to search road users for voter registration cards and other details of the incident highlight the need for NGO to sanitize the identity of their staff with respect to NGO and their association with the election process. The subsequent unfolding of the events with the victims managed to gain the confidence of their abductors during the period of their captivity and making good their escape on finding the right opportunity during the course of the AOG shootout with the police; marks the need for bringing awareness in the staff to the skills and capacities which may help victims survive a hostage situation.

The events post kidnapping, leading to two AOG members being killed in the police encounter



while the leader of the group being assassinated later on the instructions of a more powerful AOG commander - possibly as a fallout from the conflict between the two AOG to own the hijacked vehicle - carry impressions of the grave seriousness with which AOG make efforts to maintain influence in their respective areas of dominance. This incident along with the attack on a powerful AOG commander by another AOG in Gozara and the resultant killing of two AOG members indicates the level of violence which may brew up as a result of such parrying.

The incidents in Injil concerning the rocket propelled grenade attack on the Heart University women's student hostel and another rocket attack on a police check point in Chunger village indicate the increasing presence of AOG in this district. NGO operating in these districts may need to review their security plans in view of a dramatic increase in the serious nature and frequency of incidents.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- NGO Kidnappings
- SBVIED Attacks
- Rocket Attacks

KANDAHAR

The following late reported event, occurring on 30 December, highlights the possibility of further fracturing of the AOG/ACG context in the Southern Region if rumours are true that IMF plan to mobilize local militias. Even with assurances from local stakeholders that it could safely transit through Shah Wali Kot district, an unknown armed group ambushed an IO procured convoy in the district as it was carrying materials from Kandahar City to Tirin Kot. After the vehicle and its occupants were abducted to Khakrez district, only the release of the vehicle's occupants could be secured without a ransom, with the captors demanding payment for the vehicle and goods. Additionally, the following

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

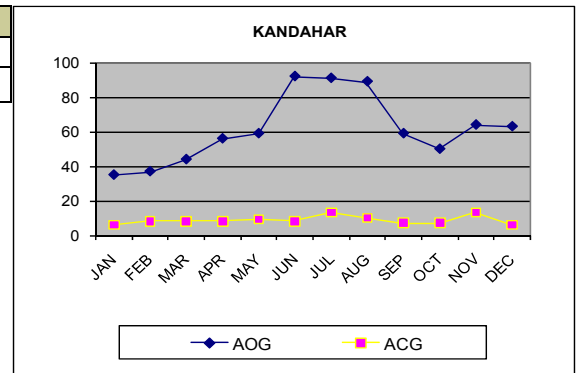
- IED
- Abduction
- Collateral damage from clashes

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

day, a driver from the initial convoy again attempted to complete the journey, but turned back after he was engaged with small arms fire at the same location, damaging the vehicle.

While NGO's can take precautions to avoid a repeated incident in the abovementioned area, we must realize that if various factions are armed in the near future, NGO's may be confronted with an even more complex system of corruption and patronage to navigate. Additionally, although participants in this rumoured plan may initially desire to cooperate and portray themselves as accountable, NGO's should be prepared to be victimized by or caught in the crossfire of rival armed groups that will seek to address old grievances and establish dominance.

Another incident of interest to NGO's was the 3 January AOG



bombing of the Basic Health Centre in Baber village, Arghandab district. Besides these, however, NGO should be concerned about the manifest lack of security, demonstrated in the 5 January assassination of the Qadiri Mosque Mullah—a member of the Kandahar province Religious Shura—who was the second mullah and member of the said shura to be killed in his own mosque in little over a week's time. This incident, paired with the 1 January incident in which IMF in Shah Wali Kot district killed a VBIED driver, demonstrate that guerrilla-style asymmetric AOG operations will be difficult to combat regardless of troop increases and likely incur greater civilian casualties due to both AOG and IMF/ANSF escalations.

ZABUL

Incidents in Zabul province were typical, focused actions against IMF/ANSF, consisting of roadside IED attacks; the abduction of an off-duty ANP; and the occurrence of an IMF airstrike that killed a mullah, inciting local opposition. Regardless of Zabul's

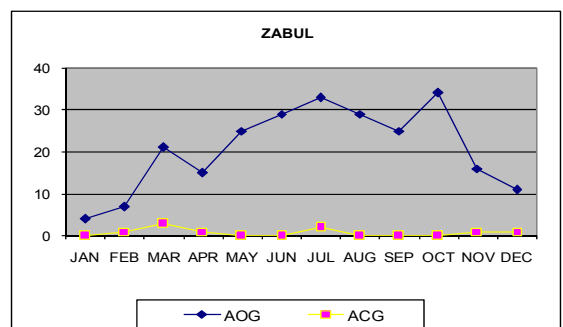
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IED
- SVBIED
- Banditry/Hijacking

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

relatively low incident volumes for the SR, the number of active NGO's in the province is not high, with primarily national NGO's that focus on rehabilitation, health, agriculture, and education programming in Qalat, Shajoy, and Shar-e-Safa districts.

The security context is also a bit dissimilar from the most climactic provinces in the SR, because the GoA is active in the province and controls district centres; still, how-



ever, ANSF do not have a firm grasp on Zabul's problematic highways, giving rise to banditry. And with the onset of winter, it appears that AOG have curtailed their activities despite maintaining a presence throughout the province.

HELMAND

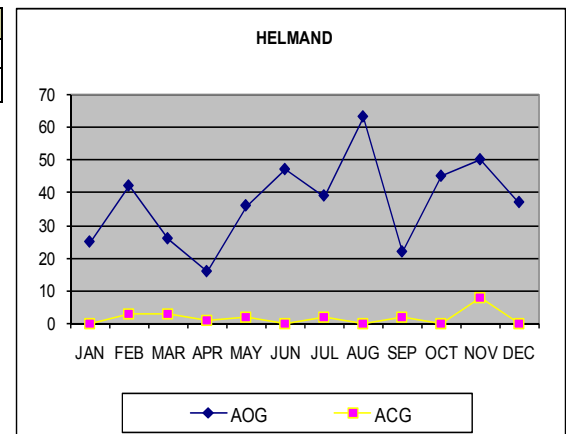
A notable incident occurred during the evening of 31 December, in which AOG orchestrated a 4 hour assault on the Musa Qala District Sub-Governor's residence in Shah Karez, Kajaki district. Reportedly, prior to the attack, the guarding ANP's food or water was poisoned by ANP officials with purported links to AOG. As a result of the entire incident, 26 ANP and 13 AOG were killed, 7 ANP were wounded, and a further 5 ANP were reported missing.

An additional important incident occurred on 7 January in Geradai Baghran, Baghran district. According to local reports, an IMF airstrike that targeted the house of a former mujahedin commander as well as a tribal elder—Mohammad Hassan Khan—killed 8 people: the commander, his brother, his brother's wife, a doctor, and 4 body guards. The incident will likely draw the ire of the general local populace, despite any purported complicity with AOG, because local residents were also

killed by a secondary airstrike as they were attempting to retrieve bodies from beneath the rubble, killing an additional 18 locals.

For 2009, NGO's should also be aware that AOG operations, morale, and control in the province have been bolstered by the support of local tribal elders, elders who are currently voicing opposition to NGO programming. Irrespective of communal elders, everyday locals are currently lending support to AOG because of rampant disillusionment, especially with the seemingly drug-ridden local ANP, and a burgeoning security vacuum. This opposition to NGO's is manifest in a recently discovered November 2008 incident where locals alerted AOG to the presence of a national working on the behalf of an INGO, resulting in the temporary kidnapping of the employee and his vehicle in Nawa District. Somewhat similar to the 30 December Kandahar incident, it appears that this abduction occurred irrespective of AOG guarantees; important to note, however, is that the victim, vehicle, and goods were later released and the affected INGO was able to carry on with its proclaimed work. Ultimately, one can assume that this AOG and local concomitant disdain for NGO's is cyclic and as a result of perceived NGO collusion with IMF and GoA.

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0



Despite this disillusionment, locals are consoled by GoA reconstruction programmes in Lashkar Gah—building of roads and schools, and cleaning of canals and streams—that Helmand Province's recent governor, Gulab Mangal, has spurred. Likewise, IMF are conducting operations in Helmand to address locals' concerns; however, most locals forecast that any progress that is painfully achieved will only be painfully rescinded, because AOG simply return from southern havens in Pakistan due to the province's porous borders. Locals also voice their frustrations concerning IMF caused civilian casualties and the state of inadequate ANSF numbers to accompany IMF on operations. For all of these abovementioned reasons, NGO's should avoid the following districts: Nawzad, Musa Qala, Dishu, Baramcha, Khanashin, Washer, Baghran, Garmser, Sangin, and Kajaki. Additionally, please note that AOG are active in Nad Ali and Nawa.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Prevailing instability
- Collateral from armed assaults
- IED

GHAZNI

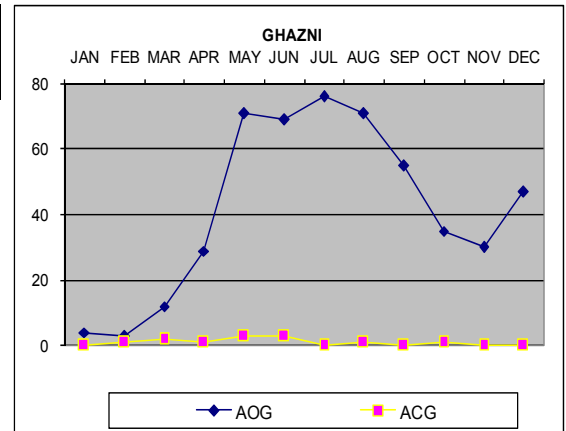
According to ANSO records for this reporting period, AOG were the dominant actors in Ghazni province and continued to demonstrate a modus operandi that focused on challenging IMF/ANSF and establishing their writ, with the latter being illustrated in a fleeting attempt to administer punishment to a criminal offender in the Qalata area of Ghazni district. NGO activities, which are more numerous than in Zabul and

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Collateral damage from IED or convoy ambushes
- Abduction
- Rocket/RPG attacks

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

Paktika, are occurring in a predominately GoA administered province notwithstanding what appear to be substantive challenges to GoA authority in the western and southern areas of the province. NGO's should expect, however, that AOG activity will continue to target GoA, ANSF, and IMF in Ghazni City, activities which will likely intensify come Spring. Additionally, NGO's should note that AOG checkpoints have become more common in rural areas and be cognizant of local perceptions—if their neutrality is questioned, they may be perceived as GoA supporters and be subject to summary execution.



mary execution.

Despite ANSO records, locals opine that IMF/ANSF are active in the province and pursuing AOG. Additionally, it appears that although the manifest increases in ANP and ANA are resulting in more frequent highway patrols, ANSF are unable to produce increased security in the province because of equipment shortages and the lack of reactionary support elements, resulting in heavy casualties

URUZGAN

Regardless of the cloud of calm that blanketed the province during this period, peripheral reporting indicates that 1 NGO employee and 1 former GoA employee were kidnapped and eventually released after local elders intervened on their behalf. With this, NGO activities in the province are extremely perilous because of de facto AOG rule paired with condemnation of NGO activities; this is especially the case in Charchino, Gizab, and Khas Uruzgan areas,

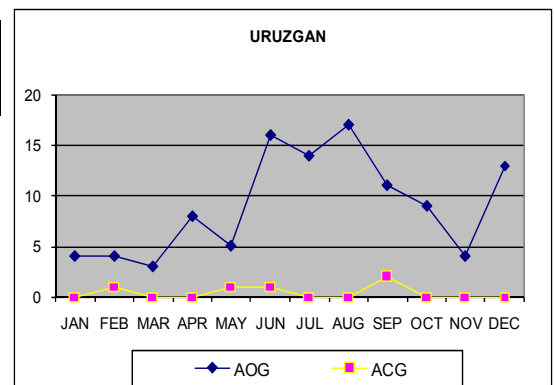
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG opposition to NGO operations
- Kidnap
- IED

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	1

because IMF and ANSF numbers are miniscule, providing AOG with liberal freedom of movement. Additionally, NGO work is said to be prohibited, with the threat of force, in the Baluchi valley. Peripheral reporting also indicates that AOG may have confiscated distributed grain in Charchino. Furthermore, AOG are now intent upon dissuading any future acceptance of aid by punishing the recipients.

Other than specific, close range targeting by AOG, NGO also need to recognize the persistent IED threat, a threat that is directly implied against NGO's in this province—unlike other prov-



inces—because of voiced AOG opposition to development programming. The IED threat is likely to be the lowest in the towns of Tirin Kot, Chora, and Dehraud. NGO's should also be sensitive to the pervasive mine threat on roads inside Charchino, as well as AOG/ACG desires to kidnap expatriate staff. The following areas are assessed to be hazardous, even for transit: Charchino, Gizab, Khas Uruzgan, Kamsan, Khush Khadir, and Eastern Mirabad/Chenartu.

PAKTIKA

AOG operations in Paktika continue to be diffuse, yet resilient, in this restive border province. And although incident levels will likely remain low because of recent snowfall that has blocked mountain passes, it appears that 2009 will exceed the highest ANSO recorded AOG levels for the province in January, currently at a low 8 AOG incidents in 2007.

NGO activity within the province appears to be minimal because of instability. In spite of this instability, however, the GoA continues

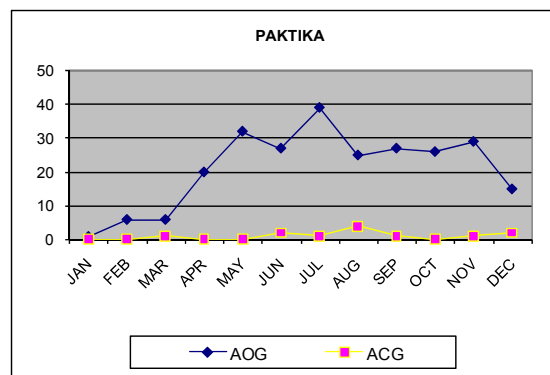
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IED
- Voter/Election intimidation

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

to enjoy at least modest local support and is active in Sharan district. Contrary to the norm, Sharan residents have even requested that the GoA extend its voter registration period by one month because of harsh weather and resultant inaccessibility to registration sites; this request was submitted even with AOG intimidation and offensive operations against the sites.

The GoA and ANSF, nonetheless, are confounded by AOG activities, corruption, and apparent shortfalls in funding and equipment, with the latter issue making ANSF reliant on IMF. Conversely, despite IMF's strong pres-



ence in Sharan and a few other districts, still, they are unable to alleviate AOG rocket attacks and cross-border operations.

NIRMOZ

On 2 January in Kang District, AOG abducted 6 persons—2 GoA officials, 1 IO employee, and 3 NGO national staff members—from an IO centre. 1 of the 6, a driver for the said NGO, was soon released after the abductors realized his occupation. The victims had made a last minute decision to remain overnight at the said location, indicating that the incident was not planned. Important to note, the victims were assured of their decision because they were less than 70 meters from an ANP checkpoint. Prior to

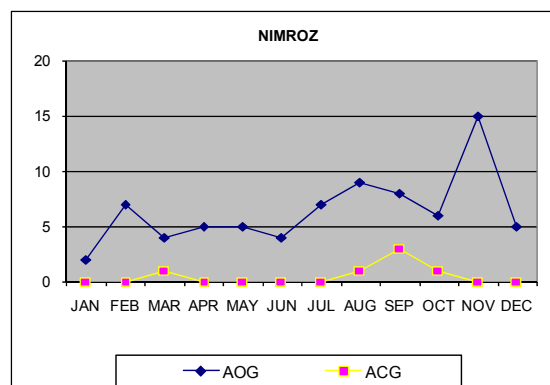
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Suicide attacks in Zaranj
- Kidnap
- Lack of security

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	1

the abduction, a local resident invited the group to dinner and hosted them for the evening. ANP have arrested 6 suspects, including the owner of the house the party visited for dinner, in connection to this abduction. Latest reports indicate that AOG are holding the victims in an AOG stronghold—Baramcha District, Helmand Province—for a ransom, a notion which is bolstered by the release of the driver.

Currently, NGO operations in Nimroz are complicated by suicide attacks in Zaranj and the prevalent threat of kidnap for ransom. In the face of obvious instability in Zaranj, and rampant AOG activity due to ANP shortages and probable acquiescence, NGO's have few options within



the province without gaining lasting assurances and acceptance from AOG. Moreover, the perception of neutrality is ever more important due to poor local perceptions of the GoA: locals lack a feeling of efficacy in GoA matters and believe the GoA is not encouraging reconstruction efforts.



ANSO is hosted by
Deutsche Welthungerhilfe

To Register with ANSO
contact:
operations2@afgnso.org

ANSO is managed by an NGO
Board. If you have any
feedback, good or bad, let
them know on:
ansoab@yahoo.com

ANSO ACRONYMS

IMF-International Military Forces / **AOG**-Armed Opposition Groups / **GOA**-Government of Afghanistan / **ACG**-Armed Criminal Groups / **ANA**-Afghan National Army / **ANP**-Afghan National Police / **IED**-Improvised Exploding Device / **AEF**-Afghan Eradication Forces / **RPG**-Rocket Propelled Grenade / **IDF**-Indirect Fire (ex: mortars) / **VBIED**-Vehicle Borne Improvised Exploding Device / **PRP**-Previous Reporting Period / **ANBP**-Afghan National Border Police / **SAF**-Small Arms Fire / **NDS**-National Directorate of Security (intelligence) / **PSC**-Private Security Company / **DC**-District Centre

CONTACT ANSO

CENTRAL REGION OFFICE (KABUL)

Blake Kehler - central@afgnso.org - 0799 323 792

Mukhtar Hussain - central2@afgnso.org - 0799 322 116

NORTH REGION OFFICE (MAZAR)

Scott Bohlinger - north@afgnso.org - 0799 404 617

Firoz Fahez - north2@afgnso.org - 0799 408 252

EAST REGION OFFICE (JALALABAD)

Chris Hansen - east@afgnso.org - 0799 248 362

Khisor Shohar - east2@afgnso.org - 0798 778 014

SOUTH REGION OFFICE (KANDAHAR)

Vacant - N/A - N/A

Mohammadi - south2@afgnso.org - 0700 300 730

WEST REGION OFFICE (HERAT)

Kulvinder Brar - west@afgnso.org - 0799 322 192

Najma Fazly - west2@afgnso.org - 0799 446 820

COUNTRY MANAGEMENT (KABUL)

Nic Lee - director@afgnso.org - 0799 325 349

Nathan Ronaldson - operations@afgnso.org - 0797 165 017

Chona Bollos - administration@afgnso.org - 0797 093 073

Ali Riazi - rsamobile@afgnso.org - 0797 414 100

MISSING

This report ANSO could not provide analysis for the provinces of:

- Badakshan
- Takhar
- Samangan
- Sar-i-Pul
- Nuristan

This is because we do not know enough about the area to comment on the significance of the incidents occurring there.

If you can help us understand the prov-

Summary of AOG Attacks on NGO for 2008

