

# THE ANSO REPORT

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## YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Potential for more demonstrations in the East
- AOG may be regrouping in Herat area
- Large activity spike in Helmand as a result of IMF operation "Cobra's Anger"
- Significant AOG activity in Kunduz and Baghlan reported this period

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## COUNTRY SUMMARY

The number of AOG attacks recorded country-wide is now levelling off after dropping consistently since September. Conflict metrics indicate that AOG activity levels are up 25% over the same period last year and higher than during the peak of the 2007 fighting season. Typically, incident levels vary only slightly from Dec to Feb, which suggests that AOG attack levels will now remain relatively constant for the next 2-3 months.

At the regional level, AOG attacks continue to drop slightly in the Central Region, are levelling off in the North and West, and increasing slightly in the South and East. One exception is Helmand, where AOG initiated attack numbers are up by 400%, mostly due to clashes

along the Helmand river related to the IMF operation "Cobra's Anger". The most publicized event of the period was the Dec 15th suicide car bomb attack in a Kabul city district which hosts numerous embassies, GoA dignitaries, development groups, a few NGOs, and several restaurants frequented by foreigners.

However, the variety, severity, and complexity of threats reported in the northern provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan are more concerning from an NGO perspective and should be carefully examined by anyone operating in the area. On a positive note, the three NGO staff kidnapped in Baghlani Jadid district during the last period were

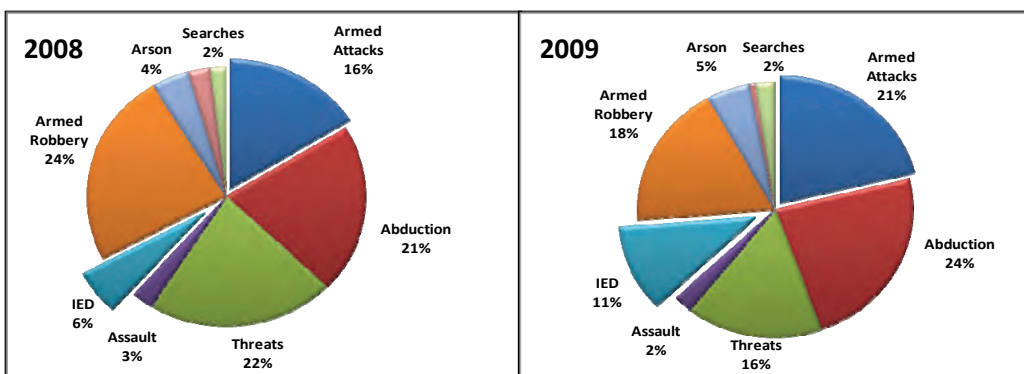
reportedly released.

Also worth monitoring is the situation in the southern suburbs of Herat where AOG may be regrouping and resuming activities after a temporary lull caused by the death of an important local AOG commander (who occasionally targeted NGOs.)

In the East, four demonstrations were held to protest against deaths and arrests resulting from an IMF/ANSF operation in Laghman. Several protesters were injured and killed in one of the protests. The risk of further demonstrations remains high and should be closely monitored this coming week.

## NGO DATA & TRENDS

The charts below show the percentage of NGO incidents by type. IEDs and armed attacks, which tend to cause high NGO casualty rates, are more common this year.



## KABUL

A relative calm reporting period in the capital has again been punctured by a high profile SVBIED attack, this time in Wazir Akbar Khan on 15 December- an area which hosts numerous embassies, GoA dignitaries, for-profit development groups, a few NGOs and several restaurants frequented by foreigners. The target of the latest attack was believed to be the former president of Afghanistan Burhanuddin Rabbani; however, his son-in-law, Ahmad Zia Masoud, was in the vicinity, and two of his entourage were killed. In total, eight people were reported killed and almost forty wounded. Attacks of this nature are rare in Wazir Akbar Khan, due to a noticeable ANSF presence, PSC guards stationed outside many compounds, and sectioned-off streets. The use of SVBIEDs as a tactic has already proved its effective-

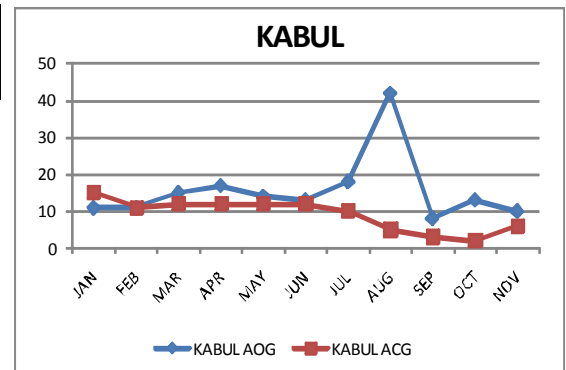
|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 9             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

ness in eight other attacks this year, mainly targeting IMF. The figure should be compared to 2008, when there were only three such attacks, and 2007 when 14 SVBIED detonations occurred in the city. Although ANSF have made numerous AOG arrests over the past months, placing pressure on AOG cells in and around the capital, the SVBIED does not require as large a support structure as complex attacks, such as those against the GoA in February and more recently against the UN in October. Therefore, their continued use against hardened targets, such as IMF and as in the recent attack, influential figures with a security escort, should be expected.

In the last reporting period, there have been two further demonstrations by ANA retirees asking for previously promised entitlements by the GoA to be fulfilled. The demonstrations, on 6 and 13 December, are but the latest protests by former ANA spanning the last four years. There is a concern that an undercurrent of frustration and

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Complex attacks against high profile targets
- Political discord
- Abductions



impatience by those in attendance may lead to eventual clashes with ANSF.

Separately, and again on 15 December, a fuel tanker was the subject of a SAF attack in Puli Stakam area of Surobi. Attacks of this nature occur somewhat irregularly as convoys of logistics trucks, often lightly guarded with a PSC detachment, are easily picked off by small groups of AOG fighters in the hills and cliffs above the curvy road, which accompanies the Kabul River. The last such attack against a petrol tanker occurred on 4 November. Although casualties have not been confirmed in the latest attack, the cabin of the vehicle is often targeted rather than the load, which results in the injury or death of the driver and adds to its intimidation value. The well entrenched ANP outposts along the route often resemble a jumble of 'Hesco' bags and are also subject to occasional AOG attacks, typically during the night hours. NGOs travelling the road to Jalalabad should steer well clear of logistics and IMF convoys and travel at a sensible speed as taking the road can often feel like a 50 km game of chicken.

## KAPISA

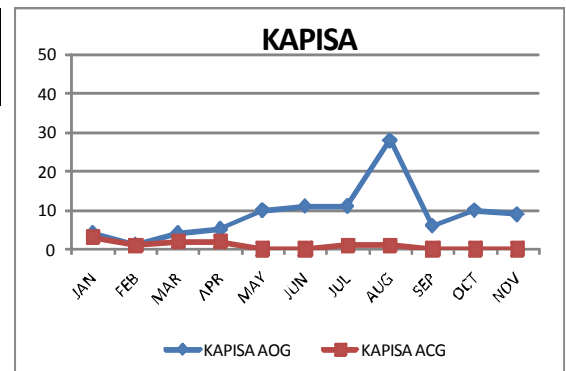
AOG incidents, mostly in the form of attacks on security forces, increased this reporting period after a slowdown in the second half of November. These remain concentrated in Ta-gab and Nijrab. However, Alasay is

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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also reported to be heavily infiltrated with AOG, but little information is available on the area, likely the result of a significant AOG presence and a very limited security presence. For NGOs, these areas remain highly risky for operations. The provincial centre of Mahmud Ragi was quiet, with only general police actions recorded, and should remain generally safe in the coming weeks.

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Attacks security forces, especially in Tagab and Nijrab
- Rockets, IEDs, and mines



The north-western districts (Kohi Band and the Kohistans) have also been quiet, but NGOs are cautioned to maintain a low profile due to the potential for periodic AOG activity.

## LOGAR

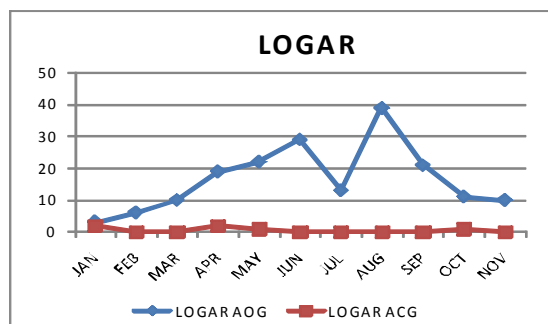
With the exception of a rocket attack on the Puli Alam DAC on 14 December, an IED find in Khushi and the arrest of two suspected AOG by IMF on 1 December in Kharwar, Logar continues its downward trajectory for recorded security incidents. Numerous reports suggest that some AOG are leaving the area prior to the full onset of winter. For the last six weeks, AOG initiated incidents (12) are almost half their

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Abduction
- Attacks on security forces

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 2             |
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level of 2008. At the same time, AOG actions in the last month are almost a quarter of their August total (40). Although both IMF and AOG have promised to continue operations throughout the winter, it appears that the seasonal slowdown will be respected by all sides, as evidenced by ANSO data. The only exception to this may be the new rotation of IMF for Wardak and Logar, arriving in the next two weeks, who may feel the need to 'manifest their strength' in their new environment.



It is unlikely that the AOG supply lines through Logar to the capital will be much utilised in the weeks ahead due to the winter conditions and the impassable mountain areas which are believed to carry men and weapons from Pakistan and the south. NGOs have a light footprint in the province due to the unpredictable security climate and the decentralized AOG command structure.

## DAYKUNDI

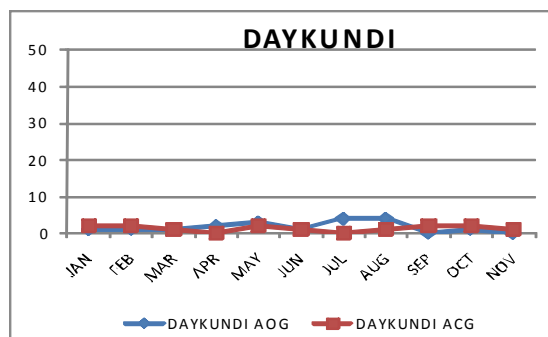
The district of Gizab, which is overtly controlled by AOG, has few reported security incidents due to the absence of GoA authority. In the last reporting period, AOG checkpoints were reported in the Bazaar area of the

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- High AOG infiltration in Kiti, Gizab, and Kajran
- Security vacuum

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 1             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

district and further reports suggested that AOG were actively recruiting in the area. The current situation is unlikely to change, considering the winter weather and the limited ANSF presence in the province. Nili, where many NGOs have their provincial base, remains calm with only one AOG attack being recorded on the district border with Gizab for the whole of 2009. As the cold sets in,



NGOs are strongly encouraged to ascertain the state of the roads before setting out on any journey, while ensuring that they have the proper equipment and supplies in case of heavy snow.

## PANJSHIR

Once passing by Gulbuddin, locally known as 'Traffic', at the entrance gates of the province when travelling from Kabul, what is perhaps most surprising is the minimal security afforded to the PRT and the relatively high secu-

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Avalanche
- Political discord

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| This Report Period | 0             |

rity building of the provincial ANP HQ. Panjshir is the most secure province in the country and is protected by its mountain ranges, ethnic homogeneity, and ANSF presence. Security incidents are rare; however, on 8 December in Unaba, a demonstration resulted in the stoning of an election facility in an expression of discon-

tent with the procedures surrounding the provincial council elections. The main security concern expressed by NGOs is the effect of AOG activities in neighbouring Nuristan over the long term and possible 'spill over' into the north of Panjshir. If commencing operations in the province, NGOs should be aware of a certain reticence among some segments of the population towards the development community following previous assistance commitments that have not been fulfilled. Excepting that, NGOs continue to operate safely throughout the province with no particular security concerns.

## BAMYAN

Bamyan remains a safe operating environment for NGOs, with only the isolated valleys of Shikari in Kharmard and Ghandhak in Shibar warranting avoidance. At issue is essentially a combination of competition over local resources, namely the coal mine; a general distrust of central authority; and AOG infiltration from Tala wa Barfak district in Baghlan. Security incidents in the northeast of the province typically assume the form of isolated attacks against ANP checkpoints and an

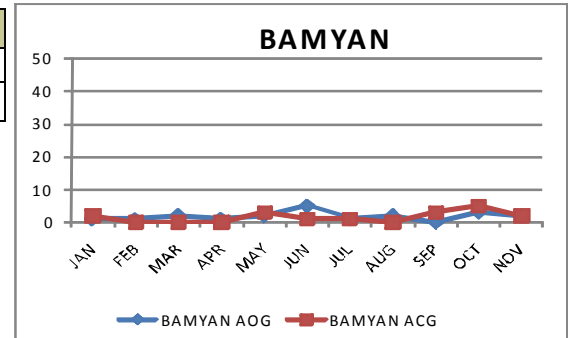
### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG/ACG threat around Ghandak Valley, Shibar

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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occasional IED targeting ANSF or IMF. On 7 December, and continuing the trend, an ANP checkpoint was attacked in the Do Aab Mikh Zarin Area of Kharmard. There were no reported casualties as is standard for most attacks. The area was also host to two separate voluntary arms handovers to ANSF, which included RPGs, AP mines, rifles and ammunition.

Although occurring somewhat infrequently, there have been two armed robberies and possibly an attempted third in the northeast over the past three months. On October 25, individuals dressed as ANA stopped and robbed several



vehicles along the Shibar Pass. Again in Shibar district on 13 November, unknown individuals fired on local trucks that refused to stop in Ghandak Village. And in an escalation of violence, a group of unknown individuals stopped and subsequently killed the driver of a truck in the same village on 9 December, stealing a significant amount of money in the process. The delineation between AOG and ACG in the province is not clear, yet it is most likely the case that the vast majority of the incidents occurring are criminally motivated.

## WARDAK

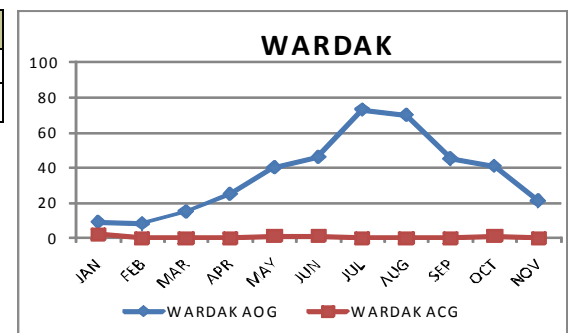
Wardak continues to be assessed as unstable and a high risk area for NGOs due to the AOG presence and continual armed clashes and military operations. Illegal checkpoints, DAC attacks, IEDs, and the threat of abduction all pose significant operational challenges. On 2 December, an INGO leased a vehicle with a driver to transport a shipment of medical supplies to a south-eastern province. The vehicle was forcibly stopped by AOG in Salar area of Saydabad and resulted in a tyre being shot out. The AOG showed disinterest

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Abduction
- Rocket and IED attacks
- Intimidation tactics

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| This Report Period | 1             |

in the contents of the vehicle, and after several hours the driver was assisted to Ghazni where his tyre was fixed. Upon leaving Ghazni City, the driver was abducted again in Qarabagh District and released 72 hours afterwards, following the intervention of a neighbouring shura. AOG conduct extensive surveillance on the main road from Wardak to Ghazni for the purpose of attack and/or abduction. Road travel is not advised; however, if NGOs do assume the route then they should keep a low profile and maintain high security vigilance at compounds. Local staff should sanitize themselves and vehicles of materials that may identify them with international NGOs, and the presence of international staff is not recommended. AOG



incidents have slowed in eastern Wardak compared to the last half of November, but remain frequent and violent. Attacks are typically directed against ANSF/IMF and typically involve IED attacks against the better protected IMF or ambushes against ANSF.

Incident reports this period have been confined to the eastern districts. NGOs with operations in the province's Bihsud District in the west report the region to be quiet, with no observed AOG presence. The primary difficulty is reported to be access to the areas due to snowfalls. NGOs can expect hazardous travel conditions and closed roads to be common in the coming months.

## BALKH

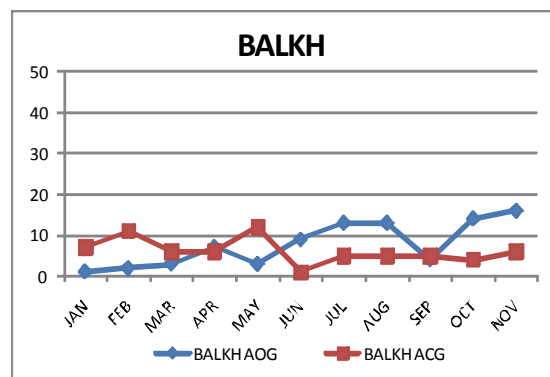
In Balkh Province, two incidents were reported late, having occurred in the last days of November. On 29 November, AOGs attacked two ANP checkpoints in Arab Mazari Village in Chimtal District, and shot dead an ANP officer in Ab Froshan Village in Chahar Bolak District while he

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG activity in Chahar Bolak and Chimtal

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
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was providing logistical supplies for an ANP checkpoint. No incidents, though, were reported in Chahar Bolak and Chimtal districts this month. The decrease in reported incidents may likely be due to a reduced presence of IMF and ANSF in Chahar Bolak and Chimtal districts, cold weather, and the recent killing of AOG leadership reported last period. The reduction in attacks is not likely sustainable, however, and attacks will likely pick up again



once IMF/ANSF reassert their presence in these areas. Also, in Nahri Shahi District, near the location of previous AOG-ANSF clashes, ANSF arrested a suspect and seized a weapon and ammunition from his residence.

## BADAKHSHAN

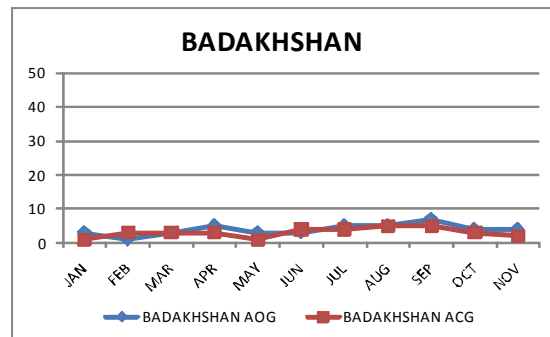
As several districts in Badakhshan Province have become inaccessible during the winter months, very little activity has been reported this period. In Arganj Khwa District, the ANP discov-

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Local conflict

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 4             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

ered and seized an ammunition cache during a search operation. Also, a civilian was shot in a local dispute in Warduj District, for which a suspect was subsequently arrested. In 2008, during this period, a temporary drop in incidents was also noted; however, arrests, seizures and violence due



to local power struggles picked up again in the immediately subsequent periods.

## JAWZJAN

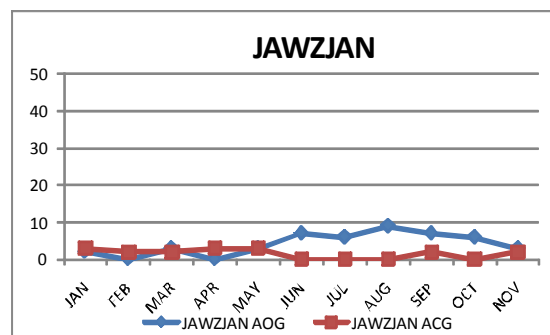
In Jawzjan Province, AOG members stopped two private trucks transporting food items for an International Organization in Qushtepa District, Turkmen Oldi Area. The AOGs took several cans of oil, reportedly under the pretence of "religious dues." The drivers and vehicles were subsequently released unharmed. This

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG roadside robbery

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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area was the location of an AOG checkpoint reported in October and a roadside robbery reported in September of this year. In Darzab District, Aqsaye Village, an armed clash between AOG and an IMF patrol resulted in the injury of a local civilian who was caught in the crossfire. In Aqcha District, two AOG members were arrested for the shooting of the NDS logistics officer that occurred last period. The individuals



are believed to be connected to a known AOG operating in the area, and were reported to be among the last of the remaining known members of the group. In Feyzabad District, explosives were discovered which were believed to be intended for an IED.

## BAGHLAN

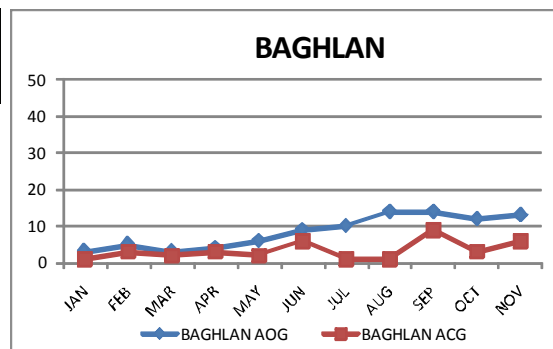
In Baghlan Province, an INGO staff member was incidentally involved in an attempted roadside robbery, targeting a public transport bus in Nahrin District that was on the way from Khost Wa Firang District to Pul-e Khumri District. The bus was stopped by a group of 6 armed ACG who attempted to rob the passengers of their valuables; however, the ANP arrived and chased the ACG from the area, firing shots in their direction. This area, near the Palfi Pass connecting Nahrin and Khost Wa Firang districts, is known for attempted robberies. ACGs typically stop multiple cars in succession and wait until several vehicles have been gathered before letting them go. The last ANSO-reported incident of this kind occurred on 16 September in which at least eleven vehicles were robbed, including one which an INGO had rented. These robberies occur most frequently around the Eid period, when travellers

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 4             |
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typically carry cash and valuables as gifts.

In addition, the three INGO staff members who had been abducted last period in Baghlani Jadid District were reportedly released. The circumstances surrounding their abduction and release are unknown at this time.

AOG activity remains high in Baghlani Jadid District. In the most fatal ANSO-recorded attack on ANSF in the Baghlani Jadid District, AOG shot dead eight ANP members and allegedly captured one other in an armed clash at an ANP checkpoint. The AOG also managed to confiscate the ANP's weapons and vehicle during the clash. According to news reports, the checkpoint was recently established to protect the northern IMF supply route, and there had been known threats against this particular checkpoint prior to the attack. The attack was reportedly claimed by a well-known AOG that has a presence in the district. AOG-ANP clashes erupted twice this reporting period in Tarakhil Area of Baghlani Jadid District. In one of the incidents, AOGs attacked a fuel



tanker in the area and were subsequently confronted by ANP. Also on 5 December, an AOG-ANP clash erupted in Baghlan Old City, Qabristan Area.

Again in Baghlani Jadid District, two IEDs were discovered in the District Centre on the main road and were defused by IMF. Additionally, in Sherkat Area, AOGs attacked the staff of a private mobile company.

In Puli Hisar and Dih Saleh Districts, at least two illegally armed groups numbering several dozen, led by former jihadi commanders, surrendered themselves and their weapons in exchange for amnesty. The groups reportedly also expected to receive financial rewards or GoA positions. It is not likely that these surrenders will affect the level of AOG activity in other parts of the province. Additionally, if the groups' expectations for money and jobs are not met by the government, they may revert to AOG activity. In Tala Wa Barfak District, residents demonstrated against the IEC and ECC for reducing the number of votes received by their provincial council candidate. Protesters also travelled to Pul-e Khumri to demonstrate in front of the UN office in the city.

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

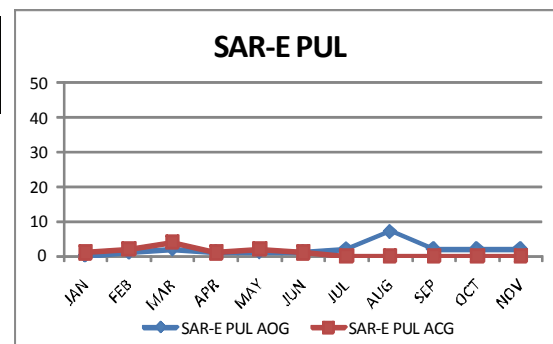
- Roadside robbery
- AOG-ANSF clashes

## SAR-E PUL

In Sar-e Pul Province, two bodies were found in unrelated incidents: one was thought to be a suicide, and the other related to an interpersonal dispute or criminal activity.

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 2             |
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In addition, a machine gun and ammunition was found during an ANSF search operation in Shiraam Area in Sar-e Pul District. AOG and ACG activity is rare in Sar-e Pul District, while most incidents in the province are reported in Sayyad and Kohistanat districts.



### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG presence

## FARYAB

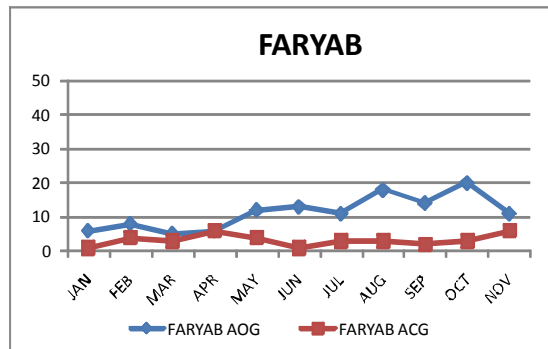
AOGs continue to target ANSF in Faryab Province at a markedly decreased rate since the onset of winter. Two attacks on ANSF checkpoints were reported, one in Almar District and one in Pashtun Kot District. ANSF patrols were also targeted in Almar and Qaysar

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Attacks against ANSF

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 4             |
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districts. In Dawlatabad District, AOG members opened fire on a taxi when it refused to stop. One passenger was killed and another was injured. Faryab has seen a sharp decline in IED incidents, reporting zero detonations or discoveries since the beginning of November, compared to an average of four detonations a month since May of this year. This de-



cline in IED incidents matches last year's pattern, in which zero detonations and only a few discoveries were reported between December 2008 and March 2009.

## KUNDUZ

AOG activity continues apace in Kunduz Province, picking up from a slight downturn last reporting period. In Kunduz City, two unknown armed men shot and killed a previous mayor of Kunduz while he was en route to his residence. The former mayor was also the provincial campaign advisor for the current president during the most recent elections, and was an active member of a political party. The motive of the assassination is suspected to be an interpersonal dispute. Also in Kunduz City, an IED was discovered and defused along the main road, near the Spinzar factory.

In Kunduz District, Talawka Area, a standoff between the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) and AOG occurred when APPF attacked an AOG position. Over the course of 24 hours, approximately four AOG were injured and the rest reportedly escaped. No arrests were reported in this clash. In addition, an IED

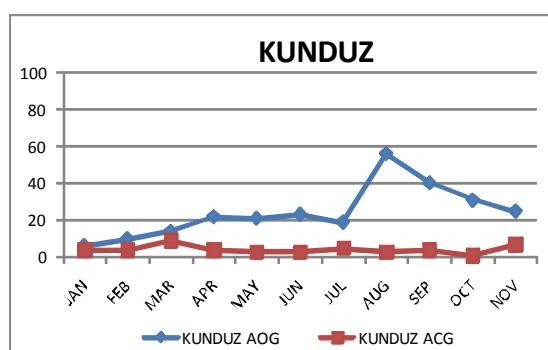
|                    | NGO Incidents |
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accidentally detonated inside an AOG residence while it was being prepared, killing an AOG member and his two sons. (Clashes in Talawka Area are expected to continue).

In the south of Kunduz District, Angor Bagh Area, an AOG checkpoint was reported on the road to Pul-e Khumri. AOG checkpoints along this road have been occasionally reported and are assumed to be present both in Kunduz Province and Baghlan Province.

In Imam Sahib District, an extremely rare roadside robbery took place near the Shirkhan Bandir main road at the Imam Sahib junction. This is the first ANSO-recorded incident of roadside robbery to be reported in the district. Armed clashes were also reported between AOG and ANSF in Quturbloq and Qalam Ghuzar areas.

In Chahar Dara District, a white private MI8 helicopter under IMF contract carrying IMF supplies was hit by SAF in Uzbek Qeshlaq Area on its way from Kunduz to Mazar-e Sharif. The helicopter



reportedly sustained very slight damage. The flight route through Chahar Dara District was officially banned for IO-chartered aircraft six months ago, and this aircraft appears to have been the first white-painted IMF civilian aircraft to have flown over the area since that time. Also in Chahar Dara, two IEDs were discovered and defused in Nahri Sufi Area, where clashes had taken place last reporting period. In addition, in Sherkat Area, IMF mistakenly opened fire on a civilian vehicle, injuring a woman. AOG also attacked IMF/ANSF joint convoys in Dashti Nawabad and Kaftar Khana areas of the district.

In Archi District, a pattern of AOG long-range attacks continued as five to six BM1 rockets impacted Kala Tarash Area near Archi District Centre, and later mortar rounds were fired on a checkpoint near the district centre. Also in Archi District, the residence of the District Governor came under attack by suspected AOGs. This is the second AOG-initiated incident reported in the past three weeks targeting officials in the Qarlogh Area of Archi District.

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Heavy fighting
- AOG checkpoints

## TAKHAR

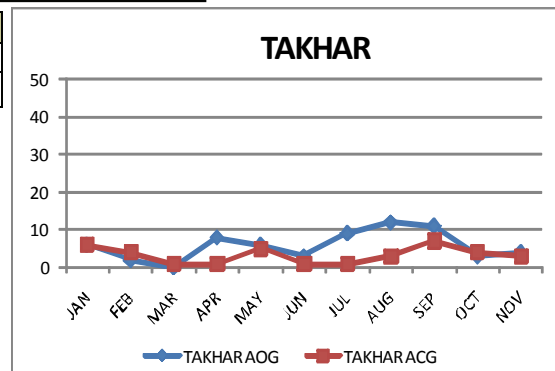
In Takhar Province, an armed clash between AOG and ANSF in Baharak District that erupted during a search operation resulted in one AOG killed, one injured, and the AOG commander arrested. During the search operation, ANSF seized a large amount of IED materials and ammunition. Baharak District has been relatively quiet since July of this year,

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Narcotics smuggling
- AOG presence

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 3             |
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when an INGO vehicle was struck with an IED, killing one INGO worker. In Yangi Qala District, AOGs attacked the District Centre, similar to an attack that took place on the first of October this year. A disgruntled former member of ANSF was believed to be behind the attack in October, and this incident may point to an ongoing conflict. In Khwaja Ghar District, the ANP arrested two suspects with 47 kg of heroin in a private truck. In January this year, two large-scale narcotics and weapons finds were



reported, indicating that the route may be an alternative smuggling route used by ACGs during the winter months. In Taloqan District, ANSF arrested a suspected AOG who was allegedly behind several IED attacks along the Taloqan-Khanabad Highway. IED incidents on this road still remain a potential threat.

## GHOR

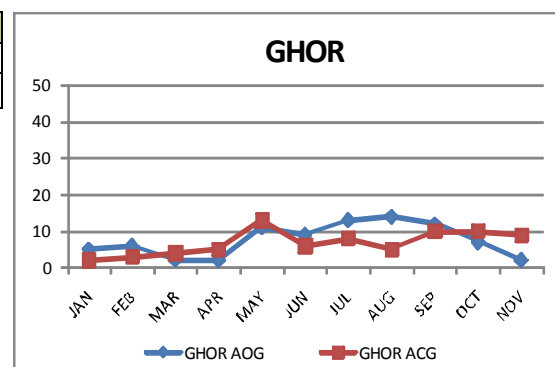
Activity in Ghor continues at levels to be far below its summer peak thanks mostly to limited mobility brought on by winter conditions. A scuffle between two local commanders (one a local elder) led to one being killed and then

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Local Conflicts
- Criminal Activity
- Limited Mobility

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
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the victim's supporters finding the alleged perpetrator and executing him themselves, vigilante-style. It remains to be seen whether this retribution will bring a long-standing resolution to the conflict between the two sides, however. In Du Layna, reporting currently suggests that one commander who has been opposing the GoA might transfer his support, but this is as yet not a done deal.



Limited mobility along with the ever-present possibility of criminal activity should discourage NGOs from unnecessary movement in Ghor.

## FARAH

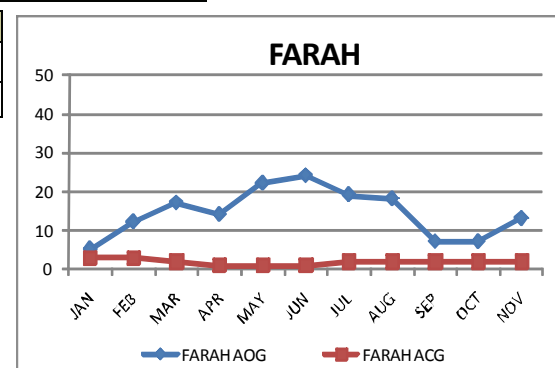
A national employee working for a local NGO was released by their captors after several days in custody thanks to their family's efforts at negotiation. NGOs are perhaps particularly vulnerable in

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- AOG-ANSF/IMF Clashes
- Abduction

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 4             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

Farah which generally hosts a greater deal of AOG activity on a grander scale than other Western Region provinces, but it is still not nearly as organised as anything seen in neighbouring Helmand. Hence the small local NGOs which choose to work in Farah find themselves confused with GoA elements by local AOGs. Other activity in Farah consists of



AOG strikes on IMF/ANSF targets, though in reduced amount befitting the winter season.

## HERAT

A misunderstanding over the details of a job led to an individual in Kohsan District making vague and non-specific threats against an NGO operating in the area. The person in question had refused an offer of employment and then sought to rescind his refusal after a new round of hiring had taken place. The dispute was successfully resolved with the help of the local shura and serves as a reminder of the importance of acceptance and HR policy in NGOs' security strategies.

And while not a security incident, two NGO employees riding in an unmarked NGO vehicle were detained for an undue length of time by ANP under the auspices of protecting them from AOGs (there had been no recent AOG activity in the area) and their supposed failure to have registered with the local police. They were held for a few hours while a few ranking ANP were located to sign a document affirming the legality of the NGO employees' presence in Herat. Subsequent investiga-

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

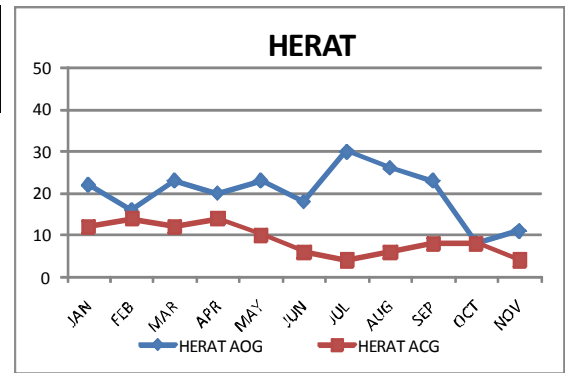
- AOG activity in Kushk
- Rocket strikes

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 18            |
| This Report Period | 1             |

tion revealed that there is no such requirement, which would in any case be obviated by the fact that all NGOs need only register with the Ministry of Economy, centrally in Kabul.

Although the death of a major local AOG commander earlier this year has led to a diminution of AOG activity in the southern suburbs of Herat, there are indications that AOG networks are still readjusting and, moreover, that the commander's son is trying to take up his father's mantle and resume activity in the area—this was demonstrated by two rocket attacks in southern Herat. One attack succeeded in causing damage to the Herat Airport runway and forcing its closure for a day, while another, targeting the Injil DAC, caused no damage but was significant in that the rockets were fired from an urban area.

Kushk District and its surroundings also remain a continuing source of instability with persistent AOG activity. Along with one report of an AOG checkpoint in Kushk, there have also been reports of AOG movements in neighbouring Gulran District. In the past, AOGs have carried out IED strikes targeting IMF/ANSF



and attacks on police checkpoints along the Herat-Turghundi Road. IMF/ANSF have carried out search operations in the area aimed at stemming such AOG activity; however, their impact as yet remains to be seen, and such operations could continue into the future.

Herat Province has been fairly quiet of late, even given the time of year, but that should not negate the possibility for an upsurge in coming months. Along with the potential for AOGs regrouping south of Herat, the situation across the border continues to grow less stable; for example, protests on 7 December, which have since led to major disruptions in Iranian control over Khurasan, are likely to intensify throughout the lunar month of Muharram (starting 16 December), culminating on 27 December on Ashura, a holiday which celebrates the struggle against oppression. Also of note, in previous months, ANSO has noticed an upsurge in the amount, type, and complexity of goods smuggled across from Iran and, in coming months, this is only likely to grow, with material potentially finding its way into the hands of AOGs.

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Contact details of ANSO staff are provide on the last page.

**ANSO:** “..by NGOs for NGOs..”

## BADGHIS

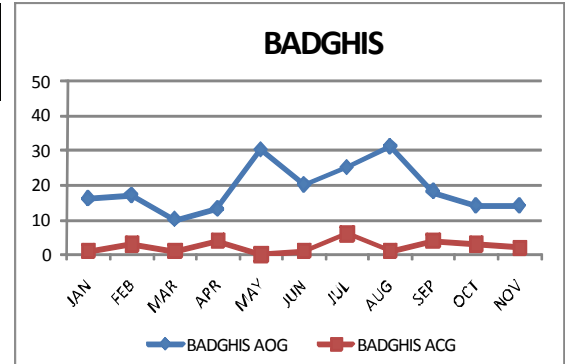
Most activity in Badghis remains restricted to its historic hotspot, the Murghab Valley, and the surrounding districts of Murghab, Ghormach, and Muqur. AOG activity has picked up after an apparent break during and after the Eid holiday, with attacks against ANSF and IMF resuming

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG-IMF/ANSF clashes
- Criminal activity

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 2             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

in the form of ambushes and IED strikes. Additionally, public reports that the ICRC will visit AOG-held detainees for the first time in Afghanistan, in eastern Badghis, are of note. Formally holding detainees and having a command structure that can authoritatively negotiate with international organisations is a sign of increased operational capability and, perhaps, even maturity on the part of these AOGs. As happened earlier this year in Kunduz



Province, it means that the AOGs might be able target more things more often, but also means that they might become more coherent and dependable interlocutors with whom NGOs can negotiate access.

## NANGARHAR

As it has been witnessed in previous reporting cycles, well over 60% of all security incidents recorded in Nangarhar are linked to routine security force operations or criminal activity.

Of 34 reported incidents, four are linked to local disputes that escalated to violence, two of which resulted in fatalities. Other events included several kinds of criminal

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

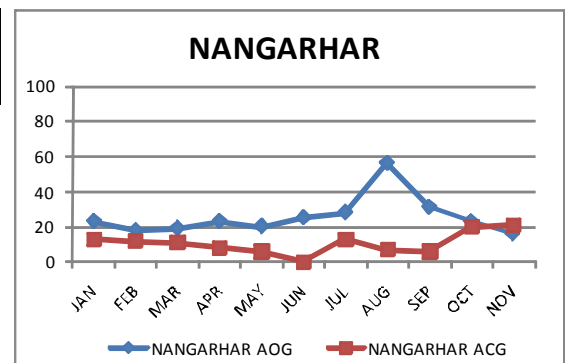
- IEDs
- Criminal activity, particularly in Jalalabad City

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 8             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

activities, such as poppy cultivation, theft or illegal possession of weapons as well as three demonstrations.

Two of the latter took place on 9 December in a protest against an IMF/ANSF operation in Laghman Province a day before, one in Jalalabad City and the other in front of Nangarhar University in Surkh Rod District—both blocked the Jalalabad-Kabul Highway for several hours and ended peacefully.

The high level of IED deployment throughout Nangarhar, as



recorded in previous reporting cycles, decreased significantly during this period. A total of eight IEDs, after 16 in the last period, were emplaced in Nangarhar, with four in Chaparhar, two in Khogyani, one in Jalalabad City, and one in Lal Pur districts.

Compared to previous periods, the level of AOG-initiated incidents in Nangarhar remains relatively low.

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## KHOST

As it has been reported throughout the year, the level of IED activity in Khost Province is significantly higher than in other provinces in the Eastern Region. During this reporting period, the number of recorded devices has increased markedly, with 19 IEDs detonated or located in the province. The effectiveness of their use remains relatively low with 12 of 19 reported devices being discovered before detonation.

Over 40 % of these incidents, namely eight, occurred in Khost City, with four IEDs detonating

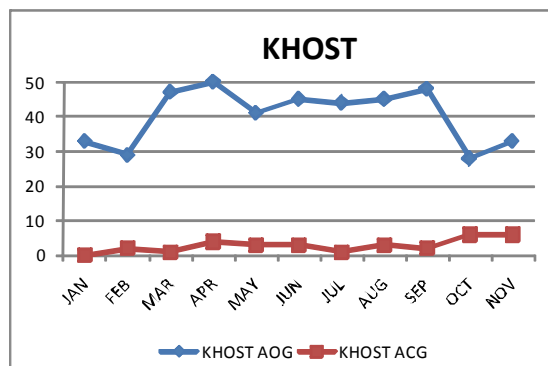
### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs on main routes
- Indirect fire in Sabari district

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 10            |
| This Report Period | 0             |

effectively against targets. The remaining 11 devices were evenly distributed in Bak, Nadir Shah Kot, Mando Zayi, Musa Khel and Sabari districts.

The first reported use of IEDs in this period was in Bak district on 1 December against an ANA/ANP patrol on the district road that caused no injuries. Two days later in Khost City, an IED struck a vehicle belonging to a local construction, injuring five civilians. A similar attack in Musa Khel district on 10 December injured, again, five civilians. As has been witnessed in previous reporting cycles, the only casualties caused by IEDs this period were civilians.



Next to the high level of IED activity, five indirect fire incidents occurred, with only one attack causing casualties. On 6 Dec in Gurbuz District, AOG threw a hand grenade into an ANP checkpoint, injuring two ANP.

Only two direct attacks were reported this period, with one in Tere Zayi and one in Sabari District. On 11 December, AOG attacked the Sabari District Centre with heavy weapons, and IMF responded. (During this armed clash, an unidentified projectile impacted in a nearby civilian house, killing a twelve year old boy).

## PAKTYA

On 15 December in Gardez City, an IED explosion occurred inside the compound of a for-profit development agency, killing five staff members – including one international – and injuring at least seven other people.

At this stage, the specific background and circumstances of this coordinated attack are still under investigation; however, the incident underlines once again the capability of AOG to conduct assaults against well-guarded targets throughout the province.

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

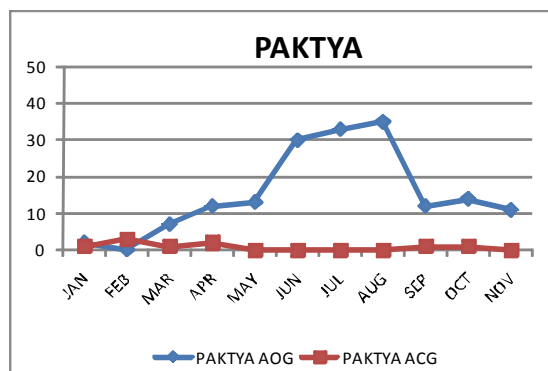
- Complex attacks in Gardez City
- IEDs

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 2             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

According to ANSO data, there has been only one SVBIED attack recorded in Paktya Province in 2009. (On 9 October in Wuza Zadran district, an SVBIED targeted an Indian road construction command post, killing six and injuring three people.)

Next to this high-profile incident, Paktya's security environment was relatively quiet this reporting period, with only 10 incidents recorded. One of two IED incidents resulted in the death of two ANA when their vehicle hit an IED in Gardez on 8 December. The other device was found and made safe in Gardez the same day.

Seven direct attacks against security forces were observed, evenly



distributed in Lija Ahmed Khel, Jani Khel, Zurmat, and Dand Wa Patan districts. For instance, on 8 December in Lija Ahmed Khel, a group of 50-60 AOG members attacked the DAC using heavy weapons and small arms fire. During the attack, reinforcements and air support was requested, and when the air support and reinforcements arrived, AOG withdrew.

This period, only one indirect fire incident occurred in Paktya, when AOG attacked the PRT in Gardez with several rockets, causing no damage.

## LAGHMAN

During this reporting period, Laghman Province has witnessed a significant increase in security related incidents, with six AOG-initiated incidents and several IMF/ANSF operations recorded.

On 8 December in Mitharlam District, for example, IMF/ANSF conducted a joint operation against suspected AOG locations, killing 14 and arresting an additional four people. As a reaction to that operation, and on the same

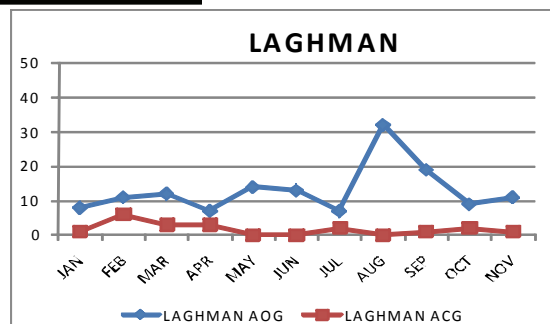
### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- AOG assaults on ANSF/IMF

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 1             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

day, about 200-250 locals started a demonstration to voice discontent about perceived collateral damage caused by IMF/ANSF. ANSF tried to force the demonstrators out of the Bazaar area of Mihtarlam by using warning shots. Consequently, one civilian was killed and two other were injured. Due to still ongoing IMF/ANSF operations, the risk of further demonstrations and public discontent remains high.

Besides demonstrations, four IED-related incidents, two in Alingar and two in Alishing districts, and three direct attacks against secu-



rity forces or convoys were reported. All AOG incidents occurred in Alishing, Alingar, Mitharlam and Qarghayi districts. Only one attack was reported on Highway 1, where a fuel tanker was attacked on 15 December.

The period concluded with an ambush against a former GoA official on 15 December, killing the former official and two other passengers in their vehicle on the main road in Bambu Sin area of Alishing District.

## KANDAHAR

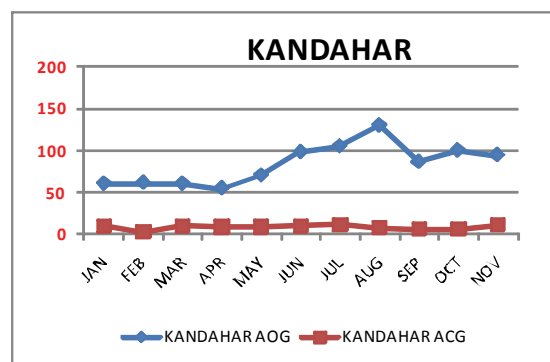
An IO worker en route from Kandahar to Tirin Kot was apparently assaulted and left in a field where he was discovered three days later with injuries not far from his house. It remains unknown at this point whether the individual was assaulted for personal reasons or because of his affiliation with the IO. That he was found near his house suggests that the attack may not have been random and that his movements were known to his attackers. Throughout Kandahar City, at-

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Abduction
- IEDs
- AOG-IMF/ANSF Clashes

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 8             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

tacks of all sorts, ranging from IEDs to targeted killings, resulted in deaths. Meanwhile, IMF undertook a search operation in the city that resulted in the death of at least one alleged AOG. AOG ambition and penetration was evidenced by a credible report of an AOG plan to carry out four suicide attacks in the city. Although the said attacks never materialised, the possibility of a suicide attack in Kandahar remains an obvious concern. Arghandab and Zhari saw significant clashes between AOGs and IMF/ANSF; with this, one can only expect further clashes surrounding Kandahar City because of IMF plans for a surge in the area. In Arghandab,



IMF operations led to the shooting of a teenage boy in Jelarean Village for unknown reasons. The following day, Jelerean residents held a peaceful demonstration in the Arghandab District Centre, during which the boy's remains were ceremonially handed over to the District Governor.

**GRAPHS:** Please note, graphs in this report are current as of 8 December 2009.

## GHAZNI

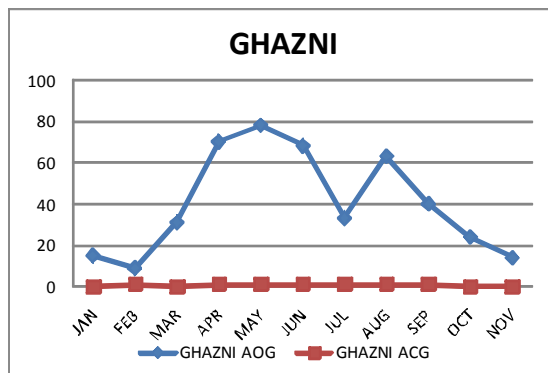
Ghazni continues to be split between a heavily AOG-influenced south and relatively quiet northern mountainous districts. AOG activity has continued at a considerably lower pace than witnessed in recent months. Cold weather is likely a factor in this decline, but increased IMF activity and ANSF initiatives cannot be ruled out. In Gelan District ANSF found and destroyed a weapons cache and, in

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

➔ IEDs

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 2             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

a joint operation with IMF, found another cache containing an array of light weaponry as well as communications equipment. In Zana Khan District, however, an AOG initiative was very much in evidence in the form of AOG ambushes on two ANP patrols and on a local construction company. On the other hand ANSF in Zana Khan also managed to find a significant cache of weapons and explosives. In Waghaz, an AOG launched a sustained attack on the District Governor's convoy, last-



ing upwards of thirty minutes. Ghazni District itself was fairly quiet, with the most significant event being the IMF capture of eight suspected AOG members and their apparent commander who were caught red-handed in the process of fabricating IEDs and suicide vests.

## PAKTIKA

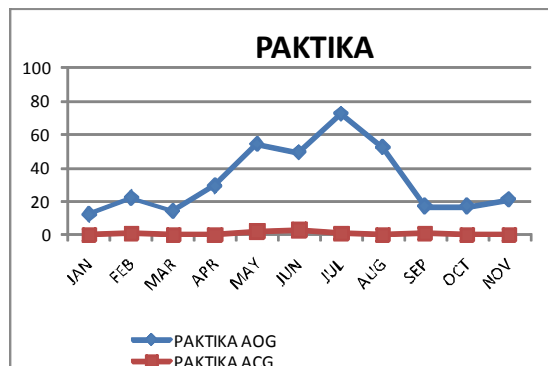
AOG activity was widely distributed across Paktika during this reporting period. In Yousef Khel, an AOG launched an attack on the District Centre that involved the use of both light and heavy weaponry. The AOG show of force was met with a large IMF/ANSF search operation on 11

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

➔ Abduction

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 1             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

December, covering both Yousef Khel and Yahya Khel districts, and which apparently succeeded in hauling off a significant amount of contraband in the form of weaponry and explosives. AOGs also demonstrated their presence in the provincial capital, Sharan, where a suicide attack in the bazaar area targeting ANP succeed in killing three ANP, one civilian, and injuring many more. In Jani



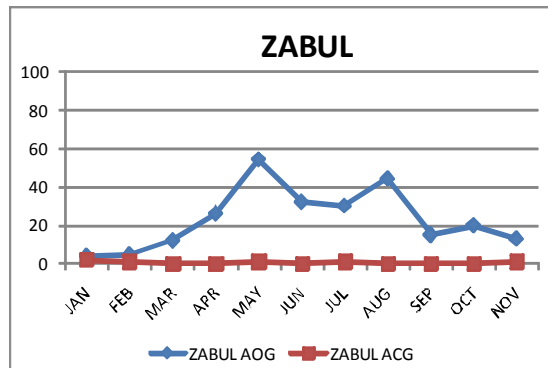
Khel and Sar Hawza, AOGs launched sustained ambushes on IMF/ANSF convoys, lasting three and one hours, respectively.

## ZABUL

Zabul has witnessed a relatively low rate of AOG-initiated activity for the region (4 out of 13 reported incidents for this period). Such activity focuses on Qalat, where AOG members stopped a bus and beheaded two ANA members which had been riding on it in plain sight. Elsewhere the modus operandi is AOG engagement of IMF and ANSF wherever they can, usually in the form of IEDs, ambushes, or a combination thereof, while IMF and

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 0             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

ANSF try to establish a modicum of control by means of search operations. The vulnerabilities of traditional power structures were also on show in Sori and Shinkay Districts, where in two instances AOGs executed tribal elders suspected of dealing with IMF/ANSF. These sorts of acts of retribution, with the assumed goal of intimidation, illustrate how, despite their appeals to perceived traditionalism, AOGs are often



very a-traditional actors who must battle existing unofficial power structures in ways similar to that used against IMF and GoA.

## HELMAND

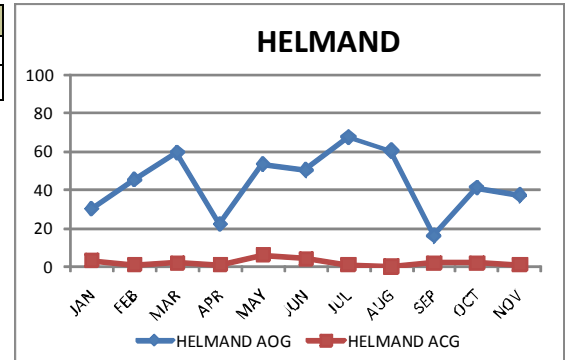
Violence in Helmand continued apace, centring on the densely populated areas along the banks of the Helmand River. In contrast to the last reporting period, incidents in Lashkar Gah have risen dramatically, with most of that rise apparently being accounted for by AOG initiatives in the form of ambushes and IEDs. One ambush on an ANA patrol lasted for over an hour and involved heavy weaponry, resulting

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Heavy Weapons
- AOG Presence
- IMF/ANSF Operations

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 1             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

in the AOG making off with some communications equipment. Clear AOG initiatives were also demonstrated in Nad Ali, Nahri Sarraj, and Sangin districts, where all but a few security incidents there consisted of AOG-initiated attacks on IMF/ANSF. These engagements ranged from SAF attacks on patrols to sustained assaults using heavy weaponry and lasting for quite long periods of time. In Naw Zad District, however, AOGs were put on the defensive by a major IMF/ANSF operation which involved a broad sweep of the district and led to the death and capture of a large



number of AOGs. For Kajaki District, IMF admitted that work on the dam would have to be suspended indefinitely due to their inability to hold the land routes required to bring in the cement, aggregate, and other materials necessary to put the new turbine into place. This announcement signals an significant and likely psychological boost for AOGs which had made halting progress on this important project a priority.

## URUZGAN

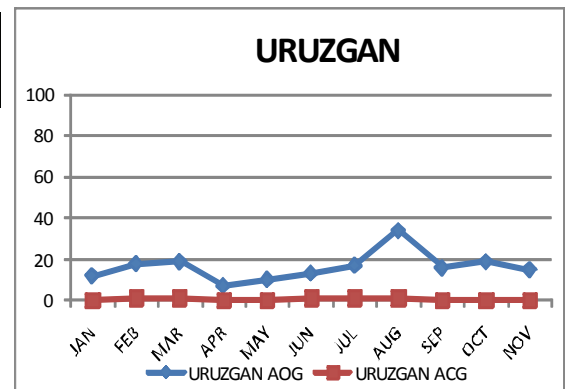
In Uruzgan, Tirin Kot remains the centre of security-related incidents, with the majority occurring in the city and its environs. Probable AOG intimidation is suspected to have been the motive behind the beheadings of two civilians there. As is typical within Uruzgan, poor discipline amongst ANSF was apparent in an incident whereby a traffic accident led to a

### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- AOG-IMF/ANSF clashes
- Xenophobia

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 2             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

firefight between ANA and ANP. Heightened IMF-initiated activity in Khas Uruzgan led to the death of two civilians, shot by IMF, and prolonged clashes as the result of a search operation. IMF operations in this area also included an airstrike which killed 18 suspected AOG members, four of whom are believed to have been AOG commanders. Sporadic IEDs targeting ANSF and IMF were also in evidence elsewhere in the province. As throughout much of the South, the high level of ambient violent activity is the result of clashes between AOGs and



IMF/ANSF or those perceived to be accessory to either side; therefore, because activity does not target NGOs per se, the main risk to their activity is collateral in nature. Nonetheless, there are no indications that local fears of external meddling have eased—a factor that NGOs must keep in mind when debating expansion of activities.

**TRAINING:** See the last page for training opportunities.

## NIMROZ

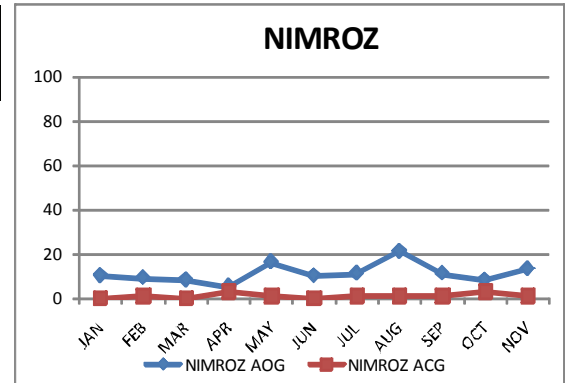
Reported activity in Nimroz is almost exclusively restricted to Khash Rod District and consists entirely of AOG attacks on ANP. In one case, this resulted in an ANP commander being shot openly whilst shopping. Given patterns of AOG activity elsewhere in the South, it is assumed

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 0             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

that the particular focus on ANP is the result of the absence of more high-profile AOG favourites like ANA and IMF. Despite the appearance of tranquillity in and around Zaranj, one should not be in doubt that Nimroz remains a significant conduit for all manner of illicit activity, from drugs to arms smuggling. The potential for instability and criminal activity is supported by the chronic instability of the neighbouring province of Sistan-

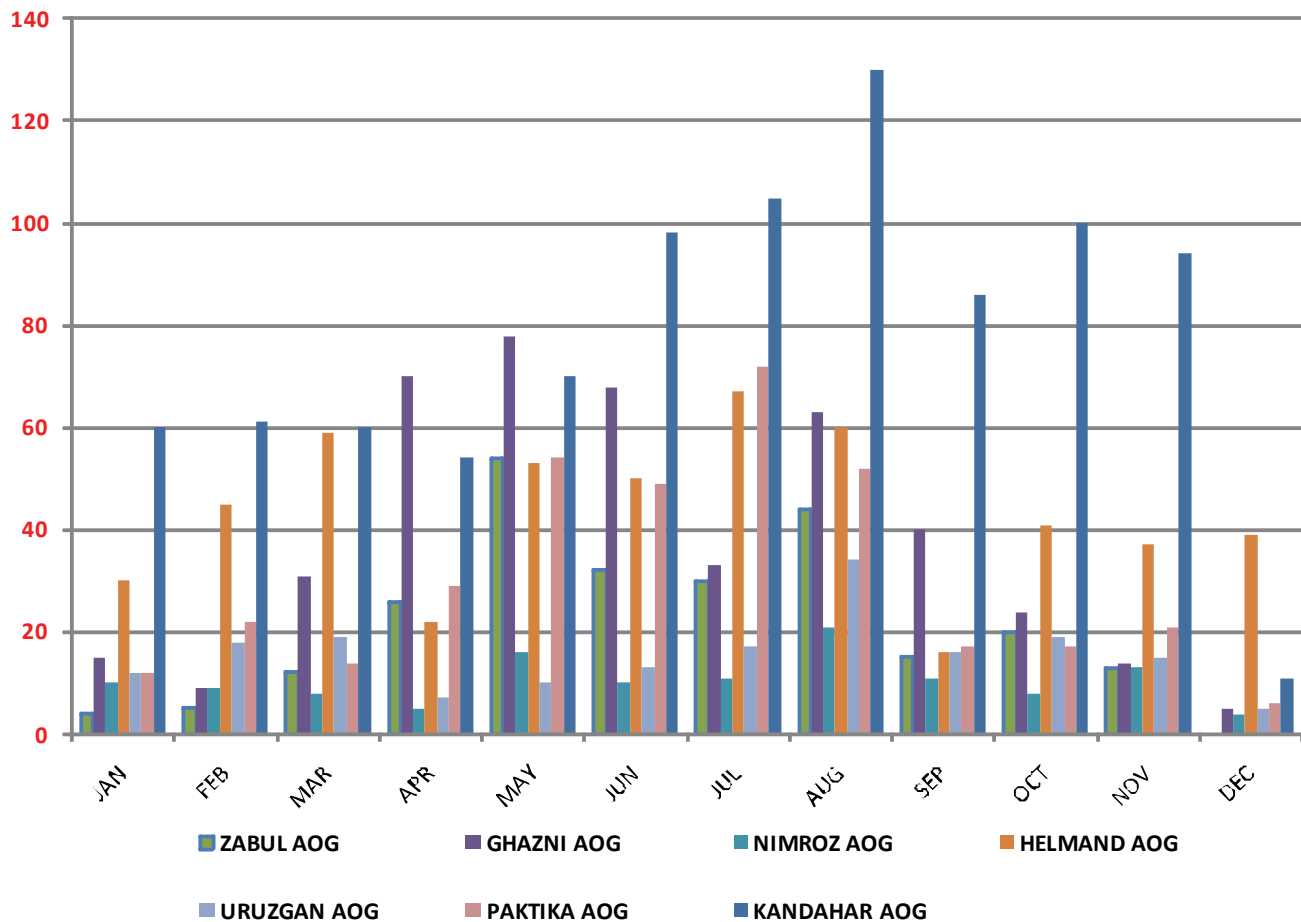
### KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG activity in Khash Rod
- Criminal Activity



va-Balouchistan, where an ethno-religious Balouchi insurgency rattles around alongside increasing anti-government protests. (A substantial portion of Nimroz's population is Balouchi).

## SOUTH 2009 AOG LEVELS



## THE AFGHANISTAN NGO OFFICE - CONTACTS AND INFORMATION



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### ANSO ACRONYMS

**ACG**-Armed Criminal Group  
/ **AEF**-Afghan Eradication  
Forces / **ANA**-Afghan Na-  
tional Army / **ANBP**-Afghan  
National Border Police /  
**ANP**-Afghan National Police  
/ **AOG**-Armed Opposition  
Group / **APPF**-Afghan Public  
Protection Forces (local  
deputised militias) / **DC**-  
District Centre / **GOA**-  
Government of Afghanistan  
/ **IDF**-Indirect Fire (ex: mor-  
tars) / **IED**-Improvised Ex-  
plosive Device / **IMF**-  
International Military Forces  
/ **NDS**-National Directorate  
of Security (Intelligence) /  
**PRP**-Previous Reporting  
Period / **PSC**-Private Secu-  
rity Company / **RPG**-Rocket  
Propelled Grenade / **SAF**-  
Small Arms Fire / **VBIED**-  
Vehicle Borne Improvised  
Explosive Device

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## MISSING

This report ANSO  
could not provide  
analysis for the prov-  
inces of:

Parwan  
Samangan  
Kunar  
Nuristan

This is because we  
do not know enough  
about the area to  
comment on the sig-  
nificance of the inci-  
dents occurring  
there.

If you can help us  
understand the prov-  
ince better, please  
contact us.

## ANSO TRAINING

If you are an ANSO-registered NGO and interested in communications or  
guard training for your national-staff, please express your interest by emailing  
Masoud Habibi at [operations2@afgnso.org](mailto:operations2@afgnso.org).