

THE ANSO REPORT

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YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Faryab experiences a spate of INGO incidents, primarily on schools
- Inter-AOG armed clashes in Baghlan may result in one AOG assuming de jure control and legitimisation
- Intra-Shinwari feuds and disputes between power players grab attention in Nangarhar

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COUNTRY SUMMARY

Throughout the country, NGOs bore witness to all to common complications that arise in the face of instability. Of note, one province in the Northern Region—Faryab—was pummelled with a spate of NGO incidents (five in total). While information suggests that motivations varied from communal rivalries to pure ideological beliefs, the prevalent belief is that AOG are merely attempting to effect their will through intimidation, a common display of aggression that occurs in contested areas. Thus, armed actors targeted three schools in the province to varying degrees, concluding with some emplacing armed guards to ensure the safety of the schools (see Faryab).

Also in the province, an NGO-run clinic was approached by AOG who sought to establish their dominance in the area by granting clinic staff the ability to continue working.

The Northern Region remained in focus, especially for the international press and those who would like to foolhardily highlight fissures in AOG movements, when a brewing conflict erupted between Hizb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) and Taliban op-

eratives. While exact motives for the dispute remain somewhat murky, it appears that a local power/land dispute led to armed confrontation between the two groups, with HIG members purportedly asking for GoA protection and expressing a desire for reintegration. And at the time of this report, it appeared that IMF/ANSF were on the cusp of confronting the enemy of the moment—Taliban—in Pul-e Khumri and Baghlani Jadid. While actual intentions cannot be known, many analysts suspect that HIG will utilise the reintegration process to establish a de jure control of the area, thereby benefiting from the legitimised use of arms and monetary and military support to defeat its local foe.

In the Eastern Region, focus remains on Nangarhar and Kunar, albeit for differing reasons. In the latter, an intra-Shinwari dispute persists, with two factions coming to blows over the distribution of land. Additionally, murmurs of a continuing dispute between two spheres of power—that of the now deceased Haji Zaman and the still present Haji Zaher—indicate that Zaher will still likely jockey

for preference with IMF and local authorities.

And with rising temperatures comes increased ferocity in Kunar Province, where one INGO staff member died during an IMF assault. While AOG activity remains high in the province—the highest in the region—IMF may be seeking to somewhat confront AOG, which again means increased danger for NGOs.

Developments in the South persisted according to typical patterns, with the 13 March coordinated attack in Kandahar City demonstrating the seeming impossibility of IMF affecting developments even in the provincial capitol. Likewise, Helmand experienced AOGs' attempts to demonstrate their vitality through increased assaults on IMF/ANSF.

Consequently, one can easily predict that AOG will continue to muster what are relatively significant assaults in metropolitan areas. Furthermore, the opposition will remain recalcitrant in the face of an international approach that utilises the flawed notion that causing instability will bring about stability.

KABUL

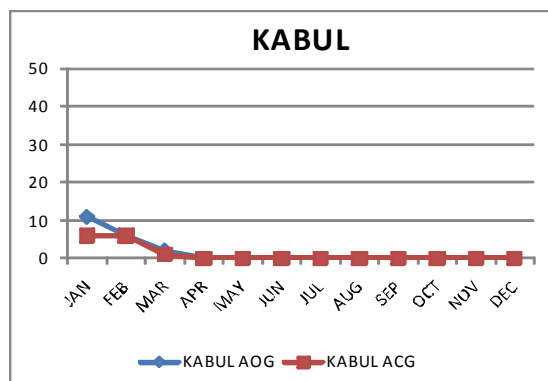
An NGO fell victim to an armed robbery in Dehbury area of District 3 on 10 March, when three armed men exited a vehicle and demanded money and computer equipment from a vehicle carrying NGO workers. No one was injured in the incident, and following a request from one of the staff, a computer and mobile phone used for professional purposes, rather than personal items, were returned. The incident is not believed to be related to the NGO's work and may actually have been a kidnapping gang as a report of a similar vehicle and number of men intent on conducting a kidnapping was provided.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- SVBIED attacks around high profile GoA, IMF and foreign representation targets
- ACG abductions
- Car accidents

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	4
This Report Period	1

In the wake of the 26th February coordinated AOG attacks against two guesthouses in Shar-e-Naw, the security climate in Kabul has been dominated by a discernible increase in threat reporting (most of it cyclical) and an associated expansion of an ANSF presence on the streets of Kabul. The events follow a familiar pattern following high profile attacks, whereby threat reporting spikes after the event, ANSF increase the number and invasiveness of checkpoints and arrests are made in districts 8 and increasingly district 12 as well. Further arrests were also made in districts 1, 3, 4, 6 and 9. In the surrounding districts of Kabul as well as districts 8 and 12, there have been numerous discoveries of large amounts of explosives, mainly ammonium nitrate, as well as logistics equipment and ANSF uniforms, underlining AOG capabilities and intent. Current trends suggest that the AOG attack cycle in the capital has reduced to every three



weeks rather than approximately every four weeks in 2009. If the 'Peace Jirga' is to go ahead in the capital as planned at the end of April, Kabul could witness an increase in the number of high profile attacks, as spoilers attempt to discredit the talks themselves or other negotiating partners.

Separately in Kabul, an armoured vehicle, believed to belong to IMF, ploughed into a crowd of people on 12 March in Patkya Kot area along Jalalabad Road, killing four people and injuring at least two others. The accident occurred in an area which was previously the scene of an IMF 'escalation of force' shooting, which led to the death of an unarmed local religious leader in late January. The latest incident is likely to add to existing resentment against IMF. As a precautionary measure NGOs should avoid the location in conjunction with Udkhel, on the south side of Jalalabad Road.

PARWAN

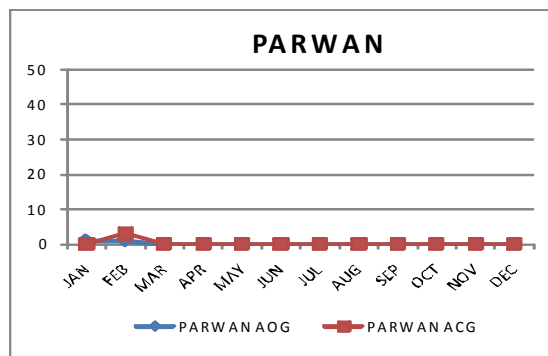
Parwan maintains its typical standing as the safest of Kabul's bordering provinces. AOG activity has remained minimal for the year to date with only two rocket attacks against the Bagram IMF base being recorded compared to six

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Low intensity AOG activity in the Ghorband Valley
- ACG activity in Chaharikar
- Winter road closures through the Shibar and Salang passes

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

separate attacks, mainly in the Ghorband Valley, in 2009. The area is known to host several AOG factions; however there have been no recorded incidents this year. Kohi Safi, given its border with the troubled Surobi district in Kabul Province and Tagab district in Kapisa, is another area that has the potential for problems. However, for the few NGO that do have operations in Kohi Safi, any current threat is indirect, as the likely targets will be military/police forces. Also, an ab-



sence of major roads isolates the district. Such factors make Kohi Safi potentially risky for NGO operations.

For the most part however, Parwan provides a safe operating environment for NGOs providing they have a high degree of community engagement both prior to and during the implementations stage of their programs.

KAPISA

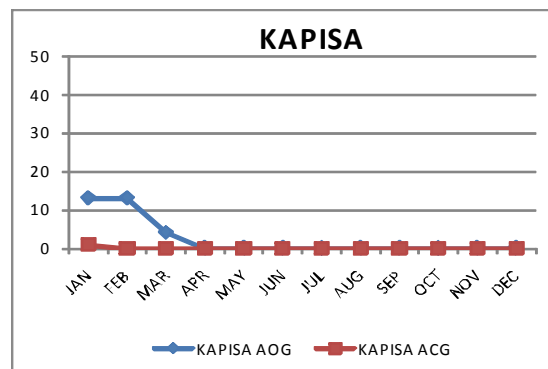
Similar to Parwan, the security situation in Kapisa is held hostage by various factions seeking to expand their control or influence over particular areas, especially in the east. Jamiat, Hizb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), tribal factions and local Taliban are all present in varying degrees and often in conflict with one another. The ANSF face man-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Secondary exposure to clashes between AOG and ANSF/IMF in Tagab
- Low intensity factional disputes in Kohistan I & II
- Decentralized AOG activity in Alasay, Nijrab and Tagab

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

power pressures from Kabul, as more ANP are drafted into the capital following each high profile attack. Furthermore, the ANP is perceived in some quarters as being associated with rival factions, thereby inviting isolated attacks on checkpoints or convoys. To add to the mix, IMF are subject to an increasing number of AOG attacks as they attempt to navigate the local 'human terrain' and expand their presence into new areas of Alasay and Nijrab. IMF control of Tagab is largely confined to the district roads, where they face isolated IEDs and ambushes, with their freedom of movement being severely limited in the more rural areas. In 2010 there has almost been a five fold



increase in the number of AOG attacks on all targets to approximately 28 at the end of February, with no indication that the security environment will improve.

More than half of all AOG incidents occur in Tagab and comprise a combination of rocket attacks, IED, ambushes and assassinations of rivals. The deterioration of the security environment in the east has little effect on NGO operations as the vast majority of the organisations operating in the province are implementing programs in the western districts of Mahmudi Raqi and Kohistan I and II.

DAYKUNDI

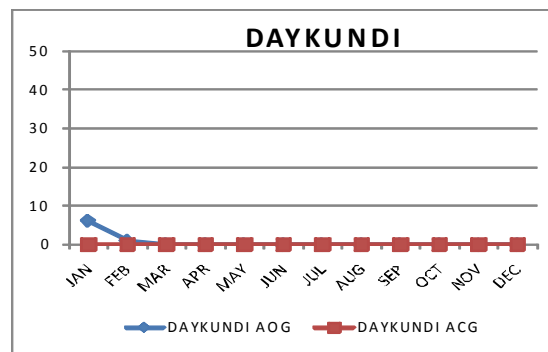
Once again, the southern districts of Kijran and especially Gizab dominate security reporting from Daykundi. With Gizab being under the nominal control of AOG and Kijran considered contested, the PRT is beginning to make its intentions clear. Originally viewed as a force for reconstruction and development in the impoverished province, the PRT, after completing several quick impact projects, appears to be assuming a more security focused role. In addition

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ACG/AOG abduction threat in Gizab
- Winter road travel
- Occasional banditry on roads leaving from Nili

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

to a joint ANSF/IMF operation south to the Tamazan Valley on 8 March, it appears, following the receipt of numerous reports, that IMF may be intending to use a 'former' commander previously involved in the abduction of two NGO workers in 2008 to assist in securing the province. An IMF program, the National Defence Initiative, may be at the heart of the issue. The program's intention is to empower local commanders to counter the AOG threat and ensure short term stability or at least an appearance of such. Essentially the program favours short term political expediency over the long term stability of the province. Supporting local commanders upsets local power balances, disempowers the ANSF,



militarizes local communities and in this case possibly contributes to a greater instability as the 'clients' and their militias are given additional resources to tackle any instability which becomes in their interest to perpetuate.

Early reports also suggest that a bi-ethnic community guard, without support from the PRT, has been established in the Tamazan Valley, Gizab, to counter an increasing number of kidnappings and forced 'taxes' in the area, allegedly by AOG. There is very little NGO presence in the south of Daykundi due to the inherent instability of the area and this is unlikely to change in the months ahead.

LOGAR

Similarly to Wardak, the operating environment for NGOs in Logar is challenging. Sustained community engagement, employment practices mirroring local communities and an understanding of the local actors is imperative prior to commencing operations in the province. Often these 'barriers to entry' and the associated risks are perceived as being too high, hence

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

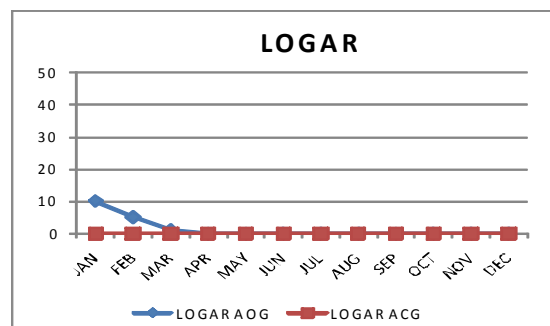
- ACG/AOG abductions
- IMF operations
- AOG intimidation

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

the small number of NGOs in the province.

To the end of February, the number of incidents, while traditionally low during the winter period, has increased by a third compared to 2009 to 15 AOG initiated attacks for the year to date. The attacks are comprised of six IED detonations against ANSF and IMF, seven ambushes against a variety of targets and three targeted assassinations of either ANSF or religious figures.

The latest reporting period reflects a similar pattern with three IED discoveries along district



roads, an IED detonation against an ANP vehicle and two IMF arrest operations in Puli Alam and Muhammad Agha which targeted IED facilitators or logisticians. It appears that IMF arrest operations, especially in Muhammad Agha, have led to an improvement in the security situation according to local reports.

Anecdotal reporting suggests Logar may host an increase in AOG initiated attacks as the winter lull comes to an end, and AOG return to the province.

WARDAK

The province continues to experience frequent clashes between AOG and the ANSF and IMF. With the exception of three IEDs discoveries by the ANSF in Kotali Dawrani Valley, Nirkh and Godan village Chaki, there have been few recorded incidents in Saydabad. On 4 March, an ANP vehicle was struck by an IED on the Majahe-din area along the road. Two ANP were reportedly killed and two others wounded. A second

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

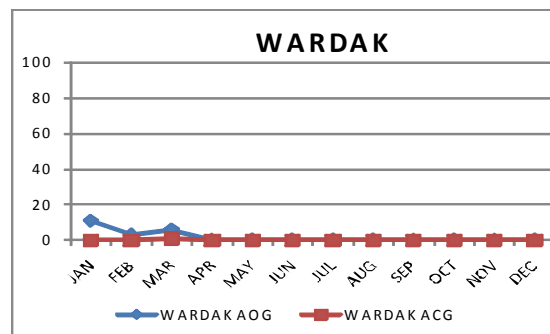
- ACG/AOG abductions
- AOG intimidation
- IEDs and SAF ambushes targeting IMF/ANSF and logistics convoys along Highway One

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

IED on 4 March struck an ANP vehicle in the Haftasya area on the ring road, leaving three casualties. Also in Saydabad, an AOG ambush on an IMF logistics convoy on 12 March in Lora Area, left an AOG commander dead following an exchange of SAF.

The number incidents indicate eastern Wardak is effectively unstable. Saydabad is especially volatile due to the long intersection of the Kabul-Kandahar highway used by ANSF and logistics convoys and its proximity to the equally AOG saturated provinces of Logar and Ghazni. But Chaki, Nirkh, Jalrez, and Jaghatu are all also reported to be heavily infiltrated with AOG.

Based on the above, the situation does not look promising for



NGOs this year. Although ANSF and IMF will probably launch operations in this province in this coming summer in order to stem the flow of AOG into the central area, it will probably not result in an improved situation for NGOs. However the main road south from Kabul remains too dangerous for NGO travel and AOG reportedly operates parallel governance structures in the eastern districts. Problems also extend into the population centres. AOGs in Wardak have shown only sporadic tolerance for NGOs in its areas of operation and therefore the few remaining NGOs in Wardak will probably continue to face certain challenges, especially in the coming summer months when incidents tend to peak.

BAMYAN

Intra-AOG clashes in neighboring Baghlan led to concerns that Bamyan may be used by the belligerents to escape the area following an increase in ANSF and IMF attention. In response ANP established extra checkpoints in Khar-mard, however there have been

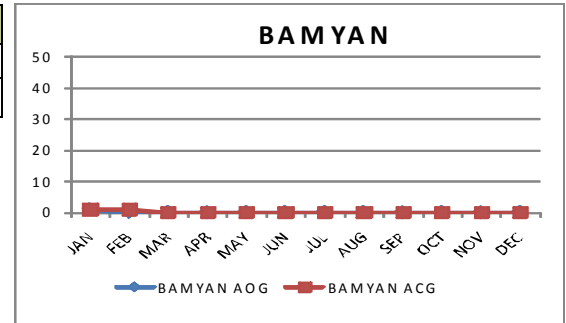
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Winter road conditions
- ACG/AOG activity in the Shikari and Ghandak Valleys

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

no confirmed sightings or threat reports suggesting movements of AOG fighters south. Any AOG threat is unlikely to materialise due to the ethnic realities on the ground and the close communities which would likely report any such movements to ANSF.

The DIAG program appears to be having a slight effect in Bamyan, with an alleged 'AOG commander' handing himself into the



ANP on 7 March and several dozen weapons being handed into the GoA in the middle of February. The main threat in the northeast of the province, however, remains ACG who have conducted several violent robberies around the Ghandhak Village area.

KUNDUZ

In Qala-e Zal District, a three-day "turf war" unfolded between AOGs and pro-government militia members. On day one, AOGs took over a pro-government militia position in Yangharek Area. Over the next two days militia members, with ANSF reinforcements, retook the position in an armed clash that killed two AOGs and injured four others. This clash was only the fourth recorded incident in Qala-e Zal District in the past four months. The district has been quieter compared to neighboring Chahar Dara, Kunduz, and Imam Sahib districts, presumably due to the strong presence of pro-government militias.

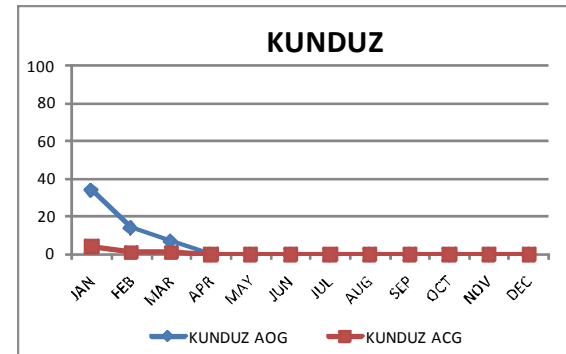
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Armed clashes on the Khanabad-Kunduz Highway
- Pro-government militia-AOG clash in Qala-e Zal District
- AOG activity in Archi District
- Continued attacks in Chahar Dara District

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

Armed roadside robberies and clashes have picked up again on the Kunduz-Khanabad Highway in Khanabad District. In two locations, ANP engaged unknown armed men on the main highway during the evening hours—once in Adam Khan Area, and twice in Aksi Dawud Area, pursuing ACGs who had established an illegal checkpoint on the main road. A SAF attack on a private vehicle was also reported in Nikpai Area on the main road. Though this road has been reportedly safe during the daylight hours over the past several months, it should be noted that some of these incidents have occurred during the early evening hours.

In Imam Sahib District, pro-government militias went on the offensive, injuring three AOGs in Tashguzar Area, and seizing territory in Qutorblogh Area. Prolonged AOG-ANSF clashes were reported near Archi District Centre this reporting period, pointing to continued instability in the district. Also in Archi District, an IED detonated in Qutorblogh



Area, killing two civilians and injuring four others. The IED was presumably intended to target pro-government militias and other ANSF who have been present on the roads from Archi to Imam Sahib districts. This is the second IED to strike a civilian vehicle in the area. Last month an IED injured seven civilians in Tash Guzar Area of Imam Sahib District.

AOG attacks on IMF/ANSF continue at a steady pace in Chahar Dara District. Most of the attacks reported this period occurred in areas southeast of the district center, including Isa Khel, Mir Sheikh and Qarai Qasab areas, with the exception of one IED attack on an IMF convoy in Palaw Kamar Area, north of the district centre. These incidents point to a continued IMF presence in these areas which increased last month following the defection of a small number of AOGs in the southeast area of the district.

JAWZJAN

In Jawzjan Province, one SAF attack was reported in Aqcha District Centre, a rare AOG-ANSF clash was reported in Khaniqa District, four AOGs were arrested in an operation in Feyzabad District, and AOG activity continues in the province's southern panhandle. In Aqcha District Centre, two AOGs riding on a motorcycle opened fire on two former local jihadi commanders. One of the commanders was injured and the other one managed to escape unharmed. The ANP subsequently engaged the perpetrators in a fire fight in which one AOG was killed and one ANP member was injured. The ANP arrested two

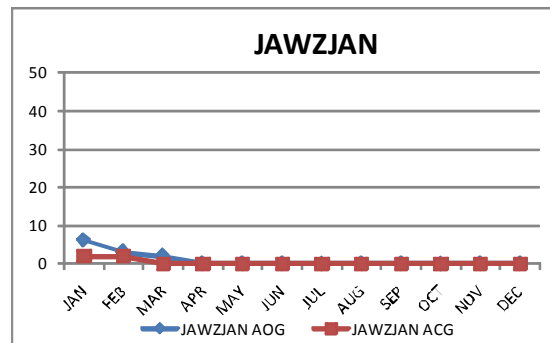
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Targeted SAF attacks in Aqcha District
- AOGs in southern panhandle

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

suspected AOGs in connection with the incident. Targeted SAF attacks in Aqcha District have been reported once every three to seven weeks since August 2009. While some incidents are connected to interpersonal disputes, the majority of the incidents have been perpetrated by AOGs targeting GOA/ANSF or, in this case, high-ranking individuals affiliated with political factions.

In Khaniqa District, ANP engaged four AOGs who were spotted in Shaqarqul Village in the district's southern hills. ANP killed two AOGs and arrested two others. The AOGs were well equipped with AK-47s, hand grenades and four VHF radios. The AOGs were spotted by the Khaniqa District Chief of Police, and it is not clear whether the AOGs had intended to carry out



an attack at that time. The AOGs are believed to be from the northern districts of Jawzjan. Also in Feyzabad District, ANSF arrested four AOGs.

AOGs continue to be active in Qush Tepa and Darzab districts. AOGs reportedly stopped a truck which had been transporting construction material and furniture for a school in Darzab District. The AOGs unloaded the truck and burned its contents, which was reportedly property of the GOA. In the past month it has been reported that AOGs have been patrolling the road from Qush Tepa to Shibirgan as far north as Jar Quduq Area (still in Qush Tepa District), and during this reporting period AOGs abducted a man from Jar Quduq Area.

BALKH

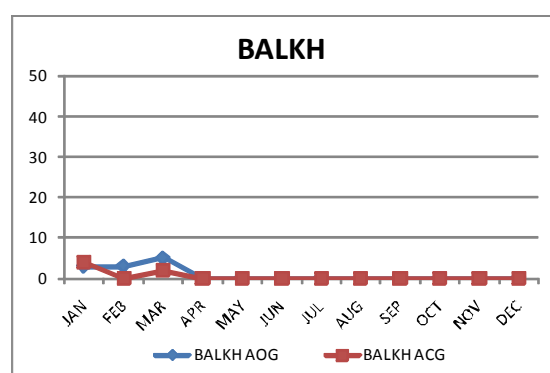
In the first NGO-direct incident recorded in Kaldar District, an NGO compound was set fire to by unknown armed men in the District Centre. The incident is known to be ACG-motivated and the circumstances were specific to this particular NGO. Also in Balkh Province, Khulm District, AOG attacks on ANSF and

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG infiltration from Kunduz
- AOG activity in Chintal and Chahar Bolak districts
- Roadside robbery in Dawlatabad District

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	1

armed clashes have been reported in the northeast, on the border with Kunduz Province. AOG infiltration from Kunduz Province has occurred over the past few months, and ANSF have recently established checkpoints and patrols in that area, thus leading to the increase in kinetic activity. AOGs attacked ANP checkpoints in Chintal District on two occasions this period. Following a period of calm in these areas over the winter months, AOG activity in Chintal and Chahar Bolak districts is likely to increase as the Spring arrives. In Dawlatabad District, ACGs stopped a civilian vehicle and robbed passengers of



their valuables. Armed roadside robberies are reported more frequently in the week preceding Nowruz due to knowledge that passengers are more likely to be bearing cash and valuables as gifts. Also north of Mazar-e Sharif, in Balkh District, an IED was discovered on a side road in Shahab Village, near the main road to Dawlatabad District Centre. AOGs are known to be present in Balkh District; however, their activity is limited due to strong ANP control in the area.

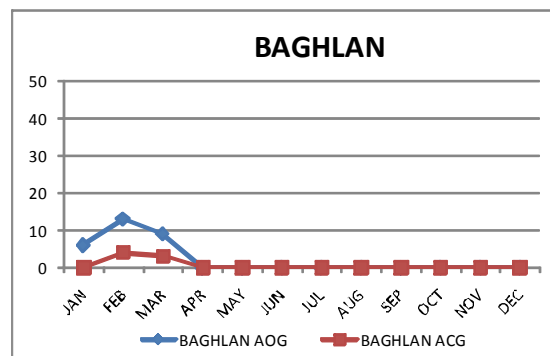
BAGHLAN

One NGO-direct incident of armed robbery occurred in Tala Wa Barfak District Centre this reporting period. An unknown number of armed men entered an NGO compound in the area, prevented the guard from leaving his room, and stole one computer, one solar panel, and one HF radio. ACGs are known to exist in the district, and the details of this incident do not suggest an AOG motivation. However, it may be noted that AOGs are suspected to be involved in a recently reported case of armed robbery south of the District Centre, targeting a privately owned international construction company. These AOGs are likely connected to groups operating in Bamyan and Shibar districts of Bamyan Province.

Elsewhere in Baghlan Province, a protracted struggle between two AOGs left approximately 60 people dead and an unknown number injured. The immediate impetus for the clashes occurred in the late evening of 5 March, when three AOG commanders from Baghlani Jadid District travelled south with several dozen men to Dand-e Ghorri Area of Pul-e Khumri District, where they succeeded in disarming a unit of 20 men belong-

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	1

ing to the rival AOG. Following the incident in Dand-e Ghorri Area, members of the disarmed AOG retaliated, attacking rival AOG positions in Qaysar Khel and Kok Chinar areas of Baghlani Jadid District. Sporadic fighting occurred throughout the day, while the pursued AOG drew in reinforcements from the north of the district. Heavy fighting erupted the second day, with clashes reported throughout areas west of the Pul-e Khumri-Kunduz Highway. Several IEDs were planted in areas west of the main highway and are still thought to remain as AOGs have sustained control of this territory. By the late afternoon of the second day of fighting, the AOG that had traditionally dominated most AOG-held areas of Baghlan Province had become overpowered. Approximately 12 commanders from this AOG, with an estimated 52 men, surrendered to the GOA, presumably because they could no longer defend themselves. These men remain in GOA custody, but it is likely that they will be deployed in the future to fight against the AOG who remains in areas north of Shahri Kohna Area, and west of the highway in Baghlani Jadid District and parts of Pul-e Khumri District, including Dand-e Ghorri, Cheshmashir, and Shahabudin areas. Prior to the conflict, the two AOGs involved



had been coexisting in Baghlani Jadid, Pul-e Khumri, Dahan-e Ghorri and other parts of Baghlan Province for several years.

The AOG who currently remains in opposition to the government had been traditionally dominant in the north of Baghlani Jadid District, north of Shahri Kohna Qala Area, with small pockets of influence throughout Pul-e Khumri District. The AOG who recently surrendered to the GOA had traditionally dominated the majority of AOG-held areas in the province. Tensions had arisen between the two groups with regard to jurisdiction over illegal tax collection and suspected alliances with the GOA. At present, the remaining AOG has increased its presence in areas previously dominated by the AOG who surrendered to the GOA. There have also been reports of AOG migration from the north of the province to areas in Dahan-e Ghorri and Doshi districts. A large-scale military operation in AOG-controlled areas may be expected in the coming weeks. In the meantime, the Pul-e Khumri-Kunduz Highway is reportedly more secure due to an increased ANSF/IMF presence during the daylight hours. However, the presence of AOGs north of Shahri Kohna Qala Area should not be underestimated, nor should the potential for further AOG-ANSF/IMF clashes near the road. Several IEDs planted west of the main highway are still thought to remain as AOGs have sustained control of this territory.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Conflict between AOGs
- ACG/AOG activity in Tala wa Barfak

TAKHAR

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

Several incidents of interpersonal disputes were reported this period in Takhar Province, marking a temporary downturn in reports of AOG activity in the northern districts. One incident of illegal tax collection and intimidation was reported in Darqad District, Kaltoot Village, late last reporting period. In what may have been an AOG-initiated incident, unknown armed men shot and killed a village elder in Yangi Qala District. The downturn in reported incidents may be due to an actual decrease in incidents, or may indicate increased AOG influence and lack of ANSF presence.

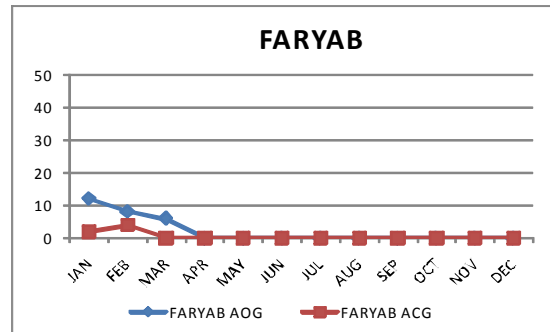
FARYAB

A total of five NGO incidents were reported this period in Faryab Province, three in the north of the province, and two in Pashtun Kot District. In the north, a series of three AOG/ACG attacks on NGO-built and GOA-run girls' schools raised alarm in Khani Chahar Bagh, Qurghan and Qaramqol districts. The incidents are tied to the incident reported last period in Qurghan District in which an IED was placed in an NGO-built and GOA-run girls' school. At the time the incident was mistakenly reported as being non-NGO related. In the first two incidents in Khani Chahar Bagh and Qurghan districts, armed men entered the schools and bound the guards. In Qurghan, the armed men stole computers from the classroom and set the teacher's office on fire. Prior to this incident, the NGO reported that night letters had been distributed to a neighbouring village, urging people not to send their female children to school. In Khani Chahar Bagh District, the armed men only stole some computer CPUs and escaped without causing further damage. Following these three incidents (including the previously reported IED incident in Qurghan District), the district governors of each district rallied community members to support the schools in providing one armed guard to each school.

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	8
This Report Period	5

Following this measure, when armed men attempted to enter a girls' school in Qaramqol District, the armed guard returned fire, deterring the men from entering the building. A brief fire fight ensued in which the perpetrators hurled a hand grenade into the school building, damaging its windows. No casualties were reported, and the attackers escaped before the ANP were able to arrive. These incidents are thought to be perpetrated by local AOGs who are particularly motivated in preventing female education. While northern Faryab Province does not have a known AOG presence, a limited number of attacks against individuals in the field of education were reported in 2007, including a murder of an NGO employee, a GOA official and a school principal. As of yet, no other evidence has pointed to a broader AOG agenda being promoted in this area.

Approximately 13 kilometres south of Maymana City, in Maymarda Valley of Pashtun Kot District, two NGOs encountered a group of about 20 armed men on the same day. Early in the morning of 9 March, the armed men approached an NGO building in a village in the valley, beat the three NGO staff who were inside, stole a number of valuables and then detained one staff member for



approximately one and a half hours before releasing him in exchange for the NGO's white Landcruiser. The men then left the village with the NGO vehicle, heading south. Around the same time, an NGO-run clinic in a village further south was reportedly approached by the same group of armed men. Upon entering the village, the men reportedly raised a white flag. The men then approached the clinic staff without entering the clinic and encouraged them to continue their operations, but emphasized that the clinic staff should be aware of the group's authority in the area. The armed men claimed that they have a presence in other areas of Pashtun Kot District, and that they have also allowed clinics to operate in those areas. The men then reportedly stayed overnight in the village and left the following morning. On 11 March, a joint ANSF/IMF operation pursued the group into the southern hills of Jiji Area, where they succeeded in recovering the NGO Landcruiser, six motorcycles and several RPG rounds; however, the AOGs were able to escape and still remain at large. The group is believed to be an amalgamation of AOGs operating in southwestern Faryab along with some local ACGs. Part of the group may have originated in western Shirin Tagab District and Khwaja Na Musa sub-district, where AOGs have become more active. AOG-IMF/ANSF confrontation in that area may be expected in the future.

BADAKHSHAN

In Badakhshan Province, AOGs attacked the NDS headquarters in Kishim District. One ANP was injured and the perpetrators managed to escape. AOG attacks on

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

ANSF in Kishim District occur on occasion. AOG activity in the district is believed to be tied to drug smuggling operations, as

revealed in February when ANP recovered a large amount of material used to produce heroin. Elsewhere in Badakhshan, a series of large weapons seizures took place in Warduj and Feyzabad districts. The weapons, including anti-aircraft ammunition and hundreds of mortars, are believed to have been abandoned by a deceased former jihadi commander.

SAR-E PUL

AOGs have grown increasingly

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Attack on Sayyad DAC
- Attack on ANP in Sar-e Pul District

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

bold in Sayyad District over the past two weeks. In the first reported attack on the Sayyad DAC, AOGs attacked the DAC and an ANP checkpoint near the DAC with SAF and RPGs and escaped

after an hour-long fire fight. Illegal tax collection has also been reported in two villages outside of Almalik Village.

Also, in Sar-e Pul District, AOGs attacked an ANP checkpoint in Imam Jafar Village. The checkpoint is to the west of Sari Pul City on the road to Sayyad District. AOG infiltrations from Sayyad to Sar-e Pul District are extremely rare.

FARAH

The rate of AOG initiated incidents remains relatively stable compared to the previous reporting period, but worth noting, it continues at a level below that registered during the same period last year. Seven incidents have been registered, of which two were AOG initiated. The pattern of IED attacks targeting security forces that was observed in Pusht

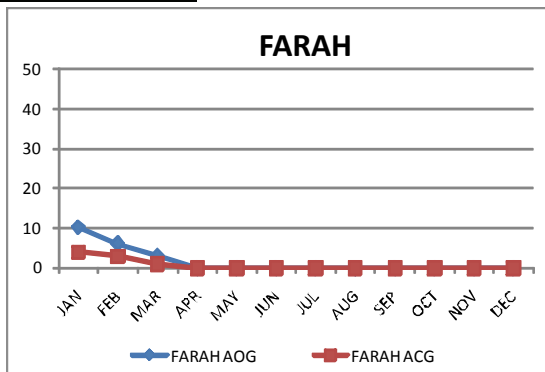
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs/RCIEDs
- AOG ambushes/Armed clashes
- Criminal activity

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

Road in the last report persisted. On 9 March, an IED struck an ANA convoy, killing four ANA soldiers and wounding another three. The same day, but in a remote district of Pur Chaman, AOG attacked an ANP post. Additionally, an IED was seized in Bala-Buluk, on 6 March.

To counter AOG activity in Farah Province, security forces led two operations. During the first of them, in Bakwa on 10 March, one person allegedly wearing a suicide vest was arrested. On 13 March in Gulistan, in an operation that was supported by an airstrike, IMF



claimed that eight AOG members were killed, including three foreign fighters.

Finally, in Farah on 8 March, a group of armed men stopped two commercial trucks. The incident seems to be criminally motivated as the drivers were released apparently unharmed, but the trucks were stolen and taken to an unknown location.

GHOR

Overall activity in Ghor continues to be low. However, in comparison to the last reporting period, a slight increase in the number of incidents has been recorded during the present cycle. A pattern that has already been observed over the past few months continued, with mainly criminal related

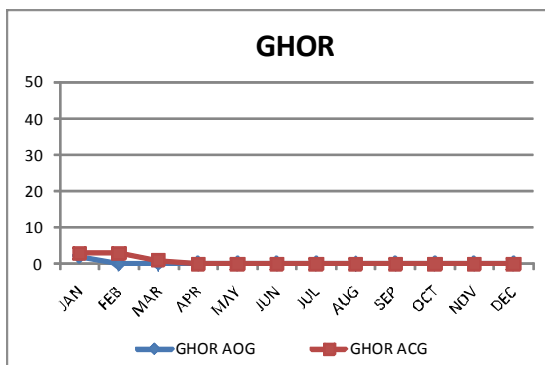
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Criminal activity
- Armed robberies
- AOG presence in Pasaband and Taywara

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

incidents taking place. On 12 March, in Shahrak District, a group of unknown individuals stopped a local transport vehicle and robbed passengers of their cash and valuables. Worthy of note, armed robberies (as well as abduction) along district roads constituted a serious threat last year for NGOs operating in the province.

In Taywara on March 6, an armed clash occurred between ANP and a group of unknown armed men. Reportedly, the clash resulted in the death of a local civilian who



was caught in the crossfire. Reports surrounding this incident indicate that this clash should be attributed to criminal activity, rather than to an AOG presence in the area.

Finally, three days later, a land dispute degenerated into violence in Chaghcharan District, this time killing one civilian after a brief fire fight between the local villagers.

HERAT

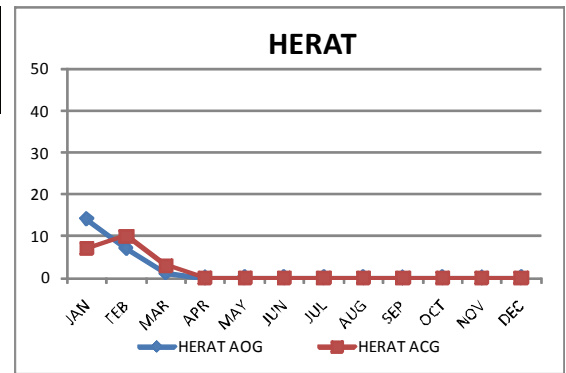
Herat Province was relatively calm during the present cycle. The vast majority of reported incidents in the province over the past two weeks were concentrated in Kushk, Karukh, Chishti Sharif and Shindand districts. Regarding Kushk, it was reported that on 7 March an AOG attacked a PSC convoy, wounding one PSC guard. The following day, in the same district, an armed clash occurred between ANP and AOG, in which reportedly one ANP was wounded. In the past from Kushk (as well as from the neighbouring district of Kushki Kunha), AOG carried out IED attacks and abductions along the Herat-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ➔ IED/RCIED
- ➔ AOG presence in Kushki Kunha and Kushk
- ➔ Criminal activity

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

Thurghundi Road. Criminal activity was also registered in Bukhor Nakhor Area of Karukh District. On 9 March, a group of unknown armed men stopped several private vehicles. Reportedly, they wanted to rob the occupants, but they fled the scene as ANP approached. Of note, this is the first significant ANSO recorded incident in the said district since last September. In Chishti Sharif, another area that experienced significant AOG activity over the past few months, security forces recently increased their presence in the district. This increase should be viewed in light of continuing development around Salma Dam, as well as that of the recent events in Kabul. On 14 March, rivalries between two local AOGs influential in Chishti Sharif erupted in an armed clash, resulting in one AOG member killed. Additionally, on 7 March in Zer-



koh area (Shindand District), where ambushes and armed clashes between AOG and ANSF/IMF are commonplace, IMF conducted an operation killing one notorious AOG commander and arresting his brother.

The situation in Herat city remains also relatively calm with a few incidents related mainly to criminal activity. For instance, on 4 March in District 4, NDS seized 140 kg of drugs during a search operation, and on 10 March, in another incident, one local civilian was shot and killed in District 6, which appeared to be the outcome of a personal dispute. Finally, the commemoration of the Herat's revolt of 1979 passed without incident. Although the current situation remains relatively quiet throughout the province, a renewal of activities should not be ruled out during the coming weeks.

BADGHIS

In Badghis, the situation is still volatile and unstable. The decrease in AOG activity that was observed during the previous reporting period was only temporary. Moreover, during the present cycle, the province witnessed several incidents highlighting still a present threat for civilians being collaterally targeted as well as the common use of IEDs along districts roads. On 7 March, a total of 11 civilians and two ANP offi-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ➔ AOG presence around Qala-i Naw city and in Qadis
- ➔ Abduction

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

cials were killed in three separate incidents throughout Muqur District. In Qirashory area, an IED hit a local transport vehicle killing ten civilians, and in the same area an ANP convoy was struck by another roadside device. As a result, two ANP officials were killed and another three were wounded. Lastly, during the third IED-related incident, one civilian was killed in the said district but in Noorkhan village. According to ANSO data, since the beginning of the year, there have already been three incidents involving the use of IEDs or other explosive devices and resulting in civilian

casualties. Of note, on 1 January in Murghab District, five passengers of a private vehicle were killed also by a roadside IED.

In Qadis District on 10 March, the area that experienced significant AOG activity (particularly during last December), an AOG attempted to collect illegal taxes from locals. An armed clash erupted as the group was confronted by the community and ANP that arrived later at the scene. The clash resulted in one civilian being killed and another wounded. (The same number of casualties was reported on behalf of the AOG).

Another important factor of insecurity throughout the province (besides armed clashes and IEDs/RCIEDs) is abduction. On 13 March in Qadis, three employees of the Education Department were abducted and subsequently released three days later. Of note, this is the fifth ANSO recorded case of abduction this year in the province and the second in Qadis District.

NANGARHAR

With 66 reported security incidents, 7 of them attributed to AOG, the overall level of incidents in Nangarhar remains high. As seen previously, the huge bulk is not related to AOG but rather to the high amount of security force operations, a high level of criminality, and significant tensions within the local population. With regards to the latter, early March saw an armed escalation of an intra-Shinwari land dispute in Achin District.

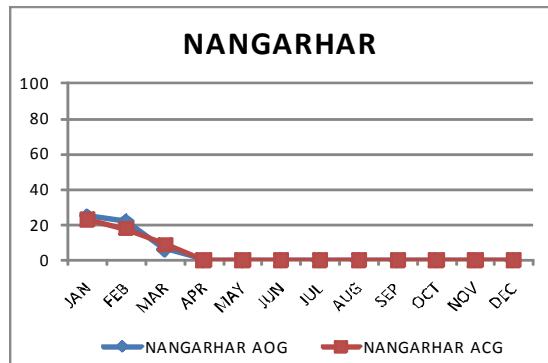
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG activity in southern districts
- Internal disputes in Achin and surrounding areas
- Criminality, particularly in Jalalabad City

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	3
This Report Period	0

Hence, on 9 March, an already brewing conflict between two clans of Nangarhar's Shinwari tribe escalated into armed violence, killing at least 5 people and wounding more than 20. Although the GoA as well as ANSF intervened, and a negotiated ceasefire between the two parties appears to be holding, the overall situation in the area remains volatile, suggesting that the dispute could quickly re-ignite.

After significant AOG activity and several high profile assaults in late February, this period saw comparatively little incidents attributed to AOG. Next to the usual activity in Nangarhar's southern districts, such as Pachir Wa Agam and Khogyani, AOG operations were rather limited. Still, of note, in an unusual inci-



dent on 3 March in Khas Kunar, AOG set fire to a girls' school book store, leaving threats to the local population against allowing girls to attend school. This incident might be a result of Khas Kunar's immediate vicinity to troubled districts of Kunar Province, where multiple AOG factions operate.

The security environment in Jalalabad City remains stable, with a high level of criminality as its main characteristic. The only significant incident occurred on 11 March, when an IED detonated on a side road leading towards the office of a for-profit development agency.

KHOST

Khost Province saw, again, a deterioration of its security environment. In early March, the province witnessed, next to a high level of IED incidents and several complex attacks against high profile targets. For instance, in Khost City on 8 March, AOG conducted a complex attack including three suicide attackers against ANP positions in the immediate vicinity of government facilities. In another

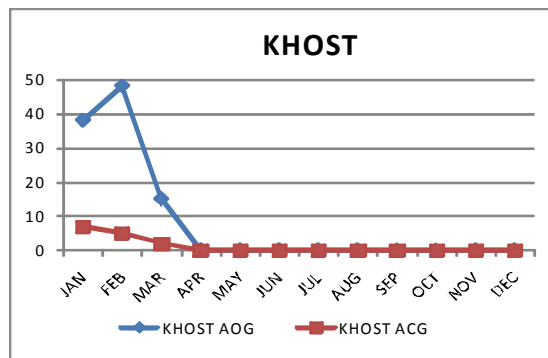
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IED-related assaults, particularly in Khost City
- Complex attacks against high profile targets
- Direct attacks in Tere Zayi District

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	2
This Report Period	0

incident, on 9 March in Tere Zayi District, one AOG managed to enter a joint IMF/ANSF base in Chergoti area, detonating himself inside the compound and causing significant damage. The latter showed a similar tactic to the late December assault against FOB Camp Chapman, when a suicide attacker detonated himself inside the IMF base.

The overall level of emplaced explosive devices in Khost remained on a high level, significantly higher than in other provinces of the Eastern Region. In early March, 30 devices were detonated or located throughout the province, with over 40% of them recorded in Khost City. Additionally, three indirect fire assaults (in



Bak, Spera and Sabari districts) and 12 direct attacks (in Bak, Mando Zayi, Sabari, Matun, Tere Zayi, and Nadir Shah Kot districts) were reported.

The spill over tendencies of violence to relatively calm areas such as Mando Zayi and Nadir Shah Kot, as described in previous reports, has continued during this cycle. Particularly Mando Zayi witnessed 4 IED-related incidents and one direct attack in such a violent period. The direct attack occurred on 4 March along the main Khost-Gardez Road, when AOG attacked a road construction company.

NURISTAN

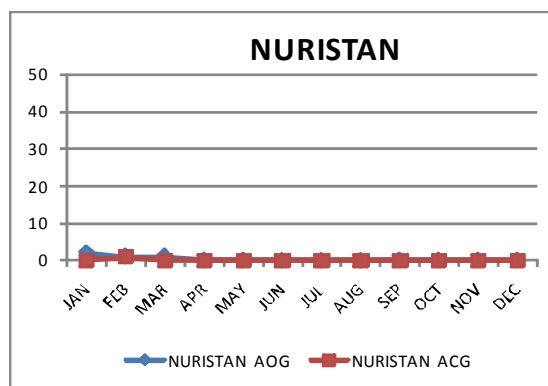
The level of received reports from Nuristan remains very low and the province continues to be isolated and hardly accessible. In early March, only three security incidents were recorded. Two of them were related to the abduction of five for-profit develop-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG prevalence in all districts
- Armed clashes, particularly in Mandol District

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

ment agency staff members in Nurgaram District on 20 February. The remaining two captives were released during this reporting cycle – with the first one on 8 March and the second on 13 March – after an unknown ransom was paid and local elders mediated. The third incident, on 8 March in Mandol District, underlined once again the prevalence as well as the capability of AOG throughout Nuristan. In this par-



ticular incident, AOG attacked and temporarily took over an ANP CP in Gandomak area of Mandol. The group set the CP on fire and abducted three ANP for several hours.

LAGHMAN

AOG activity persists in Laghman's southern district of Qarghayi, particularly along the Kabul-Jalalabad Highway. In this reporting cycle, two AOG-initiated direct attacks along the highway were recorded, both occurring in

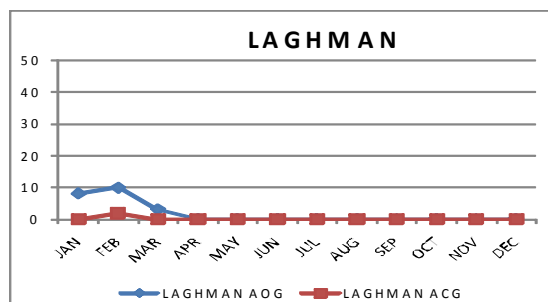
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Ambushes along the Jalalabad-Kabul Highway
- AOG activity in Alingar and Alishing districts

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

Surkhakan area. As seen in previous periods, these attacks targeted either security forces or supply convoys, without displaying a significant challenge to NGO travel on the road.

The overall security environment in Laghman remains constant with seven security incidents reported in early March (4 of them attributed to AOG). AOG remain present and active in Laghman's



northern districts of Alishing and Alingar. During this period, Alishing saw one direct attack against a joint IMF/ANSF base, one IED detonation and one IED discovery. With only one IED discovery, the situation in Alingar remained rather calm.

PAKTYA

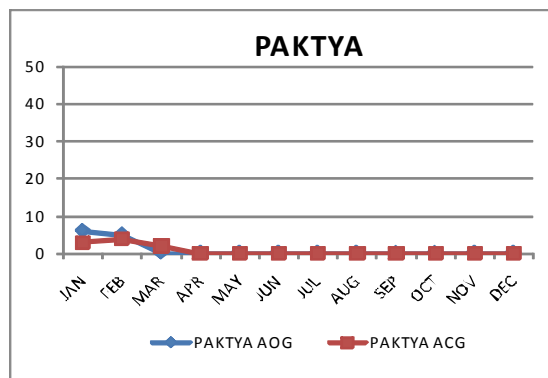
With 7 ANSO-recorded security incidents in this reporting period, the level of reported incidents from Paktya appears rather moderate in comparison to other provinces in the ER, and only 1 of them was attributed to AOG. As seen in previous cycles, the attack

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Complex attacks in Gardez District
- Security force operations in Zurmata

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

conducted by AOG targeted security forces. Albeit incident-levels might suggest a relatively accessible environment, but the ferocity of attacks shows again opposite characteristics. The modus operandi of AOG throughout Paktya appears to be sophisticated and well-coordinated, including complex attacks against high profile targets, particularly in Gardez. During this period, on 11 March in Gardez District, AOG con-



ducted a complex attack against an ANP CP, killing the Provincial Chief of QRF and at least two other ANP. The remaining incidents were either related to security force operations in Gardez and Zurmata or to criminality.

KUNAR

In the early morning hours of 13 February in Bar Kunar District, ANSF/IMF conducted an operation targeting suspected AOG. Reportedly, at least nine civilians were killed during the operation, including one INGO national staff member who was spending the night as a guest in a private residence. The exact circumstances of this incident—as well as the number of casualties—remain unclear, and an ANP in-

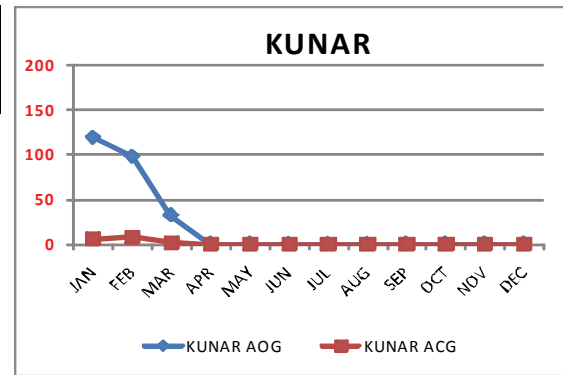
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Collateral damage from AOG – ANSF/IMF clashes
- Indirect fire assaults in Asadabad City
- Attacks along the Jalalabad-Asadabad Highway

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	4
This Report Period	1

vestigation is ongoing. However, this particular incident underlines once again the risk for civilians as well as NGOs operating in Kunar of being collaterally targeted.

While looking at the broader provincial security environment, Kunar continues to witness the highest amount of security incidents throughout the Eastern Region, with frequent and intense clashes of AOG and ANSF/IMF. During this reporting cycle, AOG activity remained very high with 40 AOG-initiated incidents recorded. Direct attacks against security forces and static positions accounted, as seen in previous periods, for over 70% of all recorded incidents. At the same time, IMF operations continued on a high level, inhering again



risks for civilians. For instance, on 14 March in Bar Kunar District, IMF conducted an air operation, allegedly killing several civilians.

The security environment in Asadabad City remained relatively calm with only two incidents recorded. Next to an AOG assault against an IMF convoy in Asadabad District, an indirect fire attack against the city itself occurred on 2 March, injuring at least 5 civilians. As seen previously, road security on the main Jalalabad-Asadabad Road remains of critical concern, with 6 attacks recorded along the road during this period.

HELMAND

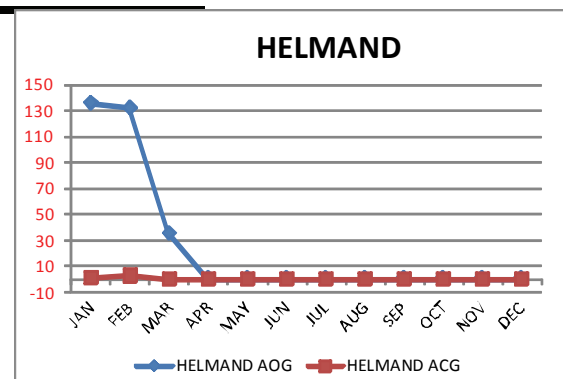
The majority of incidents in Helmand took several distinct forms. First, IMF/ANA continued to attempt to clear major routes of IEDs, both in Marjeh and in the areas to the north (Nad Ali and Lashkar Gah districts). As can be expected, this resulted in frequent road closures and controlled detonations. Secondly, AOG launched a rash of attacks on IMF/ANA forces, particularly in Lashkar Gah, Sangin, and Musa Qala districts, demonstrating that Operation Mushtarak did little in the way of reducing the ability of AOG to move freely and strike at

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG attacks
- IEDs
- AOG intimidation

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

will. Lastly, a series of IED strikes against civilian targets has raised the possibility of a shift in AOG tactics. There are a number of reports describing increasing intimidation of civilians against cooperation with IMF/ANA, as well as numerous reports of AOG using civilians as human shields during firefights in Marjeh and forcing civilians to transport ammunition and supplies for AOG fighters. It is equally possible that these reports were merely resultant from a misperception, as in many fighters were likely locals who resisted from their residences while in the presence of family, and these families would have consequently sought to supply those who sought to resist, possibly under the guise of being 'intimidated'. If this apparent



method of intimidation persists, though, it could represent a worrying change to previous approaches wherein AOG were instructed to avoid deliberately targeting civilians (and by extension NGOs). In the case of IEDs, however, it is more likely that resultant civilian casualties have dramatically increased due to the sheer number of devices planted in the days leading up to the start of Operation Mushtarak. Moreover, there are reports that the lull in fighting which occurred after the IMF/ANA declared 'victory' in Marjeh allowed AOG to re-plant many more IEDs in the area, for which the civilian population is now suffering.

URUZGAN

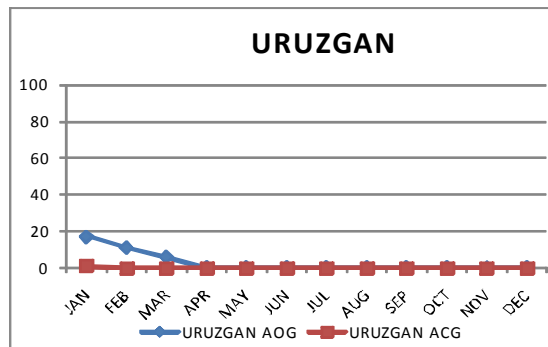
Once again in this report period AOG have avoided direct conflict with ANA/IMF; however, it is apparent that IEDs remain a seri-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- Suicide attacks on DACs
- Hostility towards outsiders

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

ous threat in the province. Two IED strikes killed civilians, the first instance involving a local farmer who was killed when an IED struck his tractor. In the second instance, four civilians were killed in the Naychin area of Tirin Kot District when their passenger vehicle was struck by a roadside IED.



KANDAHAR

Kandahar remains the most insecure area of the country, being host to a variety of serious incidents. An INGO in Kandahar City was targeted by a criminal gang who overpowered the guard and stole an array of equipment, cash and vehicles. There have been as yet no arrests made; however, the robbery may be linked to a recent office move made by the organization, during which the assets of the INGO may have been observed and targeted.

IED strikes continued to plague the province, with Daman and Reg districts being particularly

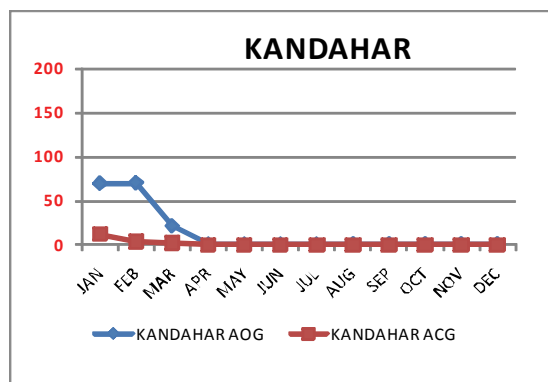
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- AOG attacks
- Robbery

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	3
This Report Period	1

hard hit as a total of seven civilians were killed in several incidents during the last two weeks. Public opinion will most likely turn further against IMF/ANA actions in Shah Wali Kot District due to two separate IMF actions that killed a total of 19 civilians: three children were killed by an IMF patrol, and a further 16 civilian mourners killed during an IMF strike that mistakenly struck a funeral service. It will be important to observe the district over the next few days to determine whether demonstrations or riots will result in either of these incidents.

Unfortunately, even these pale in comparison to the coordinated attacks carried out by AOG on 13 March in which two VBIED and



two BBIED attacks were conducted in the areas of the Sarpoza prison, the Red Mosque, ANP HQ and near the UNAMA compound. In some areas, there were also prolonged fire-fights with security forces. 31 people, including 8 ANP, were killed, with 53 others wounded. Taliban sources released statements to the effect that these were a direct response to U.S. General McChrystal's vow to bring the fight to the Taliban in Kandahar; however, other reports stress that the four (possibly five) separate attacks were primarily to support the main objective, a massive prison break from the Sarpoza complex.

Graphs: Please note, graphs in this report are current as of 10 March 2010.

GHAZNI

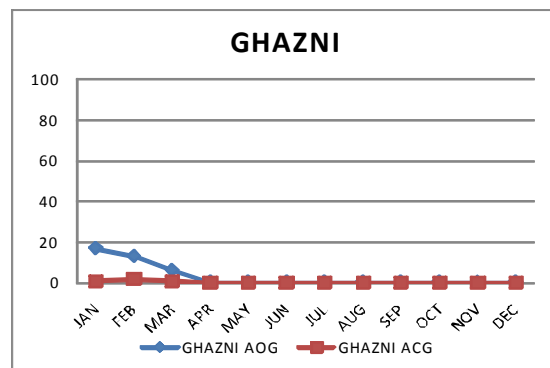
The level of AOG-initiated violence in Ghazni Province remains very high, especially in the districts of Gelan and Andar. As with the previous period, AOG used rockets to attack the District

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG attacks on ANA, IMF, and PSCs

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

Administration Center of Andar, directly attacked both IMF and ANP facilities, and targeted IMF convoys which were under the protection of private security. In response to the Andar attacks, IMF/ANA forces launched an operation on 14 March; however, it is too soon to determine whether this will be effective in



lessening the current wave of AOG activity in the area.

PAKTIKA

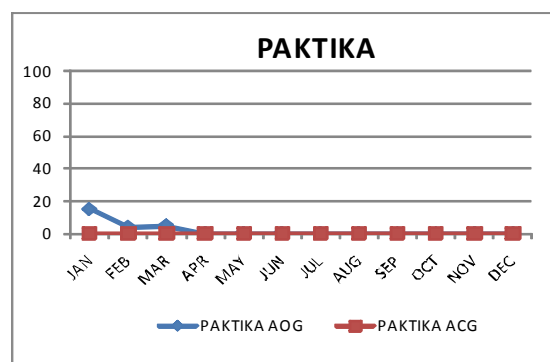
Incidents in Paktika Province during the report period were mostly initiated by IMF/ANA. In Gajan District, several operations were conducted, amounting to the arrests of seven AOG, while in Bar-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG-ANA/IMF Clashes
- IEDs

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

mal District an IMF airstrike killed another five AOG on 10 March. Despite this, AOGs maintained their practice of launching reprisal attacks to demonstrate their resolve after a setback, as seen in other areas of the south; for example, on 15 March at least two suicide bombers attempted to attack the Barmal District Administration Center but



were stopped by ANP before substantial damage or casualties could be realized.

ZABUL

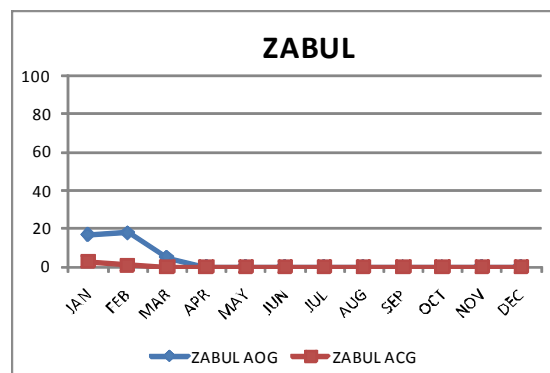
Zabul Province was relatively quiet during the most recent two-week period. The most notable incidents were two separate abductions. In the first instance, the local director for the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in Qalat District was seized and held for a substantial ransom

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Abduction

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

but managed to escape from his captors before any exchange was made. In the second instance, four village elders from Shahjoy District were taken by armed individuals after being accused of cooperating with GoA/IMF. The second example represents a trend that is likely to become more widespread, especially as AOG use the upcoming drawdown of



IMF (Dutch 2010/Canadian 2011/American 2011-12) to increase intimidation of communities and individuals.

NOTICE: Your input is invaluable for the production of this report. While we appreciate information on incidents, we also need general information on the security situation and context in your area. So please remember to call or email us regularly.



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ANSO ACRONYMS

ACG-Armed Criminal Group /
AEF-Afghan Eradication Forces
/ **ANA**-Afghan National Army /
ANBP-Afghan National Border
Police / **ANP**-Afghan National
Police / **AOG**-Armed Opposition
Group / **APPF**-Afghan Public
Protection Forces (local depu-
tised militias) / **DC**-District
Centre / **GOA**-Government of
Afghanistan / **IDF**-Indirect Fire
(ex: mortars) / **IED**-Improvised
Explosive Device / **IMF**-
International Military Forces /
NDS-National Directorate of
Security (Intelligence) / **PRP**-
Previous Reporting Period /
PSC-Private Security Company
/ **RPG**-Rocket Propelled Gre-
nade / **SAF**-Small Arms Fire /
VBIED-Vehicle Borne Impro-
vised Explosive Device

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COUNTRY MANAGEMENT (KABUL)

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

Ali Riazi - operations@afgnso.org - 0797 165 017

Rachel Adam - rsamobile@afgnso.org - 0793 230 118

MISSING

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

Nimroz

Panjshir

Samangan

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.

New ANSO Staff

ANSO welcomes aboard its new Mobile RSA, Rachel Adam. Rachel already has operational and analytical experience in respect to the Northern Region., and She will be visiting all ANSO regions in the coming months.