

ANSO QUARTERLY DATA REPORT Q.1 2009

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



SUMMARY & ASSESSMENT

Conflict has continued at an intense pace with attack metrics recording a 95% increase over previous first quarter periods. The 08-09 winter downturn was shorter and shallower and, for the first time, did not fall below the 3-year average of 300 attacks per month. The “ramp-up” to summer fighting season is already evident in Feb-Mar data within which attacks have jumped from 381 to 527, the largest month-to-month increase ANSO has ever recorded. Compared to the 2008 Q.1 period growth is evident in all AOG attack types: (a) Suicide attacks are up from 19 to 31; (b) IED strikes up from 159 to 239; (c) rocket strikes up from 98 to 177 and small arms/RPG attacks, usually on convoys or bases, up from 366 to 744. This latter category is of particular concern as it is these types of attacks which have accounted for >90% of NGO fatalities since 2007 and are growing at the fastest rate this year.

NGO have been victim to 37 serious security incidents this period (31 in Q.1 2008) including 2 deaths, 20 abductions, 4 IED strikes, 7 armed robberies and 3 cases of arson along with less serious threat letters, beatings and lootings. NGO have made no gains in being able to present themselves as impartial or independent actors and continue to be forced from the field by security concerns.

A number of strategic issues have emerged within the period that require early attention and comment.

First, the deployment of additional USFOR-A soldiers throughout the year will inevitably result in (i) displacement of AOG forces to surrounding areas and corresponding deterioration of conditions there (ii) escalating civilian casualties and related civil unrest (iii) loss of NGO access to, and acceptance in, operational areas and (iv) increased provision of aid by military and political actors. All these dynamics are already visible in early deployments and it is considered highly unlikely that NGO will be able to operate safely in areas targeted for ‘*clear, hold, build*’.

Second, the consolidation of Pakistani Taliban forces under the Shura Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen (Council of Holy Warriors, reportedly commanding up to 20,000 men) towards the end of the period could result in enhanced AOG capability this side of the border although the level of direction that Afghan AOG are able to bring to bear over those groups is disputed.

Thirdly, the IMF intention to open a Main Supply Route (MSR) though the North of the country (Kabul via Uzbekistan & Tajikistan) will invariably draw increasing levels of AOG attacks to that road. ANSO considers Baghlan, and the *Baghlan-e Jadid / Pol-i-Khumri* area in particular, to be logical focal points for attacks with AOG forces likely transiting Takhar and south Badakshan to reach the area. To the extent that this MSR is actually used by IMF, ANSO anticipates road travel on this route to become severely restricted over the year.

Finally, the expiration of the Presidential mandate in May and the process and results of elections in August are considered unlikely to give rise to armed conflict between political parties or present significant opportunities for AOG to advance their campaign. Realistic threats include competing demonstrations, isolated targeting of polling stations and staff, political assassinations and movement of AOG forces while IMF/ANSF forces are tied in defensive positions.

Concerns over elections should not come at the cost of attention to, and preparations for, the intensifying war.

Nic Lee,

ANSO Director,

Kabul, April 2009

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



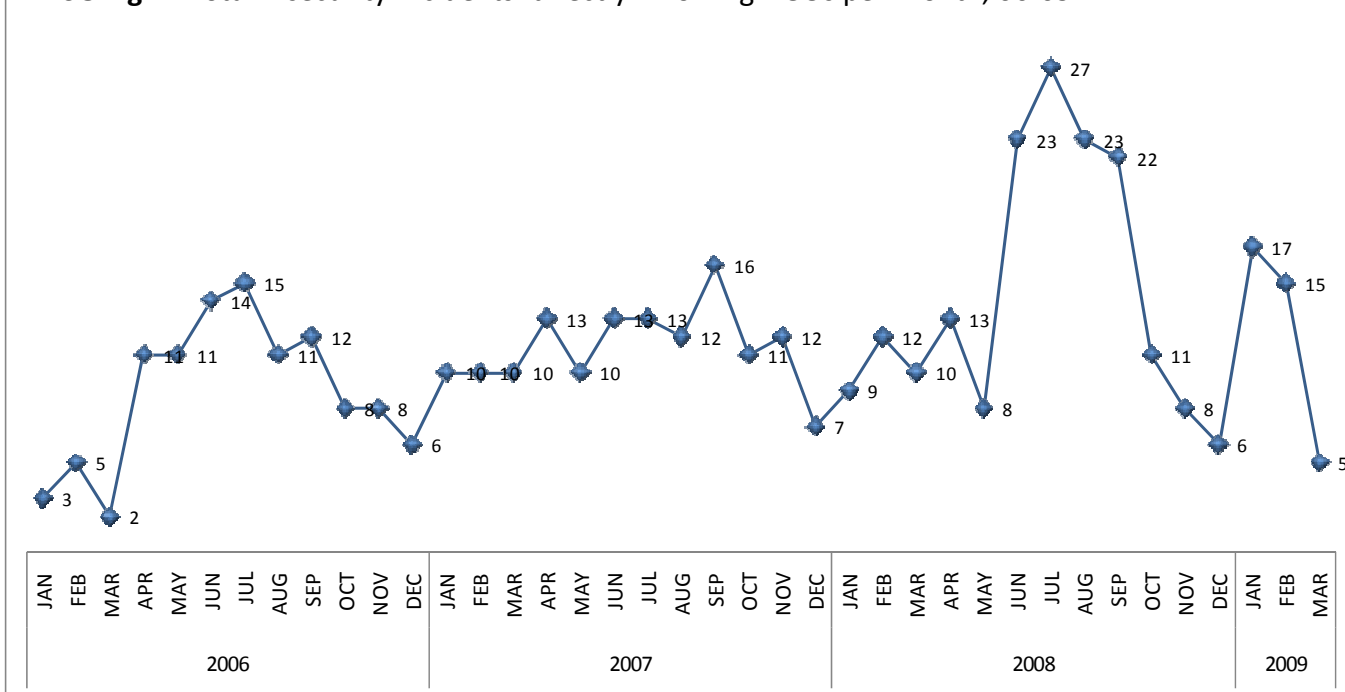
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

1. THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT & CRIMINALITY ON NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO)

1.1 GENERAL NGO TRENDS

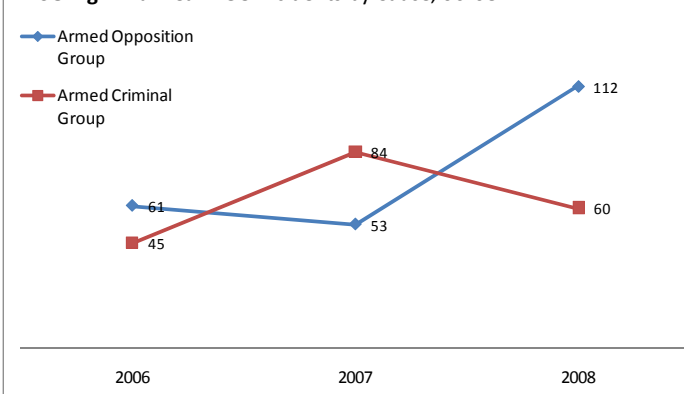
ANSO Fig.1 : Total # security incidents directly involving NGOs per month, 06-09



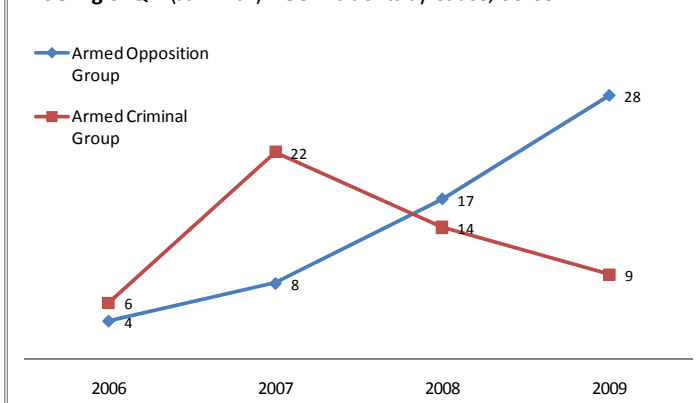
The total volume of incidents directly involving NGO (Fig.1) remains more than **25% higher than previous** Jan-Mar periods confirming an ongoing level of exposure. The fact that NGO have taken numerous risk mitigation measures throughout the past 6 months makes these figures more worrying. It is evident that our attempts to reduce risks are being outpaced by the expansion of the conflict. The cause of the sharp reduction in March is currently unknown (likely AOG displacement) but it is unlikely to reflect any significant or permanent change in NGO risk exposure.

The cause/perpetrator of NGO incidents continues to **shift from criminal to conflict related actors**. Figs.2 & 3 show that criminally motivated events have declined both between years and within the Q.1 period while AOG related incidents have increased over the same period.

ANSO Fig.2: Full Year NGO Incidents by Cause, 06-08

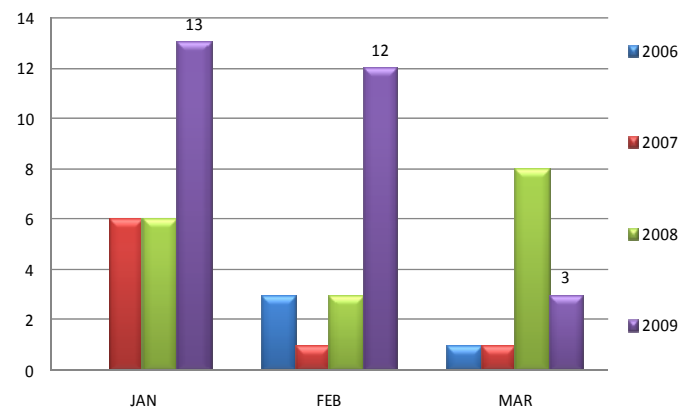


ANSO Fig.3: Q.1 (Jan-Mar) NGO Incidents by Cause, 06-09

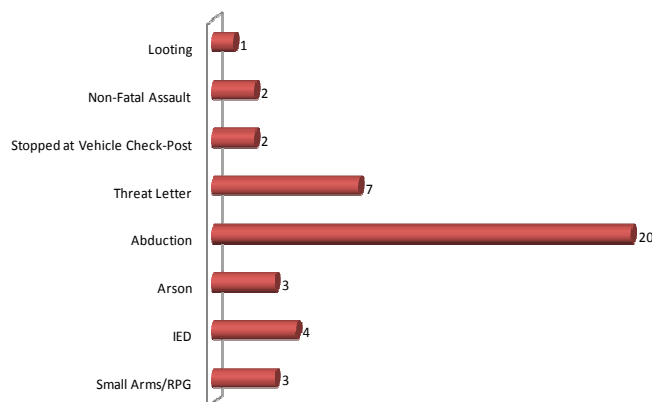


1.2 TYPES & CAUSES OF NGO INCIDENTS

ANSO Fig.4: NGO Incidents Caused by AOG, Q.1 06-09



ANSO Fig.5: Types of AOG incidents involving NGO, Q.1 2009

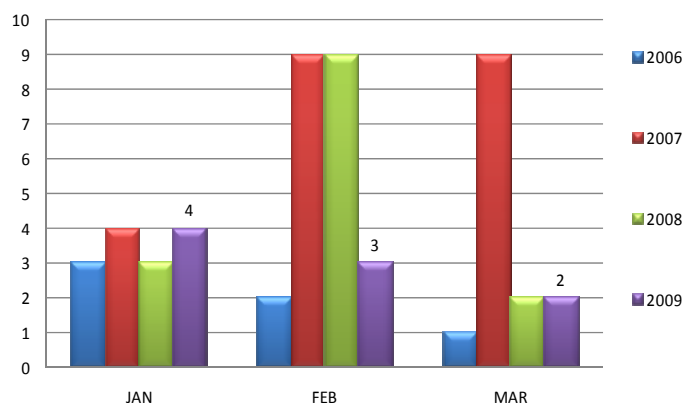


NGO incidents caused by AOG (Fig.4) account for upwards of 75% of the total incidents this quarter up from 27% for Q.1 2007 and 55% Q.1 2008 reinforcing the assessment that it is expanded conflict that is driving growth in NGO incident rates rather than ongoing exposure to crime as is often suggested. The data also reflects the growing tendency to record incidents as being 'motivated' by AOG even when actual implementation was conducted by known criminals. This form of criminal 'sub-contracting' has been a hallmark of the early stages of district destabilization since 2006.

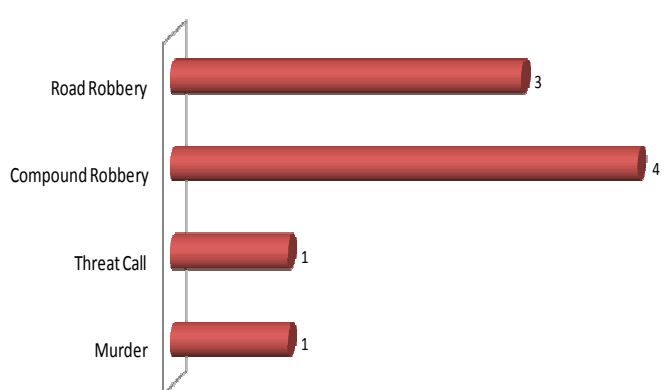
Fig.5 shows the breakdown of NGO incidents assigned to AOG this quarter. Serious events such as IED, arson, small arms attacks and abductions continue to make up a growing part of the profile. **One death (of 2 total for the period)** resulted from the small arms attacks with people lucky to escape with their lives in the two other occasions. The growing use of IED against NGO as an intimidation tactic is worrying but yet to produce any casualties. Abduction remains a primary threat with more than 20 persons taken in the three month period. Thankfully none have been killed or injured in captivity and all but one released unharmed.

Crimes against NGO (Fig. 6) remain low although the murder of an NGO employee at his home and the ongoing prevalence of armed robberies (Fig.7) demonstrate that although lower in absolute numbers crime remains a serious threat. Expect road robberies to escalate as the weather improves.

ANSO Fig.6: NGO Incidents Caused by ACG, Q.1 06-09



ANSO Fig.7: Types of ACG incidents involving NGO, Q.1 2009



1.3 DOMINANT NGO RISK FACTORS

Figure.8 shows the number of NGO workers killed by five of the main attack types ANSO tracks, going back to 2007.

What it demonstrates is that **more than 90% of NGO fatalities occur as a result of Small Arms Fire (SAF)** and that NGO staff have not been significantly impacted by the other four types of attack.

The 3 deaths occurring by IED involved NGO staff travelling in an Afghan Government convoy and so can not be associated to the victims NGO status.

This data would seem to suggest that **NGO concentrate their limited mitigation resources in defense from SAF** above other forms of attack. This is reinforced by conflict tracking data (2.1 Fig.13) which shows small arms assaults are expanding at a higher rate than the other types of attacks.

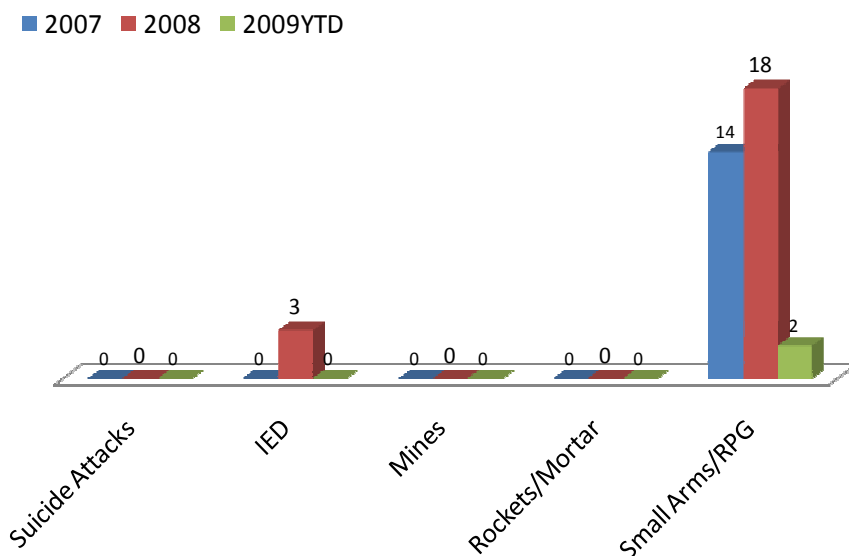
It is important however **not to dismiss the threat from other forms of attack**. Just after the close of the period (April 1st) an NGO worker was killed in a suicide attack in Kandahar and within this quarter IED's have been used four times against NGO facilities. That they did not cause fatalities is more often luck than deliberate intent.

Further unpacking the SAF incidents above Fig.9 shows that most deaths begin and end on the road. It is tempting to suggest that armored vehicles would prevent most of these fatalities but they would simultaneously increase NGO chances of being attacked with more powerful weapons, such as IEDs, mines and RPG.

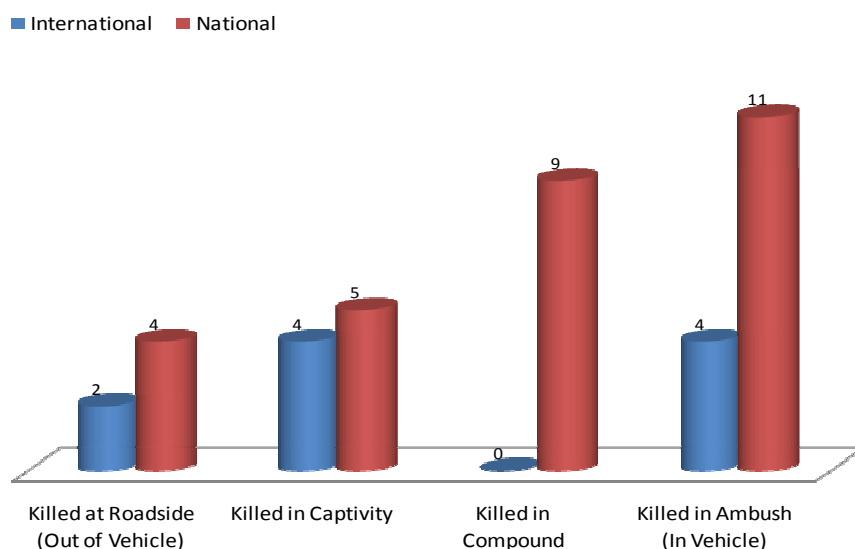
Suspension of road travel remains the primary recommendation in mitigating roadside ambushes and abductions.

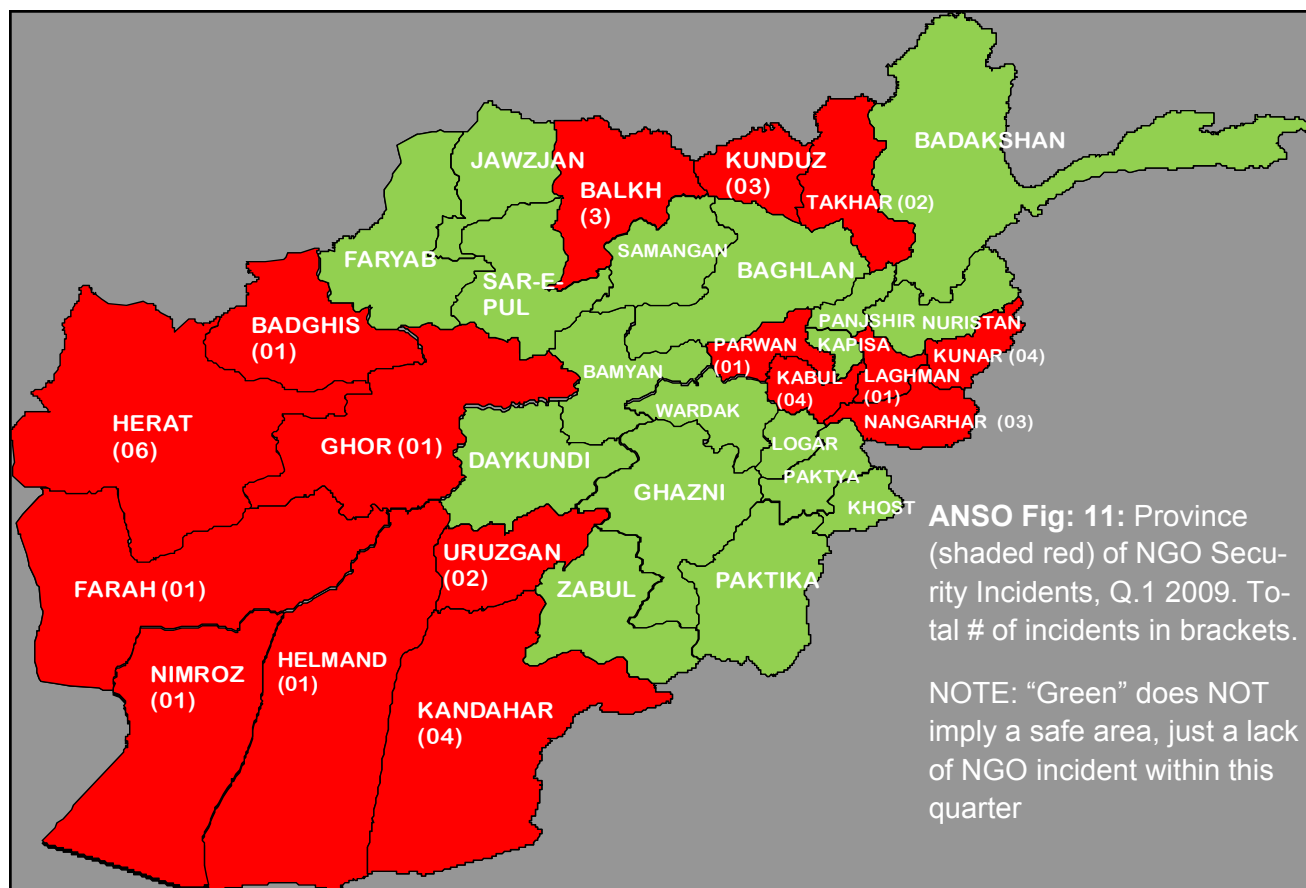
The disparity of national to international deaths occurring within offices/compounds (9-0) suggests an **imbalance in the protective measures NGO take** in securing facilities that have no International presence.

ANSO Fig.8: NGO Fatalities per Attack Type, 2007-2009



ANSO Fig.9: NGO Fatalities by Small Arms, Cumulative 2007-2009

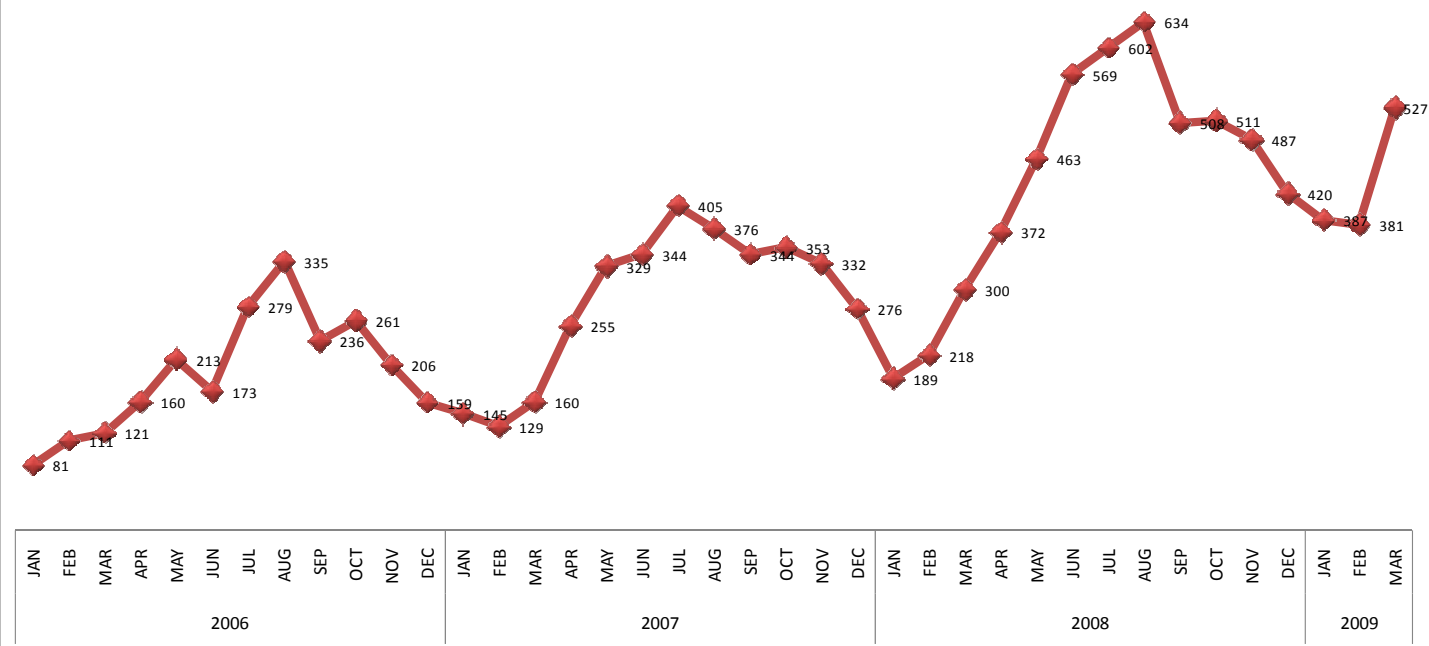




2. CONFLICT TRENDS & ANALYSIS

2.1 AOG INITIATED ATTACKS

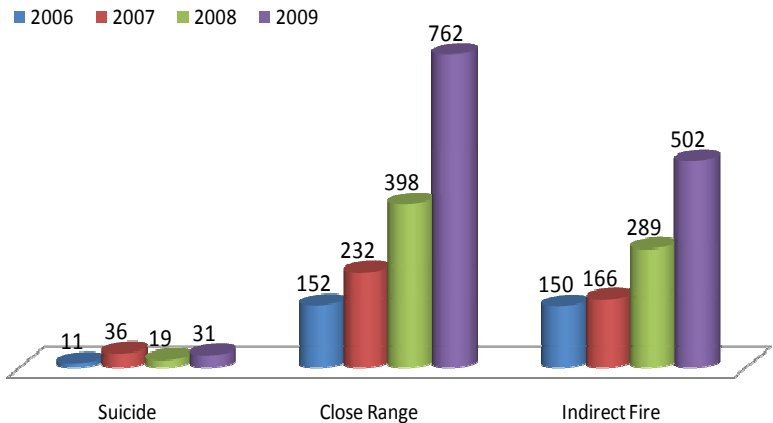
ANSO Fig. 12: Total AOG Initiated Attacks, Countrywide, 06-09. Includes Suicide, Close Range and Indirect Fire events ONLY



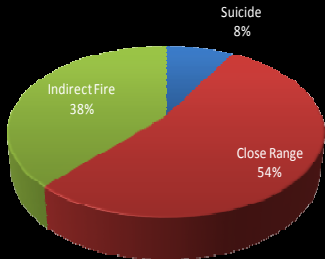
These key data-sets confirm that attack rates are high and escalating fast (Fig. 12); that growth rates are highest within the “close range” small arms attack category (Fig. 13) which causes the most NGO fatalities (see 1.3); and that suicide attacks, although increasing in absolute numbers, have actually decreased as a percentage of all attacks over a three year period (below)

All data confirms ongoing, widespread and intensifying war.

ANSO Fig. 13: Q.1 AOG Attack Profile, 06-09



Q.1 2007



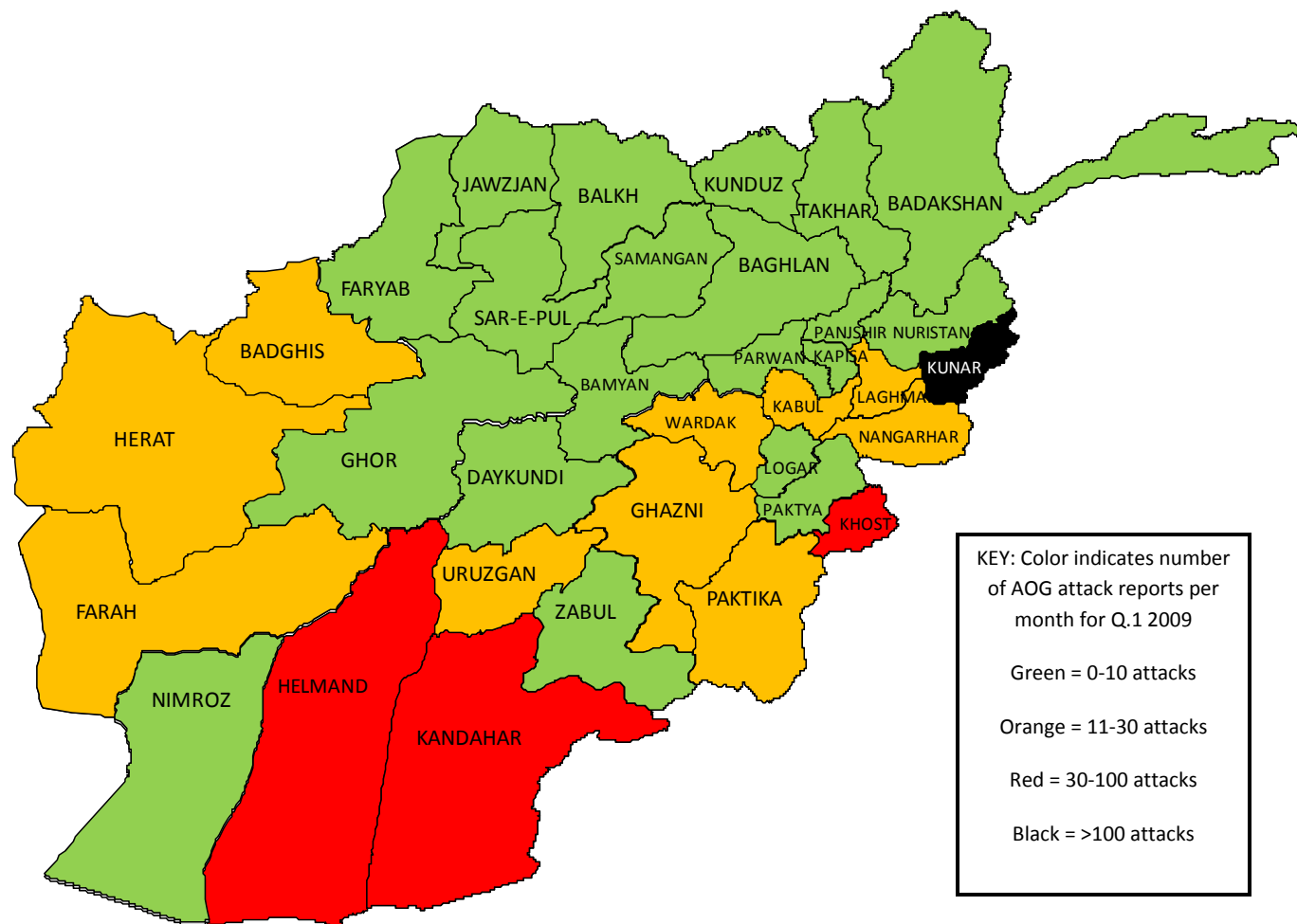
Q.1 2008



Q.1 2009



2.2 CONFLICT AREA



Map provides a snapshot of the number of **confirmed AOG attack reports** from each province throughout the first quarter of this year only (see KEY). It is important to note that (i) its is only a snapshot of NOW and does not indicate which direction the province is moving (ii) an absence of attack reports can imply a safe operating environment but can also indicate an area in which AOG control is uncontested or a simple lack of reporting mechanisms (iii) an incident rate based map like this is unable to account for the comparative severity of incidents.

Weaknesses aside, data does reveal that frequent attacks (appx. 1 every 2 days) are occurring in at least 14 provinces already with predictable concentration of daily attacks in South and East. Given that this data is for the first quarter period only (Jan-Mar) these areas can be seen to represent the foundations from which this year spring and summer offensives will be launched. Once underway we anticipate significant deterioration in up to 55% of the country.

Currently Kunar is the epicenter of events often accounting for close to a third of all attacks within a month with Khost, Kandahar and Helmand following close behind. The severe deterioration of the Western region is evident with 3 of 4 provinces (only Ghor is excluded) witnessing frequent AOG violence. ANSO expects increased activity along the northern road networks in the coming quarter as well as displacement of AOG forces ahead of USFOR-A operations in Central and South.

2.3 AOG TACTIC & TECHNIQUE COMPOSITION

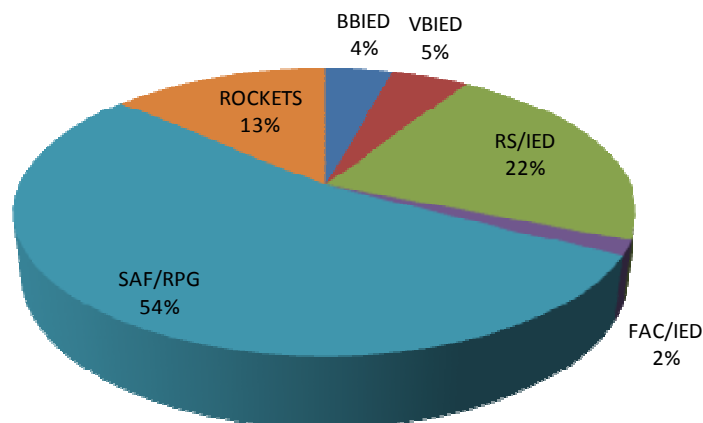
These three graphs compare the disaggregated tactics and techniques of AOG attacks for the first quarter periods of 2007-2009 and allow observation of three important dynamics.

(1) That the SAF/RPG component has grown steadily from 54-62% of total over the three years. This is a strong indicator that AOG are not having any problems obtaining and deploying new recruits and that they are becoming more comfortable in engaging in conventional combat

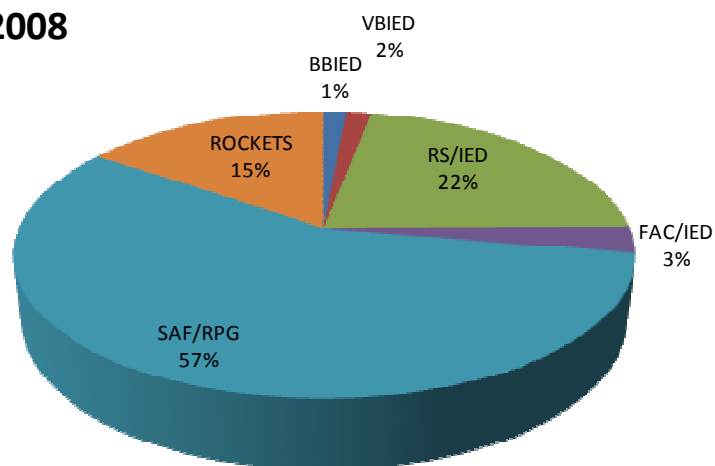
(2) That despite increases in actual numbers (19-31) suicide attacks are shrinking as a percentage of the whole profile countering (IMF) claims that conflict is being driven by expansion of asymmetric techniques. There is also evidence that BBIED will be preferred over VBIED this year

(3) That there is a reasonably **stable force composition** within which the various sections (infantry, IED, special weapons etc) are able to be scaled up or down with modular consistency. For example IEDs only vary between 17-22% of total, rockets between 13-15% of total despite the fact that the entire “pie” has increased nearly 300% over the 3 years. This is suggestive of a coherent and organized military force conducting a structured national campaign, with access to secure logistical support lines, and not of a “rag-tag” group of opportunists.

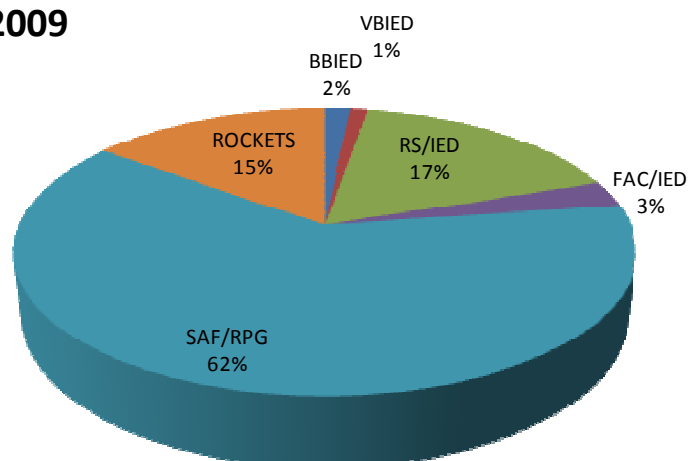
Q.1 2007



Q.1 2008

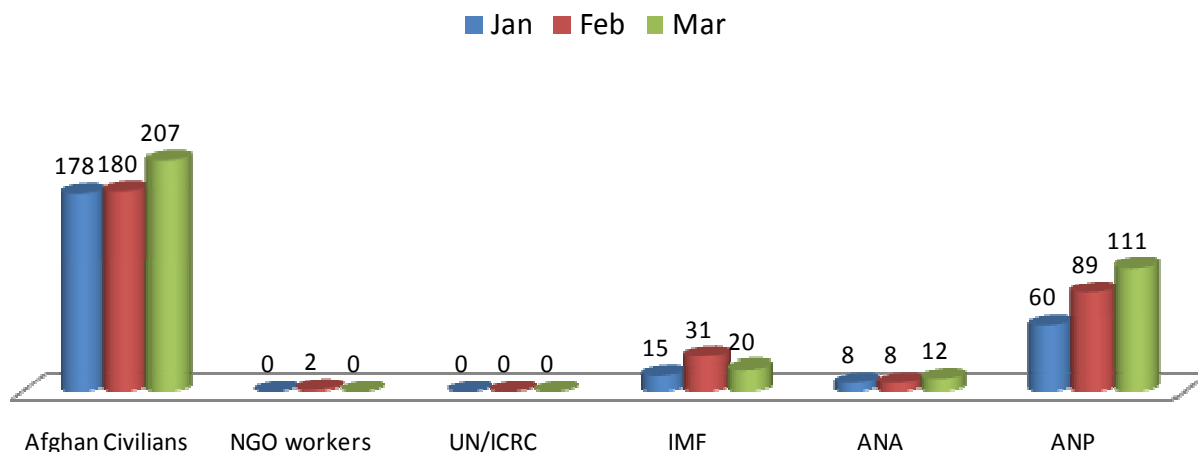


Q.1 2009



2.4 FATALITIES

ANSO Fig.14: Gross Fatalities, All Groups, All Causes, Q.1 2009

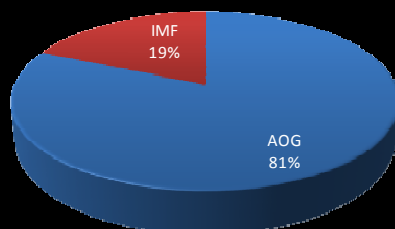


Civilians and the Afghan National Police (ANP) continue to suffer higher fatality rates than other communities (Fig.14)

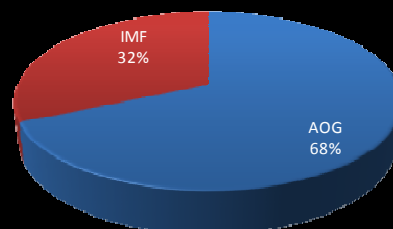
The **342 civilians killed in AOG or IMF operations** this quarter is only a slight increase over the 324 killed in Q.1 2008 although the percentage assessed to have been caused by International Military Forces has grown from 19% to 32% (Fig. 15 & 16).

Fig. 17 shows AOG ground attacks have killed twice as many as IMF operations (including most NGO deaths) and criminal murder remains a very significant cause of death (up from 114 for Q.1 2008)

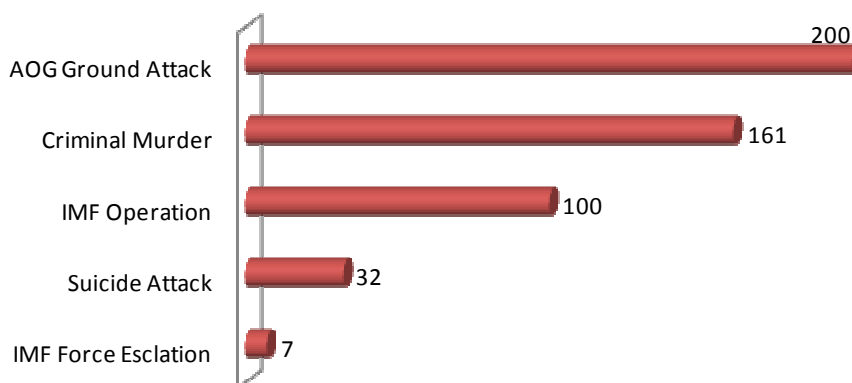
ANSO Fig.15: Percentage of all civilian casualties (fatalities) reported to be caused by AOG or IMF Q.1 2008 (from 324 total)



ANSO Fig.16: Percentage of all civilian casualties (fatalities) reported to be caused by AOG or IMF Q.1 2009 (from 342 total)



ANSO Fig. 17: Leading causes of death of Afghan civilians, Q.1 2009



REPORT END

For further information
director@afgnso.org

© ANSO, April 2009