

SUMMARY & ASSESSMENT

By the end of June, AOG initiated attacks had decreased by 38% compared to the first six months of 2011, ANSF-IMF activity levels had decreased collectively by 25%, and the total number of NGO security incidents had fallen by 17%.

Alongside the regression of AOG attacks country-wide, the East has absorbed roughly an equal number of AOG incidents as the South, the weighted difference in opposition activity levels being only 2% in favor of the South, and the two regions now form an increasingly contiguous battle space. This spillover was also felt by the NGO community, as the East witnessed 37% of all NGO security incidents at Q.2 2012 against 31% at Q.2 2011.

Despite the downturn and the regional shifts, the underlying structure of the conflict has not changed. Both parties remain locked in a co-evolutionary stalemate – albeit one of de-escalation rather than escalation - and are more consistent in their self-projection of victory rather than in their definition of what such victory could look like and how to get there.

AOG have proven throughout the surge years that they can successfully counter-adapt to the war effort by IMF/ ANSF, disregarding how intensive the campaign gets. Looking at the current AOG attack rates, June concluded above the levels seen at the Presidential Election in 2009, and considered substantial at that time. At the same time, the IMF continue to place emphasis on the transition, which has however included so far only peripheral areas to the main conflict except for parts of Helmand and Ghazni, and the current achievements there are questionable. The ANSF are growing, but their funding and basic operational aspects including troop numbers in the long term remain unclear. Despite the rhetoric, the conflict has seen no confidence building measures which would demonstrate a genuine interest to engage in peace resolution on any side. This is particularly disappointing since it is a political dialogue, not tactical military achievements, which will ultimately determine the chances for the civilian population to see an end to extant violence.

On a positive note, we remain 'cautious optimists' as to the future. While the communities and NGOs do face a period of discomfort - with the changes of local power relationships, breakdowns of discipline, 'the fog of war' and competition over diminishing resources being primary concerns - the de-escalation experienced at Q2 is an encouraging trend, and one which can achieve more than the protracted fighting achieved so far, that is de-legitimize the conflict by removing the primary mobilization factor - the presence of armed foreigners of any kind. That field commanders, or criminals, at times decide to target NGO projects and staff cannot be entirely mitigated, but the proportionate share of such incidents in the overall activity levels demonstrates that deliberate attacks on NGOs remain strong outliers and that the conflict parties do not engage in violence on NGOs from a policy standpoint.

Tomas Muzik, ANSO Director

Kabul, Afghanistan

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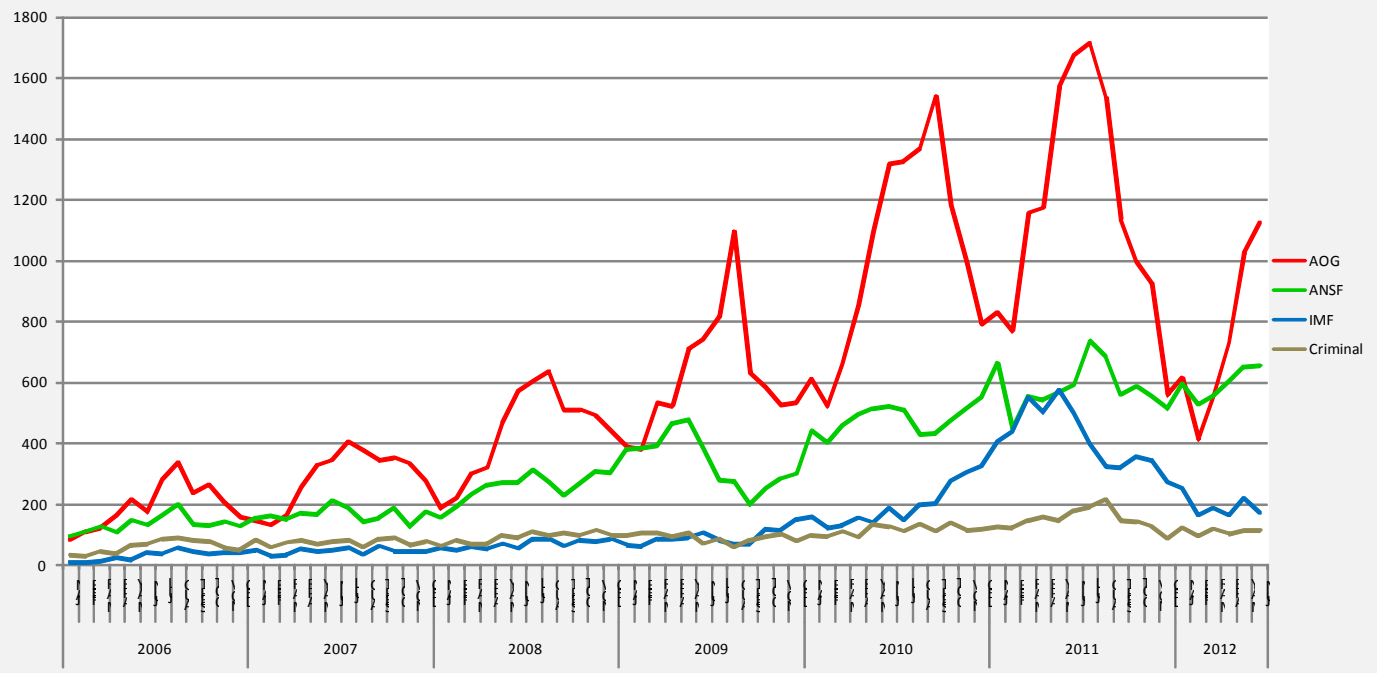
NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Part 1.

Context Overview

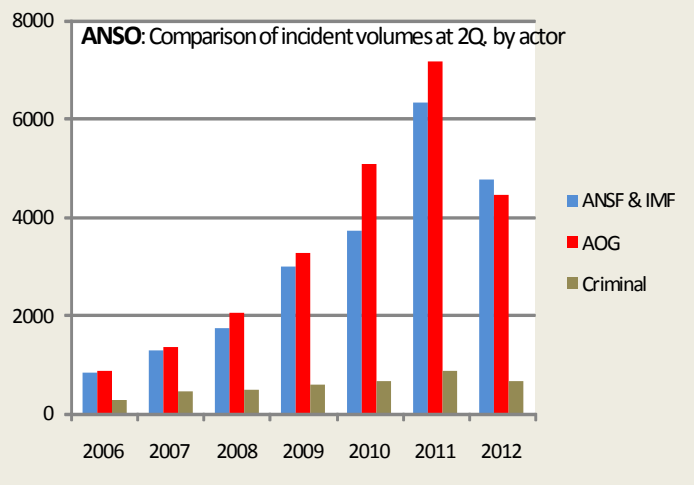
1.1 Context Overview

ANSO: Conflict activity comparison, countrywide, by author, 2006-2012

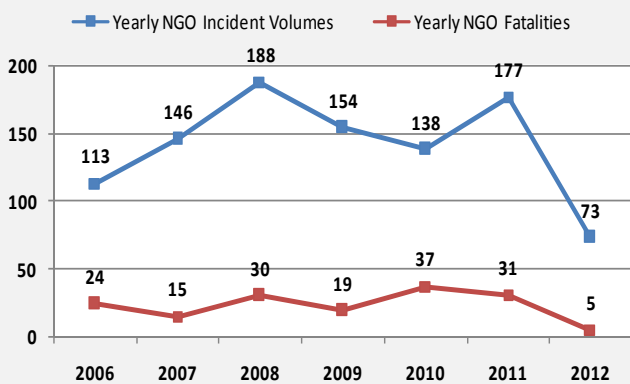


Combined incident volumes by the end of the second quarter (Q2) were down by 31% on mid-2011 (*not shown*). The main conflict parties de-escalated altogether, but remained locked in a stalemate (*above and right*). AOG activity volumes retracted by 38%, combined ANSF-IMF volumes by 25% and criminality by 22% on mid-2011. The downturn improved NGO situation in the field (*below*), but the levels of civilian fatalities due to criminality and conflict were representative of the continued exposure of civilians to extant violence (*below right*).

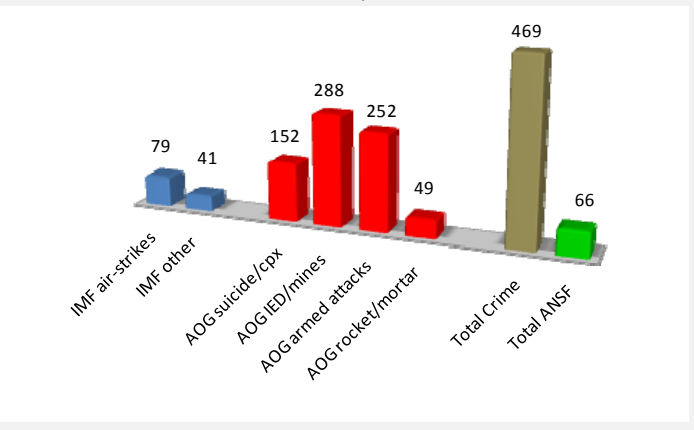
ANSO: Comparison of incident volumes at 2Q, by actor



ANSO: Total NGO security incidents & fatalities 2006-12



ANSO: Civilians killed at Q.2 2012, by actor



1.2 Incident Distribution & Comparison

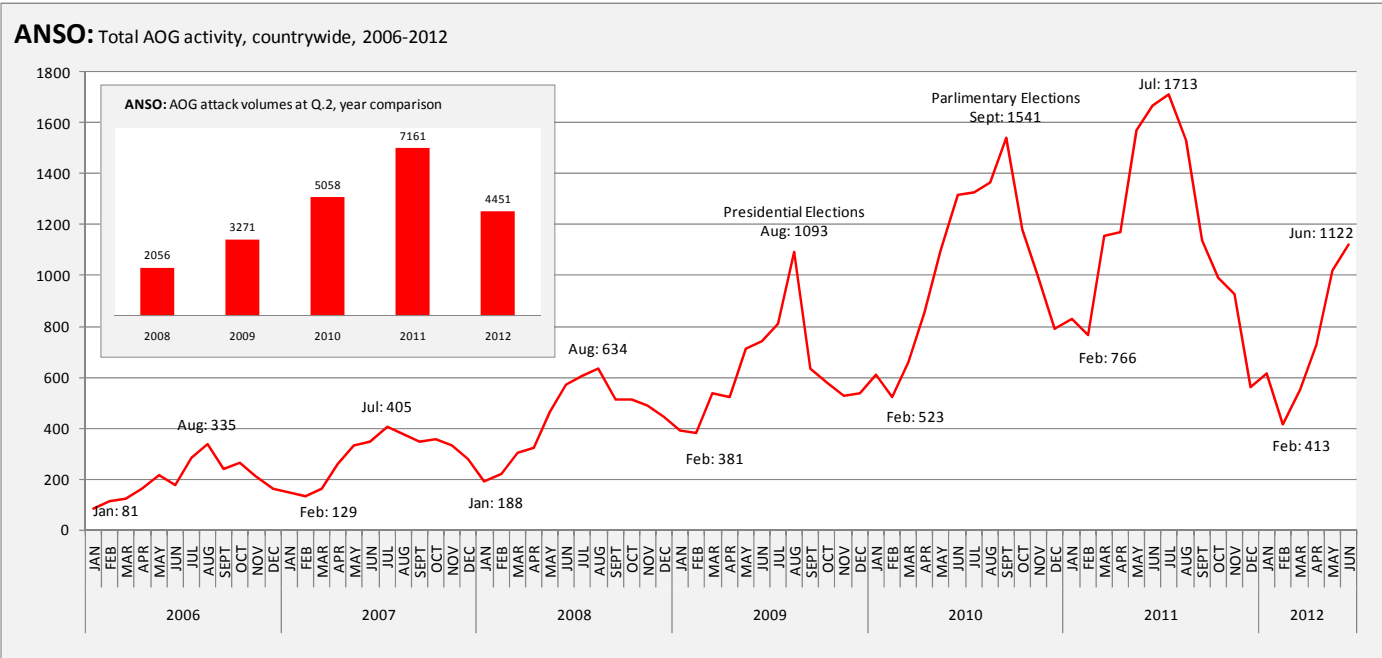
This table provides a complete accounting of all incidents recorded per province at the end of Q.2 2012. Overall, there is a correlation between combined incident volumes (all incidents initiated by all actors) and NGO incident volumes. 55% of NGO incidents on record by the end of June took place in provinces which saw on average more than 2 security incidents per day (Incident total above 360) and an additional 21% in provinces with at least 1 security incident per day. Nonetheless, as experienced in Ghor and Badakhshan, beside the incident volumes, local dynamics and the scope of actual NGO presence must be taken into account while assessing NGO access and safety.

PROVINCE	NGO INCIDENTS	INCIDENT TOTAL	AOG	IMF	ANSF	CRIME	DAILY INCIDENT RATE
Kandahar	1	963	46%	8%	44%	2%	over 2 incidents per day
Nangarhar	15	902	34%	10%	44%	12%	
Khost	8	892	40%	19%	35%	7%	
Helmand	0	773	38%	24%	38%	1%	
Kunar	1	731	85%	6%	7%	2%	
Ghazni	1	683	61%	22%	15%	2%	
Herat	5	439	29%	1%	59%	11%	
Kabul	9	425	6%	2%	78%	13%	
Paktika	0	405	61%	18%	20%	1%	
Farah	0	372	52%	3%	40%	4%	
Uruzgan	0	355	53%	7%	39%	1%	
Zabul	0	351	36%	22%	42%	0%	
Faryab	3	290	44%	6%	30%	20%	
Badghis	2	268	54%	6%	33%	7%	
Paktya	1	260	49%	20%	26%	5%	
Laghman	2	215	69%	7%	17%	7%	
Kunduz	1	209	31%	9%	45%	15%	
Wardak	1	208	53%	17%	26%	4%	
Logar	3	188	45%	20%	32%	3%	
Balkh	2	184	30%	1%	43%	25%	
Baghlan	2	167	31%	12%	46%	11%	under 1 incident per day
Kapisa	0	125	70%	9%	18%	4%	
Takhar	0	103	6%	2%	65%	27%	
Ghor	8	91	43%	1%	27%	29%	
Jawzjan	1	89	44%	4%	34%	18%	
Parwan	0	82	48%	1%	34%	17%	
Badakhshan	4	75	33%	13%	36%	17%	
Sar-e Pul	2	62	65%	3%	21%	11%	
Nuristan	0	61	79%	8%	13%	0%	
Samangan	1	50	16%	0%	54%	30%	
Nimroz	0	50	34%	18%	38%	10%	
Daykundi	0	24	13%	4%	33%	50%	
Bamyan	0	14	29%	0%	50%	21%	
Panjshir	0	8	13%	0%	25%	63%	

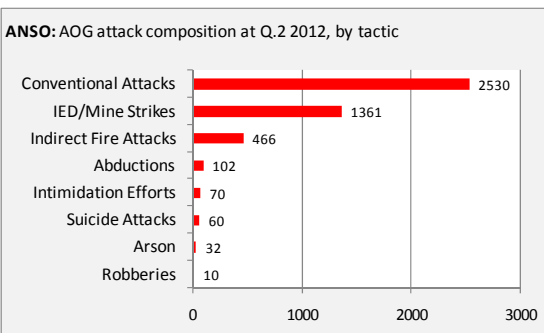
Part 2.

State of the Conflict

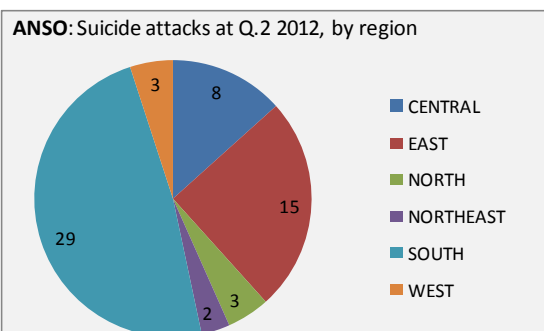
2.1 Armed Opposition Group (AOG) Activity



The number of AOG initiated attacks at the end of Q.2 has decreased by 38% on the same period last year (*charts above*). This count includes genuine combat operations only (ambushes, IEDs, IDF, etc.) and does not include any non-kinetic activity (threats, abductions) or criminal incidents. Country-wide, the average daily attack rate (all/180) has dropped from 40 to 24 attacks/day. What appears consistent throughout both the escalation (2006-2011) and the current regression phases is the fact that AOG have been successfully counter-adapting to the war efforts by their opponents. We assess that the current AOG de-escalation is primarily a tactical reaction to the IMF disengagement and does not reflect any loss of actual operational capacity. We believe it is a choice and not an obligation.



Despite the downturn, the tactical portfolio has remained consistent (*chart left*). Suicide activity was the only exception as its weighed share grew up to 1.3 % of the overall AOG volumes at Q.2.



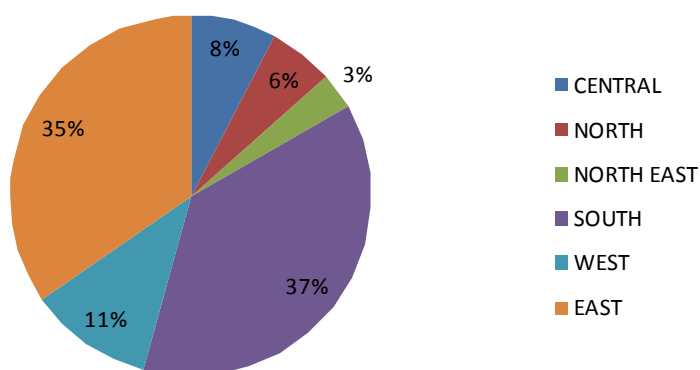
Suicide strikes are a key expression of the 'economy of force' approach adopted by the opposition. Whereas the large majority targeted IMF (42%) and ANSF (45%), the activity also caused a significant 21% of all civilian deaths in AOG attacks country-wide. Population centers in the South (13 attacks in Kandahar, 8 in Helmand), East (7 in Nangarhar) as well as Kabul city (5) were the main staging areas (*second chart left*).

NGO exposure to suicide attacks remained limited to a collateral injury of an NGO staff member in Badakhshan, and a collateral damage to an NGO clinic in Paktika.

2.2 AOG Volume Comparison Q.2 2012 vs. Q.2 2011

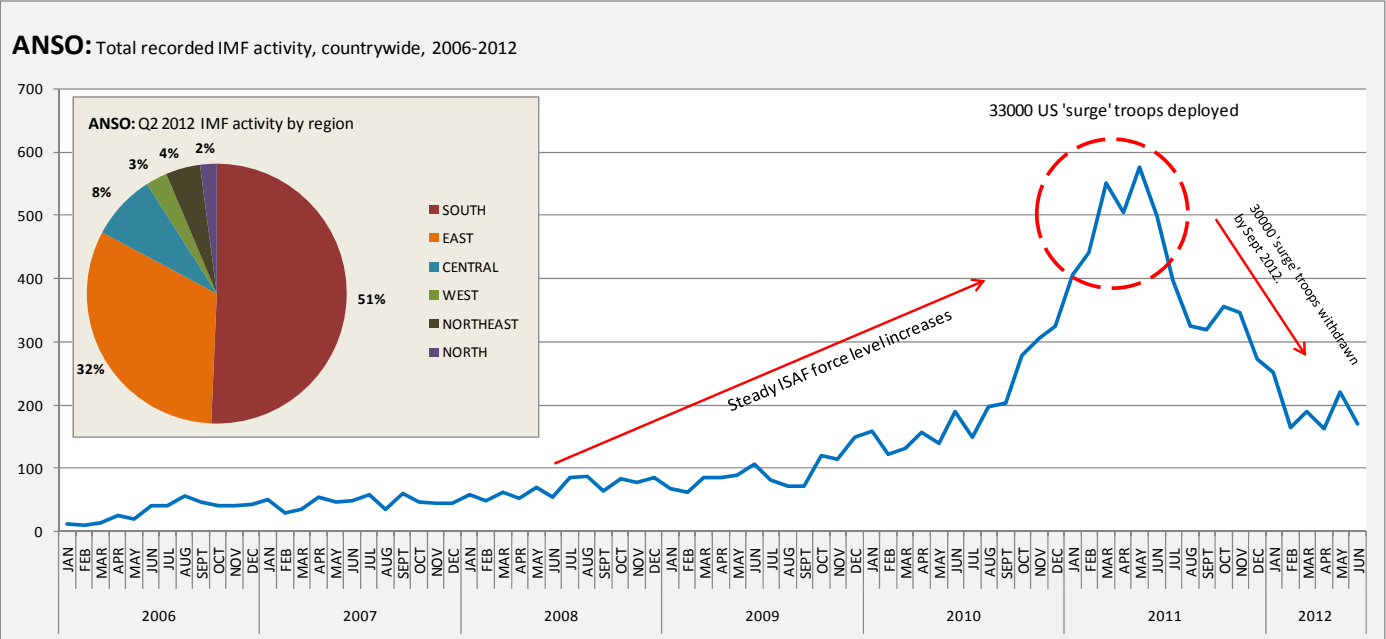
REGION	PROVINCE	AOG INCIDENTS AT Q.2 2012	AOG INCIDENTS AT Q.2 2011	ACTUAL CHANGE	% CHANGE	CATEGORY
SOUTH	Helmand	293	1430	-1137	-80%	>50% decrease
CENTRAL	Daykundi	3	12	-9	-75%	
SOUTH	Nimroz	17	45	-28	-62%	
NORTH EAST	Takhar	6	13	-7	-54%	
CENTRAL	Kabul	26	53	-27	-51%	
SOUTH	Zabul	127	252	-125	-50%	<50% decrease
NORTH	Jawzjan	39	75	-36	-48%	
EAST	Paktya	127	234	-107	-46%	
SOUTH	Paktika	249	448	-199	-44%	
SOUTH	Ghazni	419	743	-324	-44%	
EAST	Khost	355	604	-249	-41%	
CENTRAL	Wardak	111	185	-74	-40%	
NORTH EAST	Kunduz	65	108	-43	-40%	
SOUTH	Kandahar	446	724	-278	-38%	
NORTH	Balkh	56	89	-33	-37%	
NORTH	Sar-e Pul	40	59	-19	-32%	
CENTRAL	Parwan	39	54	-15	-28%	
WEST	Badghis	146	192	-46	-24%	
CENTRAL	Logar	85	111	-26	-23%	
NORTH	Faryab	128	158	-30	-19%	
WEST	Herat	129	159	-30	-19%	
SOUTH	Uruzgan	187	224	-37	-17%	
NORTH EAST	Badakhshan	25	29	-4	-14%	
EAST	Kunar	623	677	-54	-8%	
EAST	Nangarhar	307	296	11	4%	
EAST	Nuristan	48	45	3	7%	
WEST	Ghor	39	30	9	30%	
CENTRAL	Bamyan	4	3	1	33%	
WEST	Farah	195	130	65	50%	
EAST	Laghman	149	97	52	54%	
NORTH	Samangan	8	5	3	60%	
CENTRAL	Kapisa	87	53	34	64%	
NORTH EAST	Baghlan	52	31	21	68%	
CENTRAL	Panjshir	1	0	1	100%	
Provinces with notable improvement (in minimum -50 actual attacks) are highlighted in green.						
Provinces with notable deterioration (in minimum +50 actual attacks) are highlighted in red.						

ANSO: Distribution of AOG Attacks at Q.2 2012



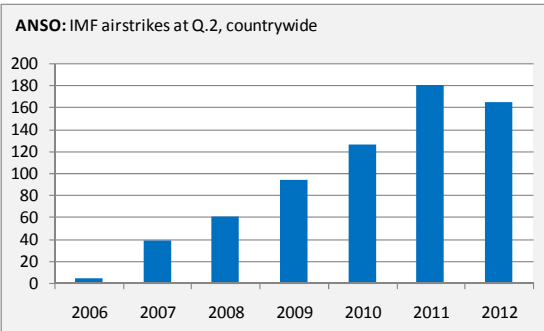
The table compares actual AOG attack numbers (all types) per province at the Q.2 stage in 2012 and 2011. AOG regression in the South, where IMF concentrated the main surge effort, opened up space for a proportionate shift of AOG activity to the East with only 2% separating the two regions in 2012 (chart left).

2.4 International Military Forces (IMF)

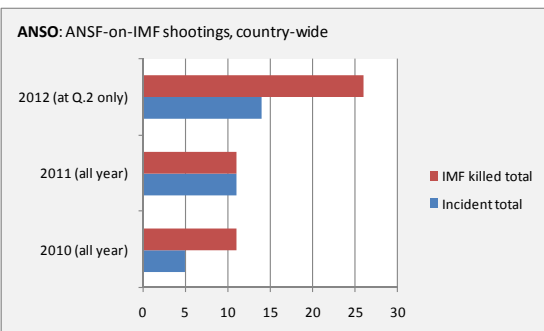


The chart above shows those operations recorded in which IMF were identified as the primary author and shows that their efforts remained focused on the South, with a significant regional drop in AOG violence. The total volume of IMF activity country-wide fell by 60% compared to last year, giving some measure to the 'rate' of disengagement – about twice the rate of de-escalation seen in AOG operations. It is ANSO assessment that IMF disengagement is the cause of AOG de-escalation- not the other way around - as by removing themselves they remove the key driver of the AOG campaign. Transition Tranche III for the first time includes key strategic areas adjacent to AfPakborder in South and East, such as parts of Kunar, Nuristan, Nangarhar, Paktika, Khost and the rest of Helmand. Post transition interplay there will provide an important window into the future of the conflict.

Two key dynamics were discerned this period (*charts below*). While falling in total numbers, IMF air-strikes have



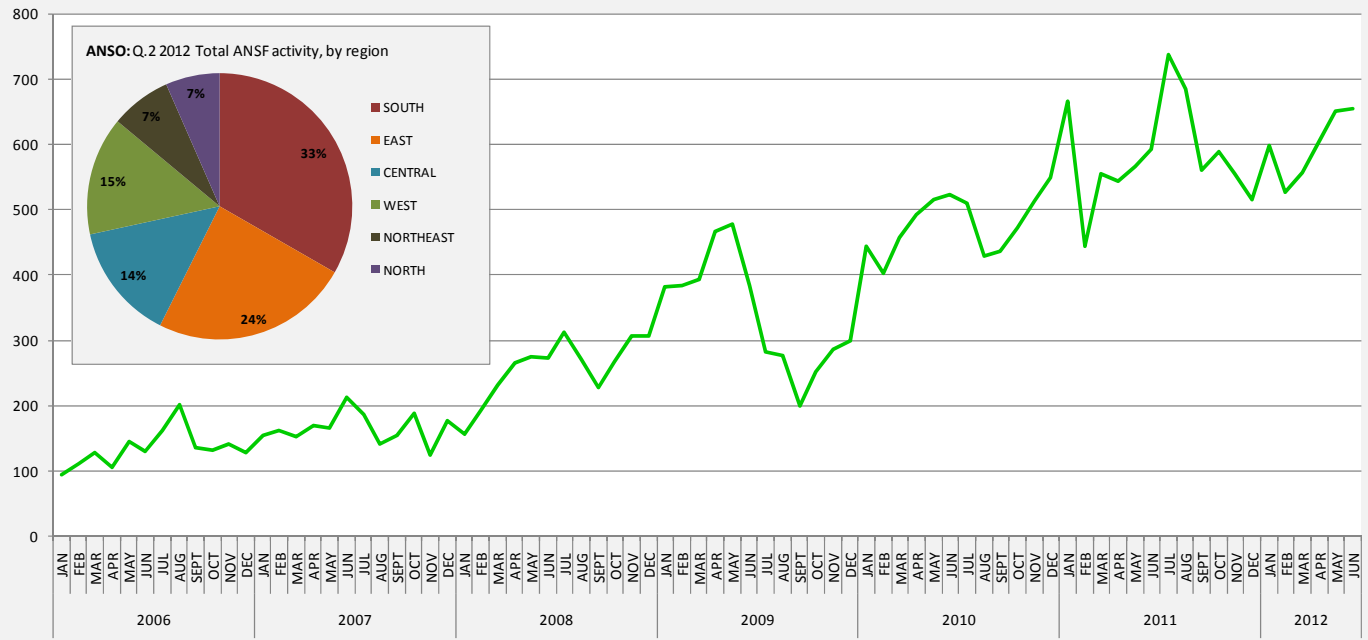
risen from 6% of the IMF activity at Q.2 2011 to 14%, combining the Soviet-era ambition at controlling key terrains and routes from the air with NATO tactical objective of eliminating key operatives or units in surgical strikes. The activity was most visible in the East and South (respectively 39% and 38% of the total activity volume), followed by Central (11%). The reverse side of these operations is that increased reliance on them at times complicates GOA's outreach to the communities. For instance, IMF airstrikes and combined air/land operations accounted for 79 out of 120 civilian deaths in IMF-initiated engagements at Q.2012, which represents 7% of civilians killed by conflict parties (IMF, AOG) this year.



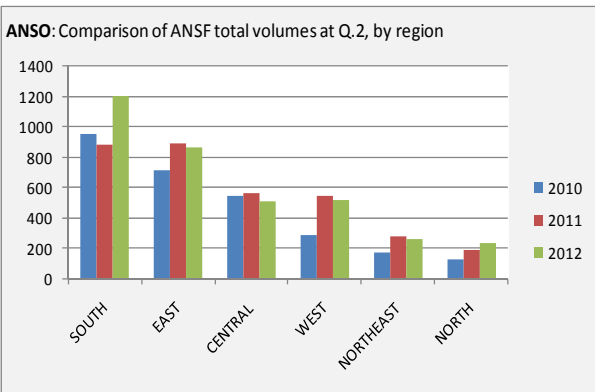
The South also experienced the majority of rogue ANSF shootings of their IMF counter-parts, mostly on grounds of cultural and personal conflicts. The high IMF death toll resulting from these incidents this year touches the IMF training mission in its core premise, the trust between the partnering units on the ground.

2.5 Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)

ANSO: Total recorded ANSF activity, countrywide, 2006-2012

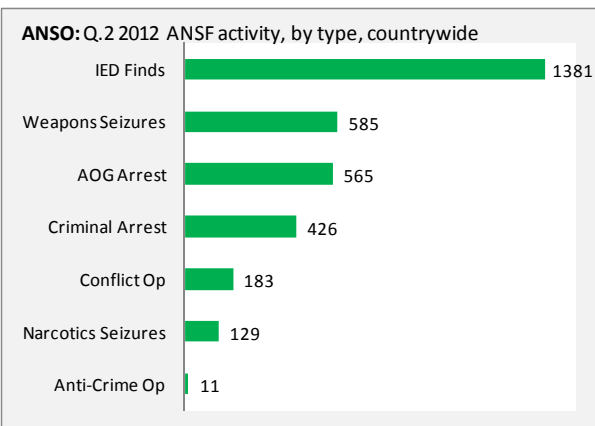


The chart above indicates that ANSF (including all types of police, army and the ALP) were the only conflict actor whose activity exhibited positive growth (by 7 %) at the end of this quarter on the equivalent



period last year. The ANP accounted for 76% of the overall activity, and the police presence in the field also explains for the broader distribution of ANSF activity across the regions (*insert chart above*).

The overall growth in ANSF activity volumes was driven by their expansion in the South, a development enabled by the IMF surge last year (*first chart left*). ANSF visibility has increased in main population centers, including Kandahar city, where it also attracted this year's AOG surge in suicide attacks (*see section 2.1*). As the transition Tranche III sets the ambitious goal of ANSF taking over security responsibility for all provincial capitals, the opposition cadres will likely continue to enact 'statement' attacks in the main population centers.



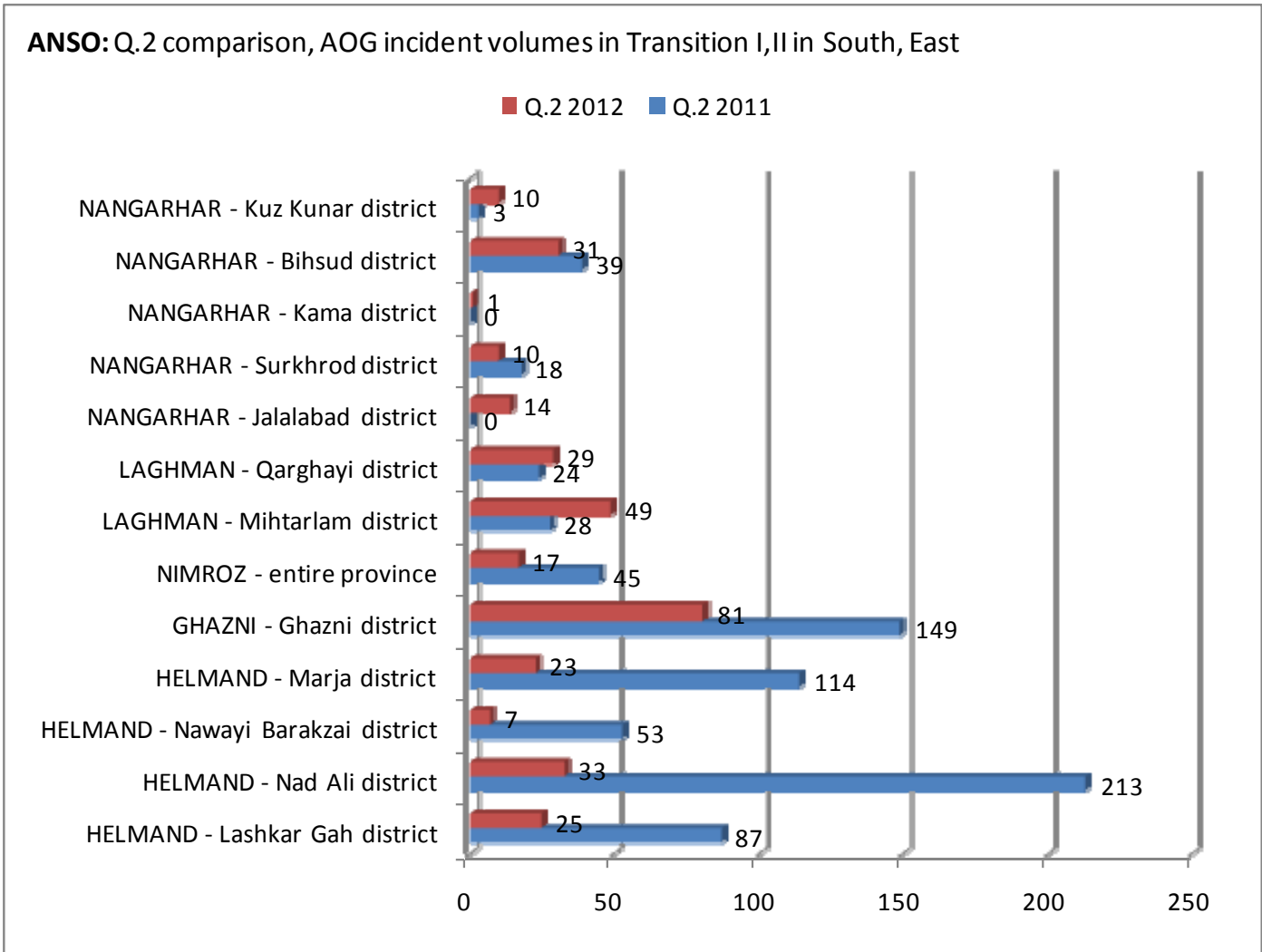
The tactical portfolio at the second quarter (*second chart left*) illustrates that the ANSF remained concentrated on conflict-related agenda, with IED finds, weapons' seizures, AOG arrests and anti-AOG kinetic operations accounting for over 80% of the total.

2.6 Transition Tranche I & II in South & East

The section provides a basic snapshot of Tranche I & II areas in South and East against AOG attack rates for Q.2 2011 and 2012.

Several observation can be made as to the process so far:

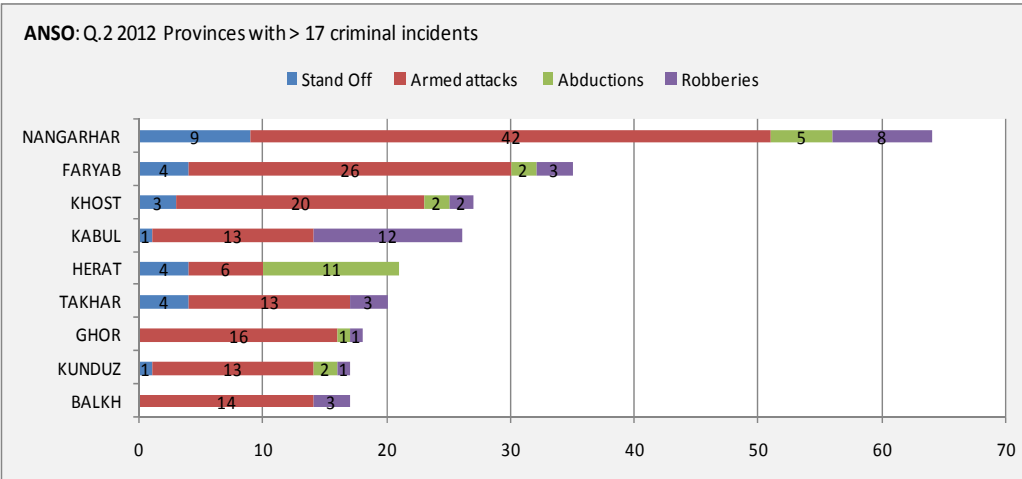
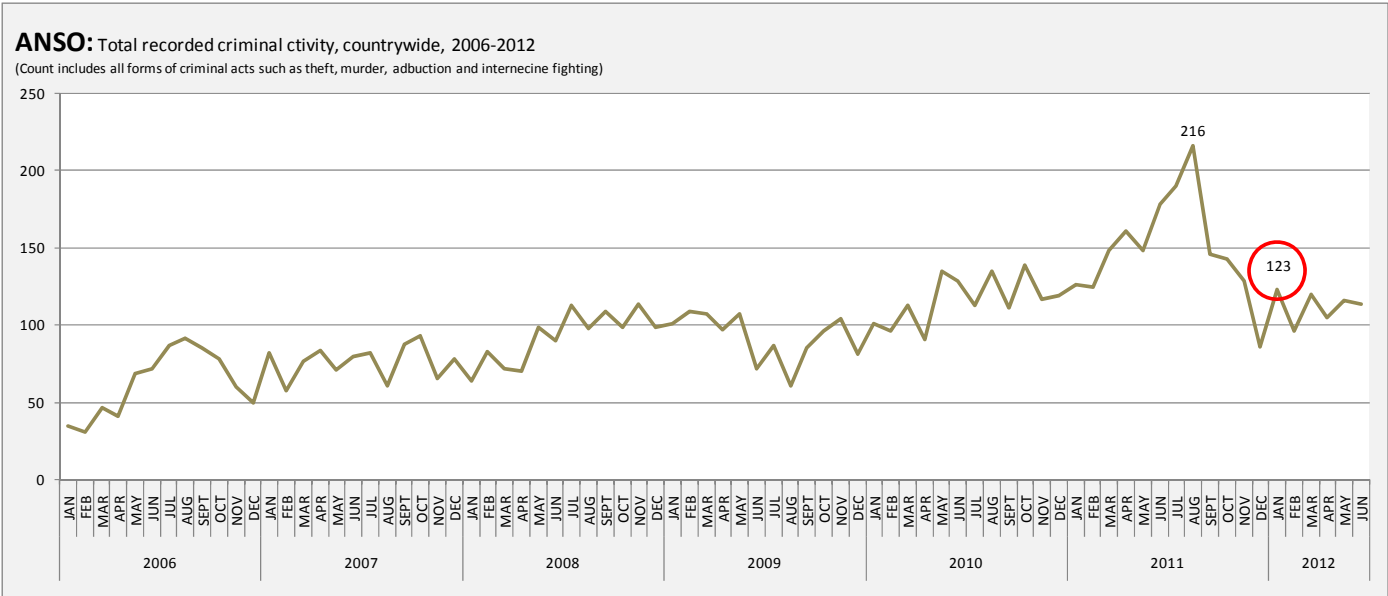
- The transition Tranches I & II have so far gone well for IMF/ANSF as it mainly included areas outside core AOG influence.
- Transitioned areas in Helmand have witnessed a significant drop in AOG activity levels. However, IMF continue to maintain an exceptional operational presence there, which blurs the analytical perspective on the actual outcomes of the process.
- Transitioned capitals of Ghazni and Mihtarlam remain problematic. Despite the IMF-ANSF focus, AOG have maintained open access there and position themselves as an ascendant power with an increasingly political posture.



Part 3.

Criminality

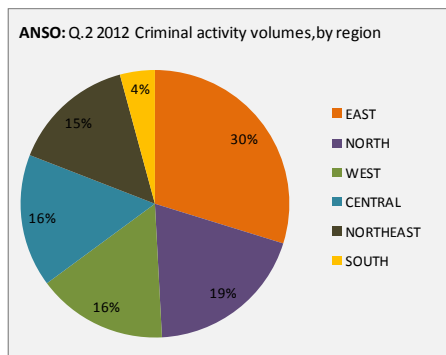
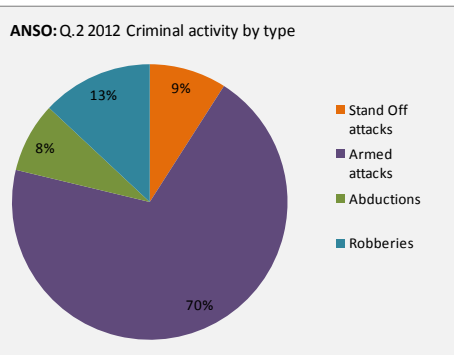
3.1 Criminology: Overview



In line with the downturn of conflict activity, the second quarter concluded with a 24% regression in criminal activity levels on 2011. Albeit the first quarter outgrew the second this year, the activity peak established in January has not been surpassed so far .

Regional distribution and tactical composition (*charts below*) remained quite consistent when compared with the first quarter. The East and North hosted every second criminal event with armed attacks in Nangarhar, Khost and Faryab being the key components of this dynamic.

The only significant changes were noted in the South, where the weighted volume dropped by 6% mainly



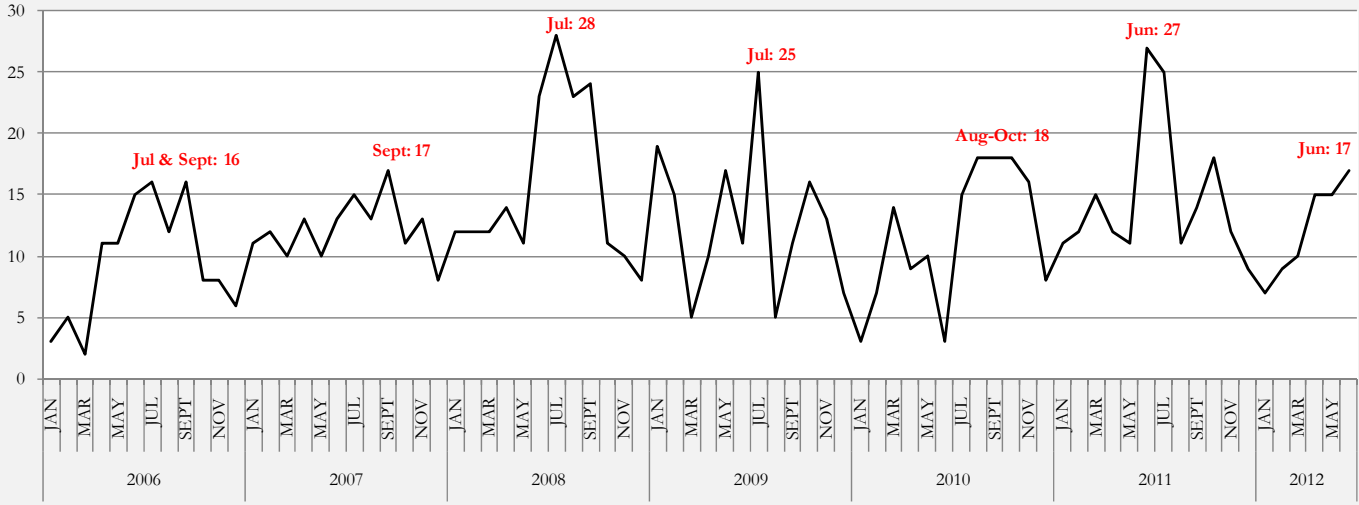
due to a relative decrease in criminal killings in Kandahar. This share was primarily recuperated in the North-East with a 5% increase driven by kinetic attacks in Kunduz and Takhar.

Part 4.

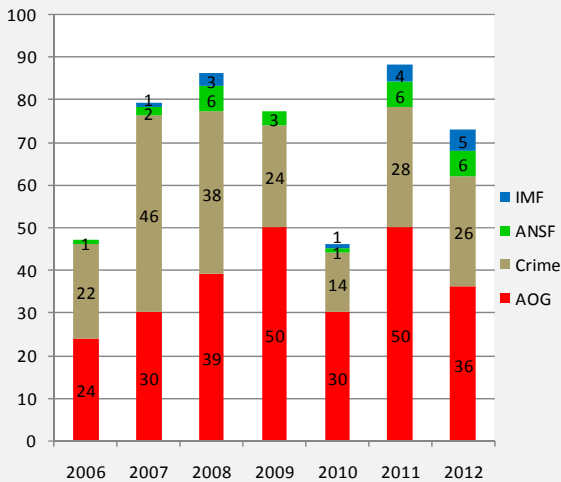
NGO Trends

4.1 General NGO Incident Trends

ANSO: Total NGO Incidents, all authors, countrywide, 2006-2012
 (Note: figures in red demark yearly incident peak)



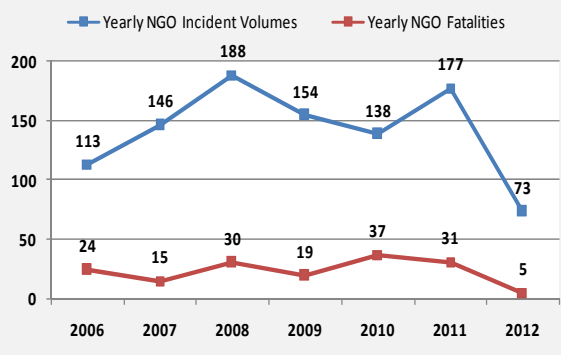
ANSO: NGO incident volume comparison by actor, Jan-Jun 2006-2012



Total NGO incident levels were down 17% on Q.2 2011, but remained consistent with longer term trends (*above and left*). Since 2008, NGO exposure to AOG activity has driven the seasonal growth at Q.2 every year. Nevertheless, compared with the 38% regression in AOG incident volumes this year on mid-2011, the data indicate that the opposition’s activity downturn had a *positive* impact on NGO security in the field. It also reinforces the assessment that NGO security incidents are most commonly related to circumstantial exposure rather than political targeting.

In counterpoint, criminal targeting remains a key component of NGO security profile, and often happens under the guise of political activity. This was visible with the outlier case of an NGO abduction in Badakhshan, but featured far more regularly into NGO incidents in the East and West (Nangarhar, Khost, Ghor).

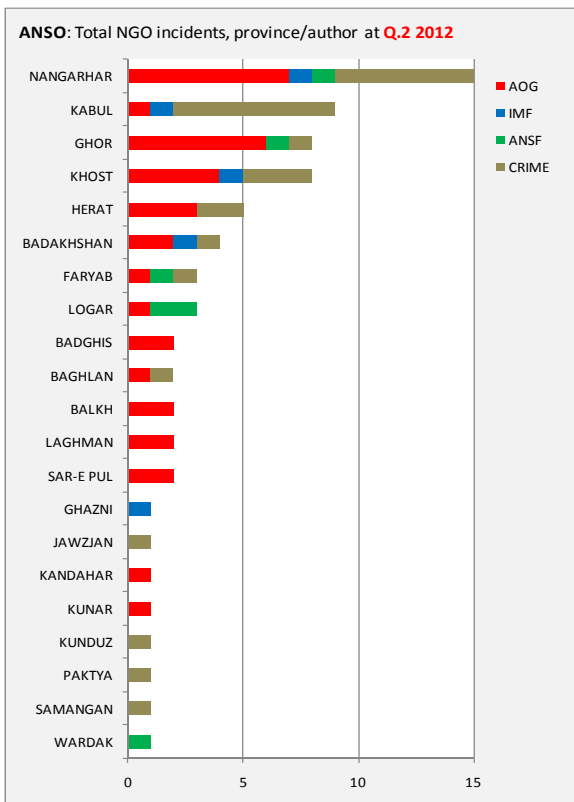
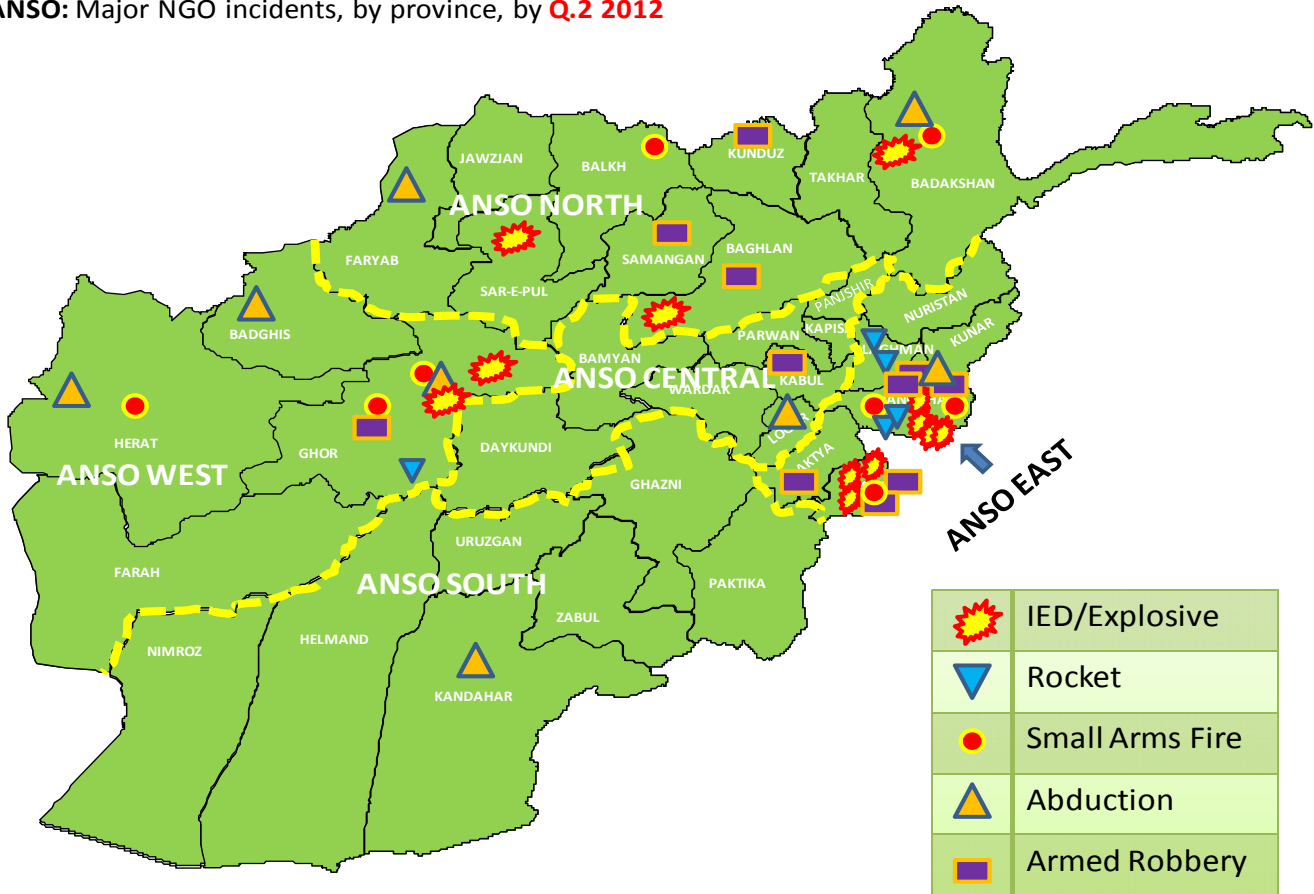
ANSO: Total NGO security incidents & fatalities 2006-12



NGO fatalities occurred on five separate occasions. The only discernable patterns in these were that four staff were Afghan, and that two deaths occurred in Ghor. In one case, the cause of death could not be established. Other cases involved an execution of an international staff at a decision of a local AOG commander in Ghor, an inter-ANP shooting in the same province, a resistance to burglary in Kunduz, and an accidental IED detonation in Sare Pul. It is noteworthy that none of the fatalities on record this year occurred in South or East where 9 cases were recorded last year.

4.2 NGO Incident Mapping

ANSO: Major NGO incidents, by province, by Q.2 2012



The chart left provides an overview of all NGO incidents this period, disaggregated by province and author. The map above includes major NGO incidents only.

By mid-2012, the East accounted for one in three NGO incidents, but even a larger proportion of significant incidents mapped above. The East and West hosted 63% of NGO incidents initiated by AOG. Criminal incidents impacting NGOs were absent in the South, but more evenly distributed across the remaining regions.

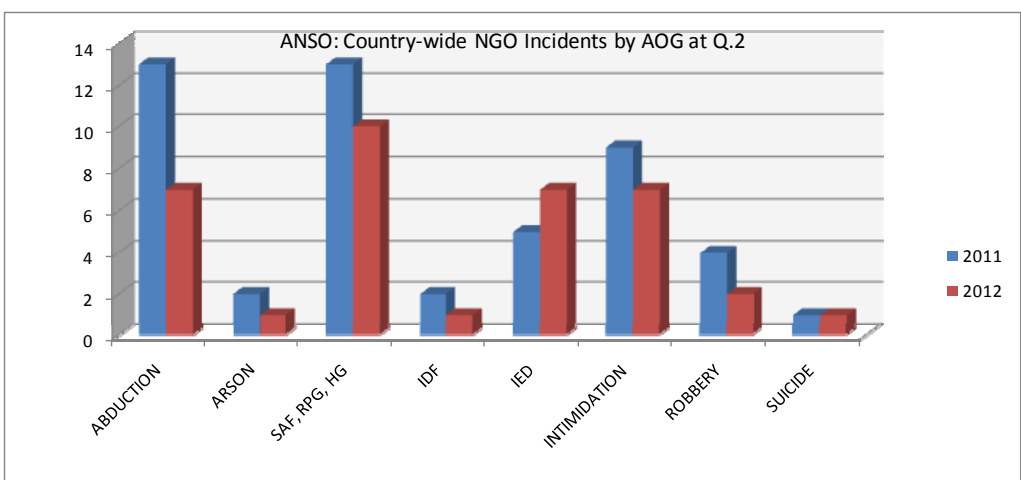
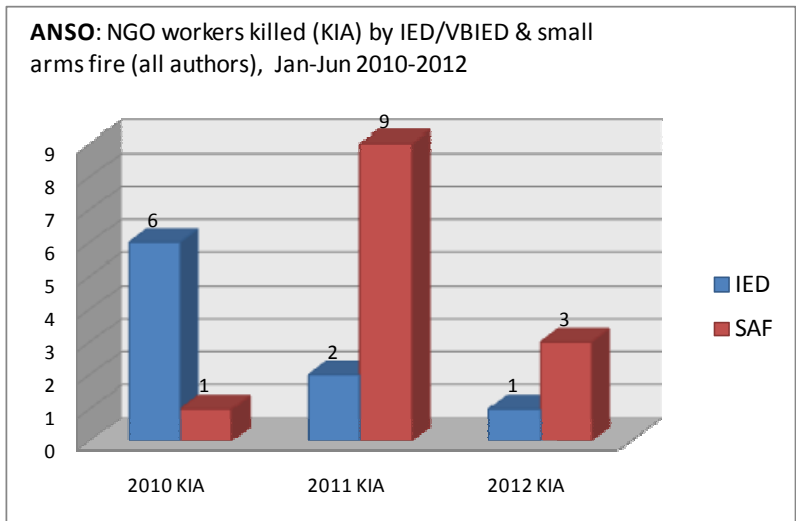
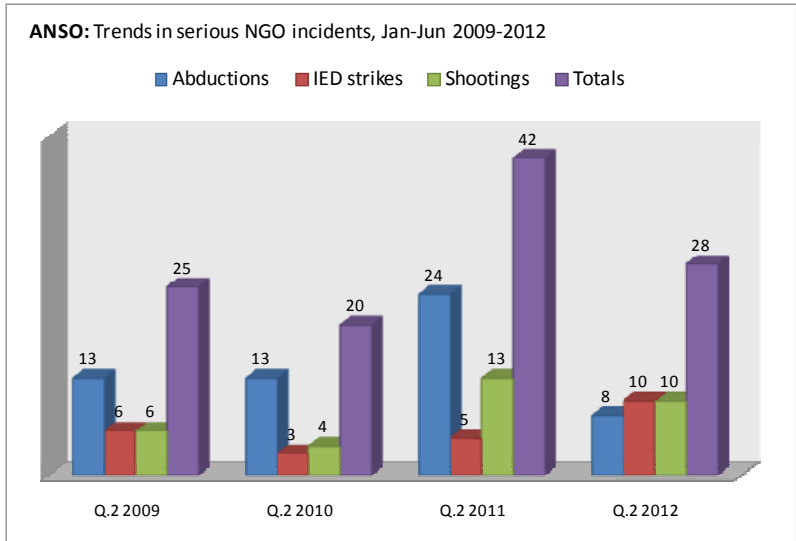
Although Kabul and Jalalabad featured heavily in NGO crime-related incidents, rural criminality remains a trend to monitor, in particular in border areas. Among the incidents on record, health sector and demining projects were impacted most frequently, albeit cash-for-work types of projects and food/NFI distributions were also represented.

4.3 Significant NGO Incidents

The total number of serious incidents - defined as NGO abductions, IED blasts and small arms fire by all authors - impacting NGOs has decreased on Q.2 2011 by 33% (*chart right*). Whereas at Q.2 last year such escalations represented 55% of all NGO security events, this share dropped to 38% this year. NGO fatalities in these regressed from 11 to 4 (*second chart below*).

Abductions are at a 4-year low. At 2.Q, the cases occurred as frequently in transit as from premises. No staff were injured/killed in these incidents. In counterpoint, IED strikes involving NGOs have increased despite visible NGO efforts to reduce road travel. IEDs in transit included a pedestrian caught in a BBIED attack on a VIP in Badakhshan, and four additional detonations which were either collateral, or resulted from ignorant AOG targeting. Other half were IEDs deployed at premises to intimidate NGO staff or beneficiaries. Small arms fire incidents, and the number of aid workers killed in them, also decreased. Only two cases were established as deliberate AOG attempts to harm NGO staff.

The tactical composition of AOG incidents alone (*third chart right*) indicates that IEDs were the only kinetic type to increase over mid-2011. However, out of seven cases attributed to AOG this year, three were used at premises to intimidate, and only four were triggered on the roads.



Acronyms:

AOG - Armed Opposition Groups specifically Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban); Haqqani Network and Hezb-i-Islami Gulbiddin (HIG)

IEA - Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban)

ALP - Afghan Local Police (militias)

IMF - International Military Forces (specifically ISAF, USFOR-A, PRTs and SOF)

ANSF - Afghan National Security Forces (mostly Police & Army)

IED - Improvised Explosive Device (home made bomb)

IDF - Indirect Fire (rockets, mortars)

CAS - Close Air Support (airstrike)

SAF - Small Arms Fire (from a machine gun such as AK-47)

ANSO REGIONS

For the purposes of this report, please note the following breakdown of provinces for the various ANSO Regions:

CENTRAL: Bamyan, Daykundi, Kabul, Kapisa, Logar, Panjshir, Parwan, Wardak

EAST: Khost, Kunar, Laghman, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktya

SOUTH: Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, Paktika, Uruzgan, Zabul

NORTH: Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Samangan, Sar-e Pul

NORTHEAST: Badakhshan, Baghlan, Takhar, Kunduz

REPORT ENDS

For further information
director.afg@ngosafety.org

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