

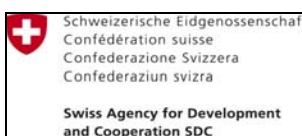
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## HIGHLIGHTS

- **NGO incidents in Wardak and Logar**
- **Intensified AOG campaign in Kandahar and Helmand**
- **Uruzgan and parts of Kandahar formally transitioned to ANSF**

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## COUNTRY SUMMARY

In CENTRAL, the opposition cadres put forward the usual array of conventional and IED attacks seeking to disrupt the access of IMF/ANSF and their contractors along the main supply routes. In Wardak, however, this was accompanied by a display of a less permissive stance of local and foreign AOG cadres towards local communities. This became apparent also with two NGO-incidents in AOG-dominated parts of Wardak, both of which encompassed the opposition cadres explicitly rejecting NGO presence on the grounds of perceived alignments of NGOs with GOA structures. In Logar, NGO incidents included a more typical robbery of communication equipment and a collateral SAF injury of an NGO staff member in transit.

Whereas magnetic IEDs were also seen along highways in Central, it was in the NORTHERN region where this tactical feature generated the most significant damage this cycle. Baghlan experienced the highest number of such attacks, although the most effective strike occurred in Samangan. In Takhar and Kunduz, the opposition revealed a continued interest to target GOA VIPs while in Badakhshan, ANSF sealed the border in Ishkashim in coordination with the move of Tajikistan authorities against an influential commander based in the Pamirs on the Tajikistan side. Faryab exhibited further cases of aggressive AOG stance towards local communities, which also included restricting the access of villagers to relief assistance.

In the WESTERN region, AOG explored the reliance of the communities on IO food supplies in a more positive sense, as they hi-jacked a food item convoy in Ghor

and organized their own distribution in the communities of their choice. The tug of war for local acceptance between GOA and AOG was visible in the contested parts of Farah and Badghis, with a mass ANP defection to the opposition in the former and the successful use of economic incentives by GOA in the latter. The region also recorded its first two instances of ANSF-on-IMF shootings in Herat and Badghis.

In the EASTERN region, the opposition remained active along the infiltration corridors and in rural district centers rather than in the main cities. In Kunar, Wata Pur district center saw an AOG attack every other day whilst cross-border shelling intensified in Dangam. AOG political supremacy in key strongholds in Kunar and Nuristan prevailed against the background of occasional IMF airstrikes on high-value targets, which took out several commanders but did not challenge AOG access.

AOG networks in the SOUTHERN region sustained a high operational tempo in Kandahar, and re-escalated conflict activity in Helmand. Ghazni followed, with a typical large amalgamation of local and external conflict parties engaged in combat, including the communities in Andar which continued to receive active support from local HIG cadres and the ANSF against their common foe: non-local IEA fighters. Heavy AOG casualties in Paktika illustrated the importance of the province as an infiltration corridor, whilst the volume of AOG attacks there matched AOG activity levels in Uruzgan, the second entire province to have been transitioned in the South. Kandahar city and three rural districts were also formally handed over to the ANSF.

# CENTRAL REGION

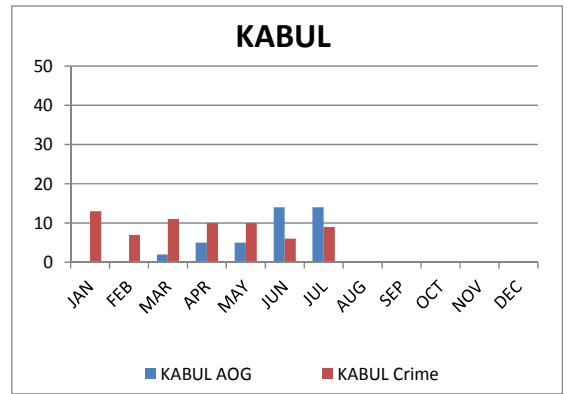
## KABUL

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	9
This Report Period	0

Kabul city remained quiet during the past fortnight, with no NGO incidents nor AOG attacks of concern. The most noteworthy incident was the shooting of a female ANP officer by her husband in District 4, as a result of a larger argument over both her job and other family issues; the husband managed to escape before police arrived. Another incident of note took place in District 8, where the bodyguards of two businessmen engaged in a brief armed clash; four bodyguards were injured in all, as well as one policeman who attempted to intervene.

Whereas Kabul city was devoid of manifested opposition activity, the potential of larger, complex attacks remains extant; after the previous incident at Paghman’s Qargha lake on June 21<sup>st</sup>, it appears quite likely that the next target will be a purely military or governmental entity with the main risk factors converging in areas which host a concentration of high-profile targets and are easily accessible along the main traffic arteries.

Outside the city, the most significant incidents occurred in Surobi



district. On the 31<sup>st</sup>, an AOG unit ambushed an ANA convoy in the Mahipar area, the first such occurrence since the onset of Ramazan. In Uzbin, AOG fighters attacked an ANP CP on a secondary road, causing no casualties. Opposition fighters also kidnapped two engineers repairing damaged electrical cables in an area adjacent to Uzbin.

## KAPISA

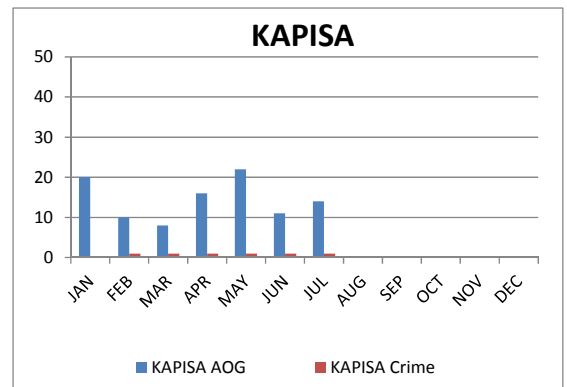
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	1

As in Logar, a demining NGO was targeted in a security incident during the past fortnight in Kapisa, although in this case the incident appeared to have been driven by a personal dispute. Early in the period, two armed men dressed in military fatigues approached a demining worksite in Kohistan - a district not known to feature any significant AOG presence - and set fire to one of the NGO’s vehicles before departing without leaving any trace of a criminal or political motivation.

peak. However, none of the recorded incidents stood out as having a high impact, and it remained the case that the intensity of conflict continued to be somewhat lower than during the winter months.

In Tagab, home to the bulk of the province’s active AOG networks, an IED struck an ANP convoy in Jalo Khel just north of the DAC on the main district road and killed a policeman. In the same area, a local *malik* was shot and killed by AOG gunmen as the elder was walking to the village mosque.

In Nijrab’s Afghaniya valley, AOG fighters executed a local resident accused of spying for the IMF, while SAF and IED attacks on ALP elsewhere in the district



also caused casualties.

Finally, in Alasay, two AOG units clashed with each other after a verbal argument, leading to two deaths.

This activity came as the French IMF detachment continued its process of withdrawal from the province, with the facility in Nijrab’s Tapa Ahmad Beg being emptied during the fortnight. Indeed, in an indication of the shape of IMF intervention after the French departure, US SOF conducted a night operation in Alasay on the 21<sup>st</sup>, killing one opposition fighter and injuring another.

## LOGAR

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	3
This Report Period	2

Like Wardak, Logar was home to two NGO incidents during the past fortnight, although unlike Wardak, both of Logar’s were well within established conflict parameters. While both occurred to demining NGOs on the same day, they were however qualitatively different in nature.

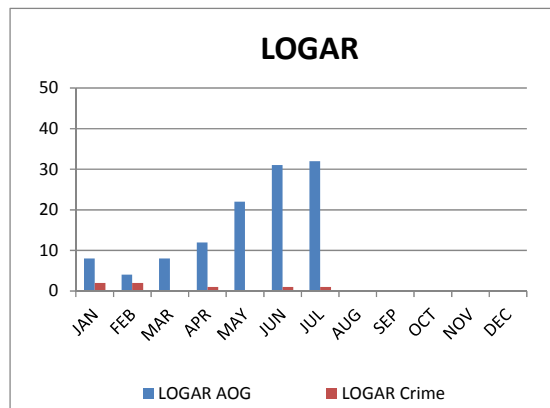
First, an NGO staff member walking through Puli Alam’s Qalaye Jum’a on the Kabul-Logar highway was collaterally caught up in a firefight between an armed opposition group and an ANA patrol convoy, after the former ambushed the latter with an RCIED detonation and a follow-up SAF attack, ultimately killing one ANA soldier; in the event, the staff member was shot in the leg.

In the second, a few hours later in Mohammad Agha, armed men approached an NGO demining worksite and demanded the staff hand over any VHF radios they had; after threats, two were given to the armed men who rode off on their motorcycles. Four of the five previous incidents targeting demining NGOs in Logar (excluding the other incident in Qalaye Jum’a) have been such robberies, which are part and parcel of using such valuable communication equipment in rural areas with significant AOG presence.

Consistent with these incidents, in the wider provincial security picture the armed opposition continued to focus its main efforts on contesting the strategically impor-

tant in Puli Alam and Mohammad Agha, while maintaining an economy of effort approach in the southern districts – such as Baraki Barak and Charkh – which are already broadly under their authority. The aforementioned Qala-ye Jum’a saw a number of other significant incidents. Most notably, on a secondary road in the area, an AOG unit set up a vehicle CP and killed one civilian who failed to stop his vehicle, while another ANA convoy was targeted by an RCIED on the same road. In Puli Alam town, after the previous fortnight’s high-casualty twin RCIED strike, the most significant incident was the targeted killing of a soldier and a policeman walking in the main bazaar towards their homes. Similarly in Kolangar to the north of the district along the highway, the husband of the Department for Women’s Affairs director was attacked and wounded in an AOG ambush; ALP responded and killed three opposition fighters, preventing the target from becoming the latest casualty from such targeted killings of government officials or those closely associated with them. Finally, also in Kolangar, a pressure plate IED struck an ANA vehicle on a secondary road, killing three soldiers instantly.

In Mohammad Agha, the majority of incidents were casualty-free attacks on security forces and fuel trucks on the highway, although in one incident in Zarghun Shahr,



an ANP CP on a secondary road came under attack and sparked a firefight that killed two opposition fighters. Across both districts, there were also a significant number of ANSF and IMF operations. In airstrikes in Mohammad Agha’s Dara area and Puli Alam’s Padkhwab Shana, a total of nine AOG fighters were killed, while arrests totalled 20, including two cell commanders in Babus, which also saw an airstrike that killed six further fighters.

In Baraki Barak and Charkh, by contrast, incident volumes were low, but indicative of the conditions in these districts. First, the region’s only SVBIED took place in Baraki Barak during the period, being detonated outside an ANA/IMF facility in Ibrahim Khel on the provincial border with Wardak’s Saydabad district. Killing three ANA soldiers, the detonation was consistent with the AOG objective of exerting pressure on security forces along the Kabul-Ghazni highway running through Saydabad; it also demonstrated the freedom of movement the opposition enjoys in Baraki Barak. To further demonstrate their position in this part of the province, AOG authorities in Charkh publicly flogged two men accused of attempting to kidnap the son of a local wealthy businessman; each received 40 lashes. This was the latest example of the opposition engaging in the provision of the sort of justice it was known to employ pre-2001, the most recent previous in Central being the execution of a woman in Parwan for adultery in June.

### NOTICE:

The graphs provided in the report are accurate as of 25 July 2012.

## WARDAK

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	2

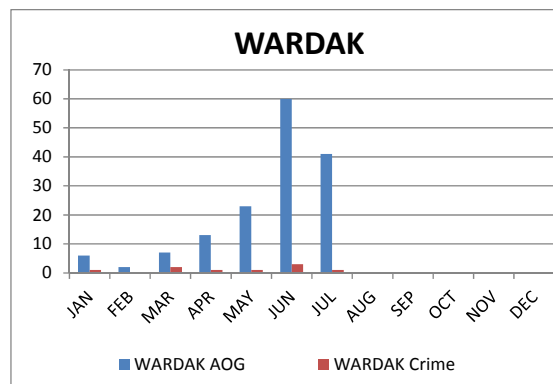
While overall incident volumes in Wardak continued to be substantially lower than those of previous years, the province was home to important developments during the second half of July. Most significantly, two NGO incidents were reported during the period, both late reports from the first half of the month, and both providing noteworthy insights into the evolution of security in Wardak.

In the first, an NGO staff member was visiting his home in Saydabad in early July when he was detained by the armed opposition; in answer to local elders' assurances that he was solely involved in humanitarian work, and not associated with government, opposition leadership asserted that his work with an organisation (*moasesa*) registered with the government was sufficient for him to be considered in violation of their rules vis-à-vis unacceptable cooperation with the authorities. However, after guarantees from the elders he would quit his job, and a fine levied from his family, the staff member was released two days later.

This incident came shortly after the appointment of a new AOG military commander for Saydabad, in mid-June, who had announced that locals must cease all work with the government, security forces or 'foreigners', or face appropriate punishment. While this statement did not include a specific mention of NGOs, the above incident indicates that there is now an ambiguity with regards to the status of NGOs and purely humanitarian work, where previously there was not.

The second NGO incident was another kidnapping, this time of a local nurse in Dai Mirdad by foreign fighters. On the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup>, the nurse was approached at his clinic by a dozen armed men, who said he was needed to provide urgent medical assistance; once he had departed the area with them, they then announced he was in fact being kidnapped. While being moved around over a number of days, the nurse was interrogated as to his affiliations with the government; two days later, with the intervention of local AOG leadership more cognizant of the local landscape, the nurse was released. In this case, it appeared the prospect of ransom was the primary motivating factor for the abduction.

Consistent with the current AOG 'shaping' efforts in the province's more AOG-invested districts was the assassination of the Chak district governor on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Having never been targeted before, the district governor was attacked in two separate incidents within five days, the first an unsuccessful RCIED strike against his vehicle in Mozakhel, and the second, a fatal SAF attack against his vehicle as he was driving from home to the DAC with his son. In the attack, both were killed. As the traditional centre of AOG leadership in Wardak, the killing of the district governor could have been executed with relative ease at any time in recent years, and as such the key question is why the opposition chose now; the causal factors are again likely to lie with the recent changes in these southern districts, where a less tolerant ap-



proach is now pushed forward by local opposition cadres as well as a substantial non-domestic AOG contingent.

Significant developments were also seen in Jalrez, to the north, although these remained within established conflict parameters. An armed group abducted six local civilian employees of the IMF in Mullahkhel, of whom five were shot dead shortly after; one managed to escape prior to this. Given the concentration of district insecurity in the Mullahkhel-Ismaikhel area over the past months, it was understandable that in the wake of this mass abduction/killing – which was taken up by Hazara segments of national political leadership – an ANSF operation was launched. Three days after the incident, a combined ANP/ANA/NDS operation resulted in the killing of a total of six opposition fighters while the security forces also managed to release two policemen and two local businessmen that had previously been taken hostage by the opposition.

The remaining incidents of note focused on the highway, and were at almost the same level as recent periods. Magnetic IEDs against fuel trucks continued to be deployed on the section of the highway near Maydan Shahr, while in Nirkh and Saydabad, AOG carried out a combination of IEDs and more direct SAF ambushes on security forces and tankers. However, in Saydabad there were also two targeted killings of locals associated with ANA; in Onkhay a serving soldier was abducted and executed earlier in the period, while in Sheikhabad, a former soldier was shot dead some days later.

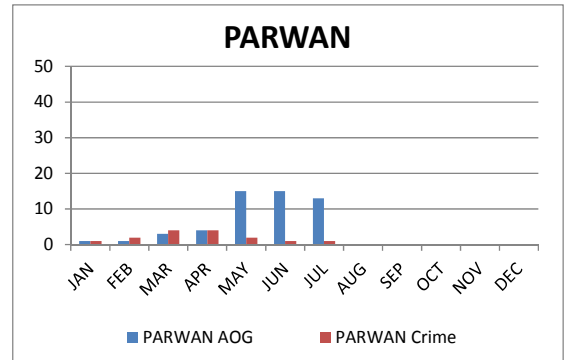
## PARWAN

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

In Parwan, the targeted killing of three privately contracted engineers, including one US citizen, was the most serious incident to occur in the past fortnight. Early in the morning in Siyagerd, along the Kabul-Bamyan highway, the three were travelling towards Chaharikar in a local vehicle when they began to be followed by another vehicle with masked gunmen inside. After blocking the road in the Chardeh area, the gunmen shot and killed the three occupants before leaving the area, in what appears to have been a straightforward AOG-authored operation.

Further insecurity along the Ghorband stretch of the highway was present during the fortnight, most notably the abduction of three ALP policemen in the Chi-

lan area; two were quickly shot and killed, with the remaining one still in custody at the time of writing. In the Abakan area, AOG fighters attacked two ANP CPs on the highway, which were effectively repelled, similar to another attack on the Siyagerd ANP HQ on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Finally in this part of the province, two unarmed AOG fighters attempted to verbally convince two policemen in the Tangi area of Sheikh Ali to hand over their weapons, later stating that they had intended to kill the police afterwards and then kill the Sheikh Ali district governor; instead, after getting one of the weapons, the policeman still in possession of his gun shot and killed one of the AOG fighters, and injured and detained the other.



Outside of the strategic Ghorband corridor, in Kohi Safi, NDS detained the IEA shadow district governor and an associate as they were moving towards Surobi, in a notable achievement for the security forces in a district that has become home to a significant AOG presence in the past two years. In Bagram district, AOG fighters attacked an NDS convoy as it was coming down from Kohi Safi late at night; in the ensuing firefight, three opposition fighters were killed, demonstrating the high level of capability that NDS armed units developed in the province.

### 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.

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

### ACRONYMS:

Please see the final page for a list of ANSO-utilized acronyms.

### ANSO VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT:

We are presently recruiting for ANSO RSA South position based in Kandahar and ANSO RSA Mobile. If you have a solid working experience from a conflict environment, a NGO mindset combined with an analytical background, and a desire to be challenged, all the while being a member of a close knit team, you are encouraged to forward a cover letter, CV, and 2 substantive writing samples to

[jobs@ngosafety.org](mailto:jobs@ngosafety.org).

# NORTHERN REGION

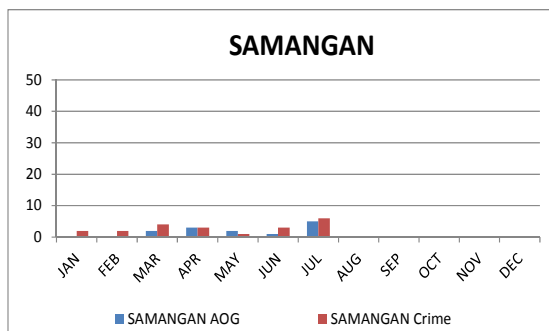
## SAMANGAN

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

On the 18<sup>th</sup>, four days after the BBIED attack at the VIP wedding in Aybak, the district was the site of another large-scale incident when 23 fuel and liquid gas tankers parked in Rabatak pass caught fire following the detonation of a single magnetic IED. Although unprecedented in scale, the incident was symptomatic of the rising number of AOG attacks against IMF fuel supply convoys along the ring road (see Baghlan). A magnetic IED had been found attached to a fuel tanker a month earlier in the same area, indicating that this was at least the second attempt at such an attack.

Apart from the fuel truck incident, Samangan recorded only seven other incidents during this cycle, none of them AOG-initiated.

In Ruyi Du Ab, the District Governor drove into an ambush that involved RPG fire on the road from Aybak. The ambush was organized by a local group with previous connections to AOG networks in Tala wa Barfak, however the official and the leader of the attack are also known to be locked in a personal dispute dating back to 2010 when the leader



of the group had been temporarily detained by IMF on charges of cooperation with AOG. After the ambush, the group leader was allowed to return to his home village where the local community vouched for preventing further attacks from taking place. The latest incident remained the sole violent escalation in Ruyi Du Ab this year and did not alter the ability of NGOs to operate in the district.

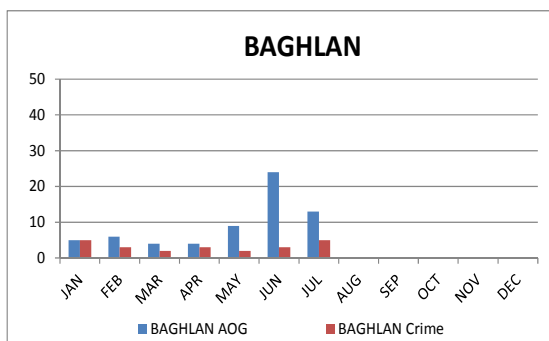
## BAGHLAN

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	2
This Report Period	0

Baghlan recorded 24 incidents in the second half of July, a substantial increase over the 13 incidents during the first half of the month. Five of the incidents were IED detonations and five consisted of AOG-initiated SAF attacks, four of those occurring on the main roads between Salang, Balkh and Kunduz. Overall, Baghlani Jadid was the most active district with four incidents initiated by ANSF and four by AOG.

and a SAF attack against the ANP escort of a fuel truck convoy in Tala wa Barfak. All of the attacks took place between six and eleven in the evening.

In total 18 AOG attacks on fuel tankers in Baghlan were recorded in June and July this year. For comparison, only two such incidents were recorded between January and May 2012 and only ten during the entire 2011. Although most of the recent attacks occurred in evening hours, NGO proximity to transiting or static fuel tankers on the ring road constitutes an increased threat of collateral exposure at any time of the day.



Targeting of IMF supply convoys featured heavily in opposition activity this cycle. AOG carried out a SAF attack against a fuel tanker in Baghlani Jadid on the Baghlan-Kunduz road, a SAF attack against the same target on the ring road in Dushi, a SAF and RPG attack on the ring in Khinjan

In a second development of import, AOG displayed intimidation

efforts towards local communities in Baghlani Jadid. On one occasion, AOG executed a civilian whom they accused of spying for the GOA. In another case a group of fighters verbally threatened locals in a mosque against active support of the government. So far this year, these have been the only cases of documented AOG intimidation in the district. However, with the summer season at its height, the current pressure displayed by IMF-ANSF on local AOG networks will likely continue to provide incentives for the opposition to engage in coercive operations towards the communities in the short term.

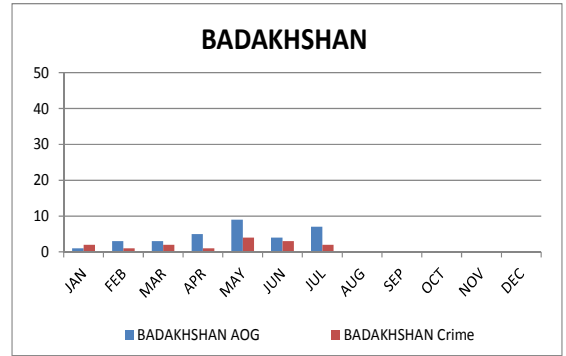
## BADAKHSHAN

The only INGO incident recorded in the North during this period was a poorly-executed night letter found in front of an INGO compound in Raghistan district. The letter demanded that two INGOs, an IO and other unspecified development actors leave the district and linked the entities to the IMF air-strikes in Shahri Buzurg in June. As per the current assessment, the letter did not originate within any established AOG or criminal group and resulted rather from an individual grudge. In another incident involving IO staff, an off-duty IO guard shot and injured two boys in a restaurant in Fayzabad over a private dispute. The guard was subsequently arrested by ANP.

A significant development this cycle was a protracted and so far non-violent stand-off between a

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	5
This Report Period	1

large AOG and the ANSF in an isolated area of Tagab district that started on the 18<sup>th</sup> and continued throughout the cycle. A group of approximately 60 AOG members emptied a local weapons cache and took positions in Kataw Bala and Khambok Bala villages, later expanding to Arghankhaw, Shakh Dara and Karasti, and demanded the control of the Tagab district center. The majority of the fighters came from local communities answering the call of an AOG commander from Kataw Bala. At a later stage, however, a unit of foreign fighters arrived from Kuran wa Munjan and joined the group. The situation did not degenerate into violence and negotiations have been ongoing as of the time of writing. The fact that both sides held off military escalations left the door open for a



peaceful settlement. The presence of non-local fighters and their eventual motivation and capability to prevent any local deals with ANSF/GOA constitutes a conflict-prone factor which will require analysis as further developments unfold.

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, the government of Tajikistan initiated a military operation close to the Afghan border in Ishkashim district in an effort to unseat a local commander. The border was sealed and no spill-over violence was recorded, although anecdotal reporting suggested that business connections exist between the commander and local criminal networks on the Afghan side of the border.

## KUNDUZ

The combined volume of incidents by all authors recorded in the second half of July doubled compared to the previous cycle. However, the AOG-initiated incidents comprised only 43% of the total in the past two weeks. Instead, the number of reported incidents was boosted by IED discoveries (7) and ANSF/IMF operations in Chahar Dara, Kunduz and Archi.

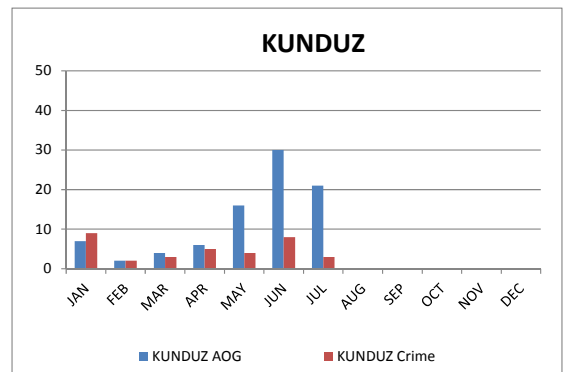
In Kunduz city a magnetic IED detonated against the vehicle of the District Governor of Khanabad, who survived the attack. The attempt constituted the third targeted attack against a high-ranking government official this year, with the previous including an IED attack against a vehicle carrying a Provincial Council member in

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

March, during which the PC member and his bodyguard were lightly injured, and another IED attack against the car of the District Governor of Chahar Dara in May, which incurred no casualties. The use of an IED in the latest attack fell within the existing patterns of AOG activity.

In counterpoint, the assassination of a local elder and his two sons, one of the latter employed with the ALP, while they were praying in a mosque in Archi was unusual both for its public setting and the deliberate killing of several members of the family at a time. On the other hand, the attack was representative of the current targeting patterns on AOG side.

Since January, members of ALP



and other pro-GOA militias attracted 53% of all AOG-initiated attacks in Kunduz, whereas the police forces (including ANP, ANBP and NDS) were the primary targets in just 23% of AOG escalations. The willingness of the opposition to circumvent ANA and IMF's superior fire power is best illustrated by the fact that the two military forces combined were the primary targets in only 5% of the engagements initiated by the opposition this year.

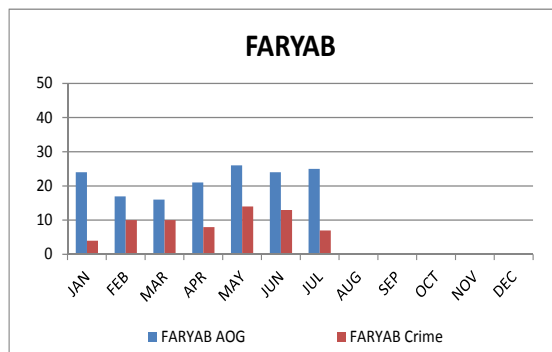
## FARYAB

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	3
This Report Period	0

In total Faryab recorded 31 incidents, meaning that the overall level of reported activity remained similar between June (50 incidents) and July (47) and that the peak reached in May with 72 incidents is unlikely to be surpassed this year. The highest rate of security incidents was reported this cycle from Qaysar and Pash-tunkot, with ten and nine recorded incidents respectively. Overall, 34% of the recorded incidents were AOG-initiated, a drop from the 51% recorded in June.

The kidnapping of the two IO-contracted truck drivers in Qaysar district reported during the PRP concluded with the second of the drivers released following negotiations led by local elders. The other driver escaped by himself a

few days after the kidnapping. Changing dynamics of the relationship between local communities and AOGs in Boraghan valley, an area in the south-east Qaysar, materialized in a specific threat of attack from a local AOG commander to an IO which operates in the area through contractors. The threat was specific to a particular relief assistance program and did not materialize in violence. Nonetheless, it illustrated an effective effort by AOG to exercise pressure on the communities by constraining their access to relief assistance. While it is true that purposeful targeting of NGOs by AOG in remains rare, the current context is worth monitoring as the AOG coercive



behaviour towards the communities has a potential to impact NGOs in the short term.

Such risks were also visible with a number of armed clashes that involved AOG and local communities or former commanders. The villagers of Khawaja Kenti, close to the Ghor-mach border, repelled two AOG attacks with ANSF assistance after having refused to pay taxes to the AOG. 11 AOG members were killed in the process. The other two incidents involved attacks against former commanders and their relatives in Pashtunkot, in a similar struggle for authority over the communities.

## JAWZJAN

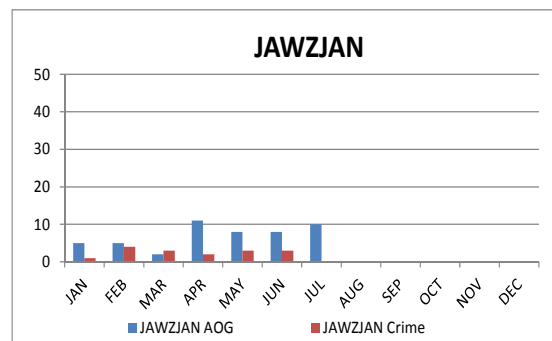
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

A steady, if relatively low, volume of incidents was recorded in the province throughout the period. All the ten reported incidents this cycle were related to the armed opposition, with eight of them directly initiated by AOG. After a temporary lull, five AOG incidents were reported from Qush Tepa and Darzab, an early indicator of resumed AOG activity.

In Mingajik, a village representative was killed by two AOG fighters with SAF while travelling on a local bus. The incident was indeed an extension of the conflict between AOGs and local communities. Since April, AOG killed five village elders and religious actors in the district.

ANSF discovered and disposed of an abandoned car rigged as a VBIED along the Mardyan-Aqcha road in the Puli Aqcha area of the Aqcha district. The set up of the VBIED was not complete at the time of the seizure, indicating that the portion of the road on which it was found was not meant to be its final target. This seizure was only the second IED incident recorded on this portion of the road in 2012 following a premature detonation in February.

Of note, there has been an absence of IED related incidents on the Shibirghan-Mazar section of the road this year, although four IED incidents were recorded in



the area last year, and the same amount in 2010. As to the overall IED trends this year, the current total of 15 IED blasts represents over one third of the overall AOG attacks in Jawzjan this year. The majority of these took place in Qush Tepa and Darzab and targeted the security forces, although a significant proportion (four out of 15) detonated prematurely, or during emplacement. On the other hand, 11 impacted the security forces causing 18 ANSF casualties (including one fatality) and killing one civilian.



## BALKH

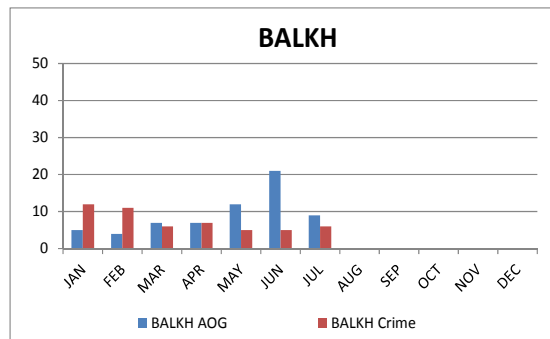
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	2
This Report Period	0

Two significant AOG-initiated attacks in Balkh district took place on the 26<sup>th</sup>. First, an ANSF-IMF patrol was ambushed in Khaspak village and in close succession an RCIED detonated at the entrance of the district ANP HQ. The ANP COP for District 4 of Mazar-e Sharif, who arrived with reinforcements and stopped at the ANP HQ before deploying to the site of the first ambush, was killed in the RCIED explosion.

The coordinated nature of the two attacks points to the level of sophistication of Balkh AOGs; and despite the low volume, it was noteworthy that three out of four AOG attacks this cycle happened in Balkh district. Since the beginning of the year AOG-initiated incidents have accounted for 16% of the overall volume of incidents in Balkh district, compared to 33% in Chahar Bolak and 63% in Chimtal. Balkh district directly

connects with the contested districts of Chimtal and Chahar Bolak, and the spillover of AOG activity into the adjacent areas in Balkh district will remain a risk for the remainder of the fighting season.

Nonetheless, the rest of the province maintained relatively low levels of security incidents. Although a seizure of a substantial amount of explosives from a passing private truck by NDS in Mazar-i Sharif led to unsubstantiated speculations regarding possible coordinated attacks, the city has yet to record a single AOG-initiated incident this year. That the area is used as an AOG transportation hub rather than being a target site itself is demonstrated by the fact that only 5 combined ANSF-IMF operations targeted AOG networks in the city thus far in 2012.



In urban areas, criminality represents a more tangible risk, including for the NGO community. Among four robberies recorded in the provincial capital this cycle, three cases featured criminal gangs intercepting and stealing motorcycles and a taxi in transit. The two motorcycle robberies took place in the city (PD 6 and 8) during the evening hours and initiated with SAF on the drivers, leaving one dead and another injured. The remaining case was a burglary targeting a private residence in Guzare Turkmenha. Another burglary was reported this cycle in Nahri Shahi where it impacted a residence occupied by a IO national member of staff and his brother. The case marked the first recorded robbery from residence in Nahri Shahi this year.

## TAKHAR

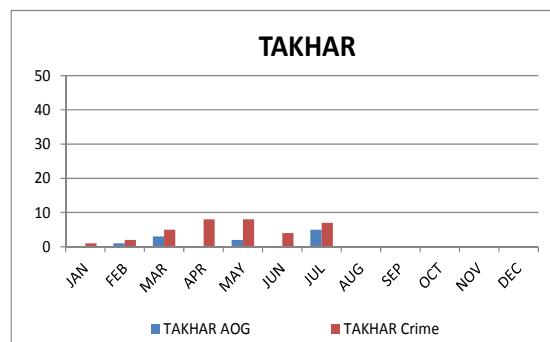
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

Overall, Takhar recorded a total of 12 incidents in the past fortnight, bringing the total for the month of July to 23. Although this marked an increase after June, the overall volume comprised less than a half of the number of incidents recorded in July 2011.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, an IED detonated against a vehicle carrying a Provincial Council member - and a prominent politician affiliated with the Junbish Milli - on the Taloqan road towards the airport, causing no casualties. This marked a second attempt against a

member of the Provincial Council this year and served as a reminder that although Takhar generally records low incident volumes, attacks against high-profile targets do occur with some regularity.

The ANP, NDS and IMF were active in Ishkamish district, a known AOG and ACG transit area where the security forces seized four RCIEDs during a search operation this cycle, and the IMF also arrested two AOG members in a separate night-raid. Although the district has so far



witnessed 14 AOG arrests this year, the RCIEDs were the first devices of this kind seized in the district this year. It is noteworthy that the seizure came one month after the NDS/ANP operation in Koka Bolaq, which yielded the seizure of a suicide vest and the arrest of another suspected AOG member.

# WESTERN REGION

## GHOR

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	9
This Report Period	1

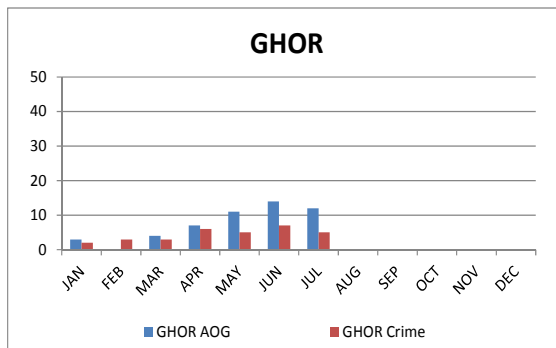
Two cases related to the wider aid community were recorded this cycle. An NGO in Chaghcharan experienced an intimidation effort by a local villager who fired a brief volley of SAF from a distance towards a group of NGO staff members. The incident concluded without any violence and was linked to the perpetrator's dissatisfaction with the location of a water distribution scheme provided by the NGO.

In Shahrak, AOG intercepted two commercial trucks carrying IO food items and ran their own distribution of the stolen items among the communities. Thus far in 2012, IOs have only been impacted on two occasions, with the

previous case consisting of threatening phone calls received by an IO employee in Chaghcharan in April.

The opposition considerably downscaled the volume of attacks in the second half of July. The month concluded with 12 AOG-initiated attacks against 14 in June, but only a single AOG-initiated incident (an accidental RCIED detonation killing five children in Taywara) took place since the beginning of Ramadan on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

The lull on the opposition side contrasted with a pro-active ANSF presence in the field. The ANSF reinforcements, which had arrived to the province in late



June, were mainly visible in Pasaband where they engaged in clearing operations including complex land and air assaults with IMF assistance. These resulted in a combined eight AOG casualties. Such a direct involvement of IMF is rather unusual in Ghor. Prior to this cycle, the province had for instance witnessed only five independent IMF airstrikes since the summer 2009. On two additional occasions had IMF supported ANSF clearing operations with air assets, in July 2009 (Shahrak) and May 2010 (Pasaband).

## FARAH

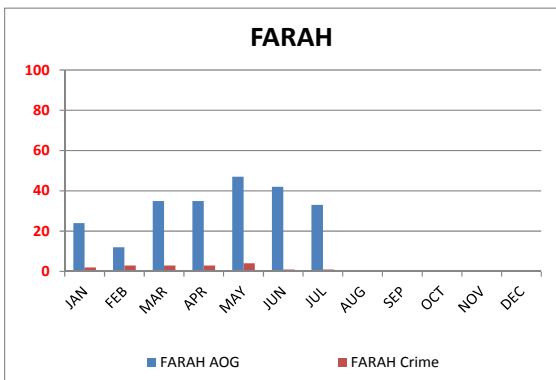
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

In Farah, the opposition remained active, although an operational shift from the central districts (Farah, Khaki Safed, Pusht Rod) towards Bala Buluk could be discerned on the AOG side.

Shiwan area in Bala Buluk featured heavily into AOG attack volumes with two IED detonations and two close range attacks resulting in numerous ANSF casualties. The area also witnessed a high-profile defection of 20 ANP members who likely joined the opposition with their weapons and three ANP vehicles. The ANSF countered with a clearing operation during which six of the deserted policemen were arrested.

In Bakwa, the opposition continued to focus on disrupting IMF supply convoys, with PSC escorts constituting the main targets for roadside IED attacks. In counterpoint, AOG activity in the capital remained limited to a single RCIED detonation which targeted an ANP convoy in front of the ANP HQ.

Last year, monthly AOG attack rates peaked in July and exhibited a significant 50% downturn in August, which coincided with Ramadan. Whereas a similar drop can be expected for the month of Ramadan this year, the current AOG attack volumes for 2012 are already 30% above the volumes for January-July last year.



In contrast, combined IMF-ANSF volumes for the same period increased by 15% only. In July alone, ANSF-initiated incidents decreased by 34% against the previous month, and the reported IMF combat activity remained minimal. A large number of provincial ANSF and IMF had relocated to Gulistan in the end of June, where they are currently focusing on establishing local defense initiatives around the district center, including the ALP.

## HERAT

On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, an ANP policeman shot and killed three IMF-contracted trainers and injured another, as well as their local interpreter, at the ANP regional training center in Guzara. The attack was the first of its kind in the West, but was not claimed by the opposition.

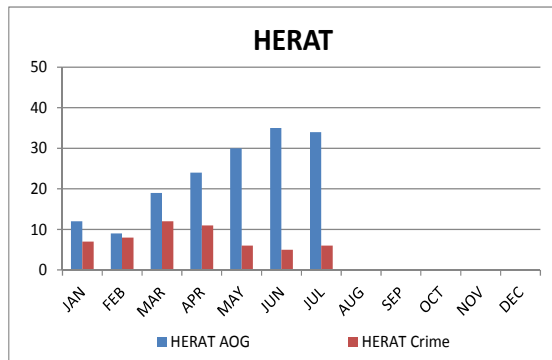
Overall, Herat hosted 43 AOG incidents this month, with July ending 23% above the AOG volumes recorded for the previous month. Whereas AOG activity normally falls during Ramadan in the wider western region, AOG also typically sustain a higher operational tempo during the same period within Herat city. This increase in AOG activity was visible during the period, where the opposition authored five attacks

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	5
This Report Period	0

in July, including three this cycle, matching the amount of incidents recorded from January to June. However, all three AOG-initiated incidents in the city this cycle were small-scale - two hand-grenade attacks and an RCIED detonation, all directed at ANP - and resulted in limited casualties.

Outside the capital, the only significant AOG attack was a lethal ambush on an ANP convoy along the airport road in Guzara. The attack resulted in the killing of the Head of ANP Counterterrorism Department of Guzara and another ANP policeman, while the District Chief of Police and another policemen received injuries.

Overall, the momentum in the city as well as in the suburban



districts remained with the ANSF, who authored 56% of all recorded incidents this month. Among these, an NDS search operation in PD 4 of Herat city yielded the arrest of two AOG members found in possession of a suicide vest on the 16th. The next day, six AOG members from Nimruz were arrested in PD 7 and an approx. 150 kg of explosives including IED components seized from them. Whereas such seizures demonstrate pervasive AOG interest in exploring security targets in the city, the arrests also proved the ANSF capability to disrupt AOG operations.

## BADGHIS

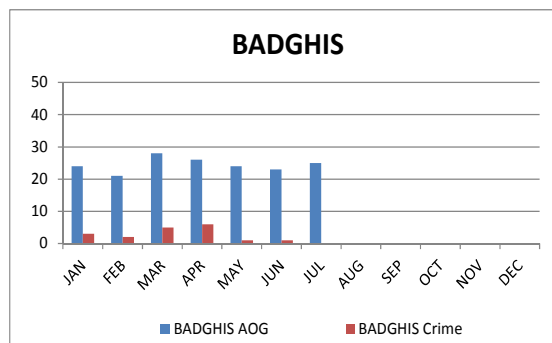
Ghormach witnessed another 'green-on-blue' incident one day after the escalation in Herat. This time, an ANA soldier injured two IMF members in the DAC area, and similarly to the aforementioned case, there was no evidence of an AOG involvement.

The volume of AOG incidents increased from 23 in June to 29 in July, although the second half of July accounted for only 11 cases. A sharp decline in AOG activity in Murghab since the beginning of Ramadan was a major contributing factor. Close range attacks remained the dominant AOG tactic, representing 85% of the total AOG incidents over this month. In contrast, there were only four IED detonations recorded, three of which prematurely exploded, killing 14 AOG

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	2
This Report Period	0

members instead. Further, four IED experts (two were foreigners) were killed by IMF operations, and another foreign IED expert as well as 11 AOG trainees died in a premature detonation. This illustrates that AOG are keen on boosting their local IED capabilities, although such efforts have had a limited impact so far this year.

Sizeable defections of AOG commanders in Qadis and Muqur were another defining factor this cycle; seven local AOG commanders and approximately 100 of their followers officially reconciled. These groups, mostly from areas surrounding the ring road, seem to have been attracted by the prospects of joining local defense initiatives, the ALP in par-



ticular. Expectations of financial gains linked to the upcoming rehabilitation of the ring road are also a strong incentive presented by the GOA, although the current GOA-IMF outreach to the communities will most likely be contested by the opposition. Early indicators were apparent with the abduction of two road construction workers from a project site in Muqur this cycle. It is likely that once the ring road rehabilitation project moves into the implementation phase after Ramadan, local AOG cadres will be motivated to explore the vulnerabilities of the project sites as well as to put pressure on the communities engaged in the construction process.

# EASTERN REGION

## NANGARHAR

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	15
This Report Period	0

In Jalalabad, an IO staff member received a threatening SMS accusing him of spying for the US and Afghan governments – the third incident of its kind in the year so far, none of which have consistently targeted IOs working in the same programmatic area.

Aside from this, the provincial capital was largely quiet, with only two other incidents, both in Zone 4. In the first one, a hand grenade was thrown against the perimeter of a private residence, resulting in minor structural damage. In the second, an unidentified gunman shot and killed a civilian. Whilst the motive behind these attacks remains unclear, there was no evidence of an AOG involvement. Despite the fact that criminal personal and business-related disputes remain common, the risks posed to NGOs based in the area are limited. Moreover, recorded incidents of criminality have decreased by 40 per cent in comparison to the same period in 2011.

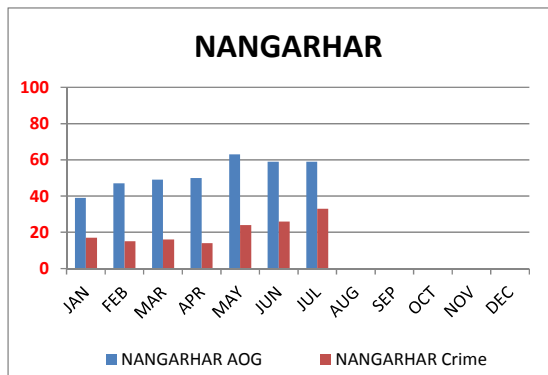
In line with long-standing trends, the beginning of Ramazan resulted in a marked decline in overall incident level volumes. AOG activity remained visible in particular in Bati Kot and Shinwar.

In Bati Kot, the armed opposition maintained pressure on ANSF targets with a total of four attacks. Of these, two were conducted along the district's stretch of the Torkham-Jalalabad highway, in the form of direct attacks against ANP checkpoints using heavy

weapons and SAF, and two were IED detonations against ANP vehicles travelling along secondary roads, the second of which killed two ANP officers. For every IED that detonated however, an equal number were discovered and safely defused by the security forces. In addition to these IED discoveries, the security forces also conducted two search operations, in which four suspected AOG members were arrested. Despite such success on ANSF side, the district remains heavily populated by AOG.

Whilst Bati Kot saw the highest number of AOG incidents overall, Shinwar recorded three significant direct attacks. These amounted to two heavy weapons and SAF attacks against the DAC and one SAF attack against an ANBP vehicle travelling along the Torkham-Jalalabad highway. The latter ambush resulted in the deaths of one ANBP officer and two AOG members.

Significant instances of road insecurity were also recorded elsewhere in the province. In Kuz Kunar, an AOG unit established an illegal check point on the Asadabad-Jalalabad highway targeting government workers in transit. The ANP responded, but by the time they arrived the AOG unit had escaped from the area. The incident occurred at 2300hrs and its timing reinforced the importance of limiting NGO road travel to within daylight hours,



when such incidents are much less likely to occur.

Meanwhile in Hisarak and neighbouring Sherzad, the armed opposition conducted two mass abductions in the space of as many days.

In the first instance, AOG members abducted five ANP officers early in the morning in the Khanjar area, whilst they were travelling towards the Hisarak DAC. The following day, five civilians en route to Hisarak to deliver medical supplies to a private clinic were abducted in the Hashemkhel area of Sherzad district at 1700hrs. Both districts have a strong AOG and ACG presence and targeted or opportunistic road-side attacks are not uncommon. In the previous reporting period, AOG members in Hisarak stopped a private vehicle at 1400hrs (an atypical time for such an incident to occur) and abducted an ANP security guard assigned to the district administrator, whilst in Sherzad, again in the Hashemkhel area, the armed opposition shot and killed the director of the district's Youth Department along with his driver.

Whilst in total, this represents a 56% decrease in comparison to the number of incidents of road insecurity in these areas during the same period in 2011 – which predominantly took the form of IED detonations against IMF convoys and direct attacks against ANP patrols – this is offset by the recent shift in favour of abductions, which were less frequent in the previous years.

## KUNAR

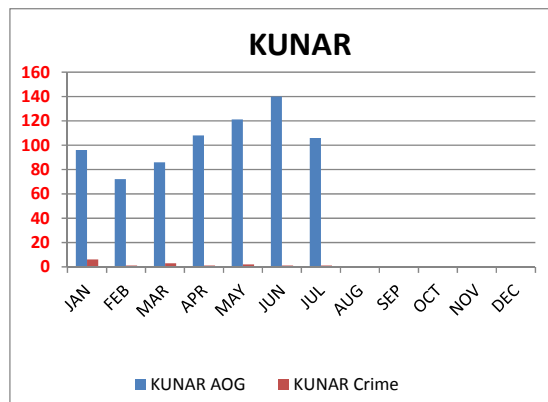
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

Kunar recorded the highest volume of AOG incidents in the East, although overall incident volumes were significantly lower than during the first half of the month, a lull which can be attributed to the beginning of Ramadan.

A prioritisation of AOG attacks against GOA targets was clearly discernible. In Wata Pur, seven out of nine attacks were directed at the district center and came after several IMF airstrikes on high-value targets during the previous cycle. Similarly to the neighbouring Nuristan, IMF airstrikes are an effective method to eliminate individual AOG commanders, but fall short of challenging local AOG access and control. In the absence of IMF ground support for the presence of the GOA, AOG cadres have been able to exert mounting pressure against government targets in

Kunar’s rural districts, consistent with their undiminished strength in Chapa Dara and the Pech valley. Chapa Dara itself is an instructive case in this respect. The strength of the armed opposition in the district has left the government unable to maintain a significant presence beyond the DAC, which came under attack a total of 25 times in 2011 and 15 times so far this year.

In the province as a whole, there have been a total of 102 attacks against GOA targets in the year so far, an increase of over 50 per cent in comparison to the same period in 2011. These attacks included the assassination of the head of Kunar's Peace and Reintegration Council with a BBIED in Asadabad, only the second BBIED attack ever recorded in the province. Further attacks on government actors can therefore



be expected, particularly in the light of a recent directive by the provincial shadow governor that the threshold for defining an acceptable attack on a GOA target be significantly lowered to include civilians with any proven association with the GOA.

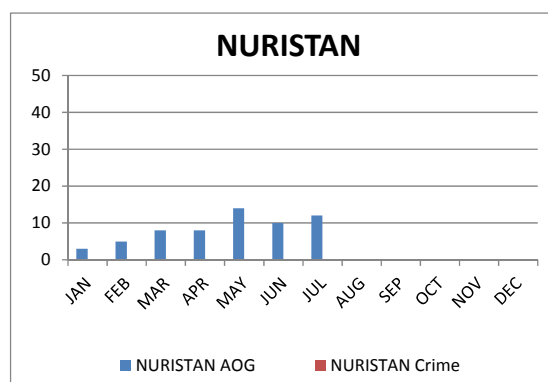
In Dangam, cross-border shelling in response to AOG infiltrations intensified during this cycle, killing four civilians and injuring 12 others on the Afghan side of the border. The intensification prompted members of the local community to stage a demonstration, blocking access to the DAC for two days. More importantly, local reports indicated that the situation generated significant internal displacements of civilians.

## NURISTAN

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

In Waygal, three AOG commanders along with the nephew of the provincial shadow governor were killed when the vehicle in which they were travelling was struck from the air by an IMF drone. A further three AOG commanders were killed in a near-identical strike the next day. The attacks marked the fifth and sixth documented airstrikes in Waygal this year, with the previous cases in the villages of Ansoz, Aranch and Algol resulting in a combined 18 AOG members killed. The AOG fatalities included seven commanders, one of whom was the IEA deputy provincial shadow

governor. The approach of the IMF to AOG-controlled districts such as Waygal – from which the IMF withdrew in 2009 – has been to focus upon utilising drones to strike high-value AOG targets in an aerial campaign akin to that conducted in Pakistan’s Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Despite the tactical efficiency of such strikes, they have done little to lessen the local political supremacy of the armed opposition and are at times seen as a de facto IMF resignation at helping GOA reach out to local communities.



AOG territorial supremacy was notably apparent in neighbouring Wama (a bellwether for AOG strength in Waygal), where AOG members laid ambush to a convoy carrying the governor of Nuristan – who was visiting the district to open a newly constructed road – both as it entered Wama and as it left it on the following day, killing one ANP officer.

## LAGHMAN

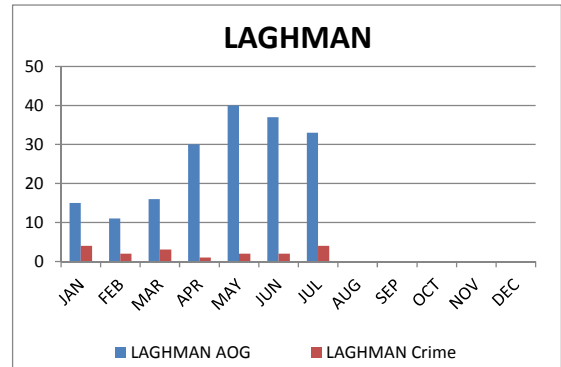
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	2
This Report Period	0

Although both overall and AOG-initiated incident levels fell in comparison to the previous period, the driving conflict-dynamic remained unchanged.

AOG cadres continued to exert pressure on the provincial capital using the surrounding districts, abandoned by the IMF since June, as staging areas. In Mehtarlam city itself, the opposition carried out a direct attack with heavy weapons and SAF against the city prison – a desirable target both because of its location at one of the main entrances to the city as well as due to the opportunity to release a number of AOG members being held there – and an IDF attack against the provincial governor’s palace, neither of which resulted in casualties.

In the wider district, AOG members attacked an ANP checkpoint and more significantly, intercepted two IMF-contracted supply trucks as they were passing through the Besram area, before setting them alight. Also in Mehtarlam, there were two cases of armed men entering private residences in the Baba Saheb camp area and shooting their occupants, leaving a total of three dead and one injured. In the second case, the gunmen gained entry by identifying themselves as ANP officers.

Bad Pakh saw the most significant clashes between the armed opposition and the security forces during the period, with AOG members attacking two separate ANA checkpoints on the same day,



resulting in a total of four AOG members being killed – one by an IMF airstrike called in to repel the second of these attacks. That the IMF continue to provide such support is an indication that even post-transition they will maintain an operational presence in the air.

Meanwhile in Alishing, an AOG unit attacked ALP officers in the Salaw area. Five AOG members were killed after the local community sided with the ALP officers – themselves local recruits – to repel the attack.

## KHOST

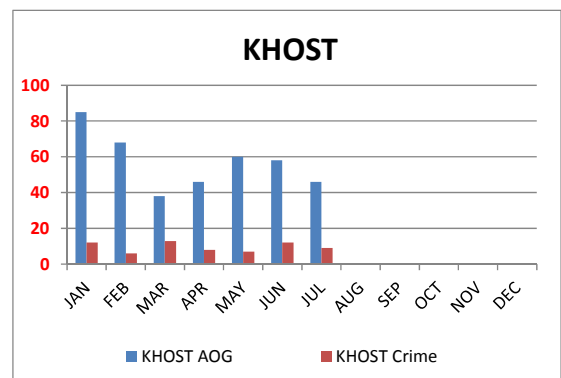
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	8
This Report Period	0

AOG-initiated incidents increased by 30 per cent over the previous period. Of these, the greatest proportion were direct SAF and RPG attacks upon the security forces, with just over 10 such incidents recorded. Despite this, the security forces sustained no fatalities. Indeed, the only fatalities resulting from direct attacks during the period were among the ranks of the armed opposition, with one AOG member killed in an ambush of an ANSF-IMF convoy in Gurbuz and a further five killed in an attack on an ANSF checkpoint in Jaji Maydan.

IDF incidents during the period were predominantly concentrated in Musa Khel, all of which were directed against the DAC. The district has recorded 32 attacks on the DAC in the year so far, including 19 separate IDF attacks. In comparison to the same period

in 2011, this represents a 33 per cent increase, illustrating a clear AOG effort to exert greater pressure on the GOA as well as a tactical shift in favour of IDF attacks over direct attacks against this particular target.

The provincial capital attracted the highest concentration of IED detonations, six in total, including one which detonated outside of a private clinic, injuring three ANP officers, one NDS member and two civilians. For every IED that detonated on-target, one was defused by the security forces. This was broadly reflective of the general dynamics in the province, with more IEDs being defused by the security forces than detonating on targets, and a total of six AOG members being killed in IMF airstrikes while attempting to replace the devices on roads.



ANSF/IMF maintained their momentum with a dozen of IED disposals and additional arrests of 26 suspected AOG members in a string of operations across the province, mostly concentrated in Mando Zayi, Gurbuz, Tere Zayi, and Sabari. Statistics for 2012 continue to indicate a heavy reliance of GOA and ANSF on IMF direct support in the province. Since the beginning of January, ANSF authored over 320 incidents related to the political conflict with two thirds of these representing IED discoveries alone. This contrasts with over 180 operations in which the IMF were the primary author, two thirds representing offensive and arrest operations and 16% dedicated to IED disposal.

# SOUTHERN REGION

## GHAZNI

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

AOG activity in Ghazni significantly increased in the last two weeks compared to the early July, and reached an impressive 87 opposition attacks for July alone (including late reporting). The trend was driven by a sharp increase in the number of close-range attacks. Nonetheless, a glance at the current data shows that the July volume also marked a 46% decrease compared to May when AOG activity peaked following the announcement of the Al Farooq operation.

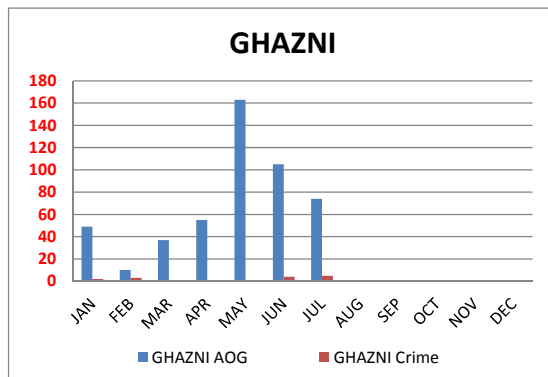
In the last two weeks Ghazni hosted at least 35 close-range assaults on IMF/ANSF patrols and posts across the province. During this reporting cycle Giro, Waghaz, Qarabagh, Dih Yak, Zana Khan and Rashidan saw AOG SAF attacks in the district centers, with multiple attacks reported against the Rashidan and Zana Khan DACs. The majority of these attacks were brief engagements meant to harass security forces rather than to inflict casualties. Yet, the ambush on an ANP food-supply vehicle in Qarabagh and two additional attacks in the same district and in Ghazni were significant, causing in total 6 ANP and 1 civilian casualty.

Besides AOG focus on conventional direct attacks, a concerted focus was placed on intimidation efforts, including assassinations and abductions. AOG selection of targets for these followed closely the Al Farooq operational announcement being directed at *"foreign invaders, their advisers, their*

*contractors, all those who help them militarily and in intelligence"*. After the killings of a prosecutor in Ghazni city and a civilian accused of supporting the ANSF in Dih Yak that had been recorded during the PRP, this cycle saw additional three killings of locals accused of collusion with ANSF/GOA in Ghazni district and Qarabagh. In addition, AOG also abducted two fathers of ANP members in Ajristan while an ANP staff member was abducted from his house and then executed in Ghazni. Lastly, the recovery of the corpse of a local working for IMF as a security guard could be ascribed to the same activity. The total of five targeted assassinations in July is noteworthy as the January-June period of this year featured in average two such incidents a month.

In the provincial capital, sporadic IED emplacement and direct attacks constituted the main components of AOG activity, although a visible spike in IDF attacks was also recorded. The series initiated in the night of 23 July when AOG fired three rockets towards the city, and continued with two IDF strikes at a later stage, one of them targeting the PRT area.

IDF attacks are indeed more typical for the rural districts in particular Muqur, Qarabagh, Andar and Gelan. So far this year, 50 IDF attacks occurred in the provinces, with over a half directed at GOA facilities in the district cen-



ters whereas less than a third targeted IMF bases. In Ghazni, the attacks usually remain inaccurate and are rarely lethal. The current casualty toll includes six civilians and one ANA member killed since the beginning of this year. For reference, IED activity caused a combined 24 civilian fatalities so far in 2012. Nonetheless, the indiscriminate nature of IDF strikes and the fact that the IDF activity typically peaks in the population centers during the summer months combine to form a tangible threat of civilian exposure.

ANSF/IMF operations were focused on Andar, Dih Yak, Gelan, Rashidan and Ghazni. This included a night time operation in Gelan which resulted in 13 AOG members killed. In addition to a seizure of several large ammunition caches across the province, two separate operations in Dih Yak and Ghazni districts concluded with the detention of 37 suspected AOG members.

The stand-off between local militias supported by former HIG cadres against IEA fighters continued this period in Andar with three comprehensive engagements and a number of small-scale inconclusive attacks. The more significant escalations took place in Khado Khel and Gandar areas as well as in Ahmad Khan and Zarin. A similar mobilization was also reported from Muqur, where one documented clash on the 29<sup>th</sup> resulted in the killing of two IEA fighters and the detention of an additional two by local militias.

## KANDAHAR

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

The opposition maintained the impressive operational tempo established in June and surpassed the ceiling of 100 AOG attacks a month, although a slight drop after the beginning of Ramadan could be discerned.

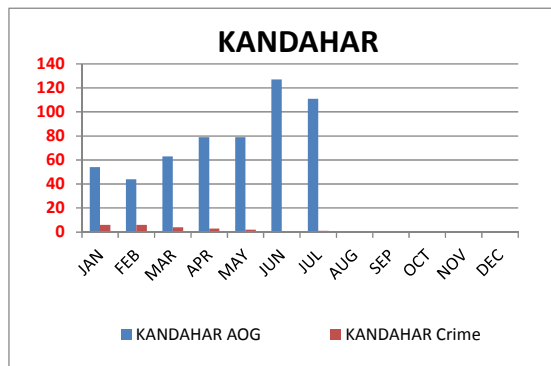
This cycle alone, AOG authored 69% of all recorded incidents, the large majority occurring in Zhari and Panjwayi although the opposition also remained active in Maywand, Miya Nishin and Kandahar city. IED emplacement continued to play an important role with 18 IED detonations recorded in the last fortnight. Despite the fact that IEDs are usually dedicated to ANSF-IMF targets, the AOG reliance on victim-operated devices frequently translates into significant civilian casualties. During this period, a roadside IED detonated on a Town Ace vehicle, killing five occupants and injuring another in the Rabat area of Spin Boldak, while other civilian casualties in IED strikes were reported from Maruf, Panjwayi and Shah Wali Kot.

Direct attacks remained another tactical method of choice, with 33 separate cases recorded mainly in Panjwayi, Zhari and Maywand. The majority of these were carried out against ANP posts and patrols, but ALP also featured in the targeting profile. An outlier case was recorded on the 19<sup>th</sup> on the ring road in Maywand where AOG targeted a large 38-truck convoy contracted by an IO. The

incident resulted only in minor damage but constituted the first direct attack involving an IO this year. Nevertheless, the size of the convoy and the fact it benefitted from an ANP security detail bring provide eventual insight as to the causative factors. The use of deception tactics to stage attacks on ANSF and ALP premises is a less frequent feature. At the very end of the previous period, an AOG unit wearing IMF fatigues overran an ALP post in Zhari and eliminated the entire unit, killing eight ALP members and injuring two.

Kandahar city did not see the continuation of the recent string of high-profile attacks—as of the writing this report—yet AOG activity manifested itself with IED emplacement in districts 7, 8 and 10 (disposed by ANSF) and with the continuing campaign of targeted killings. This reporting cycle, AOG ‘hit teams’ killed one ANP and wounded another in district 4 while another two ANP policemen were shot dead in district 9 and 1. In addition, a civilian, suspected of having links with GOA, sustained injuries in a targeted attack in district 4.

Overall, ANSF/IMF authored at least 15 operations in Zhari, Panjwayi, Maywand, Shah Wali Kot and Kandahar city. Noteworthy amongst these was the use of air assets reported from Shah Wali Kot, Panjwayi and Arghandab deployed to target AOG IED



teams, that resulted in 12 AOG members killed and another two wounded. The capital also experienced two incidents involving IO staff members, both linked to ANSF operations. Firstly, ANBP raided an IO warehouse and arrested an IO staff member on alleged charges of his involvement in AOG activity. Secondly, an ANP detail physically assaulted a group of civilians, including an off-duty IO staff, following a verbal argument in the vicinity of the Sarpoza prison in district 6.

Kandahar and Uruzgan experienced the formal security transition this reporting period. During a ceremony on the 18<sup>th</sup>, responsibilities over security matters in Kandahar city and in Dand, Daman and Arghandab districts were formally transferred from IMF to the GOA. Whereas the incident volumes in the three mentioned districts have remained relatively low this year, the involvement of the provincial capital in the transition process appears to be even more symbolic. ANSF including ANBP maintain a very visible presence in the capital, which nonetheless remains an important IMF command and control center as well as a logistical hub. In this regard, the current transition process confirms the current status quo rather than bringing any tangible changes to the security paradigm. A part of this landscape is the fact that AOG maintain their operational capability to conduct statement attacks on IMF-GOA targets in the population centers as illustrated during the previous reporting period.



## HELMAND

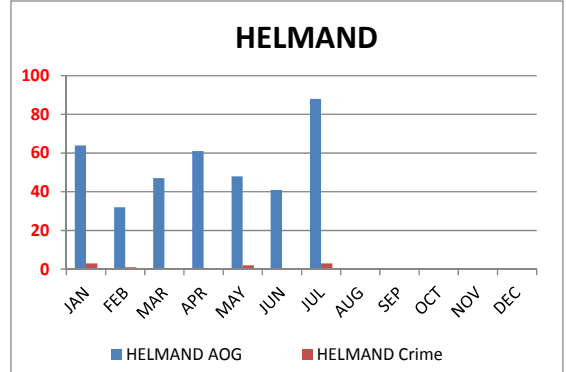
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

July experienced an important increase in the overall incident volumes in Helmand, largely driven by a spike in AOG activity. The opposition's monthly attack rate for July surpassed the previous peaks reached in January and April this year.

This cycle, AOG carried out nearly 30 direct attacks, mainly in Marja, Sangin, Musa Qala and Nad Ali. The latter district came to the fore with several large clashes opposing ANSF to AOG units. The most comprehensive of these occurred during the night of 17 July, when AOG launched an attack on an ANA post located in the DAC area. The ensuing firefight claimed the lives of nine ANA soldiers and seven AOG fighters, while an additional seven ANA soldiers and five AOG fighters sustained injuries.

Helmand also saw a large number

of IED attempts, including 23 detonations and 20 IED discoveries by ANSF/IMF. In the Bazaar area of Musa Qala, an IED fixed to a motorcycle detonated prematurely and wounded three civilians. In Sangin, another premature detonation killed two children inside a mosque. Civilians were also affected in IED incidents in Kajaki, Nawa-i-Barak Zayi and Lashkar Gah. In the district center of Sangin, a donkey-borne RCIED detonated against an ANCOP post with the animal-carrier remaining the only victim. IED activity was also visible in the provincial capital, which usually features only a small proportion of AOG attacks. This cycle, an IED detonated in the Karta-e Lagan area and another two devices, including a motorcycle mounted IED, were discov-



ered and defused in the city. The potential for further IED activity was highlighted with the seizure of a cache consisting of 12 IEDs in Mukhtar area. Completing the AOG portfolio in the capital, this cycle closed with two instances of AOG killing off-duty ANP officers.

Despite this seasonal increase, the opposition still staged less attacks in Helmand than in the neighboring Kandahar. Looking back into 2011, the current AOG attack rates for 2012 exhibit an 80% decrease on the equivalent period last year. With the province remaining heavily penetrated by AOG, the reduction in AOG activity this year seems to be a matter of choice rather than an obligation.

## ZABUL

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

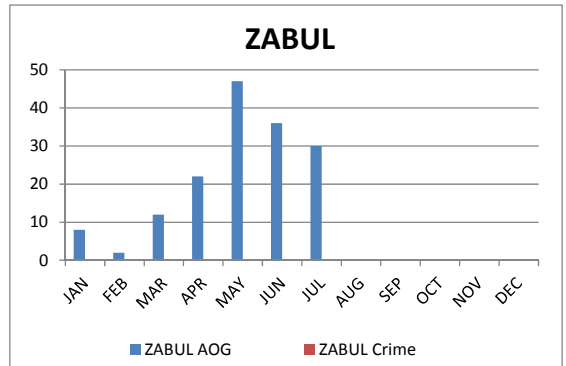
AOG activity exhibited a downwards trend this cycle. Conversely, ANSF-IMF displayed more activity and authored 60 % of all reported incidents.

The security forces were particularly active in Shahjoy, Qalat, Naw Bahar and Mizan districts where they displayed a mixture of large-scale clearing operations as well as targeted arrests of AOG members or supporters. During a targeted raid in Mizan district, IMF and ANP arrested two AOG members and seized two suicide vests alongside an assortment of ammunition.

In Shahjoy, targeted ANSF-IMF operations resulted in a dozen AOG fatalities and additional arrests of nine fighters.

Although limited in scale, IEDs continued to pose a threat. In Tora area of Qalat city, an IED hit an ANP vehicle, killing one ANP and injuring an additional three at the very end of the previous cycle; three days later, another ANA soldier was injured in an IED blast in Mizan.

The AOG intimidation campaign was another component of note. Two ANP policemen were killed



in Qalat district by an AOG mobile team whereas two civilians were also executed by AOG over accusations of supporting ANSF/IMF in Chinay and Pasani areas of Shahjoy.

Interestingly, Naw Baha saw the only IDF attack of this period, with five mortar rounds impacting in the vicinity of the DAC.

## URUZGAN

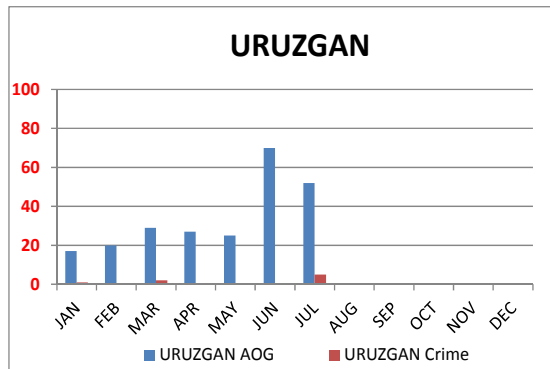
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

During an official ceremony on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July, Uruzgan became the second province in the South (after Nimroz) where ANSF took over formal security responsibilities from IMF. Yet, in contrast to Nimroz where the incident volumes remained low, Uruzgan continued to face a steady level of AOG activity.

IED deployment aimed at ANSF/IMF remained a key threat across the province and accounted for 42% of all AOG incidents. On 11 separate occasions, IED detonations resulted in ANSF casualties. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, a single RCIED strike killed six ANP policemen, including the ANP chief of the newly established Sarab district. Another notable IED incident occurred in Tirin Kot city as an RCIED killed a former provincial judge while the victim was

leaving a local mosque. The use of an explosive device on a ‘soft target’ denoted an outlier, although IED activity in general remained a key element of the opposition campaign, in particular in and around the capital. As of the end of this cycle, IED strikes constituted 62% of all AOG attacks initiated in the province since January. Every second device detonated in Tirin Kot (77 in total), followed by Dihrawud (27). Chahar Chino, Chora and Khas Uruzgan recorded 12-14 IED strikes each whereas Gizab experienced only 6 strikes thus far.

This cycle, AOG direct attacks increased in Tirin Kot, Char Chino and Khas Uruzgan, almost exclusively targeting ANP facilities. In the latter district, a prolonged firefight in Badatzi area



claimed lives of two ANP policemen and five AOG members and caused injuries to an additional four ANP. Three ANP members were also killed in three separate targeted attacks.

Manifested ANSF/IMF activity pertained mainly to the removal of IED devices. A noteworthy development occurred in Char Chino where a sizeable number of ALP members deserted their posts in Khwad and Sarab areas and likely joined the opposition. The district witnessed a slight increase of AOG attacks on ALP since the end of June, and it is likely that the program will remain in AOG orbit for the foreseeable future.

## PAKTIKA

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

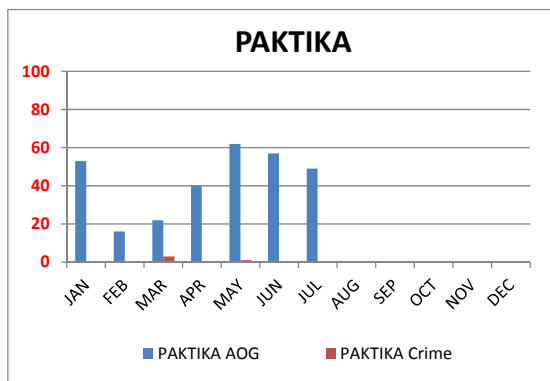
For the entire month of July, 100 security incidents were recorded in Paktika, 59 occurring this period alone - marking the highest combined incident volume since the beginning of this year and indicating that the conflict did not de-escalate during Ramadan.

AOG maintained an important attack rate but the momentum remained on the IMF/ANSF side this cycle. The security forces carried out a number of targeted operations including lethal airstrikes in Barmal (on three separate occasions) and in Gomal. In Barmal, IMF airstrikes resulted in the deaths of 33 AOG fighters. In Gomal, a comprehensive land and air assault killed 40 and injured 14 AOG fighters in a single operation. GOA and IMF out-

reach programs came to fruition in Sar Hawza district where a local AOG unit formally joined the APRP program.

Meanwhile, the AOG tactical portfolio remained driven by conventional close-range attacks. These were directed mainly against ANP/ALP posts and patrols along the main infiltration corridors as well as in the DAC areas of Yani Khel, Ziruk and Gayan.

The recent IMF operations in Uruzgan including an airstrike which killed over 40 AOG fighters in early July prompted an AOG retaliation in the form of an execution of a civilian over the accusation of supporting the IMF. AOG focus on ‘soft targets’ was



also demonstrated in Sharan and Yosuf Khel districts where the opposition fighters destroyed telecom poles.

Paktika remains a crucial infiltration corridor for the opposition, and AOG activities aimed at securing and maintaining access throughout the province, and reactive IMF-ANSF to prevent the infiltrations, will continue to dominate the security landscape in the province throughout the rest of the season. On a positive note, AOG-initiated attacks so far this year remain 63% down on the equivalent period last year.

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### MISSING THIS PERIOD:

ANSO did not provide analysis for the following areas:

- ➔ Bamyán, Daykundi, Panjshir, Sare Pul, Paktya, Nimroz

These areas will be included in subsequent reports. If you have any information that would help us better understand the dynamics, please contact your local ANSO office.

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ANSO REGIONAL DIVISIONS

### COMMON 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 deputised 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 Grenade / **SAF**-Small Arms Fire / **VBIED**-Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device / **PDO**-Private Development Organisation / **ALP**-Afghan Local Police / **LDI**-Local Defence Initiative / **IEA**-Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban) / **PSG**-Provincial Shadow Governor (IEA) / **DSG**-District Shadow Governor (IEA) / **PGM** - Pro-Government Militia / **APRP** - Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Program