

## Index

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Central Region  | 1-4   |
| Northern Region | 5-8   |
| Western Region  | 9-11  |
| Eastern Region  | 12-15 |
| Southern Region | 16-19 |
| ANSO Info Page  | 20    |

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Heavy civilian casualties in IED strikes in Nimroz and Kunduz**
- **Sustained AOG activity throughout Ramadan**
- **NGO staff members abducted and released in two separate incidents in Baghlan and Farah**
- **ANBP clash with Pakistan armed forces in Kunar**

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## COUNTRY SUMMARY

Incident reporting remained high during Ramadan, with a notable increase in targeted killings that is in line with AOG “economy of force” efforts, although it declined slightly in the final days as high profile attacks in population centers came to the fore (see Kunduz and Nimroz). Despite the sustained level of activities, the country is likely to see further increases - including high profile attacks - after Ramadan, making it likely that this fighting season will go later than that of 2011, even though overall incident volumes remain lower in sum.

In CENTRAL, the first half of August continued the notable absence of complex or spectacular attacks in Kabul after two separate NDS operations broke up AOG cells within the city, at least one of which would have had the capacity to launch a significant attack to end the ongoing lull. The ability of NDS to intercept operations was further displayed by the breaking up of a third cell in Parwan, with the only successful high profile attack in the region being an SVBIED detonation against an IMF base in Logar that caused a low number of casualties but no fatalities.

Civilian fatalities did occur in the NORTH, when a yet unclaimed RCIED detonated during the evening in a crowded market of Archi (Kunduz) with no obvious target identified. Targeted attacks against district level leadership were noted in Faryab, Jawzjan, Balkh, Takhar, and Badakhshan, along with an attack against an IO vehicle in Qaramqol district of Faryab, the second to occur in an area where a new AOG commander has become active. Baghlan witnessed one of three NGO incidents this

cycle, when an NGO staff member was abducted and released in a remote part of Andarab district.

The WEST also recorded the abduction and release of an NGO staff member in an AOG heavy portion of Farah. While targeted killings played an important role in Ghor and Badghis, an IED strike against an ANP checkpoint in Herat caused the highest number of civilian casualties, although the highest number of fatalities occurred when 13 ANP policemen were killed by an ANP policeman in Dilaram (Farah).

The EAST witnessed significant activity including three ANSF attacks on IMF, the final NGO related incident recorded this period - the disruption of a vehicle transiting NGO livestock through Laghman - targeted killings in Nangahar, Laghman, and Paktya, and a sustained fire-fight between Afghan and Pakistani armed forces in Dangam (Kunar). Asadabad in Kunar was also home to a BBIED strike as AOG activity around the city continued to increase.

In the single most casualty heavy incident this year, the SOUTH witnessed multiple BBIED strikes in Zaranj city of Nimroz, a province that has typically witnessed only a moderate volume of AOG activity. Kandahar, Helmand, and Ghazni maintained a high volume of security incidents, highlighted by an increase in targeted attacks against ANSF personnel in Kandahar and two “green on blue” incidents in Helmand that left seven IMF soldiers dead. In Uruzgan, a militia commander with ties to ANSF/IMF killed over 10 members of a rival’s community and remained at large.

# CENTRAL REGION

## KABUL

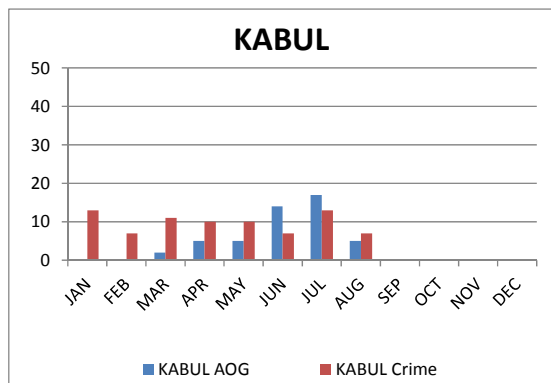
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| This Report Period | 0             |

The most important developments in the national capital’s security environment in the first half of August came in the form of two NDS operations to disrupt complex attack networks in different parts of the city. At 0200 hrs on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, NDS QRF were dispatched to surround four houses in the Butkhak area, south of Pule Charkhi in eastern Kabul, which the directorate had been monitoring. When dawn arrived, NDS forces forcibly entered the buildings and killed three AOG operatives without resistance, and a further two who briefly resisted with small arms fire. In all, five were killed with no arrests, while a large quantity of explosives and weaponry was also seized from the site, including a VBIED. Subsequent reports indicated that the NDS were in fact expecting to find a significantly larger group at the site, a fact consistent with the quantity of weaponry and equipment found at the compound. As such, the planned complex attack was likely to have engaged significant - if not multiple - targets across the city, and in this way, its disruption can be understood as a significant operation for the NDS. Nine days later on the 11<sup>th</sup>, an NDS QRF operation against a local hotel in PD 1 led to the detention of six AOG operatives, as well as the seizure of unconfirmed numbers of ANA uniforms, BBIED vests, and light and heavy weapons. One of the individuals was confirmed to be from a

neighbouring country, and the targets were announced to have been the residence of a GOA VIP, and/or the parliament. However, given the location of their forward position and the size of their cell, their objective was likely a single target in the downtown area, and thus on a smaller scale than the previous attempt – although substantial all the same.

With both of these NDS operations, and two previously in June and July, complex attacks have been absent from Kabul city since the beginning of May (exempting the Lake Qargha hotel siege on June 22<sup>nd</sup>) when a complex attack against an international residential compound on the Jalalabad Road, PD 9 was staged to mark the announcement of the opposition’s summer fighting season. The ability of security forces to disrupt attempts within the national capital places escalating reputational pressures on the armed opposition to launch such an attack in the late summer – in order to demonstrate their ongoing capability in this strategically important regard.

There are two implications of this. First, the armed opposition is likely to continue to attempt such attacks in the short term, with some potential for such attacks to be coordinated with the occurrence of national holidays such as Eid, Independence Day or Mas-soud Day. Second, if the opposition is unable to launch a success-



ful attack this summer, they could potentially extend their campaign later into the autumn. Regardless, this latter remains likely in comparison to 2011’s early draw down of AOG activities.

Likely targets remain governmental or military facilities in downtown Kabul – which could include a continuation of the opposition preference for storming a well-situated high-rise civilian building to attack nearby targets – as well as security force bases on the eastern and southern edges of the city. However, it is edifying for the NGO community to note that in the 34 major complex/suicide attacks that have taken place in Kabul since the summer of 2009, none have led to any NGO fatalities or casualties.

In other developments of note, two IED incidents targeting Ministry of Defense vehicles were recorded during the past fortnight. First, in Kart-e Naw, a magnetic IED attached to an ANA ranger detonated while its operator, a driver for the ministry, was inside his home; no casualties were sustained although the vehicle was destroyed. Second, in Paghman, an RCIED targeted an armoured vehicle bringing MOD employees to the ministry from Paghman on the main district road, as well as its ANP escort; however, it human error on the part of the trigger man appears to have caused the IED to instead strike a civilian bus, killing eight passengers, one of whom was coincidentally an ANA soldier, with the rest civilians.

## PANJSHIR

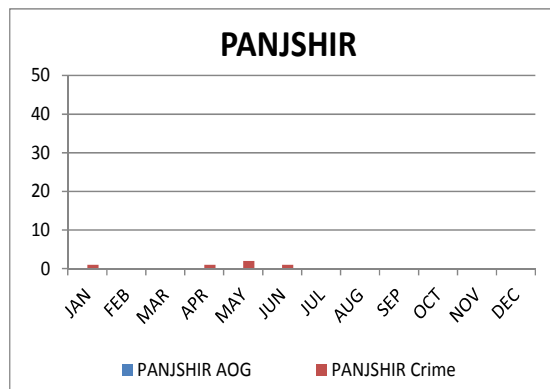
In just the second AOG-initiated incident in Panjshir this year, two rockets were fired at the ANP/NDS office in the Dara DAC area on August 9<sup>th</sup>, both missing their targets. This incident is the first kinetic manifestation of recently detected infiltration by a small armed opposition group into the east of the province from neighbouring Nuristan. The AOG commander responsible, who is a Dara local, was historically affiliated with Hezb-e Islami (and therefore very far outside the mainstream in such a Jamiat stronghold); consistent with this, the group’s motivations are understood to be primarily financial and local political in nature, rather than ideological in any meaningful sense. Indeed, in western Nuristan where the group appears to be normally based,

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HIG appears to have a questionable relationship with the IEA.

However, it is believed that the commander and his group have at least temporarily turned to work with the IEA, and this recent IDF incident – and his success in evading recent ANSF attempts to arrest him in Dara, where many members of his family continue to live – testifies to their intent to cultivate a kinetically active profile in this part of the province.

Indeed, the emergence of an active opposition group in this manner is indicative of a deeper truth about the Panjshir. It is the case that the province, created shortly after the fall of the Taliban government, has remained more insulated from the wider conflict than anywhere else in Afghanistan, with its elite focused on securing



high position in national institutions. However, if the consistent expansion of opposition power in all its neighbouring provinces – particularly Nuristan and Laghman in the east and Kapisa and Parwan to the south – continues into the future to creep up on the province’s borders, Panjshir’s “splendid isolation” may be evermore troublesome to maintain. That being said, given how hostile the Panjshir is to armed opposition activity of any kind, and given how well represented the province is in the national political and security elite, it is highly unlikely that any significant AOG-driven destabilization will take place there in the short or medium term.

## KAPISA

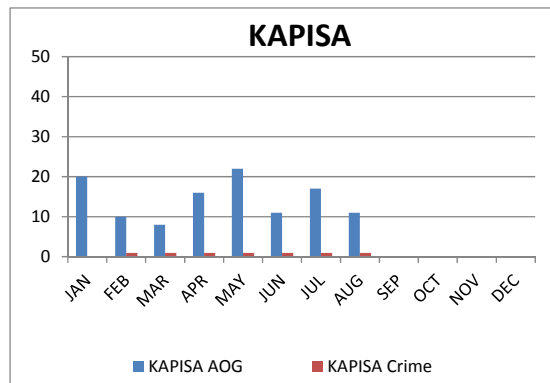
There has been a small but notable increase in opposition activity in Kapisa, focused in the centre of the contested Tagab, where a small number of IMF units continue to be present, having had the timeframe for their departure renegotiated by the provincial authorities; as such, small but operationally active IMF detachments will remain in Tagab and Nijrab for the coming three months, while air support will also remain available to the ANSF.

This moderate increase in insecurity in Tagab, returning to early summer levels after a short Ramadan downturn, does however demonstrate the challenges that the ANSF continue to face regardless of IMF presence in this part of the province. Indeed, not

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only were two policemen killed in separate attacks in Sherkhel and Qorghal – both close to the DAC on the main district road – but an IMF soldier was also killed in another AOG ambush in Qorghal on the 7<sup>th</sup>, which also injured an ANP policeman. However, later on the same day an ANSF/NDS operation took place in Qorghal that managed to kill two AOG fighters and seize their weapons – indicating the ability of the ANSF to inflict at least tactical blows on the armed opposition in AOG-dominated areas. But it remains unlikely that such tactical achievements are enough to undercut the strong strategic position of the opposition in Tagab.

The most notable incident else-



where in the province was an RCIED strike against an ANA convoy in Hisa-ye Dowum Kohistan, in an area normally lacking an active AOG operational presence; this is just the third AOG-initiated incident in the district since 2009, the previous two both taking the form of IEDs earlier this year, neither of which was successful in striking a target. In the event, which took place on the main district road in the Murad Bazaar area, just north of Mahmud Raqi, an ANA soldier was killed and three others injured, in what amounts to a notable escalation by the opposition.

## BAMYAN

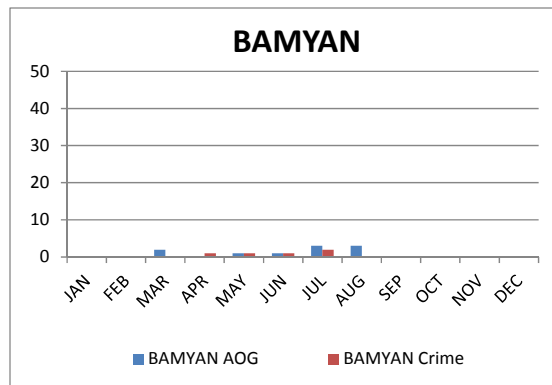
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Bamyan continued to see worrying signs of the growing strength of armed opposition forces in its northeast in the past fortnight, after recording further intensification of the kinetic targeting of its security forces on August 4<sup>th</sup>. While returning from an early morning patrol to Eshpushta, an NDS QRF convoy came under concerted attack by a large opposition cadre, pinning them down ultimately for 16 hours, and killing six QRF soldiers, as well as two IMF soldiers that arrived on the scene later as part of the IMF support force. A further 10 QRF and six IMF soldiers were injured, with AOG casualties remaining unclear.

Coming after a pattern of attacks on GOA and ANP targets in nearby areas in the previous two months, including two incidents that collectively killed nine police, this assault represented a significant further escalation. For one,

targeting the NDS QRF, the branch of the security forces that received the biggest slice of the funding during the process of security transition in summer 2011, as well as international forces, demonstrates both a confidence and tactical skill broadly absent from the opposition in the area in recent years – particularly given the more than half dozen casualties they managed to inflict, the highest death toll from a single incident in the province recorded by ANSO. Moreover, the size of the force and the quantity of weaponry needed to credibly sustain such a protracted firefight against a large number of well-trained security forces – as well as to carry away their casualties, as is normal during such large rural assaults – would have been considerable.

The following day, AOG fighters then attacked the much-pressured ANP CP at Eshpushta, which



represents the final security force post in Bamyan before crossing the district border, the attack was therefore symbolic in terms of demonstrating both ongoing AOG capability the day after such a large assault, and the final frontier of Bamyan security force authority.

When combined with substantial insecurity on Ghorband and Wardak access routes, these developments are a significant concern for Bamyan’s security environment; however, its center and west continue to be quiet, and much of the current insecurity is seasonal, with the late autumn and winter likely to see the opposition cadres involved in generating the present insecurity leaving their current areas of operation for home soil.

## PARWAN

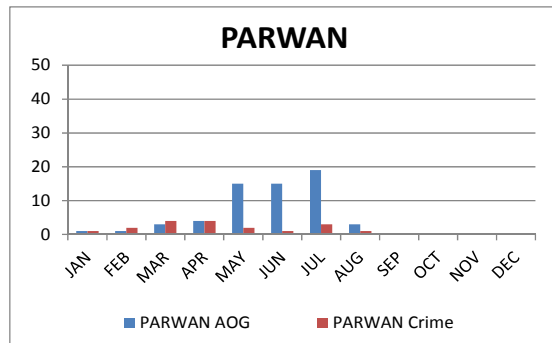
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Compared with recent periods, incident volumes were notably lower in Parwan over the past fortnight, experiencing only a small amount of insecurity on the Ghorband road, and two significant events elsewhere. Firstly, just two AOG operations were recorded along the Kabul-Bamyan highway, each taking the form of an attack on an ALP CP, with no fatalities in either incident; however, in one of the incidents a mid-level ALP commander was injured in the exchange of fire.

By contrast, in Jabal Saraj, an NDS QRF operation just outside the town on August 4<sup>th</sup> led to a

firefight between the QRF and an armed opposition cell staged in a local house, in which one NDS soldier was killed and seven opposition fighters were arrested, alongside weapons and ANA uniforms – in what was clearly planned to be a significant (albeit non-suicide) attack on a government or security force target.

Also, early the morning of the same day in Bagram, an AOG cadre opened fire on a local vehicle travelling to Mahmud Raqi for goods, killing six civilians – having mistakenly identified the passengers as ALP policemen. This sort



of incident is highly unusual, and comes during the same fortnight of a number of other AOG operations across the central region that led to significant civilian fatalities; however, local AOG cadres such as the one involved in the above incident have usually appeared relatively careful to avoid intentionally killing civilians, and such incidents as the one above can be understood to be strong outliers to the standard conflict parameters in the region.



## LOGAR

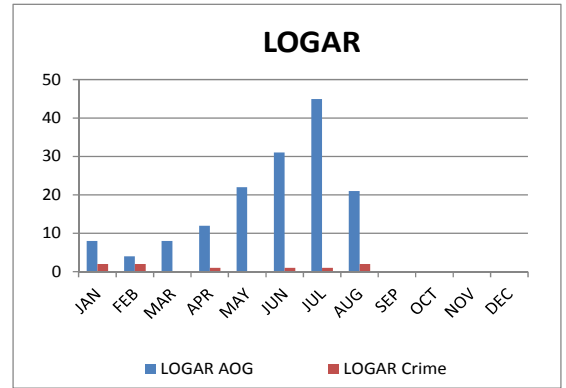
As with the previous period, Logar experienced a further SVBIED operation against an IMF base, this time in the Padkhwana Shana area roughly five kilometers south of Puli Alam town on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The vehicle used was a large truck, similar to other SVBIEDs in the southeastern region over the past two years; the quantity of explosives that can be packed into such a large vehicle was amply demonstrated by the blast, which demolished much of the perimeter of the base. However, as with the previous SVBIED in Baraki Barak, there was a relatively low number of casualties, in this instance the injury of 11 local civilian employees and two IMF soldiers. Such large attacks are being used by the southeastern AOG leadership to mask an overall drop in kinetic activity. However, as

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 5             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

IMF withdrawal occurs, they are busy actively increasing their socio-political authority in rural areas, which remain their most natural constituencies.

Also in Puli Alam district, a number of IEDs were targeted at ANSF across the district, focused in the main town and in the Porak/Kolangar bazaar area; most notably, a pressure plate IED was accidentally detonated by a local on a secondary road just off the main Puli Alam bazaar, killing him and injuring two other civilians.

In Charkh, further evidence of the ability of the opposition was manifest in the mass abduction of nine local civilian employees of the IMF facility in the district; who were detained while travelling on the main district road in the Nawshar area. Three of the nine



were executed the same day, with the rest remaining in custody at the time of writing. There was also a single attack on the district ANP HQ late on the 7<sup>th</sup>, comparable to an attack on the similarly encircled Kharwar DAC that occurred on the same night.

For the security forces, IMF activity was focused on Baraki Barak, where an airstrike killed seven AOG fighters in Lachikhel, while a clearing operation in Alozai killed one fighter and saw the arrest of six others. In Puli Alam, ANP and ANA conducted an operation in Babus, killing four, while ANP intercepted an AOG member driving a stolen car in the Abazak area, shooting and killing him.

## WARDAK

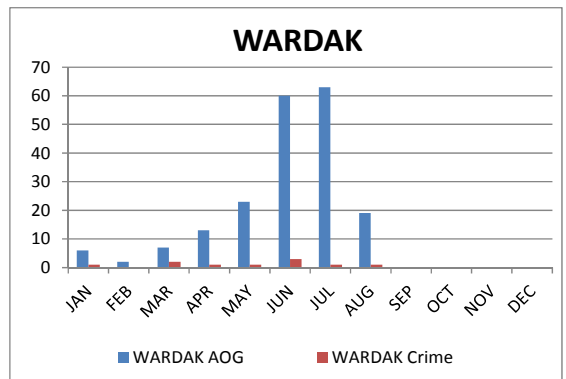
Overall incident volumes remained stable in Wardak, exhibiting little variance from July levels; however, there were some notable shifts in focus. Most particularly this was seen in a significant decrease in insecurity along the highway in Nirkh and Maidan Shahr, which saw a near total absence of the IED and SAF incidents that had been so prevalent up to this point; the insecurity that did occur concentrated on Saydabad, where PSC convoys absorbed the bulk of the casualties, seeing six guards killed in two separate incidents. Remaining incidents targeted ANSF convoys and fuel tankers, with no fatalities sustained.

By contrast in Nirkh, insecurity primarily took the form of IED incidents on secondary roads, but

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 3             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

the most significant incident was the targeted killing of a local HIG commander, part of the ongoing feuding between IEA and HIG cadres there; the SAF ambush took place in Khan Jankhel, while the following day members of his family were targeted with an IED in the same area, killing one – in what was likely to be a clear warning sign to other HIG leaders.

Jalrez saw a further intensification of its conflict in the past fortnight. After the IMF airstrike that killed five AOG members on July 31<sup>st</sup>, and a number of ANSF clearing operations shortly before that, it could have been expected that AOG cadres in the area would have chosen to engage in a tactical pause. In fact, they stepped up



their activities in the wake of these operations; most significantly, on the 8<sup>th</sup> they abducted two ALP policeman and an ANA soldier in the Zaywalat area, killing a policeman and the soldier shortly after, and keeping the remaining policeman in custody. They also staged ambushes of ANP, ANA and IMF convoys on the main district road during the period, inflicting some casualties but no fatalities. This insecurity will likely continue into the Autumn, partly because the strategic AOG objective of constricting access to Bamyan is focused on this district.

# NORTHERN REGION

## KUNDUZ

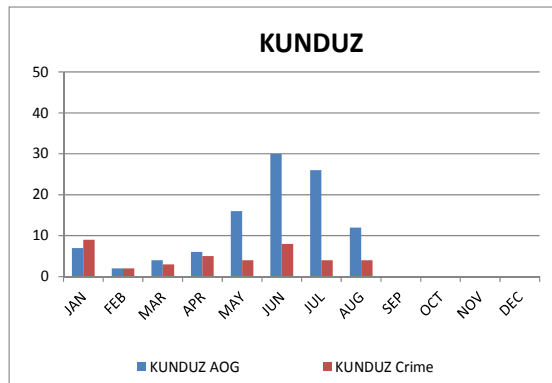
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| Year to Date       | 1             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

The most significant incident of this cycle took place on 14 August, when an RCIED attached to a motorbike exploded in the middle of a busy market in the Archi district center. The explosion incurred the highest number of civilian casualties in Kunduz this year, at 13 confirmed killed and 35 injured, and was second region wide only to the BBIED attack against the wedding in Samangan in July that killed 23 and injured 65. The apparent lack of any known ANSF, IMF or GOA target in the area marks the incident as a strong outlier that runs counter to the observed AOG targeting patterns in the North. Further to this, no group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, indicating that if there was a decision

to target civilians, it is not openly sanctioned by AOG leadership.

Kunduz district and Chahar Dara, both traditional sources of insecurity, accounted for the largest number of security incidents this cycle - with nine and ten respectively - however, AOG-initiated incidents were also recorded in Archi prior to the explosion (6 total), all targeting ANP and ALP. In a further indication that high-profile attacks in the Northern districts of the province may be on the rise, ALP killed a suicide bomber as he was approaching a checkpoint in Imam Sahib at the end of the reporting period on 15 August, a day after the attack in Archi.

Lastly, a school construction site



was attacked with RPGs in Khanabad after the private construction company contracted by a GOA office failed to pay religious taxes to a local AOG. The incident was another demonstration of the continuing pressure being put on local populations in the district and throughout the region at large.

In all, Kunduz recorded a 17% increase in the rate of reported incidents compared to the PRP. However, similar to Baghlan province, ANSF and IMF continue to put pressure on AOGs in the province, initiating 44% of the total incident volume for the period.

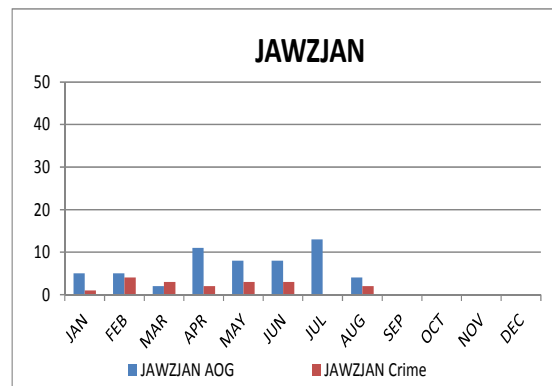
## JAWZJAN

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The province recorded a 45% decrease in reported activity compared to the PRP, with only six incidents reported in five districts. Four AOG-initiated incidents included three RCIED detonations, one of which took place on the outskirts of Shibirghan city at 0900 against a passing IMF convoy, and another failed to hit the passing vehicle of the Mingajik district governor on the Mingajik-Aqcha road. The latter explosion was the second attack on a district governor that day, after a similar incident took place in the Dawlatabad (Balkh) district center an hour earlier. Overall, none of the three RCIEDs that detonated in

Jawzjan hit their target, nor did they cause damage or casualties.

Due to the downturn in fighting in Darzab and Qush Tapa districts - both traditional pockets of AOG activity - the rate of incident reporting in these districts is now comparable to that of the previously calm Mingajik. Since the beginning of May, Mingajik has recorded four AOG-initiated incidents, the same as Qush Tapa and one less than Darzab. However, while Darzab and Qush Tapa continue to target "hard targets," including an attack against ALP checkpoints in Qush Tapa and an RCIED detonation against an



ANP vehicle in Darzab this cycle, in contrast, only one AOG-initiated incident in Mingajik since the beginning of the year has targeted the ANSF, with - besides the current incident - the other two targeting civilians. The decreased activity in Darzab and Qush Tapa and increase in Mingajik is likely the result of ANSF/IMF focus on the prior two (and lack of focus on Mingajik) combined with possible spill over of AOG activity from Balkh and Sar-e Pul.

## BALKH

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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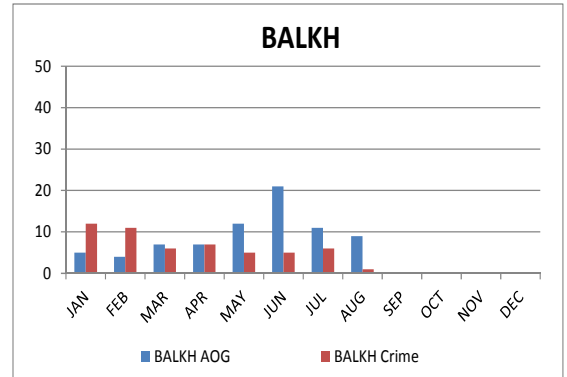
The end of this cycle saw the first recorded IED detonation in Mazar-i Sharif this year occur along a secondary road and cause no injuries. A second IED was also discovered in the area attached to an abandoned bike. The two IEDs were most likely intended to target the ANP who frequently use the road in question. It should be noted that although the two IEDs were placed within the city limits, they were outside of the city's security perimeter, in an area that is infrequently patrolled and relatively accessible from Balkh district.

The incident conforms to the trend of highly-visible attacks being staged in previously calm districts in western parts of the province, as AOGs are being pushed out of Chimtal and Chahar Bolak by frequent ANSF and IMF oper-

ations. Eight ANSF-initiated incidents were recorded in Chimtal district during this reporting period alone, resulting in the removal of six IEDs and arrests of 13 AOG members and a close relative of an influential AOG commander.

In another incident signalling the relocation of AOGs beyond traditional hotspots, the vehicle of the Dawlatabad district governor was targeted by an IED in the district center, killing one civilian and injuring two. The attack was one of four that occurred against district governors in the North this cycle, and took place on the same day as a similar incident in neighbouring Jawzjan.

Besides attacks against ANSF and GOA officials, AOGs have also been putting pressure on civilian



populations in Balkh. This was evident in an incident where an outspoken and publicly active headmistress of a local school was killed inside her own house after having received numerous threats. Further to this, in Dawlatabad a grenade was thrown into the residence of another headmaster, injuring his son, and numerous teachers have received demands to turn over part of their salary to AOGs as a religious tax. Incidents of this type point to an effort on the part of AOGs to establish their presence in areas where their influence may be somewhat weaker, and where they feel that threats against local populations must be accompanied by violent intimidation.

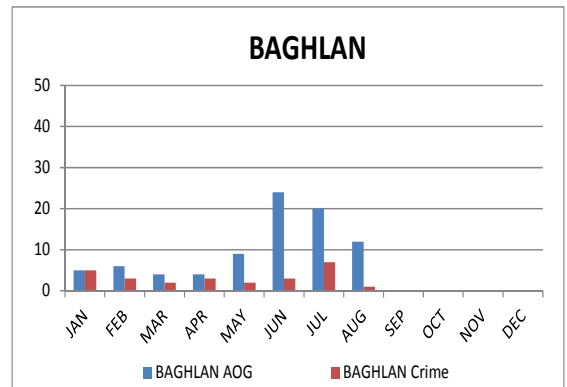
## BAGHLAN

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 3             |
| This Report Period | 1             |

In the only NGO incident of the reporting period, an INGO national staff member was abducted while travelling by himself in a remote area on the border between Andarab and Dushi districts on 5 August. He was taken by four armed men, who were identified by the local community as an AOG that occasionally visits the area. The man was let go the following morning after a delegation from his home village came to ask for his release. The incident marks the first abduction recorded in the area and the first NGO abduction recorded in Baghlan this year.

Overall, the province recorded 29 incidents during the first two weeks of August, which marks a 16% increase from the PRP.

ANSF and IMF continued to exercise substantial pressure on AOGs in Puli Khumri and Baghlani Jadid, where a combined total of 11 ANSF/IMF-initiated incidents took place. In Puli Khumri only one AOG-initiated incident was recorded, however in Baghlani Jadid AOGs continued to be active along the Puli-Khumri - Kunduz road, where four RCIEDs detonated against ANP vehicles in Fabrika and Charshanbe Tapa areas. The targeting pattern on the main road remains consistently focused on the ANP, however the timing of the attacks has been shifting into daytime hours, with one attack occurring at 1130 and another at 1600.



Tala wa Barfak recorded the first attack against the DAC since 2010, when four RPG rockets were fired towards the center (but impacted in an open area) on 11 August. The incident conformed to the trend observed across the Northern Region throughout the cycle, where high-profile targets such as DACs and district governors were attacked in districts with known AOG presence, but low volumes of recorded incidents. In context, an RPG attack against the DAC demonstrates AOG presence while requiring a relatively low level of effort.

## FARYAB

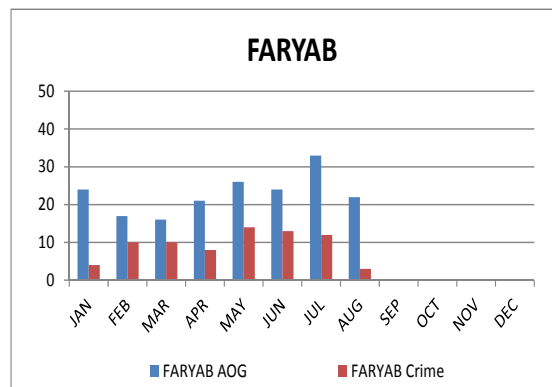
For the second time since the beginning of July, an IO convoy was targeted in the Alti Bolak area of Qaramqol district on 2 August, when an RCIED exploded in front of the lead vehicle on the Maymana-Shibirghan road. The previous attack on 8 July, a SAF ambush, took place off the main road in the same area. The attacks demonstrate an increased targeting of high profile vehicles - including those of IOs - with almost all the previous incidents on the Qaramqol portion of the road having targeted ANSF and GOA elements, as low-profile vehicles continue to pass through the area uninhibited. Anecdotal reporting suggests that the increased attacks are likely the work of a new AOG commander in this area who may be trying to establish a name for himself.

The number of AOG-initiated

|                    | NGO Incidents |
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incidents rose by 13% compared to the PRP - putting August on pace to record the most AOG activity of any month this year - and included four attacks against ANP checkpoints and seven against ANP patrols.

The sustained level of AOG activity was partly due to an increase in incident reporting in the north of the province, where seven AOG-initiated incidents were recorded in Qurghan, Qaramqol and Andkhoy. The incidents included a noon attack against an ANP checkpoint in Andkhoy that left two ANP policemen dead on 8 August and a hand grenade thrown at the vehicle of the Qurghan district governor on 11 August. In comparison, the three districts recorded only two AOG-initiated incidents altogether in June and July.



AOGs also continued to exercise pressure on local communities through targeted killings. The former district governor of Almar survived a SAF attack in Maymana, a female employed by the CIP project was killed inside her house in Dawlatabad, and a civilian was killed in Almar. AOG-initiated attacks against villages also continued in Qaysar, where an attack against Hazara Qala village was repelled with ANP and ALP assistance after a six hour long fire-fight.

Amongst this, ANSF appeared relatively passive across the entire province, with no ANSF-initiated incidents recorded. Even allowing for late reporting, this is a significant drop in activity in comparison to the 14 recorded in July.

## BADAKHSHAN

During the first two weeks of August 14 incidents were reported in Badakhshan, a 27% increase over the PRP. The seven recorded AOG-initiated incidents took place in five districts, indicating a spread of AOG activity from Warduj, one of the centers of AOG presence in Badakhshan, further across the province.

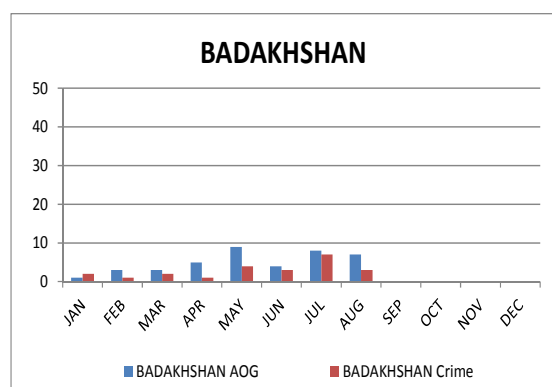
Three of the recorded AOG-initiated incidents took place in Arghanj Khwa, a previously calm district that recorded only one AOG-initiated incident in 2012 prior to this cycle. The incidents included an attack on the DAC in the form of three RPGs that impacted in an open area, and ambushes against an ANP patrol and a vehicle carrying the Shignan district governor on 8 and 14 August

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 6             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

in the same area on the Arghanj-Khwa—Shighnan road. The latter SAF ambush marked the fourth and the final attack on a district governor recorded during this cycle in the Northern Region, and killed the district governor along with three other passengers.

The DAC in Jurm district also saw an attack this period when an RPG was fired at the ANP HQ on 6 August.

Criminality continued to be of concern in Fayzabad city, where an armed confrontation between a relative of a local VIP and two bodyguards of the provincial COP developed into a demand for the dismissal of the COP by the VIP and his supporters. The resulting conflict between the two was



eventually mediated by high-ranking officials of the political party that both the VIP and the COP belong to, but on 11 August a peaceful demonstration protesting the inability of the police to reduce the crime rate in the city marched to the provincial governor's office nonetheless. A number of criminal incidents in Faryzabad have been accredited to interpersonal disputes initiated by local VIPs and their relatives, and the ANP often does not involve itself in such incidents, contributing to the narrative that they are unable to properly operate.



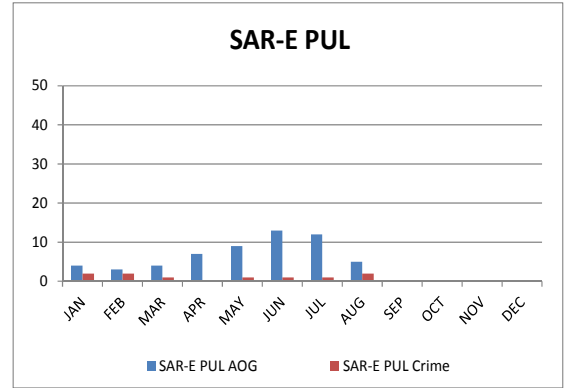
## SAR-E PUL

The province maintained a similar level of incident reporting to the previous fortnight, with nine incidents recorded. Two thirds of those incidents took place in Sari Pul district, which has this year been the focal point of AOG activity, and where such activity has been steadily increasing since the drop that followed the attack on the prison in Sar-e Pul city on 7 June.

Intimidation campaigns featured prominently, and out of the five AOG-initiated incidents in the district, two consisted of evening attacks against locals inside their homes. In the first incident, a

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

head of the local CDC was abducted from his house with his body returned to the villagers the following day, while in the other, the father of an ALP member was killed during a home invasion. A second killing of a CDC head also took place in Gosfandi district, when the CDC head and another elder were shot at a hotel together with the owner. Unlike in Sari Pul, where intimidation of the civilian population has been reported with some regularity, AOG presence had not been recorded in Gosfandi in recent months, and according to local accounts the



CDC head in question had a number of interpersonal disputes in the area, making it likely that his death was a result of an ACG targeted killing.

The main road between Sari Pul and Shibirghan did not record any incidents this period, with ANSF forces deployed along the road and maintaining a high defensive posture.

## TAKHAR

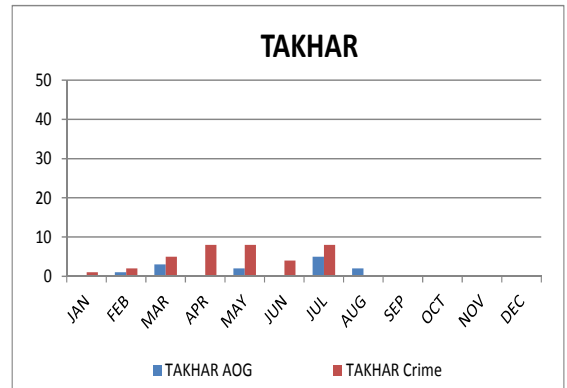
Takhar recorded no incidents over the first eight days of the reporting period, a silence which was broken by an RCIED detonation against the vehicle of a former jihadi commander on 9 August.

Ishkamish, a district with known AOG presence but usually low volumes of incident reporting, accounted for three out of four incidents recorded in the province this cycle. The most significant of these was an RCIED detonation against a vehicle that carried the district Mayor and four other passengers on 13 August. The explosion destroyed the vehicle and

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

killed all of the occupants on the spot.

The attack marks an outlier in Ishkamish, where only two AOG-initiated incidents were recorded prior to this cycle in 2012. However, it was one of the five attacks on high-ranking district-level officials recorded in the Northern region during this cycle, in which two out of the five targeted officials were killed. It is notable that amongst the higher profile attacks this cycle (including those on district governors and the RCIED detonation in Kunduz), most of



them occurred in areas with a known AOG presence, but relatively low volumes of sustained AOG activity - like Ishkamish - suggesting a temporary preference towards somewhat softer target areas in areas with less active ANSF/IMF presence (ie: Archi in Kunduz, Mingajik in Jawzjan, Dawlatabad in Balkh).

**EID MUBARAK:** ANSO would like to wish everyone in the NGO community and their families Eid Mubarak.

# WESTERN REGION

## GHOR

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

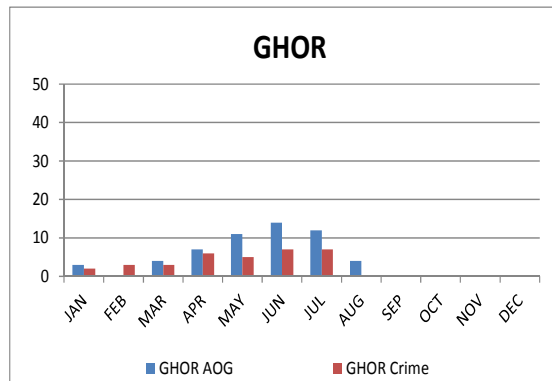
While the overall volume of security incidents recorded in the province remained low this period, a notable three of the four AOG authored incidents to occur were related to targeted killings that involved district level or above GOA/ANSF officials. In Chaghcharan, an RCIED detonation killed a Provincial Council member as he was in transit by car. Another RCIED explosion hit the district COP as he was on foot in the Charsada DAC (resulting in his death), and in the last instance, AOG attacked the private residence of the Saghar district COP resulting in injuries to one ANP policeman.

While conflicting reports exist as to the involvement of a local powerbroker and a tribal/interpersonal dispute in the first of these - suggesting the potential for increased tensions between the two conflicting groups - the use of RCIEDs by AOGs against ANSF/GOA targets remains consistent with regional and countrywide trends, and all three are assessed as likely AOG driven. In fact, AOG targeted killings of provincial/district level leadership has been on the increase, with seven such incidents recorded thus far this year, as compared to only two witnessed through the

middle of August in 2011. Speaking to this increase, four cases have now occurred over the most recent two reporting cycles, and tactically, of the seven total, six have involved the use of RCIEDs.

While the total volume of targeted killings still remains a relatively unsubstantial percentage of provincial AOG operations, it is reasonable to assume that such incidents will continue or increase in the near future as part of the AOG movement towards ‘economy of force’ measures, especially in remote areas of the province in the east (Dawlat Yar) and the west (Saghar, Tulak and Shahrak) - where AOGs have a limited presence - as well as in the north, where AOG influence has recently weakened due to relatively new changes in the local dynamics (Charsada and the north of Chaghcharan - see below).

Charsada – the AOG stronghold in the northern enclave – experienced a series of significant events over the past two months that has diminished AOG presence/leadership, and thus could potentially shift their tactical preferences towards more asymmetric tactics, particularly the use of RCIEDs. On 09 June, the District Shadow Governor along with



his three bodyguards were killed during an ANP operation, and the following month (01 July), ANP arrested another influential local AOG commander and six other AOG members in Sakhi Rahmani. Perhaps most critically, AOG lost a major access route from the south through Murghab Valley since 02 July, when an armed clash occurred between a prominent local commander and another local AOG cadre from the valley.

Further adding to the above, ANSF has recently mobilized a large deployment to Chaghcharan while also mounting pressure on the southern part of Charsada (where ANSF conducted a clearing operation in Khafak and Qondagh areas on 08 July). AOG ranks were further depleted when 12 AOG members (including their commander) joined the APRP this cycle. While the low level of IED activity in Charsada (in total this year there has been only one effective RCIED detonation and two insignificant IED incidents) makes it too early to determine whether such tactics will increase, the above places a clear pressure on AOGs to conduct operations with a significantly diminished presence, and as such, may limit their use of close range attacks.

**NOTICE:** The graphs provided in the report are accurate as of the 15th of August, 2012.

## HERAT

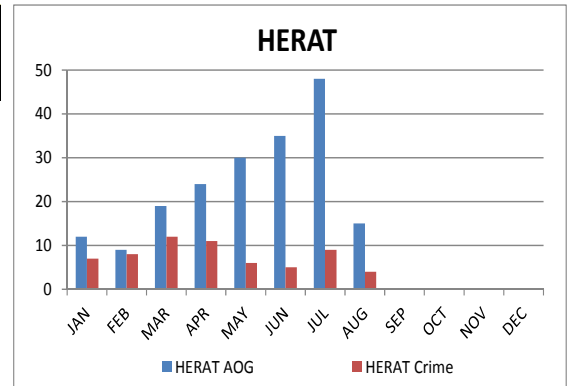
|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 5             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

Herat city experienced an RCIED explosion which involved a significant number of local civilian casualties. The device, which was attached to a bicycle, detonated in the immediate vicinity of an ANP check post (PD2) and resulted in at least 15 civilians and two ANP policemen sustaining injuries. Although this suggests that the civilians were collaterally involved (rather than targeted), it demonstrates a willingness to incur civilian casualties. IEDs remain a potential risk in the suburbs outside of Herat City as well, with a roadside IED detonating against locals riding a motorcycle and the ANSF discovery of a roadside IED in Injil.

As with elsewhere in the country, the province continued to experience the targeted killing of district level leadership, when an RCIED detonation wounded the Adras-

kan district COP. However, overall the province witnessed a decline in AOG activity, with only 13 AOG incidents recorded this cycle, a 55% decrease compared to the previous period.

AOGs remained most active in Shindand, which accounted for 54% of the total volume of AOG incidents in the province. In Shindand, five close range conventional attacks and two effective IED detonations - mainly against ANSF - were recorded, three of them directly targeting ALP. In fact, while the district experienced 31 AOG incidents thus far this year - a 26% decrease compared with the same period last year - the number of incidents targeting ALP increased from two to 14, accounting for 45% of the total AOG incidents recorded this year. This is of note, as IMF/ANSF had established and ac-



celerated the ALP program by supporting a particular armed group/tribe which has a longstanding dispute with another that allies with the IEA. Further intensification of the conflict between these two groups/tribes is expected as the program continues.

Lastly, the Provincial COP was replaced as a result of a strike initiated by local businessmen and doctors in protest against allegedly growing abduction cases. Despite such claims, the volume of criminal abductions remains almost unchanged from last year's, with ten recorded in 2012 as compared to 11 over the same period last year, suggesting the possibility that the strike - as well as the COP replacement - was more politically motivated than substantive.

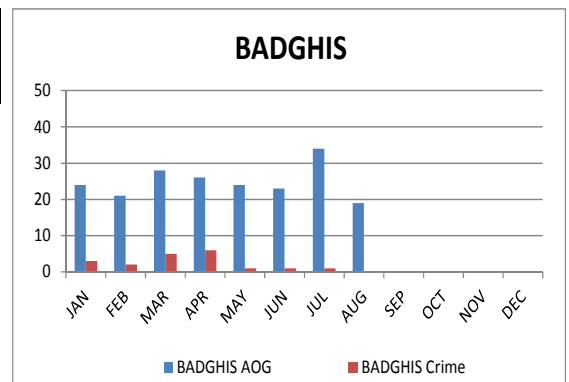
## BADGHIS

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

AOG in Badghis maintained a relatively high operational tempo, accounting for 19 incidents this cycle. Within this, the geographical distribution of AOG activity has shifted since June from the traditional AOG hotspots of Murghab, Muqur and Qadis towards Ghormach. Ghormach has been the site of 29 AOG attacks since the beginning of July, accounting for 38% of the total AOG incidents recorded in the province over that period. In contrast, the district was responsible for only 9% of the total AOG initiated incidents recorded over first five months of the year.

This intensification is likely a reaction against the increased efforts

of IMF/ANSF to stabilize the district for the expected construction of the unfinished section of the ring road, as well as the strategic importance of disrupting AOG networks/movements between Badghis and Farayab (North). Strategically, it appears that security forces are focused on militia/ALP building and the disruption of AOG network hubs rather than engaging in direct confrontations. To this point, 90% of the total AOG incidents recorded in this district since the beginning of June have been close range conventional attacks on ANSF, mostly sporadic and ineffective, carried out by small units and



rarely resulting in fatalities/casualties on ANSF/IMF side.

Further highlighting an increase in targeted killings across the country, an RCIED detonation wounded the district COP in Jawand. While this attempt remained a significant outlier to district security dynamics (the district has experienced only four AOG incidents thus far this year), such incidents will likely continue - albeit at a generally low rate - throughout Badghis in line with countrywide trends.

## FARAH

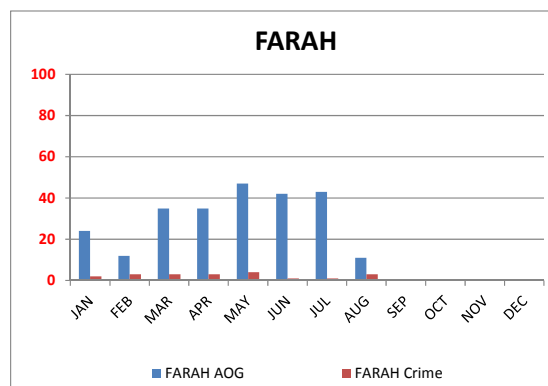
|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 1             |
| This Report Period | 1             |

Farah experienced its first NGO incident this year when a local AOG cadre abducted an NGO doctor while he was traveling by public transport vehicle in Gulistan. After approximately 12 hours in captivity, the hostage was released unharmed following the interferences of tribal elders. It is important to note that while NGO incidents have been extremely rare in the province, all three NGO incidents last year were related to abductions authored by AOG, two of which occurred in July 2011 involving mass abductions. While the exact circumstances of all the cases were dissimilar, in each instance some or all of the abductees were released due to negotiation efforts by local elders, highlighting the importance of local acceptance to NGO security.

In terms of the overall volume of abduction incidents, the province has witnessed eight cases thus far this year (six AOG authored and two ACG) compared to 19 over the same period last year (18 AOG and one ACG), denoting a significant 73% decrease in this particular tactic. Further to this, only one case this year has directly involved the targeting of local civilians – excluding this latest NGO incident – in contrast to 14 directly targeting local civilians

over the same period last year (13 of those authored by AOG). This potentially indicates an increase in the importance of local community influence to AOG cadres in Farah, which is playing out at the operational level.

Overall AOG activity decreased this period with 11 AOG authored incidents recorded, following the same pattern observed last year during Ramadan (although not a pattern that has been replicated this year throughout the country at large). The decline in AOG activity is apparent in just six cases involving IEDs or AP-mine detonations and one close range conventional attack recorded (compared with 11 and five the PRP). This is largely the result of lower AOG operational tempos in Bakwa and Bala Buluk, the most AOG kinetic districts throughout the province, with AOG activity completely absent from Khaki Safed and Pusht Rod. Only seven AOG incidents were recorded in these two districts combined (four in Bala Buluk and three in Bakwa), whereas 14 were recorded over the second fortnight of the last month (seven in each). In contrast, AOG remained visible in Farah city, with three AOG incidents which were relatively insignificant (one small RICED deto-



nation against an ANP vehicle and two cases related to hand-grenade attacks against ANP), indicating AOG efforts to demonstrate their presence in the capital despite an operational pause in rural areas. It is reasonable to assume that the volume of AOG incidents will likely increase again after EID in line with last year’s pattern.

Another significant incident recorded this cycle occurred when an ANP policeman originating from Dilaram shot and killed 13 of his colleagues at the Dilaram ANP base in Bakwa. The perpetrator was shot and killed by other ANP policemen immediately after opening fire. While the fact that the IEA claimed responsibility combined with the fact that the area regularly records kinetic AOG activity/presence suggests that the case was likely attributed to infiltration of the ANP by AOG, like in other such incidents, it remains difficult to confirm, as AOGs have an incentive to claim attacks that cannot be verified which appear to demonstrate the extent of their influence/reach. Although this marks the first rogue shooting by ANSF in Farah, two such cases were recorded in Badghis (both of them in 2011), and AOG efforts to infiltrate into ANSF will likely continue/increase as IMF shifts security roles to ANSF going forward.

**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.

**ANSO:** “..by NGOs for NGOs..”



# EASTERN REGION

## NANGARHAR

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 15            |
| This Report Period | 0             |

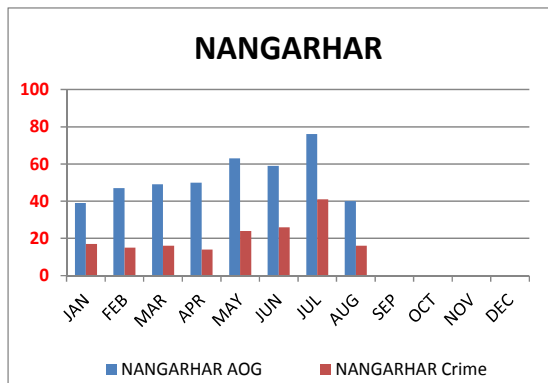
Although overall incident volumes were broadly consistent with those recorded over the second half of July, this period observed a marked increase in AOG activity – amounting to a 26% growth in AOG-initiated incidents in comparison to the previous period – with significant incidents recorded in Jalalabad, Achin and Pachir Wa Agam.

The provincial capital recorded two AOG-initiated incidents this period. First, an IED concealed in a parked rickshaw detonated against a Justice Department vehicle, injuring four officials. The target of the attack is believed to have been the head of the department, by whom the vehicle is normally used. Second, a hand grenade was thrown into the home of an ANA official, injuring his wife. Nangarhar has recorded 11 targeted killings of GOA officials thus far this year, and it can be assumed that further attempts will be made by the armed opposition going forward in order to intensify pressure on the government.

In Achin, a large AOG ambushed an ANP convoy as it was returning to the DAC from Mamand Dara, where it had been called to disarm an IED earlier that day. At the time of the attack, the convoy, for reasons that remain un-

clear, was being accompanied by the district governors and police chiefs for both Achin and Speen Ghar. The convoy managed to escape the ambush, with no reported casualties, after a local tribe helped repel the attack. The tribe’s assistance had been specifically requested by the provincial governor. The incident represents something of a departure from established AOG tactics – with the majority of attacks against GOA and ANSF targets in the area taking the form of IED detonations – but is nonetheless consistent with the significant presence that the armed opposition maintains in the district, as evidenced by recent increases in the frequency of AOG initiated incidents, with more incidents recorded over the first half of this month than over the entirety of July.

Achin was also home to one of three incidents of rogue ANSF personnel opening fire upon IMF soldiers (also known as “green on blue” shootings) recorded in the region in under a week. The incident resulted in one IMF soldier being injured, along with an NDS officer who was caught in the ensuing crossfire. The assailant, an ANP officer, managed to escape the area.



Meanwhile, in Pachir Wa Agam, in the Pass Sabar area at 1600 hrs, AOG fighters stopped a container truck whilst it was carrying supplies to a nearby ANP base, before proceeding to set it alight. At the time of writing, the whereabouts of the driver of the truck remain unknown. The attack came just six days after the targeted killing of a district official in the area on 31 July, as he was driving home from the DAC at 1400 hrs, and can therefore be understood as a further indication of the armed opposition’s intent to consolidate their presence in Pass Sabar.

In a further incident of note, 19 civilians were injured when an IED that had been planted inside the Dawlatzai village mosque detonated during Friday prayers. The motive behind the attack remains unclear, but with no declaration of responsibility being made by the armed opposition and the absence of any plausible GOA or ANSF target in (or expected to be in) the mosque at the time that the detonation occurred, it is distinctly possible that the incident was born out of a private dispute. In the wider province, non-AOG initiated IED detonations have accounted for 25 per cent of all such incidents in the year so far, none of which have targeted GOA or ANSF actors.

## KUNAR

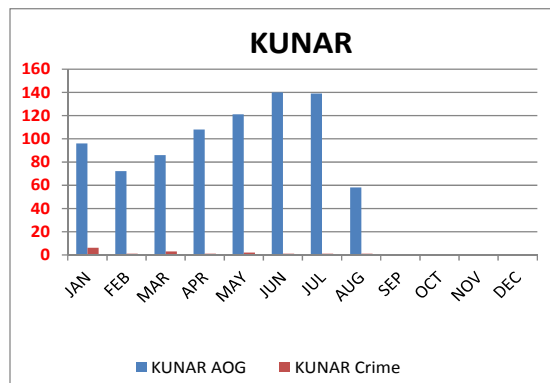
|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 1             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

In Kunar, a twin BBIED attack against an IMF foot patrol in Asadabad city killed three IMF soldiers and one civilian, and injured three others. The incident marked only the third BBIED attack ever recorded in Asadabad, following the assassination of the head of Kunar's Peace and Reintegration Council in April, and an attack against the city's NDS office in October 2011. Attacks against IMF and GOA targets in and around the provincial capital have increased by over 80% in comparison to the same period in 2011, and it can be assumed that the armed opposition will maintain such efforts for the remainder of the summer fighting season. Both overall and AOG-initiated incident levels rose in comparison to the previous period, with noteworthy incidents, outside of the

provincial capital, recorded in Dangam and Nari.

In Dangam, the ANBP engaged in a three hour long armed clash with Pakistani Military Forces. The fighting began when the latter, for reasons that remain unclear, attacked an ANBP checkpoint from across the border with heavy weapons, prompting ANBP officers to return fire. After additional ANBP reinforcements were mobilised to the area, the ANBP captured two Pakistani checkpoints before being repelled. The incident represents a significant escalation in already heightened cross-border tensions, following intensive shelling of Afghan territory by the Pakistani Military, which has caused significant internal displacement.

Meanwhile, Nari saw the most



casualty-heavy clash between security forces and the armed opposition of any district during the period, when AOG fighters attacked ANP and ANBP checkpoints in the DAC area, prompting a fire-fight in which five ANSF personnel were subsequently killed along with four AOG fighters, and a further six AOG fighters were injured. The incident came as the second attack against ANSF checkpoints in the district in as many days, and is an indication of the importance that the armed opposition places on Nari, owing to its status as a key infiltration route from Pakistan.

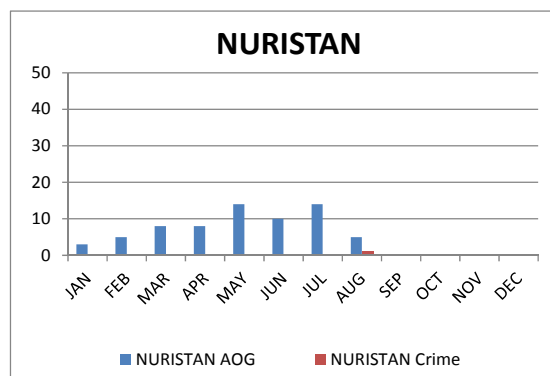
## NURISTAN

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

In Kamdesh, a large host of AOG fighters, reportedly between 100 and 150, entered the Madagul valley from the neighbouring Awlagul area of Bargi Matal, from where they staged an attack against the DAC and several ANP checkpoints with heavy weapons and SAF. The incident came little over a month after roughly 100 AOG fighters launched a three-sided massed assault against ALP and ANP forces in the DAC area, which lasted for 13 hours and resulted in a number of deaths on both sides. This most recent incident is therefore a clear demonstration that the armed opposition retains both the intent and the capability to conduct attacks on such a scale. AOG incident levels in Kamdesh have increased by

73% in comparison to the same period in 2011; a rate of growth that is indicative of the increased importance of the district to the armed opposition. As such, further attacks against GOA and ANSF targets in Kamdesh can be expected, as the armed opposition attempts to exert greater pressure on the GOA's already limited presence in the district.

Meanwhile in Waygal, a village high school was set alight by armed men, causing significant structural damage to the building. The incident followed the forced closure of several schools by the armed opposition in the same area – Want – in June and thus whilst AOG have denied claims that they were responsible, these previ-



ous incidents, and the de facto control that they exercise over Want village potentially suggest otherwise. As in these other instances, the burning of the school was likely a response to repeated IMF precision drone strikes in the district (which have killed 18 AOG fighters so far this year), in order to demonstrate that whilst IMF may be able to bring air power to bear against high-value targets, the armed opposition can still exert influence on the ground. The burning of the school prompted 500 people to stage a protest in neighbouring Wama.

## LAGHMAN

|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 3             |
| This Report Period | 1             |

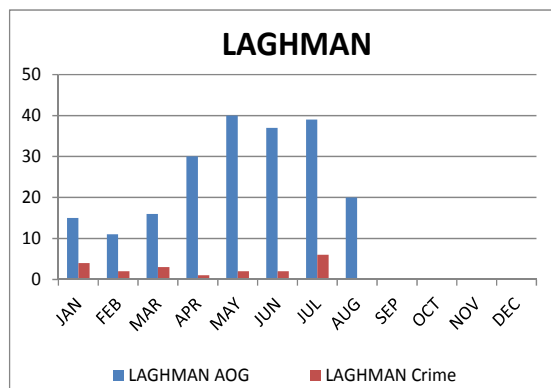
Laghman recorded one NGO incident during the period, in which AOG fighters stopped a privately owned truck transporting livestock on behalf of a local NGO at an illegal checkpoint along the main road in Besram at 1100 hrs, before proceeding to release the livestock into the surrounding area. The driver of the truck was left unharmed and allowed to continue his journey.

Thus far this year, the district has recorded nine AOG-initiated incidents, including three other instances of the armed opposition establishing illegal checkpoints along the district’s stretch of the main road (two of which occurred in the same week as this latest incident), as well as several attacks against passing IMF supply trucks (two using IEDs and one using RPG rounds). Prior to this year however, the district had recorded no AOG activity since 2006, indicating that AOG establishment of a presence in the area of a significant supply route has been, and will continue to be, an important objective for the armed opposition during this year’s summer fighting season. In the wake of these incidents, and in a clear indication of their concern over escalating AOG activity, the ANP established a checkpoint in the area and conducted a clearing operation in in which 60 suspected

AOG fighters were arrested. In light of this increase in both ANSF and AOG numbers in Besram, it is likely that the district will become increasingly kinetic in the coming weeks.

Of arguably greater significance to the wider conflict was the targeted killing of the district governor of Alishing in Mehtarlam city, when an IED detonated against the vehicle in which he was travelling, also killing his three ANP bodyguards. The incident marked the second targeted killing of a GOA official in Mehtarlam city this year, following a fatal attack on the head of Mehtarlam’s Department of Women’s Affairs on 13 July. The armed opposition has proven increasingly capable of conducting offensive operations against high-profile targets within the provincial capital in recent months, including IDF attacks the ANP HQ, the provincial governor’s compound and the PRT, as well as two close range attacks with heavy weapons and SAF against Mehtarlam Central Prison.

Mehtarlam city also witnessed one of three ‘green on blue’ incidents recorded in the Eastern Region this period (see Nangarhar and Paktya), when two ANA soldiers opened fire on IMF personal inside the PRT base, for motives which remain unclear, killing two



IMF soldiers and injuring four others. In the ensuing fire-fight, one of the assailants was killed and the other (who was later arrested) was injured. Whilst the incident represents a relative outlier for the regional security environment, it is consistent with a countrywide increase in attacks of this nature, with at least 20 recorded thus far this year, compared to only nine across the same period in 2011.

Although overall incident levels remained broadly the same in comparison to the previous period, with 32 incidents recorded in the second half of July compared to 31 in the first half of August (prior to late reporting), there was a marked growth in AOG activity, amounting to a 30% increase in AOG initiated incidents. Of these, the majority took the form of close range attacks against ANSF targets using heavy weapons and SAF, with nine such incidents recorded across Mehtarlam, Alishing and Alingar. In one such incident, and of particular significance, AOG fighters attacked local community members in the Salaw area in an attempted act of retribution for the support that they had afforded to an ALP unit in a previous clash. ANSF repelled the AOG and, with local community support, conducted a clearing operation later that day in which three AOG fighters were killed.

### ACRONYMS:

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

## PAKTYA

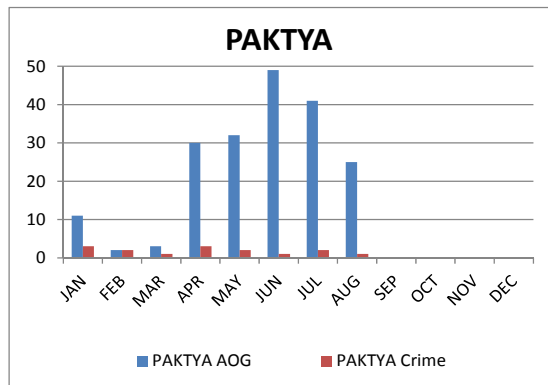
|                    | NGO Incidents |
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| Year to Date       | 1             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

Overall incident levels in the province rose in comparison to the previous period, as did the level of AOG activity, with noteworthy incidents recorded in and around Chamkanay and Gardez.

In Chamkanay, a district official and his son were killed when an IED detonated against their vehicle. The incident marks only the second targeting killing of a GOA official in the province so far this year, following that of the district governor of Chamkanay on 29 April in a close range attack against the ANP convoy in which he was travelling. Whilst the armed opposition has not publicly claimed responsibility for the killing, the overwhelming majority of the incidents recorded in Chamkanay both in the year so far and across the same period in 2011 were AOG initiated, making

them the most likely assailants. Despite the fact that both officials came from the same district, there is no evidence to suggest that the armed opposition is expressly targeting GOA actors in Chamkanay over those in other districts.

Gardez also recorded two significant IED strikes during the period. In the first, a magnetic IED that had been attached to an ANP vehicle detonated, killing one ANP officer and injuring three others. This was followed by an IED detonation against an AN-COP vehicle, which killed four AN-COP officers and injured two others. For every IED that was detonated in the district however, an equal number were defused by the security forces, who also conducted a clearing operation in which one AOG fighter was killed



and six others were arrested – indicating a relative balance of forces between the armed opposition and the security forces in Gardez this period.

Meanwhile in Shwak, the district was home to one - chronologically the first - of three 'green on blue' incidents recorded in the Eastern region in the space of a week, when two ANA soldiers fired upon IMF personnel inside an ANA/IMF base, killing two IMF soldiers and injuring four others. One of the assailants was arrested, whilst the other managed to escape the area. Such incidents appear to be on the rise countrywide (see Laghman), and are likely to continue going forward.

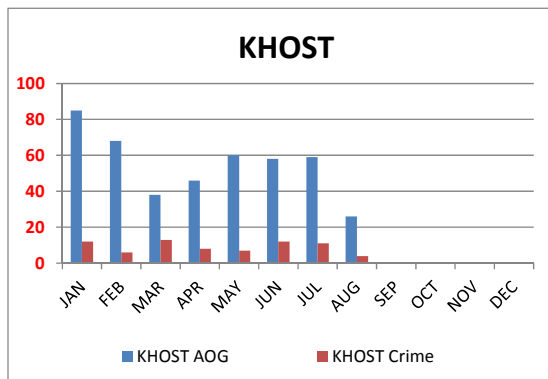
## KHOST

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

The provincial capital was largely quiet this period, with only four recorded AOG-initiated incidents, including three IED detonations. Of these, only one was on-target – the detonation of a magnetic IED that had been attached to an ANP vehicle, injuring two ANP officers and five civilians – but there was also an attack against several labourers queuing outside an IMF base with a hand grenade and SAF which resulted in several injuries but no fatalities. Indeed, the only incidents that did result in fatalities this period were two private disputes that turned violent (killing two civilians), with the remaining incidents recorded in the city consisting of four IED discoveries by the security forces, an NDS clearing operation and a

public protest against cross-border shelling from Pakistan into Kunar.

This lull was consistent with a decrease in both overall incident volumes and AOG initiated incident levels in comparison to the previous period. Outside of Khost city, the majority of AOG incidents recorded took the form of close range attacks with heavy weapons and SAF against ANSF targets, with nine such incidents across Jaji Maydan, Sabari, Tani, Tere Zayi and Musa Khel. The incident in Musa Khel took the form of an assault against the DAC, which - whilst causing no casualties - came as the third attack in the area in under four days (following two IDF attacks), and



can therefore be understood as an effort by the armed opposition to demonstrate their undiminished offensive capabilities to the GOA.

By contrast, there was a marked increase in the intensity of operations conducted by the security forces, with a total of 43 AOG fighters being killed as a result of two air strikes in Musa Khel – a clear response to the armed opposition’s increasing presence in the district – and a series of clearing operations, predominantly focused in Sabari and Tere Zayi, in which 55 suspected AOG fighters were arrested in all.



# SOUTHERN REGION

## KANDAHAR

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

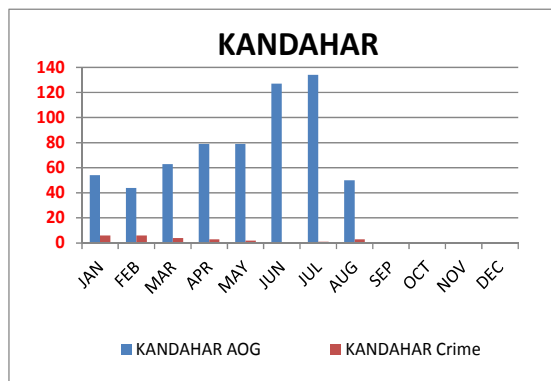
Kandahar continues to record a high volume of incidents. In the last fortnight the province witnessed (prior to late reporting) 88 security events of which 50 were initiated by the armed opposition. The security profile of the province has not changed significantly when compared to the previous cycle, with an absence of high-profile attacks in urban centers continuing throughout this period (most likely expressing a deliberate choice by the opposition during the period of Ramadan), and AOG TTPs favouring direct attacks and IED emplacement. AOG intimidation efforts—another distinctive feature of the security landscape in Kandahar—have also continued, with the rate of targeted killings significantly increased over that of late July.

Whereas the PRP witnessed eight reported targeted killings, the current cycle notched 13 such incidents attributed to the armed oppositions, with an additional two occurring that were likely related to criminal activity. This cycle Kandahar city experienced eight of these attacks, Maywand and Shah Wali Kot two, and Daman, Khakrez, and Panjwayi recording one each. These numbers make it likely that targeted killings authored by AOG in August will likely approach or surpass the previous peak recorded in March (19). Further to this, the current rate marks an increase in the use of this tactic over the same period last year (which recorded only 10),

and has occurred in conjunction with a short term shift from focusing on “high-profile” targets (as was the case during 2011) towards “low-profile” members of ANSF or civilians. Regarding the geographical distribution of such incidents a glimpse into the data reveals that amongst 81 AOG-initiated targeted killings that have been recorded across the province thus far this year, Kandahar city was the recipient of 67% of them.

In the last fortnight IEDs were deployed extensively throughout the province. Effective AOG IED activity occurred primarily in Panjwayi and Khakrez, but also in Maruf, Zhari and Kandahar city. These incidents resulted in a high number of casualties amongst ANSF personnel: 11 ANP and one ANA soldier killed, and 10 ANP and five ANA soldiers wounded. In addition, three separate IED strikes involved civilians. These include an IED detonation reported in Panjwayi which killed three civilians and a roadside IED which targeted a local vehicle in Khakrez, resulting in one person killed and another wounded.

In Kandahar city, sporadic AOG IED activity manifested itself in districts 2, 4 and 5. The AOG target pattern remained consistent with the trend observed across the province, as the IED attacks were carried out primarily against ANP vehicles (and injured two ANP policemen and one civilian passerby). In addition, IED emplace-



ment was recorded in districts 3 and 9 with two devices defused by ANSF.

Direct attacks this reporting period were geographically concentrated on Panjwayi, Zhari (usual AOG strongholds) and Kharkrez districts, almost all exclusively targeting ANP personnel and posts. As frequently occurs across the province, the majority of these attacks consisted of inconclusive engagements between the ANP and AOG units, with the AOG breaking contact after a brief fire-fight, yet there were some noteworthy exceptions. In the area of the Panjwayi DAC, a night time AOG attack against an ANP post continued for about two hours and claimed the lives of two civilians and one ANP policeman, while an additional one ANP and two civilians sustained injuries. Another prolonged engagement took place in Zhari— following an attack on an ANP post—and caused three AOG fatalities and injuries to two militia members.

On the security forces side, the last two weeks saw the rate of IMF/ANSF operations slightly increase when compared to the previous cycle. Security force search operations resulted in the seizure of a significant amount of explosives and drugs, with the most significant results reported in Zhari, where during three separate operations more than 90 IEDs were seized from caches and subsequently disposed of. In another notable operation, in district 9 of Kandahar city NDS arrested seven AOG members, including a mid-level commander.

## NIMROZ

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

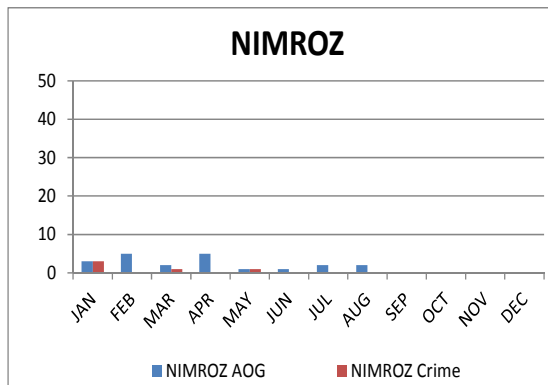
A series of deadly suicide attacks dominated this reporting period in Nimroz. On the afternoon of 14 August, Zaranj city was shaken by coordinated BBIED attacks that occurred in three separate locations within the provincial capital.

ANP personnel in the vicinity of the provincial hospital appeared to be the initial targets, while an additional two BBIED detonations were reported in two separate locations: the Carpet market area and near to an oil pump station. Due to the timing (early afternoon), and the crowded nature of the locations of these attacks, the casualty toll was extremely heavy. This was particularly true for civilians, and included at least 21 civilians and 15 ANP killed, with an additional 98 civilians and 22 ANP wounded.

The night just prior to these at-

tacks, ANP intercepted a vehicle transporting assorted explosives - including a suicide vest - killing two AOG operatives who resisted in the process. Following this incident, ANSF conducted house search operations in the area in an effort to locate additional AOG fighters, and during this, detained three individuals, seizing additional suicide vests and hand grenades. The involvement of such a significant number of operatives in the incident denotes a high level of planning and coordination, but it remains unclear what the extent and target of the attack would have been had there been no disruptions.

To contextualize this, security reporting in Nimroz has remained limited in comparison to other Southern provinces, with Nimroz



experiencing only 53 security events thus far this year (a total significantly less than Helmand or Kandahar average every month). In addition to limited reporting, the use of suicide vectors has been rare. The province experienced only one suicide attack this year, when a single BBIED detonated on an IMF convoy in Zaranj city, on 28 April. Prior to that, there had been none since a coordinated attack occurred on 5 May 2010, when nine BBIED attackers engaged with security forces in several high-profile targets in Zaranj city.

## URUZGAN

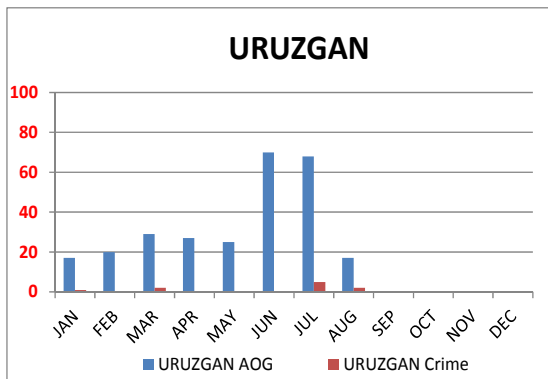
|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 0             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

In the last fortnight Uruzgan experienced 17 AOG-initiated actions, displaying a decrease compared to the 31 recorded the previous cycle. While AOG activity manifested itself in Khas Uruzgan, Dihrawud and Chora, 64% of all AOG authored incidents were focused on Tirin Kot district.

IED emplacement continued to be the main source of insecurity in the province with 18 recorded incidents (both detonations and discoveries). On five separate occasions IED detonations resulted in ANSF casualties. Noteworthy amongst these, in Tirin Kot city, an RCIED attack on a patrolling ANP vehicle claimed the lives of three ANP policeman and injured an additional two along with one civilian. The ANP took the

majority of casualties in the province this period as another targeted RCIED strike recorded in Tirin Kot district killed four ANP, including a commander.

Besides IED emplacement, other tactical choices were minimalized in the security landscape, with only two direct attacks reported in Tirin Kot and Khas Uruzgan. However, the AOG intimidation campaign came to the fore with three cases of targeted killings recorded in these two districts, with AOG killing two individuals accused of working for IMF in the latter. Afterwards, militia members from the tribe of those victims - under the leadership of an influential militia commander - conducted a retaliation action and



abducted and executed a number of civilians (up to 15 persons) from the area where the initial killing took place. Although a potential ethnic component to this series of clashes has the potential to cause further tensions, elders from both tribes met and managed to calm the situation temporarily, putting forth expectations that those responsible for these killings will be brought to justice. However, the issue has not been settled, and the commander suspected of being responsible remains on the run, with strong allegations existent that he is - or has been - working with security forces.

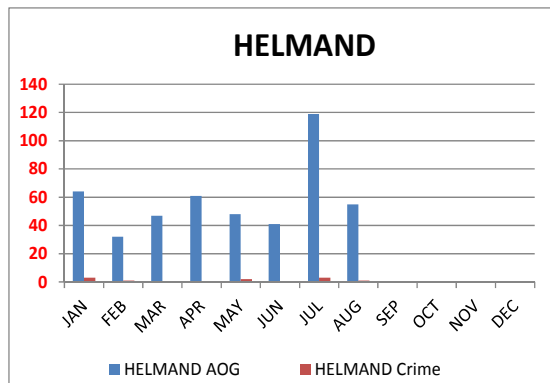
## HELMAND

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

During the first two weeks of August incident volumes in Helmand remained high, with over 100 security incidents recorded, of which AOGs accounted for 50%. In addition to IED deployment and close-range attacks, AOG continued their campaign of targeted killings (five, targeting primarily ANP policemen), and a series of “green-on-blue” incidents featured prominently.

In the last fortnight at least 22 IEDs detonated, in addition to an almost equivalent amount of disposal operations recorded across the province. The bulk of IED detonations targeted ANP and ALP vehicles in districts of Nahri Sarraj, Lashkar Gah, Marja and Musa Qala. Civilians were involved on five separate occasions, with the most noteworthy incidents reported in Musa Qala,

when a roadside IED detonated on a Town Ace vehicle - killing six civilians and wounding another six - and in Kajaki, where an IED killed four tribal elders. The continuing threat of collateral involvement in security incidents by simple proximity to potential AOG targets was further highlighted in Sangin, when an IED detonated as both a local vehicle and an ANP Ranger were travelling through the area. The detonation was followed by an AOG SAF attack, which killed one civilian and injured another two along with four ANP members. Direct attacks remained frequent and were conducted on 25 separate occasions, mainly in the districts of Nahri Sarraj, Marja and Lashkar Gah. Noteworthy amongst these was an intense firefight oc-



curing in Nahri Sarraj which required the use of the IMF air assets to repel an AOG attack on an ANP post, and resulted in seven AOG fighters killed and four wounded.

This reporting period was also shaped by a series of “green-on-blue” incidents recorded in Sangin and Garmser districts which combined to claim the lives of seven IMF soldiers and injure another three. These incidents (occurring within 24 hours of each other) were the latest in a string of 14 shootings involving IMF elements in the region.

## PAKTIKA

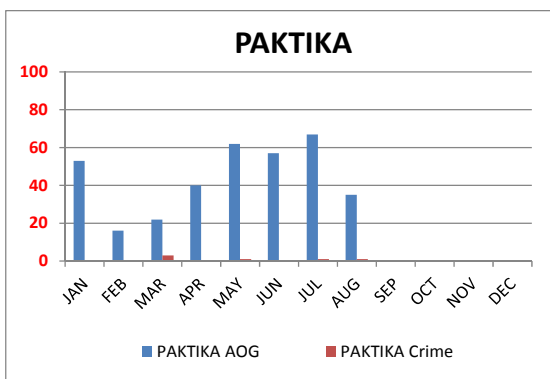
|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 0             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

In the last fortnight, the level of AOG activity in Paktika remained in line with the previous period - recording 35 AOG-initiated attacks - but overall incident volumes dropped, driven primarily by a decrease in documented IMF/ANSF operations.

The security profile of the province continued to be dominated by AOG close range attacks, which this period were focused on Omna, Ziruk and Mata Khan districts. A number of these attacks involved casualties, particularly those recorded in Omna, Khair Kot and Zarghun Shahr districts, with four separate AOG attacks from these districts resulting in three ALP, two ANA and three ANP killed, and an additional 10 ANA soldiers and three ANP wounded. Noteworthy amongst

these was a protracted AOG attack on an ANA/ANP base located in the DAC area of Omna which injured seven ANA soldiers and three ANP policemen. Although limited in number, effective AOG IED activity increased this period from four IED strikes the PRP to 10 over the current cycle. Further to this, the majority of recorded IEDs this period produced casualties (eight out of 10) across Urgun, Dila, Omna, Sar Hawza, Yosuf Khel and Barmal. This affected also civilians, with four killed in a single IED strike in Chanikha area of Urgun and the same number of fatalities reported from Yosuf Khel, but in the latter involving children.

Further to this, the proximity of the border and the consequent



presence of supply channels result in sustained IDF attacks by the armed opposition in the province. In the last two weeks these attacks were concentrated on the Gayan DAC, however Ziruk, Barmal and Sar Hawza saw also sporadic IDF assaults. While reports of casualties associated with such attacks remain rare, four civilians were wounded in Sultani area of Sar Hawza, when inaccurate mortar fire intended to target an ANP post impacted a local residence. Unfortunately, misfires amongst such attacks appear more common than not., creating a significant potential for collateral civilian casualties going forward.

## GHAZNI

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

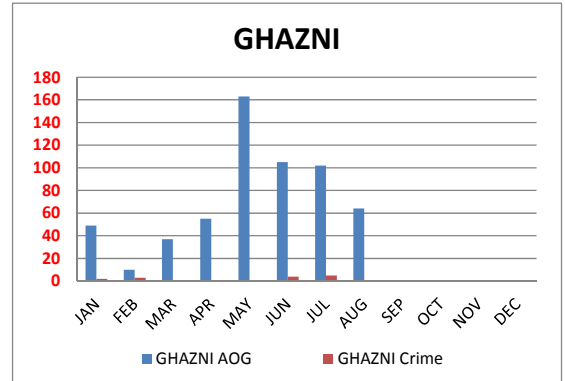
During the first two weeks of August, Ghazni continued to record a significant level of incidents, with at least 90 entries. This period AOG activity - which accounted for 71% of all incidents - was focused primarily on the districts of Ghazni, Andar, Qarabagh and Muqur.

Conventional AOG attacks continued to feature across the security landscape, with 39 occurrences (43% of all recorded). These targeted mainly ANP (62%) and DACs. This period the district centers of Khogyani, Andar, and Rashidan came under multiple AOG SAF attacks, but the majority of these attacks were inconclusive and caused a limited number of casualties (although those that did occur were primarily civilian).

AOG continued their efforts of intimidation against ANSF mem-

bers, as well as civilians accused of cooperation with GOA. A local civilian was abducted in Ab Band district and in Ghazni ANP recovered the corpse of another policeman who had been abducted and executed by AOG. Targeted killings also occurred in Ghazni district (two attacks on ANP), with one of them occurring in Ghazni city, when an ANP policeman was killed in Jahan Market area.

IED emplacement demonstrated an upwards trend with 15 IED strikes recorded in Ghazni, Gelan, Qarabagh and Andar. The primary AOG targets remain ANP and IMF, as was highlighted by an IED strike on an ANP vehicle that occurred in in Qala-I-Jawz of Ghazni city which resulted in two ANP policemen killed and five wounded. Nevertheless, involve-



ment of civilians in IED related incidents continued as well. This period an IED detonation on a local tractor caused one civilian fatality and injured another two persons in Waghaz, and further incidents involving civilians were reported in Andar, Gelan and Ghazni.

IMF/ANSF maintained a consistent operational pace with approximately 16 documented operations. These included the use of air strikes in Gelan, Andar and Ab Band which claimed the lives of 8 AOG members, including the deputy shadow governor for Ab Band district, but also collaterally killed two civilians in Gelan.

## ZABUL

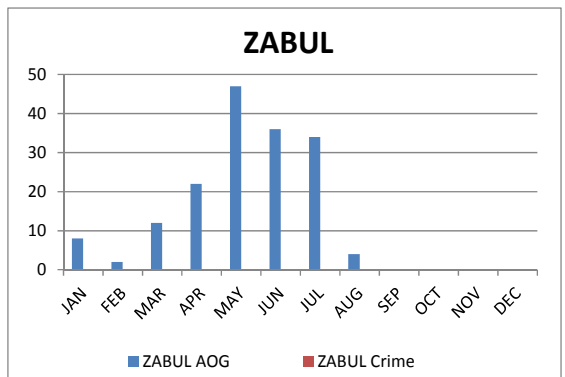
|                    | NGO Incidents |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Year to Date       | 0             |
| This Report Period | 0             |

Incident volumes dropped in Zabul when compared to the PRP, as both AOG and ANSF-IMF appeared to scale down their activities.

In the last fortnight AOG operations took the form of sporadic IED attacks on ANSF mobile and static positions which affected Qalat, Shahjoy, and Shamulzayi districts. The latter district came to the fore when a roadside device detonated on an ANP vehicle carrying the district Chief of Police. The detonation - which occurred on the main Shamulzayi-Shahjoy road - killed three ANP policeman, including the official. The incident marked the first killing of a GOA official at a district level recorded in the province this year, but does not denote a new trend

as ANSF and/or GOA personnel remain the primary target of AOG operations region-wide. In addition, the use of explosive devices fits with existing trends in Zabul where IED emplacement remains prominently featured. Current data reveals that amongst 163 AOG-initiated incidents that have been recorded this year throughout the province, IED strikes represent 42%, direct attacks 36%, targeted killings 13% and IDF 4%.

In line with long term trends, effective AOG IED activity continues to primarily affect Qalat and Shahjoy districts, which experienced more than 57% of all recorded IED detonations thus far this year. This trend continued



this period as - in addition to Shamulzayi - the remaining IED incidents took place in Shahjoy and Qalat (and resulted in one civilian injured). ANSF/IMF showed a moderate level of activity this period, with six documented operations focused on AOG manpower and sporadic seizures of drugs in Qalat, Shahjoy and Shinkay. These operations resulted in five AOG members detained, another two killed and also caused collateral damage when - during a ground operation in Shahjoy - two civilians sustained injuries.



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### MISSING THIS PERIOD:

ANSO did not provide analysis for the following areas:

➡ DAYKUNDI, SAMANGAN

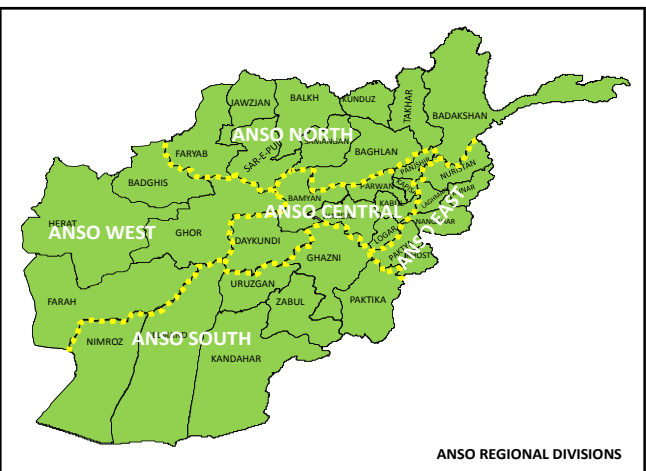
These areas will be included in subsequent reports. If you have any information that would help us better understand the dynamics, please contact your local ANSO office.

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### 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