

Mazar Area Weekly Integrated Report

26th July-4th August 2002

UNAMA Mazar

1. Security Situation

1.1 Key developments:

Over the week under reporting, continued high wave of crimes, low-level factional military confrontations, mines related incidences and reinforcement by the two major factions of artillery and troops including enhancement of logistics support in the vicinity of Mazar city has been reported. It is further reported that reinforcement includes foreign military experts and infiltration of erstwhile Taliban and AQ's return to the area.

Moreover, ACF and PINF, two international NGOs have reported incidences involving their staff on missions; staff were stopped, interrogated and, in one case, asked to provide "assistance" to local commander's men.

On 1st August a large fire spread from the Turkman border into areas in three southern districts of Faryab province (Qaisar, Almar, Khoja Musa); an aerial assessment was arranged by UNAMA, however, no human habitat is affected and on fourth day the wind has shifted blowing the fire back on itself in most places.

There has not been any action taken by any of the factions who were asked by SRSR early in the year to return the lost vehicles of UN in Mazar that are seen driven by commanders of various factions.

1.2 Constraints to Operations:

The constraint reported last week continued to impede the assistance work in parts of Daresouf affected by factional conflict, in particular return of IDPs.

In addition, due to armed conflict reported in Kohistanat district of Surepul province, German Agro Action had to suspend their survey and distribution of assistance cards to identified beneficiaries due to interference and threats of local commanders; likewise WFP monitoring team faced serious problems that hampered the delivery of their work in the same district.

1.3 Analysis and Recommendations:

The weak security management of Mazar city (Police and Security Departments) continues to be a concern for civilians as well as for the large presence of assistance community. This problem is compounded by the unresolved inter-factional conflicts in many areas of the region that threaten to further destabilize the fragile security of the city. Absence of effective and impartial judicial mechanisms within the military structure (Mahqakam-e-Nizami/military counts) as well as civilian judicial structure means that many of the criminal cases later (may) develop into a factional conflict and often a military confrontation.

It is imperative that continued high-level interest and engagement of Centre/Kabul with Mazar leadership is maintained (TA, UNAMA, and donor community) to, where possible preempt, and mediate in conflicts and ensure agreement/s and implementation of agreement/s by all regional factions.

2. Political Situation

2.1 Key Developments:

The most significant developments during the reporting period were as follows:

Kohistanat, Saripul: A peace agreement was negotiated under the auspices of the Security Commission on 29th July following the deployment of a mission into the area and communications with both sides instructing parties to exercise restraint. The agreement stipulates that: all military forces which recently moved into the area must now return to their areas of origin immediately

(this refers to the Jamiat forces which accompanied Qazi Haid when he moved into the area last week and the Jumbesh reinforcements which deployed in response); that a district shura comprising the Loya Jirga (Phase 1) representative plus one other person should be established as a means of resolving any further conflicts; that, in the even of any intractable issue, the district shura should report this to the provincial authorities and to the Mazar Security Commission; that all commanders of all parties are bound by the terms of the agreement; and that the collection of agricultural taxes by commanders is forbidden. The issue of disarmament has been left pending discussions with the regional leaderships.

Sholgareh, Balkh province: Close attention continues to be paid to Sholgareh district following the earlier disarmament operation. The Security Commission continues to investigate reports of violations of the agreements, to try to resolve tensions and to support the local Commission and nascent Police. Allegations abound of parties distributing/buying weapons and distributing money. A number of written instructions have been sent to both the Wuluswal (district administrator) and the local tripartite commission from the regional Security Commission instructing them to: facilitate the return of IDPs and to guarantee their security (to Kuchi Kizil), investigate reports of the occupation of one village (Koshumsai) by Jamiat after it had been disarmed by Jumbesh (this proved to be incorrect), investigate reports of an armed robbery (three sub-commanders involved have been summoned to Mazar), to investigate and detain if necessary a commander involved with violence against civilians, to investigate and resolve a water dispute which had given rise to serious tension between a Hazara (Harakat) and Uzbek/Tajik (Jumbesh) village, to send the six commanders originally listed as being involved with the previous conflict to Mazar, etc. It should be noted that these six commanders – plus one extra - have been summoned to Kabul by the Ministry of Defence. It has been decided as of 31st July to attempt to increase the level of activity of the Sholgareh commission, specifically in the rural areas, now that the situation in Sholgareh town is considered to be satisfactory. Any bases existing in areas outside the town are now to be dismantled and increased pressure is to be applied to retrieve weapons (though it is acknowledged that, for the collection of weapons to have a realistic chance of success, there must be a genuine accommodation reached by the regional leaderships of Jamiat and Jumbesh). The section of the Balkh Police responsible for the rural areas are now attempting, along with the Sholgareh commission, to establish a Sholgareh police force based on an initial five soldiers contributed by each of Wahdat, Jamiat and Jumbesh, which will be given responsibility for controlling the town. In areas outside the town the Sholgareh Commission – which has 60 troops under its aegis – will have primacy pending the disarmament of these areas. The Sholgareh Commission is now required to provide a weekly written report to the Mazar Commission.

Tandorak, Charkent, Balkh province: Tension has arisen in Tandorak, which was previously of no-fixed political affiliation, following the purported distribution of weapons and money by a Jumbesh commander, and a number of people have been reportedly killed. In an attempt to prevent the increase of Jamiat-Jumbesh tension in the area a group is being deployed under the aegis of the Security Commission to resolve the situation.

Darra-I Suf/Samangan and Balkhab/Saripul province: The mission deployed on 25th July is still in the field having evaluated the situation in Darra-I-Suf before proceeding to Balkhab. In the Darra-I Suf area a number of positions were stood-down. Reports of distribution of arms and ammunition in the area are being investigated. Reports of assassinations in Balkhab on 31st actually referred to the deaths of two people in an intra-family dispute and were not party political in origin.

Gosfandi district, Saripul: Control of this district has been unclear for the last two weeks – when its commander, Wuluswal Karim, and his main opponent in the area, Mawlavi Zarif, both established links with Jamiat and were supplied with food rations - though it now appears to be under Jumbesh control. The brother of Wuluswal Karim does, however, still have communications channels open with Jamiat.

Faryab: The attempt to close District Military Councils continues. On 02 AUG Provincial authorities including Com. Hashim Habibi (Jum), Com Gen. Farouk (Jam), Governor, etc met with authorities in Almar to reconcile differences and arrange the disarmament of both sides. The Military Council base in Almar is to become the District Managers new offices.

Regional leaderships: Both of the two key regional figures – Gen. Dostam, who is undergoing medical treatment in Tashkent, and Ustad Atta, who returned from India and Dubai to Kabul – continued to be absent from the region during the reporting period. This continues to represent an impediment to the resolution of key issues.

DDR fact-finding mission, UNAMA: The eight-member mission visited the Mazar area on 30th-31st and held a series of meetings with the regional military and political authorities, plus meetings in the field with field-level commanders in Balkh city.

Activities carried out (meetings, areas visited, etc.):

Meetings: security commission, separate Kohistanat meeting, missions to Darra-I Suf and Balkhab, Kohistanat and Tandorak, Balkh.

2.2 Analysis and Recommendations

The need for a senior level dialogue between the regional leaderships and the need for an accommodation between Jamiat remains a critical requirement. Efforts are underway to effect a meeting, though the absence of the two main players continues to hamper this. Efforts to secure consensus on key issues between the second tier of both leaderships has been successful and there is now a majority within both parties which are well disposed towards an accommodation.

A parallel and critical need is for the administration in Kabul, specifically the Ministry of Interior, to review appointments here, to appoint a professional Head of Police for Balkh province and for Mazar city, and to recruit new cadres for the police force. Until that time all efforts to restore security in Mazar will be futile.

3. The Provision of Humanitarian and Recovery Assistance:

3.1 Key Developments:

- Following what was reported in the last week's integrated report, regarding the challenges of coordination in North-East, under the new arrangements whereby both Baghlan and Kunduz provinces are coordinated by NE Area Coordination Office, a visit was made of AC/NE to discuss ways and mechanisms to ensure smooth coordination for assistance operations in NE, by organizations whose management decision-making is located in Mazar. It is decided that over the coming weeks, ACs/Mazar and Kunduz will discuss these mechanisms, including regular visits of AC/NE of Mazar. A detailed briefing of coordination work in these two provinces was also provided by Mazar UNAMA Team, as part of de-briefing.
- Further progress is made regarding the first Provincial Strategic Planning exercise, starting with Balkh province. Consultations with provincial authorities as well as regional authorities for Planning are expected to produce final decisions next week. Efforts are being made to get input and involvement of UNDP, Kabul in this exercise.
- A number of joint missions of UNAMA, UNHCR with key partner NGOs were carried out in different areas experiencing problems in return of IDPs, to assess the conditions and suggest strategy to move forward. Further work on this is planned and will continue next week, based on which final decisions for return of these groups of IDPs will be made, notably IDPs from Surepul in Sakhi and in Shiberghan as well as to various parts of Faryab. In most cases reasons affecting decisions of IDP families to return are caused due to ethnic tensions, landownership, forced occupation of land and shelter and the like. At the same time, reports of population movement from north to other regions/borders has also come in; from Faryab 84 families have left for Iran while over 100 families are reportedly gone to Herat.
- Two large international NGOs with operations in Balkh, Jawzjan and Samnaghan provinces have reported increasing trend in reduced age for girls for marriage, from an earlier 13/14 years to presently as young as 7/8 years; reasons attributed are poverty, family debt, social vulnerability of a family in a difficult political context. Further work is required to ascertain the scale of this trend. However, it is also reported that when

assistance projects recently were brought in earlier missed out areas of districts/groups of population, families dropped this practice immediately.

- WHO reported outbreak of cholera in Jowzjan and Samanghan provinces, however, of the reported 87 cases, 2 are confirmed cases; while the rest are established to be due to ARI, Pneumonia, or diarrheal diseases combined with ARI. Cholera task force is following up the issue. The outbreak is reported to be under control now.

3.2 Overview of Humanitarian and Recovery Assistance:

- Following the basic principles of Return Strategy for the region, i.e. safe, dignified and sustainable return, both for IDPs and refugees, further return movements have been assisted during the period under reporting. IOM assisted a total of 2408 families (or 9,811 individuals) from 26th to 31st July, from Baghlan, Balkh, Kunduz, Mazar to various districts of Saripul, Balkh, Takhar, Baghlan, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Samanghan, and Faryab. UNHCR assisted return of 160 families from Iran and another 19 families from Pakistan to Faryab province while a total of 361 families have returned spontaneously to this province. It is expected that movements will increase over the next weeks once assessments currently under way in many areas of origin are completed and findings suggest that dignified, safe and sustainable return is feasible. At the same time, more groups of IDPs are identified who can not return back due to different problems and a medium term strategy is being worked out to ensure they get assistance especially over the coming winter months.
- Efforts are increased to strengthen the cooperation and partnership between the assistance community and provincial and district authorities. This collaboration also provides opportunity for capacity building measures for the authorities, especially renovation and equipment of their offices. For instance, under IOM supported Afghanistan Transition Initiative, a large number of construction and rehabilitation projects have been completed last week, including: schools, agricultural vocational training centers, office buildings of several provincial ministries, medical institutes, cottage industry vocational training schools, factories and bridges as well as repairing of heavy machinery of some of the provincial ministries and plantation projects. All these initiatives are carried out in three provinces: Balkh, Faryab and Samanghan.
- Constraints to food assistance continue due to influence of limited resources and food shortages in the pipeline of WFP. Nevertheless, last week of July WFP alone has distributed 6,426 MT of food reaching 165,894 beneficiaries from vulnerable and food insecure families, including 91,937 women. In addition, 231 MT of wheat flour was distributed to bakeries in Mazar city to meet the basic food need of 20,000 most vulnerable families living in the ten districts of the city (or 1,400,000 loaves of bread). Similarly, through FoodAC projects assistance is provided to 39 districts of North, with a total of 2,171 MT of wheat, covering 35,320 vulnerable families.
- Country-wide survey on VAM is under way in Samanghan, Balkh, Jawzjan, Saripul and Faryab led by WFP in close partnership with five international NGOs, the survey is expected to complete during the third week of August. In addition, WFP and partners will soon finalise their findings and analysis from zero-able-bodied households survey of the most economically vulnerable groups in Mazar city. These and other surveys currently under process would provide further understanding of the level, nature and depth of poverty and especially vulnerability in the region, and this analysis would assist in programme planning processes for more medium-to-long terms social and economic recovery and reconstruction assistance.
- In view of the coming spring planting season, FAO and a number of NGOs are trying to gear up their efforts to meet the challenges of providing seeds to farmers on time. However, there are reports of NGOs making procurement from the local seeds markets, creating an artificial rise in prices, especially for rain-fed seeds.

- FAO continues to make assessment of improved summer crop varieties in farmers' fields and to plan next planting season. In addition, in view of the deadly effect of locust on crops, FAO has launched monitoring of locust egg-laying survey in various districts of Samanghan (as well as Baghlan and Kunduz).
- Lack of activity regarding the Sar-E-Hauz Dam rehabilitation (in Maimana) is creating concern among provincial authorities as well as the assistance community, as the season for construction at the dam will end by the end of October. An average precipitation winter will spell disaster in the spring if some effort is not taken now to stop leakages and prevent further damage. UNAMA has requested for a Kabul-based task force to be set up immediately to move this long delayed project forward in such a manner that construction begins within the next 2 weeks.
- SC/US will rehabilitate a PHC likely to be situated in Lawlash in Kohistan district of Faryab in cooperation with MOPH who have agreed to provide supplies and staff. This news brings relief to a region where there has never been access to Primary Health Care.
- *Situation of key partners:*
IOM will be closing its operations including the IDP Camp management and transportation of IDPs through its Faryab Office in Maimana at the end of September. Human rights constraints already are hampering the possibility of returning IDPs from Andkhoi to Balkh. Negotiations with UNHCR are underway but they too are not in a position to support all of the IOM activities. The closure of the IOM office in Faryab will be hard to absorb with all Agencies and NGOs presently extremely stretched.

3.3 Human Rights and Protection Situation:

- Reports from different villages of Almar district of Faryab of Pashtun families facing problems and violations were investigated jointly by UNAMA and UNHCR. Villages include Khuja Gawhar, Kafter Khan, Bad Bad, Mir Shadi. The village the village of Khuja Gawhar consists of some ten smaller villages (hamlets) and is predominantly Pashtun. The area of Khuja Gawhar is controlled and protected by the Khan Agha who is an ethnic Pashtun and a member of Jumbish party. Khan Agha has been appointed by General Dostum to assure returning Pashtuns of their safety in coming home. However it appears security is calm only close to the Khuja Gawhar centre, but further away there are problems. Village delegations reported incidents in two remote villages (hamlets). The village of Kafter Khan (80% Pashtun and 20% Uzbek) is frequently exposed to extortion performed by the commander Fatulah (an ethnic Uzbek, a member of Jumbish party). Ten Pashtun families left the village some ten days ago. It is not clear where they went to. The village of Bad Bad (100% Pashtun) is often raided by villagers from the neighbouring village of Mir Shadi (100% Uzbek) who are pressurising Pashtuns to leave place of their origin. Allegedly, villagers from Mir Shadi want to take over Pashtun agricultural land. A month ago, five Pashtun families fled the village of Bad Bad and they went towards the Ghormach District in the Badghis Province.
- The bodies in the desert alongside the Mazar-Hairatan road reported earlier have been buried by the Hairatan authorities. From the remains of their clothing it appears that they were Taleban soldiers. The circumstances and cause of death has not been ascertained though their graves have been marked for future reference.
- The disbanding of the District Military Council in some of the districts of Faryab may result in a reduction of human rights incidents particularly against Pashtuns as antagonists are reduced in terms of their 'legitimate' power base.

Other Activities Carried Out (ongoing investigations, meetings, areas visited, etc)

- UNAMA Mazar had a five-day visit of Ms. Margareta Walstrom, the new Director of Area Coordination of UNAMA and deputy of DSRSG for Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction. The objective of DAC was to look at the quality and nature partnership and relationship

between the authorities and the assistance community and identify areas requiring strengthening of cooperation and coordination between these two stakeholders, familiarize herself with the conditions of operating environment under which assistance for both humanitarian and recovery purposes is delivered and conducted, and to meet both the authorities and the key partners from the assistance community.

- UNAMA Mazar provided briefings to visiting delegations of Dutch Embassy from Kabul, DDR mission, and AUSAID.
- A number of field missions were carried by UNAMA to support coordination, conduct joint missions, to participate in PCBs in Jowzjan, Surepul, Balkh and Faryab.

3.4 Analysis and Recommendations:

- A wait and see approach should prevail with continued monitoring with the changes to the Head of Military Councils and even to senior Civil positions (District Managers) in the districts of Faryab where this process is ongoing.
- During the meetings of Director Area Coordination of UNAMA (from Kabul) with authorities in Mazar it was evident that key documents produced in Kabul and shared with departmental heads in Mazar (and in other provinces) require small workshop to ensure that these documents are understood and reacted to by the authorities here. It is, therefore, decided by UNAMA Mazar to run small workshops for provincial authorities, wherever required, on initiatives such as NDF, Capacity Building, DDR, etc. and ensure feedback to Kabul through UNAMA Mazar's mechanisms.
- A series of workshops for UNAMA Mazar staff will be organized to develop understanding among the colleagues from political side of the established coordination mechanisms for assistance and protection work so that relationship can be established between assistance and political functions of UNAMA with the aid community as well as the authorities through these mechanisms.

3.5 Observations on Cross-cutting Issues:

NTR

3.6 Mission Issues:

- Coordination of Political and Assistance pillars of UNAMA: UNAMA Mazar sub-office in Faryab held a workshop with Provincial authorities to (again) clarify the role of UNAMA office in Faryab as representing Pillar 2, to explain the National Development Framework, to introduce the Programme Areas and indicate how we have made the transition from the UNCO system to the Programme Area modality over the past months with excellent cooperation with the authorities.
- UNAMA sub-office in Faryab has on 27JUL requested the assistance of Pillar 1 in Maimana for a consultation regarding the local situation. This request likely will join the request for the UN Security Officer to visit, the UNAMA Programme Officer visit.
- UNAMA IT and Coms technicians are planning a road mission on 04AUG for the sub-office in Maimana to provide assistance and install systems.