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THE ANSO REPORT

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YOU NEED TO KNOW

- AOG reverting to targeting of telecom infrastructure and extreme intimidation methods
- AOG targeting and beheading of CDI/LDI in Herat
- Deterioration in Ghazni and targeted killings in Kandahar

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COUNTRY SUMMARY

While IMF and supporting nations insist that the conflict is easing, all signs point to the contrary, with AOGs reverting to proven asymmetric methods. Thus, in contentious areas AOG are demonstrating a preference for intimidation and restriction of communication methods.

With this shift, the Northern Region appears to be the bellwether; Kunduz, Jawzjan, and Sar-e Pul, for example, witnessed AOG targeting of telecom architecture. Also in Kunduz, road security severely deteriorated, possibly due to foreseeable intra-militia strife. Setbacks to IMF acceptance were evident in the wrongful detention and interrogation of an NGO staff member in Chahar Dara, furthermore.

Baghlan also was an exemplar for how IMF/ANSF will likely approach contentious areas. Security deteriorated along Kabul routes to Kunduz and Mazar-e Sharif, and construction of ANSF FOBs was prioritised, possibly even for future handover to 'reintegrated' opposition. The role that reintegrees took in spearheading ANSF operations also lends one to suspect that reintegrees may merely be rebranded actors who concurrently accomplish

their goals with aid from IMF/ANSF.

Balkh also experienced deterioration in road security between Mazar-e Sharif and Shibirghan and an increase in AOG activity in Chahar Bolak, Chimtāl, and Sholgara. With this, an NGO staff member's family in Sholgara was explicitly warned about increased numbers of armed men.

Other NGO incidents occurred in the North; for example, Faryab again found itself the site of an attack on an NGO-built girls school, and an INGO worker in Takhar was temporarily abducted with his vehicle. Additionally in these two provinces, instability will be of further concern for NGOs if the offensive in Takhar goes forward as planned, and IMF intentions to conduct 'development' activity in Faryab's Jalayir Valley are easily disconcerting.

Badakhshan likewise was the focus of AOG plans, with AOG conducting an expected large assault on the Kishim District Centre.

Another example of how IMF/ANSF plans can easily be subverted was seen in Herat, where AOG targeted

the Shindand CDI/LDI with an attack and abduction that later led to AOG beheading 4 of the pro-GoA militia members. IED activity was also of concern in Herat as well as reports of a prominent AOG who operates between Ghor and Herat and in Chishti Sharif once again reconciling with the GoA.

The border between Badghis and Faryab likewise should draw attention through recognition that its climactic Ghormach District has experienced a 62% increase in 1st quarter incidents when compared to 2009.

Wardak experienced rampant ambushes of logistic convoys and an 8 May PSC shooting of a student that led to a local backlash and two PSCs being suspended from travel on the Kabul-Kandahar Highway.

IED increases in Logar and, notably, Panjshir drew attention, with the latter province experiencing political tumult.

Overall high incidents in Ghazni and targeted killings, abductions, hangings, and assaults in Kandahar suggest that IMF 'shaping' is not going as planned.

KABUL

The capital is experiencing a prolonged period of quiet with the last major AOG attack occurring on 26 February against the Noor Guesthouse. Arrest operations continue to be reported, which most likely result in ANSF garnering more information on suspects, subsequently leading to further arrests. In the last reporting period arrest operations, combined with seizures of weapons, have been made in the southern district of Musayi as well as Bagrami and PD 5 and 17. Threat reporting, some of which could be deemed credible, remains high, although rarely departing from the usual suspects of targets. Of note for 2010, NGO security measures appear to becoming more stringent in terms of both compound and movement SOPs for staff. Despite a one third reduction in AOG initiated attacks in the capital compared to 2009, NGOs are wanting to increase security measures following each major incident, also despite the fact that their existing protocols have safeguarded their staff. Interestingly, following a lull in AOG attacks,

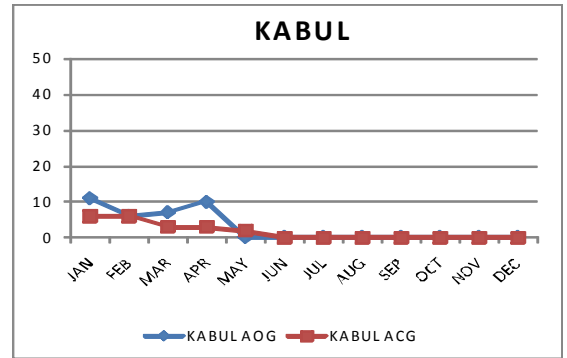
	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	5
This Report Period	0

such as the present period, security measures are not relaxed as they are increased after each high profile attack in the capital.

The ‘Al-Faath’ AOG statement, essentially declaring the start of the Spring offensive, raised few concerns amongst the NGO community in Kabul. The statement made clear AOG intentions towards companies and organisations who overtly work with IMF or ANSF in particular, rather than collective targeting of internationals. The intended start date of the AOG operation, scheduled for 10 May, passed without incident in the capital, despite high threat reporting.

The state execution of several Afghan citizens in Iran led to three demonstrations in Kabul City on 2, 6 and 8 May, involving several hundred people. The demonstrations passed without violence and are likely to reoccur if further executions are reported in the coming weeks. Most of the condemned are believed to have been convicted on drug smuggling charges.

Alleged gassing of school girls has again struck Kabul, following a spate of similar such attacks in the north. On 4 May in PD3, 23 school girls and three teachers fell ill, which led to claims of a poison gas being introduced. Again on 11 May in PD4, eight girls and a



teacher fell ill with similar symptoms. Trials are ongoing to ascertain how the girls fell ill.

Separately, two ambushes were reported in Surobi during the last reporting period. The first involved an ambush of an IMF convoy, resulting in no casualties in the remote Pad Pakh Valley. The second ambush occurred against a convoy of petrol tankers on 12 May, which left two civilians dead in the crossfire. Civilian casualties are rare in such cases as the AOG attacks are purely designed to destroy the targeted tanker and close the road for an hour, providing the appearance of insecurity, without actually making the road insecure. Further fatalities were recorded along the highway on 10 May, when IMF shot and killed a woman and injured two others in an alleged ‘escalation of force’ incident. According to the IMF narrative, the three individuals came too close to the convoy.

The second half of May, provided the Peace Jirga is not postponed again, will most likely mean a significant increase in the level of security across the centre of the city with all branches of the ANSF contributing to a robust security posture. The immediate area around the Kabul Polytechnic will witness the heaviest levels of security as the delegates will be hosted and accommodated on the premises. Avoiding the whole area is strongly advised during the lead up to and during the event.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- SVBIED attacks around high profile GoA, IMF and foreign representation targets
- ACG abductions
- Car accidents

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT:

Do you have NGO experience and a thorough understanding of the challenges NGOs face in a conflict-environment? Are you looking for a new challenge and an opportunity to provide analysis on the conflict and security incidents to NGOs operating in Afghanistan? If so, please see the last page for instructions on how to apply for ANSO’s latest vacancy.

DAYKUNDI

The late spring floods have also impacted Daykundi. Reporting remains somewhat sparse due to many areas being inaccessible; however, it appears there have been eleven casualties. NGOs in the province are particularly concerned about the districts of Shahristan and Ishtarlay with assessment teams finding it difficult at the time of writing to access the area to determine the needs of the local population. Similar to

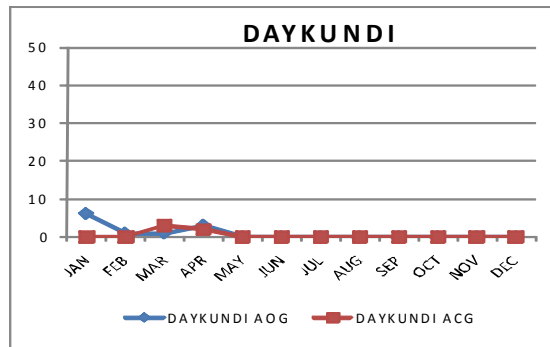
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ACG/AOG abduction threat in Gizab
- Winter road travel
- Occasional banditry on roads leaving from Nili

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
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Bamyan, this year’s harvest will also be affected, although the degree will only become apparent at a later stage.

Little news has emerged from Gizab in the last reporting period after the government reestablished control over the DAC. There have been several ANSF convoys which have taken the Tamazan road to the DAC; however, the road remains a high risk due to the inability of the GoA to exert any form of control beyond that of the district centre. Some reports are emerging of a division of support for the GoA along tribal lines. The Jalezai, believed to be the largest tribal group in the district, has shown support for the return of GoA authority while



two smaller tribes have been somewhat reluctant or tepid in overtly aligning with the authorities. Sympathies for AOG are no doubt still evident considering the absence of GoA authority for at least the last four years.

Unconfirmed reports also suggest that a confrontation may occur in the coming weeks between a former commander from Khadir, with a number of still mobilized men, and the provincial authorities. A previous deal for the individual to assume a senior position with the ANSF appears to be fraying with deadlines imposed by either side being ignored.

BAMYAN

Although the floods were largely viewed as affecting the north of the country, Bamyan and Daykundi also suffered serious inundations. In Bamyan, three people were confirmed dead and another 126 injured. Almost 900 families needed assistance and tens of thousands of jeribs of farmland and a million trees were damaged or destroyed in the first week of May. The road from Yakawlang to Panjab was closed, and travel to Kharmard was severely problematic, with some roads

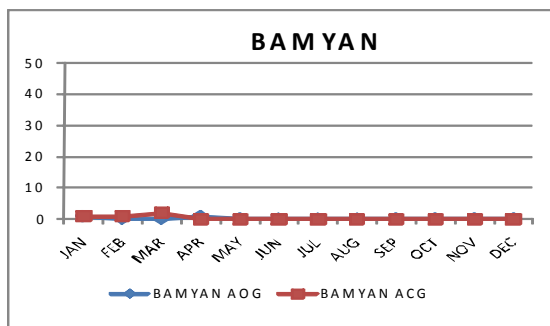
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ACG/AOG activity in the Shikari and Ghandak Valleys
- ACG/AOG penetration from Tala Wa Barfak

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
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judged impassable. NGOs are heavily involved in the emergency response to the crisis and at the time of writing there have been no reported NGO staff casualties. It remains to be seen what effect the floods will have on this year’s harvest and the economic livelihoods of the province’s population.

Separately, a UXO detonated, injuring two people in Qarghantoo Village while they were walking in the mountains on 2 May. Four days later an old Soviet era 150 kg aircraft bomb was dislodged in the floods in Surkhl Qul Village, within sight of what remains of the Buddhas. Both incidents serve as reminders of the vast number of minefields and abandoned ordinance which litter



large tracts of Bamyan. Walking on marked tracks and having the benefit of local knowledge will do a significant amount to reduce the risk from UXOs.

Several reports have also been received regarding the continued threat of AOG penetration into Kharmard district from Tala Wa Barfak. The AOG district commander in Tala Wa Barfak has launched a number of operations in Baghlan, including a direct assault on the DAC, which in turn has invited an increased ANSF presence. A move south into Kharmard, temporary or otherwise, may be expected if ANSF reinforcements remain north of the provincial border.

PANJSHIR

Panjshir is rarely mentioned in the ANSO Report largely due to the complete absence of any security incidents in the province. The change in the provincial governor, however, appears to have shaken the peaceful kingdom from its slumber. The previous governor, a strong supporter of Dr. Abdullah in the elections, was replaced by a reported ally of the current regime. As has happened across the country, a change in provincial leadership often invites a change

	NGO Incidents
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in the security dynamic as the security climate is undermined by elements intent on profiting from the instability or to highlight the perceived instability following a change in leadership. Consequently, on 6 May two UN vehicles were transiting through Khenj district in Pesh Ghor Area when a small IED detonated, damaging a window on the car and leaving no injuries. It appears that the device was not designed to inflict casual-

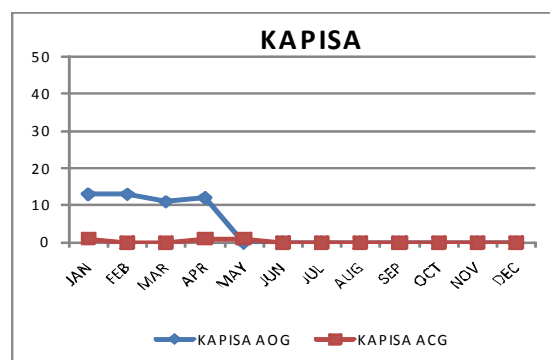
ties. A further small IED on 27 April also detonated, causing no casualties after a passing IMF convoy. A SAF exchange between the former governor's bodyguards and the ANP on 27 March could also be placed in the same context as the two IEDs. Some reports have emerged of a possible AOG connection to the incidents due to a dormant AOG faction based in the centre of the province; however, this appears unlikely considering the timing and recent political events. NGOs, in the proceeding weeks, are advised to use low profile vehicles for any travel through the province as high profile international vehicles—the UN and IMF included—appear to garner the most attention.

KAPISA

AOG initiated incidents in Kapisa have increased almost three and a half times from 2009 levels. The vast majority of which occur in the eastern districts of Alasay, Nijrab and Tagab where few NGOs operate. At the beginning of 2009, AOG incidents were on the decrease as the disparate groups were on the defensive following several months of IMF operations after the deaths of 10 soldiers in Surobi in August 2008. This is perhaps best exemplified by examining the AOG casualty count from IMF/ANSF operations or actions. From May 2008 to May 2009, according to ANSO data, there were 95 AOG fatalities for the 12 month period and 24 reported AOG casualties. What

	NGO Incidents
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followed was a discernible lull in AOG initiated attacks as many senior and mid-level commanders had been killed and the average age of the fighters reportedly dropped to below 25 years old. In late 2009 a more population centric IMF approach was adopted involving a decrease in the number of offensive ANSF/IMF operations and a drop in the use of airstrikes, which have in the past caused several civilian casualties. Between May 2009 to May 2010, the number of AOG fatalities decreased by nine tenths to nine with four reported AOG injuries. Simply put, whereas ANSF and IMF were on the offensive in the second half of 2008 and beginning of 2009, the roles have been reversed and it appears that AOG ranks have been replenished. More recently, AOG appear increasingly able to dictate the current security environment. If one is to extrapolate further, an IMF shift to a population-centric approach does not appear to have improved security or secured the population, considering that AOG



attacks have increased more than three-fold this year.

The east of the province also suffers from numerous tribal and personal disputes stretching back to the civil war period, often assuming the forms of assassinations and ambushes of opponents. Occasionally, this also involves different AOG factions openly fighting one another.

In the West of Kapisa, two rocket attacks were recorded in the past reporting period—one striking the provincial centre on 9 May and another rocket attack targeting an ANP checkpoint in Rahman Khel Village, both causing no casualties. Of possible concern for NGOs with staff and operations in Mahmudi Raqi or either of the Kohistans is the potential for floods in the coming weeks. Panjshir experienced a metre of snow in the first week of May, which will no doubt increase the height of the flood season which occurs in the region.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Clashes between AOG and ANSF/IMF in Tagab
- Low intensity factional disputes in Kohistan I & II
- Decentralized AOG activity in Alasay, Nijrab and Tagab

LOGAR

An increasing number of IEDs are being found along the district roads in Logar, particularly Baraki Barak, Kharwar, and Puli Alam. Seven of the eight IEDs found in the last reporting period were located in Baraki Barak along the main thoroughfare to Wardak, where numerous IMF and ANSF convoys travel every day. In Kharwar on 8 May, IMF attended to a roadside IED in Khawja Angor Area, when AOG attacked their position. In the resulting exchange of fire, one civilian was killed and three others were injured. It is not known whether a deliberately exposed IED was used to attract IMF, which would force them to exit their vehicles to investigate. The tactic would by no means be beyond the realms of possibility.

Two detonations did occur, however: one struck an IMF vehicle, causing no casualties in Puli Alam

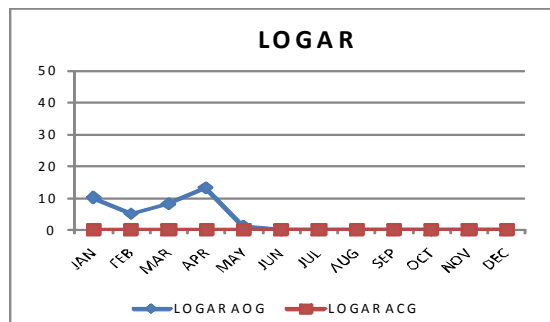
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ACG/AOG abductions
- IMF operations
- AOG intimidation

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
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on 5 May; and the other detonated against a civilian vehicle in Dondoki Area of Charkh on 7 May, killing all five civilians on board. Civilian casualties from IEDs remain a rare occurrence but are likely to increase in line with their use by AOG. IEDs are preferable to SAF ambushes due to their effectiveness considering that IMF vehicles now closely resemble a mobile fortress on wheels. When ambushes do occur, they target logistics convoys or ANSF vehicles in remote locations, where the chances of a counter-ambush are dramatically reduced.

A senior AOG commander was arrested by ANSF in Dashti Pandi Area of Baraki Barak on 8 May. One report suggests that the individual is the AOG military commander for Baraki Barak. Similar such arrests in other districts of Logar have led to a discernible drop in the number of AOG initiated incidents until a qualified replacement commander is found. Interestingly, it has been reported that the individual has twelve active fighters under his command,



which is a relatively small number considering the size and strategic importance of Baraki Barak.

IMF logistics convoys, although occasionally targeted, may become a higher profile target if the two attacks this month begin to set a trend. The first, on 5 May in Padkhwab Area of Puli Alam, involved the use of rockets against a convoy. There were no reported casualties. The second, on 13 May in Tangi Waghjan Area, using SAF resulted in two trucks being set ablaze. The convoys may be seen as a more vulnerable target for AOG attacks, especially considering the current sentiment towards IMF following several night-time raids that have resulted in a number of fatalities, of which IMF claim are AOG and the local population claims are civilian. An IMF escalation of force shooting on 4 May in Baraki Barak left one man dead and is unlikely to engender support from the local population towards IMF. AOG have been extremely adept at using any incident involving IMF in the province for propaganda purposes and will continue to take advantage of the situation.

PARWAN

A familiar pattern of security incidents has again been experienced in Parwan. In the last reporting period, Chaharikar hosted several ACG events, and AOG attacked an ANP checkpoint in Shinwari. On 4 May in Opian Area of Chaharikar, a dispute between two

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG activity in Ghorband Valley & ACG activity in Chaharikar

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	2
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former commanders evolved into a SAF exchange which left two injured. Following the arrival of the ANP, two further individuals were also arrested. A week later, armed men shot and killed a man in the daylight hours in Sanj Dara Dara Area. An undercurrent of criminal activity exists in the provincial capital as former commanders to the conflict preserve their networks and seek to benefit

financially from the apparent peace. The attack against the ANP checkpoint on 4 May also fits a regular pattern of occasional low intensity attacks against ANSF along the main road in the Ghorband Valley. Any fatalities are largely the result of IEDs; however, there have been no such incidents year to date. The escalation of the conflict in neighbouring Tala Wa Barfak district of Baghlan has produced some reports suggesting that a 'spillover' may occur into Parwan, but at the moment they remain unconfirmed. NGOs face few security concerns when operating in Parwan, providing they are transparent about their activities with the local communities.

WARDAK

Eight separate ambushes of logistics convoys in Saydabad alone in the first half of May are indicative of the general trend in Wardak. A PSC detachment typically is assigned to the large convoys, which shuttle supplies to Ghazni, Zabul or Kandahar for IMF as well as the general population. Salar and Sheikhabad Areas in Saydabad are particularly renowned locations for ambushes and have been so for the last two years. NGOs have been affected in the past when a PSC detachment sought shelter in an NGO run hospital after being attacked in an ambush. The individuals ended up causing extensive damage to the medical facility following the death of a colleague. Civilian casualties occasionally occur following exchanges of fire between AOG/ACG and the PSC members protecting the convoy. On 8 May, a local student was shot and reportedly killed by a PSC in Zamyi Area of Saydabad following an ambush on a convoy. The local population was in-

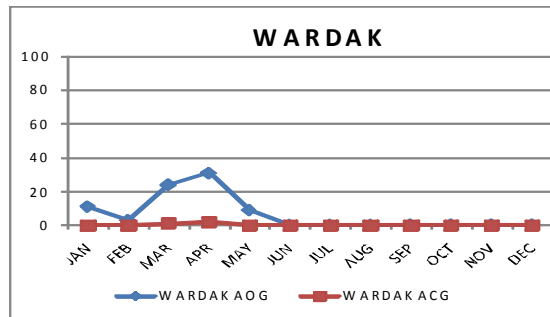
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- ACG/AOG abductions
- AOG intimidation
- IEDs and SAF ambushes targeting IMF/ANSF and logistics convoys along Highway One

	NGO Incidents
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censed, and provincial authorities demanded immediate action. Two PSCs, who together are believed to supply the majority of IMF bases across the country, were suspended from the Kabul to Kandahar Highway. The action is unlikely to change the operating rules for PSCs considering that they are replacing the traditional role of the international military—that of guarding supply convoys. The attacks on convoys are perhaps the best example of the blurred lines between AOG and ACG activities. Although there is no doubt an AOG incentive to attack IMF convoys, there is also a criminal connection as rival companies attack competitors and ‘insurance companies’ assure passage for their own convoys. Premiums are dictated by the insecurity along the road. The more insecure the road appears, the higher the premium that transporters have to pay. If the intention of building Highway One was to liberalise trade across the country, then this is being severely hamstrung by both the transporters themselves and those networks that specialize in attacking the lifelines of the country.

It appears that a significant shipment of rockets has arrived in



Jaghathu or that last year’s supply is being dusted off. Last summer’s rocket attacks against the Jaghatu DAC seemingly occurred every other night. The DAC suffered a rocket attack on 1 May, followed by the new IMF FOB the following day. The FOB suffered a further rocket attack on 8 May. There were no reported casualties from the incidents. The new FOB in Jaghatu is likely to attract further rocket attacks on a regular basis over the coming months as there has been no permanent IMF presence in the district since the arrival of the bolstered force at the beginning of 2009.

Also in Jaghatu, three surveyors for an NSP implementation program were abducted by AOG in Wolbeddin Area on 9 May. The status of the three is currently unknown; however, typically NSP workers are undertaking projects at the behest of the local shuras, therefore an intervention by that body often leads to the release of the individuals.

Those few NGOs operating in Wardak are doing so with the acceptance of local communities and therefore are able to navigate the local dynamics. The increasing frequency of ambushes and IEDs along the main district roads is obviously a cause for concern and NGOs. The complete avoidance of any security or logistics convoys is an obvious necessity.

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..”

KUNDUZ

AOGs appear to be rising to the challenge presented by the northern “troop surge” through an increasingly sophisticated counter-intelligence campaign. Meanwhile, IMF/ANSF are vying to protect the northern supply line through a series of arrest operations and airstrikes in Chahar Dara and Kunduz districts. The intelligence behind such operations was called into question this period, however, when an INGO national staff member was mistakenly arrested in Chahar Dara District and detained for five days in Bagram Prison. While such incidents occur more frequently than are reported, this specific incident called to mind the threat posed to NGO national staff members and the resentment that these incidents must inevitably invoke among the local population.

The threat of abduction southeast of Imam Sahib District Centre remains high, where two NGO abductions occurred in April. The second abduction, which was not included in the relevant biweekly report for security reasons, occurred in Gadi Sazi Village on 14 April. One NGO worker was abducted alongside a GoA employee, and both abductees were released the following day.

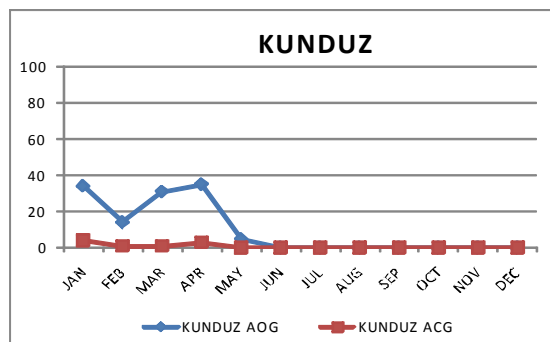
As part of a well-orchestrated campaign to interrupt ANSF/IMF intelligence capabilities,

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	3
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AOGs have managed to shut down telecommunications in most areas of the province from 1800 to 0500 hours daily, following a series of attacks against telecommunications towers over the past three weeks. Intimidation campaigns against telecommunications companies in Kunduz have been reported in previous years; however, such earlier campaigns were directed towards obtaining illegal taxes from the victimized companies, rather than shutting down communications. As part of this concerted agenda against IMF/ANSF intelligence collection, AOGs have also abducted and executed at least five civilians accused of spying in Imam Sahib and Kunduz districts.

According to open source media reports, AOG intimidation tactics have been deployed against civilians in Kunduz City, where several dozen girls were hospitalized after a poisonous gas had been released into their high school—the fourth such incident reported in the past month in Kunduz City. In an equally alarming case of civilian targeting, an RCIED detonated at a local cockfight, killing two civilians. If these incidents are confirmed to be AOG-initiated, this would represent a deviation from the AOG’s purported strategy of avoiding civilian targets. Such attacks are more reminiscent of the former Taliban government’s reprisals against “immoral” activity, such as women’s education and gambling, than that of the current AOGs’ purported ban on civilian targeting.

Meanwhile, IMF/ANSF are attempting to weed out AOG leadership through targeted arrest operations and airstrikes in Chahar



Dara and Kunduz districts. A single operation with close air support in Gorteppa Area of Kunduz District resulted in the purported deaths of at least 27 AOGs and the arrest of several more, including at least one commander and several foreign fighters. The Khanabad-Kunduz Highway, which was previously kept secure over the past six months by a handful of pro-government militias, has seen an increase in daytime IED incidents and evening roadside robberies. Three RCIED incidents were reported in Khanabad District in the morning hours, each two to six kilometres east of Kunduz City: one detonated against an ANP convoy and injured two ANP, the second was discovered and defused, and the third detonated against a privately owned vehicle. Two separate incidents of roadside robberies were also reported in Nikpai Area of Khanabad District, both at approximately 2100 hours. The security of the road may have been compromised by an internal dispute among under-paid militia members, who may now be utilizing their positions for personal gain. In Imam Sahib District, southeast of the District Centre, ANSF and pro-government militias continue to engage AOGs for control of the Gumbaz, Qirghiz and Kinchak Villages, where three RCIEDs were discovered and defused by IMF. AOGs are also engaging with pro-government militias to the north of Kunduz City, where late last reporting period two AOGs dressed in ANA uniforms attacked the militia’s vehicle with SAF, killing one. Again on 10 May in Telawka Area, AOGs ambushed a militia vehicle with SAF and RPGs, killing two militia members, including one commander. Violence in Kunduz Province is expected to increase in the coming months, as both AOGs and IMF/ANSF shift their attention to the war’s “northern front.”

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG control of telecommunications
- AOG attacks against civilian targets
- IEDs on Kunduz-Khanabad Highway

BAGHLAN

The fight for control of the most critical junction in the north of the country continued this period, as AOGs launched operations in Dand-e Ghorī Area of Pul-e Khumri for the first time since five UN staff members were abducted to the area in mid-April. Also, in an unprecedented roadside robbery on the Kabul-Pul-e Khumri road in Doshi District, armed men stopped vehicles and robbed them of their valuables in the early evening. Though the incident was apparently criminally motivated, AOGs are known to support ACGs in northern Doshi District. Thus, the main roads connecting Kabul to Kunduz and Mazar-e Sharif remain vulnerable in three critical locations: to the west, south and north of Pul-e Khumri City. The alternate road leading from Bamyan to Doshi through Tala Wa Barfak District is also at risk, as AOGs continue to attack road construction efforts in this area.

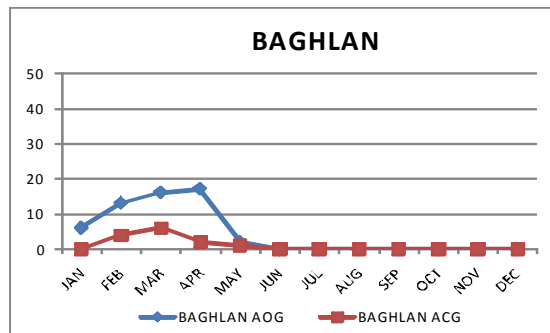
Operation Taohid II continued for the fourth week in Baghlani Jadid District, where three ANSF

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Operations in Baghlani Jadid and Pul-e Khumri
- ACG/AOG presence in northern Doshi
- AOG presence in Tala Wa Barfak

	NGO Incidents
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forward operating bases were constructed along the river. While the FOBs are intended for ANA and NDS usage, the idea has also been floated by IMF to use the FOBs to house AOGs who surrendered to the GoA last March. These “reintegrated” AOGs have been involved in planning and leading IMF/ANSF operations throughout the district, and one high-level AOG commander who has yet to officially surrender to the GoA may attempt to retake his former stronghold in Baghlān-e Merkazi in the near future. Meanwhile, AOGs reopened the southern front of the battle in Pul-e Khumri District when around 50 AOGs attacked an ANP checkpoint in Bazari Pustaq Area between Dahan-e Ghorī and Dand-e Ghorī, forcing ANP to retreat from the area. ANSF responded 24 hours later with overwhelming force, deploying approximately 400 ANA, ANP and NDS members to secure Dahan-e Ghorī District Centre and engage the AOGs in Dand-e Ghorī. The operation is ongoing at the time of reporting, and nine AOGs have been killed, with one ANA member also killed. The risk to civilians remains high in both areas of Baghlān where fighting is ongoing, as AOGs are utilizing long range rockets and ANSF has deployed close air support. AOGs demonstrated their willingness



and ability to launch BM-1 rockets capable of striking Pul-e Khumri City when four rockets were launched from Dand-e Ghorī area, two of which impacted the eastern part of the city. Further south in Tala Wa Barfak District, a group of 50 AOGs led by a local commander who recently returned from Pakistan launched an attack against the District Administrative Centre. The attack was staved off by ANP with local community support; however, the AOGs remain at large and may continue to attack targets in Tala Wa Barfak or further east in Bamyan Province.

It is not yet clear what the outcome of these operations will be in Baghlān Province, although ANSF/IMF hope to secure the area through the establishment of ANSF FOBs meant to ensure permanent ANSF presence in areas which had been previously difficult to control. An ANA FOB may also be constructed in Dand-e Ghorī Area; however, this has not yet been confirmed. In the near term, violence will continue to make NGO operations and travel through the province difficult. In the long term, IMF/ANSF-led reconstruction and development objectives will likely be targeted, as has occurred in other areas of the country where such projects have been used for military strategic purposes. Whatever the outcome of the current operations, the struggle for control of the most strategic junction in the north will continue for the foreseeable future.

GRAPHS: Please note that graphs in this report are current as of 5 May 2010.

BALKH

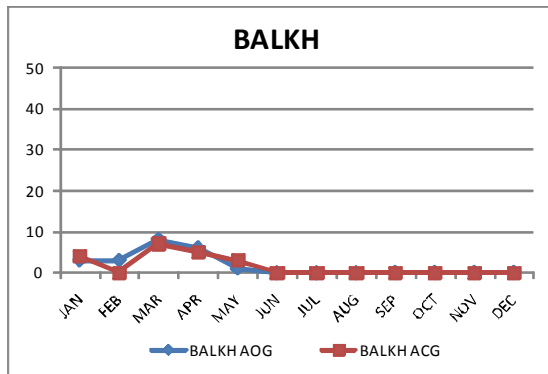
Two NGO incidents in Balkh Province this period highlight the well-known but under-reported presence of armed groups in both the north and south of the province. In one incident, an NGO driver encountered two armed men intent on stealing the NGO's marked Hilux truck. When the driver refused to hand over the vehicle, the men shot the vehicle with SAF and an RPG, eventually stealing the vehicle's communications equipment before fleeing the scene. A verbal warning given to an INGO staff member in Sholgara District was perhaps one indicator of an increase in AOG presence in the south of the province. The staff member was told not to work in Dallan Village due to the reported increased presence of armed men in the area. The eastern side of Sholgara District has long been regarded as an AOG safe haven due to the physical barrier of the river running

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Increased AOG presence in Sholgara District
- Emboldened AOGs in Chahar Bolak and Chimtial
- AOG targeting of IMF supply lines

	NGO Incidents
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north-south which prevents ANP from patrolling the area. The recent security incidents have been accompanied by rumours of an increased AOG presence concentrated on the border with Samangan Province and in the north of the district around Sayab and Paikan Dara areas. This reporting period, two armed men on motorcycles killed a local shopkeeper in Shahgadi Qulan Village, a group of armed men intimidated and stole motorcycles from a local school in Paikan Dara Village, and three men on motorcycles stopped the vehicle of the Deputy of Balkh Provincial Council (while the council member was absent from the vehicle) and shot dead the council member's bodyguard. The increase in AOG presence in Sholgara is seen alongside an increase in AOG activity in the traditional AOG strongholds of Chahar Bolak and Chimtial districts. Exposing themselves on the main Mazar-Shibirgan road in the early evening hours and carrying out an intimidation campaign against the local population, AOGs in this area may be receiving increased external support and guidance as a part of a broader AOG strategy to secure control of key territory and cut off IMF/



ANSF access routes throughout the northern region. For the second time in two weeks armed men stopped vehicles along the Mazar-Shibirgan Road, this time abducting four commercial truck drivers—three of whom were Turkmenistani and remain in AOG custody. In addition, AOGs appear to have launched a campaign of intimidation against the local population, with two reports of organized intimidation in Arzankar and Zig Zig villages of Chahar Bolak, as well as Chimtial District Centre.

AOGs may begin to focus their attention on the high-value sitting target of the railroad leading from Uzbekistan to Camp Marmal, which is now thirty-four kilometres complete. The railroad, which runs adjacent to the road leading to Hairaton Junction, and westward along the ring road to Camp Marmal, is expected to be completed by March 2011. According to one source, the railroad will be exclusively utilized by IMF for the next three years, and plans have been laid to extend the track's network throughout the country. In the northern region alone the railroad is expected to reach Shir Khan Bandar of Kunduz Province in the east and eventually extend to the western capital of Herat.

SAR-E PUL

As seen in Jawzjan Province, the re-emergence of AOG activity can be seen this period in Sar-e Pul Province, following a month-long period of quiet in the aftermath of the recent ANSF operation. While an ANSF forward operating base houses approximately 50 ANSF in Sar-e Pul City, the AOG centre of

	NGO Incidents
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gravity of Sayyad District is only visited by daytime ANSF patrols. No AOG activity was seen in Sayyad District itself this period; however, reports of AOG intimidation against a telecommunications tower in Jurghan Area of Kohistanat suggests that AOGs

may be trying to protect their access along the road which leads from Jawzjan southward through Bilchiragh, and eastward again into Sar-e Pul District. Unknown armed individuals also fired on a village elder in Sar-e Pul City, perhaps an indication of an AOG campaign against suspected IMF/ANSF collaborators. In Sozma Qala District, three RPGs were fired toward an ANP checkpoint outside a refugee camp which the government is insisting be closed. One of the rockets impacted near the camp and injured three children.

FARYYAB

An NGO-built government-run girls school in northern Faryab was targeted for the fifth time in the past four months, revealing a standing threat against female education in the vicinity of Andkhoy District. In this incident, a man entered the school and assaulted the two guards on duty. The man attempted to set fire to the administrative office of the school, but was apprehended by ANP before he was able to cause any major damage. The ANP released the individual, who is reportedly well-connected with politically influential people in the area. This is the second incident in which individuals were apprehended in connection with these incidents and later released, possibly revealing a level of tolerance for these attacks among local authorities.

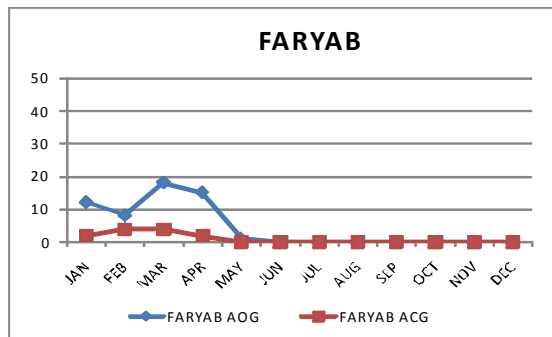
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG attacks in Almar, Qaysar and Bilchiragh
- AOG presence in Myandara Valley
- Continued attacks against girls schools in northern Faryab

	NGO Incidents
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The ongoing ANSF/IMF operation in Jalayir Valley, named “Cheshma-e Naw” is continuing into its second month. As AOG activity has reportedly been reduced in the area from Atta Khan Khwaja to Meng Derakht, IMF is reportedly handing off responsibility for the area to national forces while proceeding to clear the surrounding areas. The newly constructed forward operating base is intended to house the recently consolidated Afghan Border Police force who will be responsible for patrolling the area. IMF have expressed their intentions to start large construction projects in the area in the coming months (roads, wells, pharmacies, and electricity grids); however, they have also explicitly announced they will not be approaching NGOs to assist with these projects as they understand it will jeopardize the NGOs’ security.

Last month in Myandara Valley, ANSF launched an operation to clear the area of a newly formed AOG which presented itself last March. Though one AOG commander was killed and another



member arrested, the operation was reportedly unsuccessful and AOGs remain present. Local GoA representatives continue to advise NGOs against entering the area since the area is remote and the security situation remains tenuous. However, efforts are allegedly being made to gather community support to guarantee the protection of NGOs who enter the valley.

In the east of the province, AOGs connected to those in southern Jawzjan Province continue to attack ANSF targets. This time, in eastern Bilchiragh District, Qorchi Village, AOGs fired mortar rounds on an ANP patrol, and four civilians were killed in the ensuing firefight. AOGs may continue to focus their efforts on this area of Bilchiragh as ANSF have increased their presence in the Jawzjan districts of Darzab and Qush Tepa. In the west of the province, Almar and Qaysar continue to see attacks against ANSF, where AOGs managed to abduct four ANP members from Timor Koprok Area of Almar District and engaged in a two-hour long firefight with an ANP logistical convoy in Kanjak Village of Qaysar.

SAMANGAN

Samangan Province reported an unusually high number of incidents this period, with two attacks on ANSF, a roadside robbery and one arrest of a high-level AOG. The two attacks on ANSF were on opposite sides of the province and do not necessarily represent an increased threat of orchestrated AOG activity. The first attack targeted a checkpoint in Dara-e Suf Payin and is assumed to have

	NGO Incidents
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been carried out by AOGs who have migrated from Kishindeh District of Balkh Province. The second attack occurred in Aybak District, Khoja Ismail Area, when AOGs reportedly attacked an ANP patrol, injuring an ANP officer. One report suggested the second incident was in fact a case of “friendly fire;” however, this was not confirmed. Elsewhere, in a

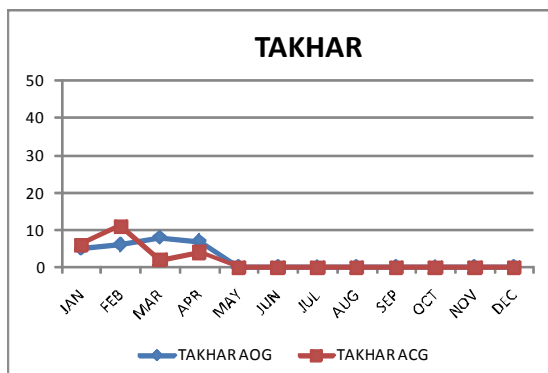
typical incident in the largely ungoverned district of Dara-e Suf Bala, armed men stopped private trucks and robbed them of their valuables in Kotal-e Sorkh Area before being chased off by ANP. While no confirmed incidents have occurred in Robatak Area of Aybak District, the area to the immediate west of Baghlan Province along the ring road remains vulnerable to AOG attacks or abductions in the early evening hours. Overall, the security situation in Samangan remains stable, and AOGs have not shown a concerted effort to infiltrate and carry out activities from neighboring Baghlan Province.

TAKHAR

The first NGO kidnapping was reported in northern Takhar this period, when the driver of a red unmarked INGO Hilux truck was taken with the vehicle from Khwaja Ghar District, Zard Kamar Area. The abductors released the INGO driver 72 hours later, stating that their objective was not to kidnap the driver, and that they support the INGO’s activities and want them to continue working in the area. AOGs in Khwaja Ghar are not necessarily

	NGO Incidents
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ily connected with the more prominent armed group based in Darqad and Yangi Qala; however, both groups are intent on gaining control of the Tajikistan border. In response to the growing AOG presence in northern Takhar, a high-level meeting was convened among ANSF, IMF and GoA personnel to discuss plans for a military operation in the area. If military assets are able to be redirected from Kunduz and Baghlan provinces, the operation will take place within the coming weeks. However, GoA officials expressed reservations that adequate reinforcements could be redeployed from the neighboring provinces in



the short-term. AOGs are continuing to vie for control of the Tajikistan border area, where AOGs clashed with Afghan National Border Police and pro-government militias in Darqad and Khaja Bahawuddin districts. A separate group of AOGs from those centred in Darqad and Yangi Qala are becoming increasingly active in neighboring Chah Ab District and are reportedly intent on securing smuggling routes on the border with Badakhshan Province.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

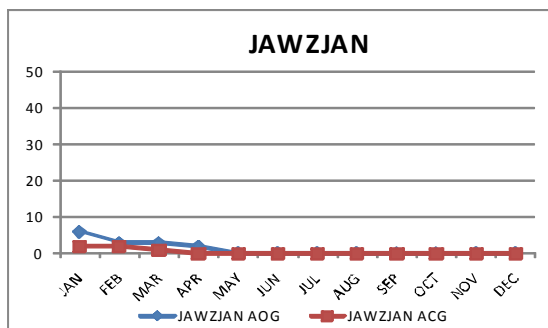
- AOG presence in northern Takhar
- Possible ANSF operation

JAWZJAN

Despite the sustained presence of fifty ANSF in the newly built forward operating base one kilometre north of Darzab District Centre, AOGs are beginning to reveal their presence after a month-long period of quiet following the recent ANSF operation. While ANSF reportedly makes regular patrols on the Shibirgan-Darzab Highway, IMF assesses that AOGs remain present to the west of Darzab District Centre, in the

	NGO Incidents
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northern Dasht-e Laili Area, as well as Aqsai Area on the border with Sar-e Pul Province. In a slight display of force this period, two AOGs were killed while laying IEDs alongside the Darzab-Sayyad Road where AOGs have attempted to block ANSF/IMF access between the provinces. Also in the same area, AOGs attacked a telecommunications tower with SAF and set it on fire, perhaps mirroring the current AOG campaign in Kunduz Province, aiming to hamper ANSF/IMF intelligence capabilities in the area. As AOGs in southern Jawzjan



zjan have neither been defeated, arrested, or reintegrated, it is only foreseeable that there will be a resurgence of AOG activity in the coming months. Such activity will likely occur along the roads between Sar-e Pul and Jawzjan Provinces—both the Darzab-Sayyad Road as well as the road leading through Bilchiragh and Kohistanat districts of the neighboring provinces towards the capital district of Sar-e Pul Province.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG presence in Darzab and Qush Tapa

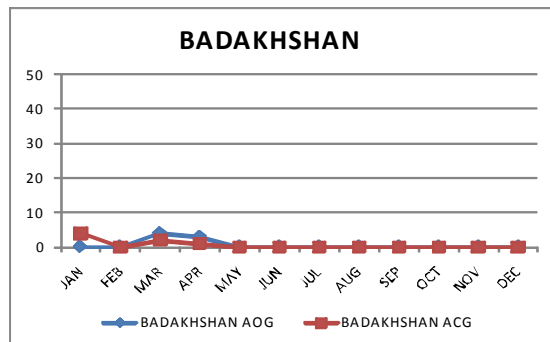
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BADAKHSHAN

Tensions in Kishim District erupted this period when a group of approximately 12 armed men attacked the Kishim District Administrative Centre in the evening with SAF and RPGs from the eastern and northeastern hills. Approximately 20 RPGs were fired in the direction of the DAC, and the municipality guesthouse was partially burnt. The AOGs retreated after ANP detachments arrived from Kalafgan and Faizabad districts. Reportedly, the body guard of the Kishim District Chief of Police was injured and two suspected AOGs were subsequently detained. According to further

	NGO Incidents
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reports, ANP had intelligence that AOGs were intent on attacking the DAC as of two weeks ago, prompting ANP from surrounding districts to deploy to Kishim. However, following a period of calm, the ANP reinforcements left a few days prior to the attack. AOGs local to Kishim District have a history of attacking ANSF/IMF targets on occasion; however, the recent large-scale attack may have been prompted by pressures currently placed on AOGs in northern Takhar who are suspected to have connections with AOGs in the district.



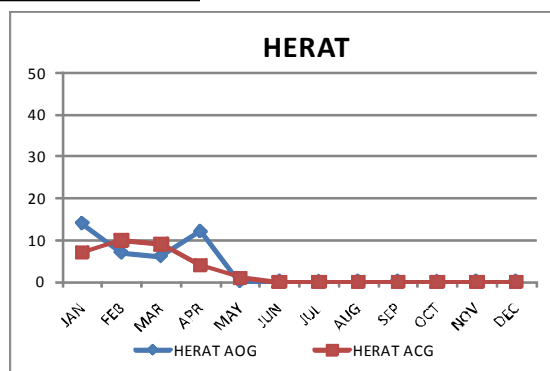
A recent spate of IED discoveries in Feyzabad City may point to local political tensions. Feyzabad City and the rest of Badakhshan Province will likely remain calm, contingent on the stability of the provincial government; however, AOG infiltration from northern Takhar may upset certain districts which already host an indigenous AOG presence, such as Shahri Buzorg and Kishim.

HERAT

During this reporting period, the majority of security incidents in Herat Province were concentrated mainly in Kushk, Adraskan and Shindand districts. The latter district was particularly active during the present cycle with numerous serious incidents. On 8 May, in Parmakan area, AOG members attacked a pro-government militia checkpoint, killing one militia member. Another four pro-government militia members were abducted and later beheaded by the AOG. Subsequently, following this attack IMF conducted an airstrike in the same area, killing 9 AOG members and destroying 5 AOG vehicles. On 9 May, on the main road in Zer Koh (the area which is known as an AOG stronghold in the district) two men dressed in military-style attire attempted to stop a private truck. The driver, seeing that they were trying to conceal their weapons, refused to stop. Reportedly, the two men attempted to shoot the truck's tyres; however, the driver

	NGO Incidents
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was able to escape from the scene of the attack. Finally, the same day also in Zer Koh area, ANP located and then defused an RCIED. The use of IEDs/RCIEDs is still a concern in Herat Province with similar incidents that were recorded in Adraskan and Kushk. On 6 May in Kushk (Suburb area), an RCIED hit an IMF patrol, damaging one IMF vehicle (another RCIED was discovered and defused a day earlier in that area). Also on 6 May, but in Adraskan, an IED hit an ANP vehicle, killing one ANP and wounding the District Chief of Police. As seen in Farah, intimidation against the local population continued also in Herat Province. On 9 May, in Kushk (Suburb area) an AOG abducted a local civilian whom they accused of spying for GoA. Heightened tensions have been reported in Chishti Sharif District related to the conflict between two local commanders. For in-



stance, on 10 May (Shir Khaj area) as a result of an armed clash that occurred between two groups involved in this conflict, three AOG members were killed and another two were wounded. For the time being, the situation has calmed with the intervention of different actors; however, taking into account the complex security environment in the area (related with the sensitive issue of Salma Dam), further tension in the area can be expected in the near future. The situation in Herat City still remains relatively calm with, of note, a robbery targeting an IO national staff in District 6 (the attackers stole his mobile phone). Finally, on 14 May, a demonstration to voice discontent about recent death sentences against several Afghan nationals in Iran was aborted by the authorities and ended without incidents.

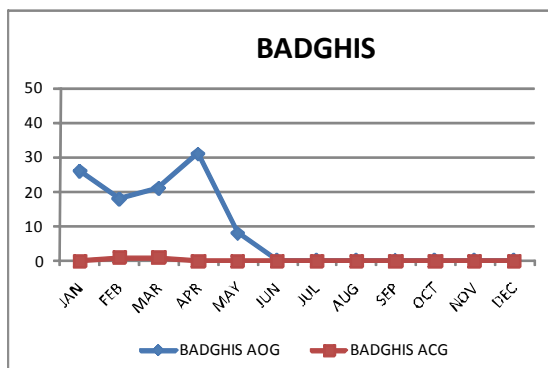
BADGHIS

Badghis continues to be assessed as the most volatile and unstable area of the Western Region with 22 ANSO recorded incidents (a slight increase compared to the previous reporting period). The majority of incidents were concentrated in Muqur and particularly in Ghormach. It is worth noting, that Ghormach has witnessed an increase by 62% of overall incident rates during the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2009. During this reporting period, only two incidents were recorded in

	NGO Incidents
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Murghab. The lull in the overall rate of incidents in the said district can probably be explained by a significant activity that this district experienced during the previous cycle and should be considered only as temporary.

The pattern of AOG expansion in Qadis District that was noted in the last report has continued into this reporting period with a surge in deployment of IEDs; for example, on 13 May, on the main road in Qarchaghi, security forces located a motorcycle-mounted RCIED. Of note, also as mentioned in the last report, a large IED was discovered in this area on 24 April. On the same day, five IEDs were located then defused in Qarqui Tu area. In addition, on 1 May in Takar Area of Qadis District, a roadside IED was discovered by security forces. The



recent incidents indicate an important collateral risk for local populations as well as for NGOs travelling through the area and should be taken into account while planning road missions.

As seen in previous periods, direct attacks against ANSF/IMF convoys and facilities remained AOGs' tactic of choice, accounting (during the reporting cycle) for more than 54% of all recorded incidents and being concentrated particularly in Ghormach and Muqur. Another feature, the trend of AOG initiated abduction continued as well in the province; for instance, on 3 May in Ghormach, AOG members abducted an ANP from his residence.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG-ANSF/IMF clashes
- IEDs in Murghab, Muqur, Ghormach and Qadis
- Abduction

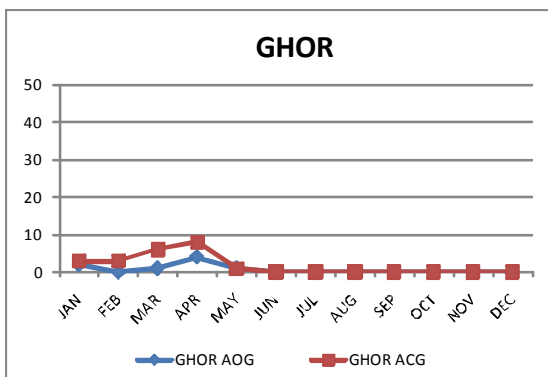
GHOR

After an active previous reporting period (regarding the number of incidents, including two NGO related ones), the overall rate of security incidents in Ghor dropped during the reporting cycle. A total of four incidents were registered in three districts: Du Layna, Shahrak and in Saghar.

	NGO Incidents
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Among them, one was AOG initiated. On 2 May, in the latter district, an AOG entered a primary school and set the storage room on fire, burning some equipment. Regarding the attacks targeting schools, this marks the first such ANSO recorded incident for 2010 in Ghor Province. It is worth noting that during 2009, according to ANSO data, there were five similar incidents. One respectively in Du Layna, Taywara and Saghar Districts and two in Shahrak (last September).

Criminal activity continues in the Province. On 2 May, in Shahrak District, a group of armed men



attacked a private residence of a local civilian, wounding one person. The motive of the attack was allegedly a personal dispute. On 10 May, another civilian was shot and killed, this time in Du Layna District, apparently also due to a personal grievance. Finally, a peaceful demonstration took place on 11 May in the Shahrak DAC area, when demonstrators voiced their disapproval with the appointment of the new District Chief of Police.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- Criminal activity
- Armed robberies long districts roads
- AOG presence particularly in Pasaband and Taywara

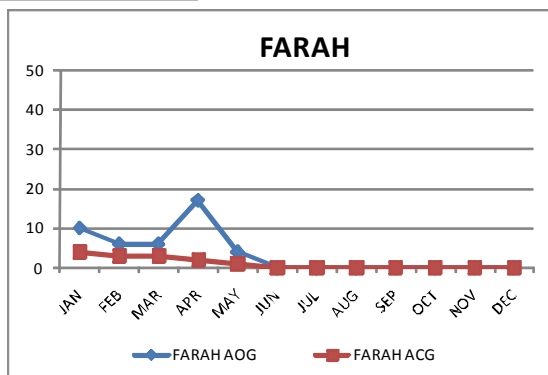
FARAH

The overall activity in Farah Province has increased compared to the last reporting period with a total of 15 ANSO recorded incidents. Nonetheless, it remains equivalent to those reported during the same period of 2009. The trend which was already observed during the previous cycle—a decrease in armed clashes—continued throughout the reporting cycle, with only two armed clashes that were reported on 10 May (in Pur Chaman) and three days earlier in Bala-Buluk taking place. Conversely, the use of IEDs/RCIEDs remains significant

	NGO Incidents
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in the province, with a total of 6 IEDs/RCIEDs being placed, of which 3 resulted in detonations. The majority of IED-related incidents were concentrated in Gulistan, Bala-Buluk and Pusht Rod. In the latter district, on 10 May, an IED was located in Naw Bahar area. Of note, security along the Herat-Kandahar Road is still a concern with an IED (placed under a bridge) which was discovered on 9 May in Bala-Buluk District.

Two hand grenade attacks were reported in Farah city. The first one took place on 3 May, when unknown men threw a hand grenade into the residence of an IO staff member. In addition, on 13 May another grenade was lobbed into an IO compound in Farah



city, causing neither damage nor casualties. It is interesting to note that similar attacks were recorded during 2009. For instance, three incidents took place last July; however, their targets were mainly GoA employees. Usually, the objective of such attacks is to intimidate, rather than to cause serious damages. Therefore, attacks against IOs seem to be a new development in the area. Intimidation of the local populace has continued as well in Farah, highlighted in an incident that occurred on 4 May in Khaki Safed District: an AOG physically assaulted and seriously wounded a local civilian, accusing him of cooperation with the GoA.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs/RCIEDs
- AOG ambushes/Armed clashes
- Criminal activity

KHOST

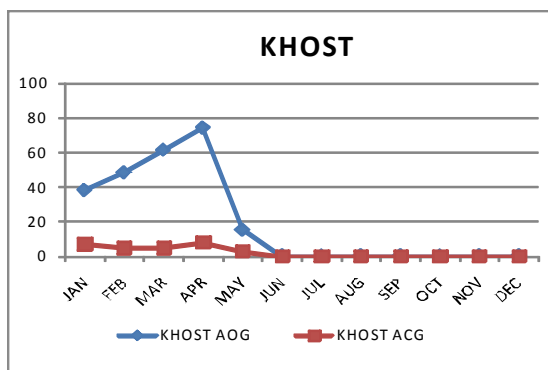
Khost Province continues to be a very violent and dangerous environment for NGO operations. The quantity of recorded AOG incidents in early May was slightly lower compared to the previous period, while the quality of these assaults remained significant, including high-profile attacks. For instance, on 3 May in Khost City, a water tanker rigged as an

	NGO Incidents
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SVBIED detonated at the main gate of an IMF base, causing damages and casualties.

Next to the usual high amount of IED-related incidents across the province, this period saw a significant increase in direct attacks and particularly IDF assaults. During this reporting cycle, around seven direct attacks and ten IDF incidents were recorded throughout Khost. This shows an apparent diversification of AOG offensive tactics from IED-related attacks.

All direct attacks targeted security forces and were reported from Spera, Tere Zayi, Tani, Sabari, Bak, and Nadir Shah Kot districts. Some of the IDF assaults, though



relatively inefficient, suggest an indifference of AOG towards civilian casualties. For example, on 11 May AOG fired at least six mortars randomly towards Khost City which impacted in different residential areas of the city. The significant increase of indirect fire incidents as well as the amount of projectiles fired further suggest an improved AOG supply chain. In several incidents, AOG fired more than 10 projectiles. On 5 May in Sabari, AOG fired even 15 mortars towards the District Administration Centre.

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs throughout the Province
- Direct attacks against security forces
- IDF targeting DACs, particularly in Sabari and Gurbuz

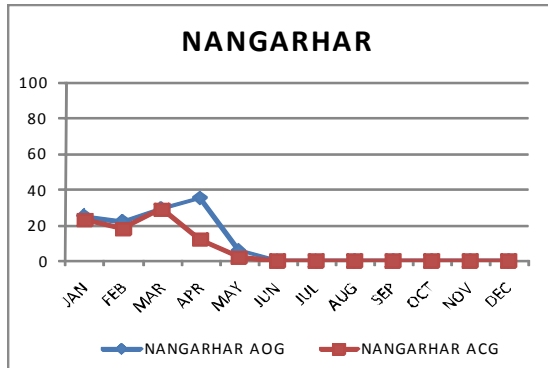
NANGARHAR

On 11 May in Sherzad District, unknown armed men forcefully stopped a private vehicle which was locally contracted by an IO whilst it was transporting wheat supplies to an INGO project site in Hisarak. The gunmen unloaded the wheat, allowing the driver to continue his journey afterwards. Although it is understood that several AOGs operate across the district, the characteristics of this incident suggest that an ACG was behind it.

With around 15 AOG incidents recorded, AOG remained very active across Nangarhar. As seen previously, the activity was concentrated in the province’s southern and eastern districts bordering Pakistan, ranging from Hisarak in the southwest to Muhmand Dara in the east. In early May, eight AOG direct attacks, mainly targeting security forces, were recorded in Dur Baba, Hisarak, Mumand Dara, Khogyani, Pachir Wa

	NGO Incidents
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Agam, and Surkh Rod districts. The level of effective IED strikes declined slightly in this period, with six detonations recorded in Bati Kot, Chaparhar, Hisarak, Jalalabad City, and Pachir Wa Agam. It is believed, however, that some of these detonations, such as the ones in Bati Kot, as well as in Jalalabad City, were at least partially attributable to crime. Next to direct attacks and IED strikes, only one IDF assault was recorded across the province. Namely, on 14 May in Bihsud District, AOG fired two rockets towards the Jalalabad Airfield which impacted in an open area. Nangarhar Province saw two significant demonstrations in early May, with one occurring in Jalalabad City and the other one in Surkh Rod. The former took place on 13 May in Jalalabad’s City Centre, when several hundred locals protested against recent death



sentences against Afghan nationals in Iran. As seen in other regions, the protestors marched towards the Iranian Consulate and subsequently dispersed peacefully. One day later, locals from Surkh Rod gathered near the District Administration Centre, protesting against alleged civilian casualties caused by a recent IMF/ANSF operation in the area. The demonstration got violent when demonstrators forcefully approached the DAC, throwing stones towards ANSF. Although not fully confirmed, two demonstrators were purportedly killed and three wounded during the clash. Subsequently, arriving Provincial Council members were able to ease tensions. However, the issue of civilian casualties during IMF/ANSF operations and/or night raids continuously inheres the risk of further civil unrest.

PAKTYA

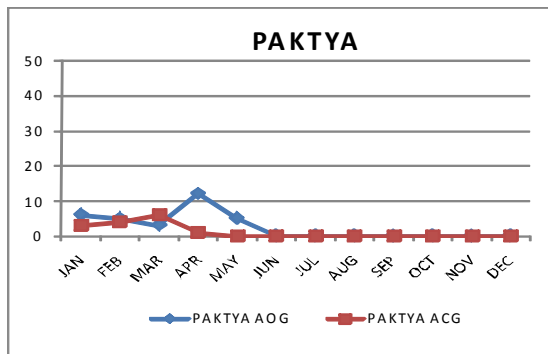
With seventeen recorded security incidents, Paktya continues to witness a step-by-step deterioration of its security environment. Eleven of these incidents were attributed to AOG, exemplifying the previously identified trend of a steady increase of AOG activity across the province in recent months.

After a significant period without complex attacks, early May saw again a coordinated assault against a high-profile target. Namely, on 14 May in Gardez District, a BBIED targeted the convoy of Paktya’s Governor, causing several casualties as well as significant

	NGO Incidents
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damage. This attack matches the identified AOG pattern of occasional high-profile attacks in and around Gardez.

AOG activity throughout the province increased once again, with particular concentration of activity in Zurmat, Gardez, and areas bordering Pakistan, such as Jaji and Dand Wa Patan. Although IMF/ANSF continued their operations in Zurmat, the District remains a hotspot of AOG activity. In at least two incidents, AOG attacked private road construction companies along the main Gardez-Zurmat Road. Around 30% of all AOG inci-



dents across the province were reported from Zurmat District, with at least two direct attacks and one IED recorded. The latter caused numerous civilian casualties when a large IED struck a mini-bus on the main road on 2 May. Still, due to the high level of IMF/ANSF operations across the district, it is not believed that the IED targeted specifically civilians, but rather was intended to assault IMF/ANSF convoys on the road.

KUNAR

In early May, AOG once again stepped up their operations across Kunar. With 57 reported AOG incidents, this period saw an increase by over 40% compared to the last cycle. Around 39 of these incidents, or approximately 68%, were direct attacks against security forces, GoA facilities, or supply convoys. The remaining 32% included IDF strikes, abductions, intimidations, and an increased amount of emplaced explosive devices.

AOG increased their pressure on major IMF/ANSF supply routes across the province. With increased confrontations in districts such as Bar Kunar and Shegal, the supply chain for IMF/ANSF po-

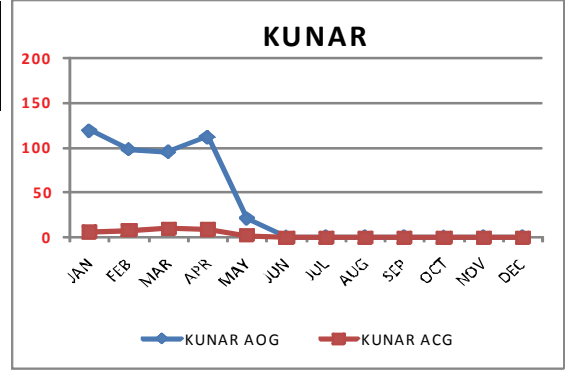
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG – IMF/ANSF clashes, particularly in Manogai and Bar Kunar
- Assaults along the Jalalabad-Asadabad Highway
- IEDs in Khas Kunar and Chawkay

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	4
This Report Period	0

sitions in northern Kunar appears to be partially interrupted. Furthermore, during this reporting cycle, at least eight attacks along the Jalalabad-Asadabad Highway were recorded, including several assaults against supply convoys. Although the latter did only target security forces as well as the mentioned supply convoys, these assaults continue to inhere risks for NGO travel on the road. As outlined previously, the frequency and intensity of these attacks increases the risk of being targeted collaterally. ANSO ER, therefore, strongly recommends that NGOs who are stuck behind a convoy on the Jalalabad-Asadabad Highway should postpone their road mission.

With 23 AOG incidents reported only from there, the hotspot of AOG activity in Kunar remains the Pech Valley, including the districts of Manogai and Wata Pur. Across this part of Kunar, which is by far the most violent area throughout the Eastern Region, IMF/ANSF patrols as well as



static positions are typically attacked on a daily basis. It appears that the IMF withdrawal from Korengal Valley one month ago increased AOGs’ operational movement capability throughout Pech and, in turn, increased the pressure on security forces even more.

The use of IEDs, a rare tactic across Kunar, has significantly increased in early May. Around five IED attacks were reported from Khas Kunar, Sirkanay, Chawkay, and Bar Kunar districts. All of them detonated against IMF or ANSF vehicles.

On 12 May in Marawara District, AOG distributed night-letters warning the local population to stop supporting GoA, IMF, and the National Solidarity Program (NSP). The specific inclusion of NSP in these night-letters again underlines ANSO’s understanding that the implementation of government-funded NSP projects by NGOs could change local perceptions of the entailed NGOs’ partiality.

LAGHMAN

After a comparatively violent period in late April, the level of recorded security incidents across Laghman Province dropped significantly in early May. Only three relevant incidents were reported, with only one being attributed to

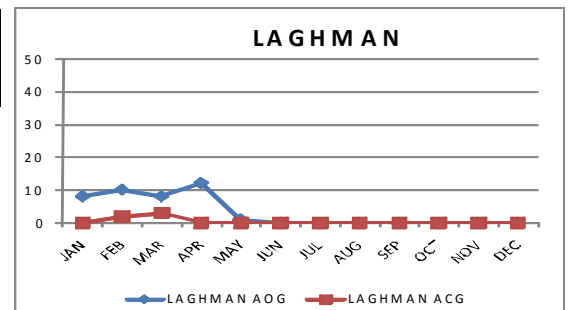
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- BBIEDs in Alishing
- AOG activity, particularly in Alishing and Qarghayi

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

AOG. The non-AOG incidents were one IED discovery in Alingar on 10 May and one arrest of a suspected AOG by NDS, also in Alingar.

The AOG incident occurred on 12 May in Alishing, when a BBIED attacker detonated himself in the vicinity of an IMF convoy without causing damage. This attack marked the second BBIED incident ever recorded in the dis-



trict, with the first one occurring just two weeks earlier. It remains unclear why this kind of attack has increased there recently. Still, it is apparent that both assaults were rather unsophisticated and/or poorly coordinated.

HELMAND

The general security situation in Helmand Province remains severe. During the present reporting period, Nad Ali and Nahri Sarraj districts saw most of the incidents, followed by Garmser and Naw Zad districts. AOGs still seem to be influential in Nad Ali and Marja districts, which had been the focus of Operation Mushtarak.

The numbers of direct attacks and IED related incidents were nearly equal. AOGs were mainly focusing on IMF/ANSF targets. However, there were three IED inci-

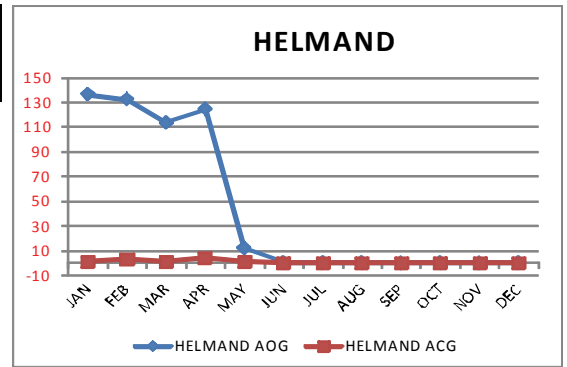
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG attacks
- IEDs
- Intimidation

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	3
This Report Period	0

idents affecting civilians in Nad Ali and Naw Zad districts. On 5 May, a roadside IED hit a local tractor, killing one civilian and wounding another in Naw Zad. On 9 May in Nad Ali District, a roadside IED hit a group of civilians, wounding three of them. On the same day in Trikh Zaaber Area, a roadside IED hit a vehicle, wounding four civilian passengers. These incidents demonstrate the risk of civilians being collaterally targeted, especially while travelling.

Helmand Province, writ large, has also seen several incidents which seem to be linked to intimidation tactics. On 5 May, AOG attacked the residence of a District Council member. As a result, two AOG members were killed and the Dis-



trict Council member and his son were wounded. On 6 May, AOG attacked Shura members of Garmser District. As a result, three AOG members were killed. In addition, on 8 May unknown armed men—allegedly AOG members—shot and killed four civilians under unknown circumstances in Grishk Valley, Nahri Sarraj District.

Furthermore, drugs were seized by ANP, ANA and IMF during several operations in Nahri Sarraj, Nad Ali, and Musa Qala districts. And because the poppy harvest is coming to its end, AOG activities are expected to increase.

GHAZNI

Ghazni Provinces continues to be insecure and is still facing a higher number of incidents as at the beginning of April. Direct attacks remain the most frequent tactic used by AOGs. With more than one quarter of all incidents, Ghazni District was quite insecure during this reporting period. Most incidents in this district took place in Qala-e-Qazi and Arzo areas as well as Ghazni City itself. However, Gelan and Qarabagh districts were not calm as well.

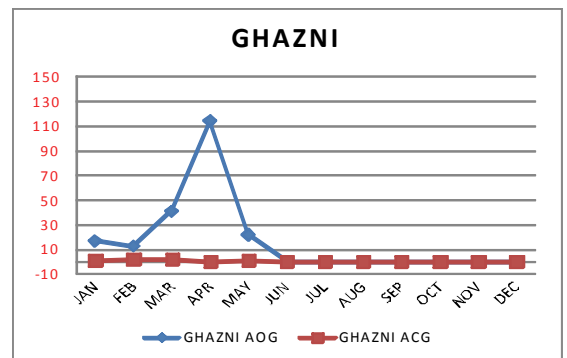
Direct AOG attacks targeted

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- AOG attacks
- Intimidation/Abduction

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

mainly IMF—including supply convoys—and ANP checkpoints. However, this reporting cycle also saw attacks against PSCs related to road construction. In addition, attacks against DACs continued—especially in Dih Yak and Giro districts. There had been altogether 11 attacks on DACs in nine districts during this reporting period. IED related incidents made up a quarter of all incidents in the province; however, half of them were discovered and safely defused, and most of the IED related incidents took place in Ghazni District. Nevertheless, other districts were affected as well, as seen on 7 May, when an IED wounded two civilians in Gelan District (Spin Ghondi



Area), demonstrating the risk of being collaterally damaged.

In addition, there were several abductions, which seem to be related to intimidation tactics by AOGs. The latest incident of abduction took place in Andar District on 8 May, when AOGs abducted locals and held them for several days. The AOGs had suspected the locals were GoA spies. On 6 May in Dih Yak, AOGs abducted a GoA official who was later released unharmed due to negotiation efforts of tribal elders. In addition, on 3rd May AOG abducted three people in Gelan District.

KANDAHAR

In light of the upcoming IMF/ANSF operation in Kandahar the environment is progressively tenser. There is a perception of increasing insecurity, whether through the perception of locals or outsiders, coupled with the large number of incidents that was recorded in Kandahar City. Additionally, Zhari and Arghandab districts also saw a significant number of incidents during the reporting period.

In Kandahar City, more than half of the recorded incidents were arrests, seizures of weapons as well as explosives, and IED discoveries. However, on 12 May an RCIED hit an ANP vehicle in District 5. Apparently, two ANP and two civilians were wounded. Attacks on ANP are expected to increase as the build-up to the planned operations in the city and the surrounding districts continues.

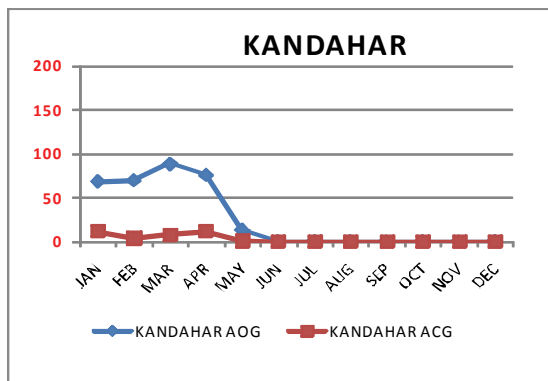
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IMF operations
- AOG assassinations
- Increasing intimidation

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	3
This Report Period	0

Furthermore, intimidation remained a concern in Kandahar City as well as the districts. In Kandahar City, there were killings or assassinations of people who held a special position in the communities or were related to GoA or IMF. On 3 May, a former ANP officer was killed and, similarly, one day later a tribal elder as well as a member of the Arghistan Shura were killed.

On 6 May, AOG shot and killed a local national driver, who was a driver for IMF logistics convoys. Furthermore, on 12 May the office manager of the prison in Kandahar City as well as a brother of a former Jihad commander were assassinated. The trend of increasing intimidation also affected national IO staff during the reporting period. In two cases, national IO staff were threatened and in one attacked. In one case, there was the explicit remark that a victim was targeted for allegedly working for “the Americans”. This confirms the present assessment that IOs, members of the international community, or civilians in a broader sense become



the focus of AOGs when they are perceived as having dealings with IMF; therefore, a neutral position to any military and political issues reduces the risk of being targeted at present.

In addition, Arghistan, Shah Wali Kot, Panjwayi and especially Zhari districts have also seen intimidation measures of AOGs such as killings, abductions and attacks on private residences during this reporting cycle. On 10 May, AOG hanged a 19-year old civilian in Zhari District (Talibano Hadira Area), accused of spying for IMF. Two days later in Ashogha Village, AOG shot and killed a civilian as he was driving and stole his vehicle. On 7 May, AOG assassinated the deputy of the Arghistan District Shura, who had been also a former CoP in the district. Furthermore, in Panjwayi District a tribal elder was abducted on 10 May, and the private residence of an ANP officer was attacked in Shan Wali Kot on the same day. In the run-up to the planned IMF/ANSF operation in Kandahar, intimidation is expected to increase further as a pinnacle element of AOG tactics.

ZABUL

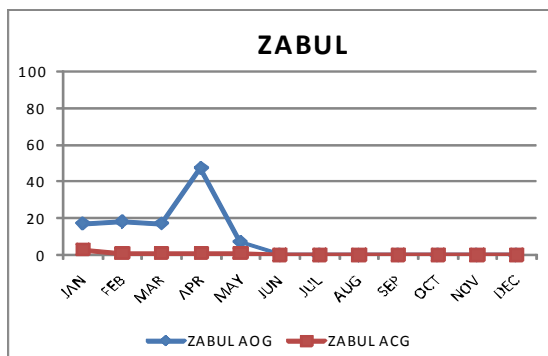
The number of incidents in Zabul Province decreased slightly compared to the previous reporting period and is nearly on the same level as at the beginning of April. However, allegedly the frustration of the local population is increasing in regard to the GoA and co-

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- AOG attacks

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	1
This Report Period	0

operation is declining. The use of IEDs—with a focus on Qalat and Shahjoy districts—seems to have been the dominant AOG tactic in Zabul during this reporting cycle. The vast majority of all incidents took place in Qalat District, especially in Sinak, Kharwaryano, and Spina areas. However, Shahjoy also saw a significant number of incidents, including an attack on the DAC on 2 May. Furthermore,



in Shamulzayi District civilians were hit by IEDs in Zanzir/Gata Shinkey Area as well as the District Centre Area.

URUZGAN

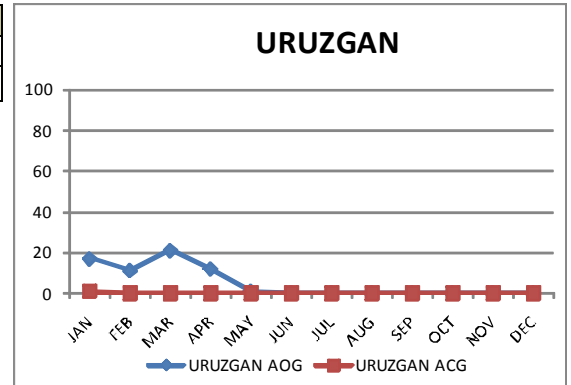
Even though incident levels in Uruzgan Province remained relatively low, this should not be seen as supporting the conclusion that Uruzgan is calm. With the end of the poppy harvest at hand, AOG activity—particularly IEDs—is

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- AOG attacks
- IMF/ANA operations

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

expected to increase again. The vast majority of incidents took place in Tirin Kot, Chora and Dihrawud districts, particularly in Shartokhi Village, and weapons and explosives were seized in Chora and Tirin Kot. There also were several AOG attacks recorded. On 4 May, AOG attacked an ANP official riding on a motorbike in Dihrawud, resulting in



one civilian killed. Furthermore, on 6 May AOG fired three rockets towards an IMF base in Tirin Kot that landed in the nearby area.

NIMROZ

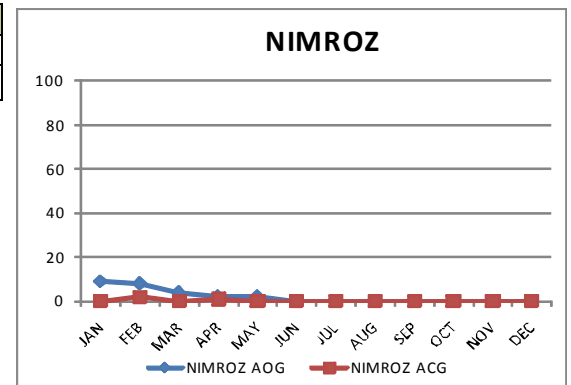
As usual, Nimroz Province remained relatively quiet during the current reporting period, except one major incident on 5 May in Zaranj City, when eight BBIED attackers engaged with security forces at the Governor’s office, the Provincial Council, and the

KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- AOG attacks

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

ANP HQ. The clash concluded after either ANSF killed the final BBIED attackers, or they detonated their vests. As a result, eight BBIED attackers, one female Provincial Shura member, and two ANP died in the clash and seven other ANP and four civilians were wounded. Additional AOG related incidents occurred mainly in Khash Rod (Pusht-E-Hasan, Ghor Ghor, and Munar areas),



where AOGs attacked ANP posts and established an illegal checkpoint.

PAKTIKA

The number of security incidents in Paktika Province remains high, particularly in Yahya Khel and Sar Hawza districts. This reporting period saw a significant number of direct AOG attacks, especially on DACs but also on usual targets like ANP posts. DACs were attacked in Yahya Kehl, Sar Hawza, Urgun, Yosuf Khel, Gayan, Go-

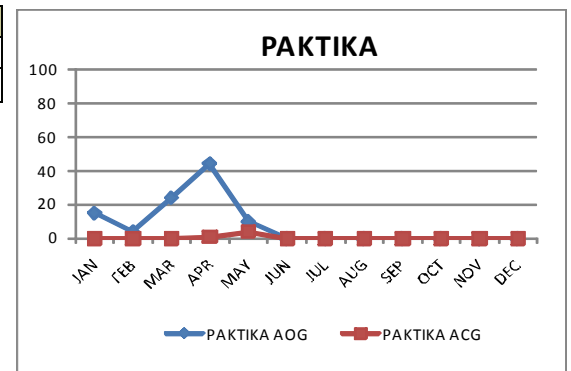
KEY THREATS & CONCERNS

- IEDs
- AOG attacks
- Intimidation

	NGO Incidents
Year to Date	0
This Report Period	0

mal and Ziruk districts. In regard to the IED related incidents during this reporting cycle, the vast majority was located and safely defused. However, on 11 May an IED exploded behind the ANA Battalion HQ in Khair Kot, wounding one civilian.

In addition, there were three killings by AOG which seem to have been meant merely to intimidate the populace. On 1 May, AOG killed a tribal elder in Waza Khwa District. On 8 May, AOG killed the son of a Provincial Council member in Kharir Kot area, Sar



Hawza District. The next day, AOG shot and killed a person who was allegedly working as a carpenter with IMF in Sweai Kamar, Gomal District. Again, this seems to fit with usual intimidation patterns since people with respected positions in the communities as well as people related to IMF were targeted.



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ANSO 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 depu-
tised 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 Gre-
nade / **SAF**-Small Arms Fire /
VBIED-Vehicle Borne Impro-
vised Explosive Device

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MISSING

This report ANSO could not provide analysis for the provinces of:

Nuristan

This is because we do not know enough about the area to comment on the significance of the incidents occurring there.

If you can help us understand the province better, please contact us.

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ANSO is in search of a few good NGO analysts. If you have NGO experience, an analytical background, and the desire to be challenged, all while being part of a close-knit team, pass your CV, cover letter, and two English writing samples to operations@afgnso.org.

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