



PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : AFGHANISTAN

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PROFILE SUMMARY

The context

The main cause for conflict-induced displacement in Afghanistan today is the civil war between the Taliban, who control 95% of the country and the Northern Alliance, a multi-ethnic opposition group with a stronghold in the North. Population displacement has also been caused by natural disasters, which occur with alarming regularity. Afghanistan currently faces its worst drought since 1971, affecting all segments of the population. (UNOCHA, 1 June 2000)

Afghanistan has a long history of internal strife between Islamic movements, communists and tribal warriors (FAS September 1998). The guerrilla war inside Afghanistan gained international recognition in 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded the country to curb increasing opposition to the seizure of power by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in April 1978 (Maiwandi 1999). After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, fighting between various mujahedin groups continued. When the communist government of Najibullah collapsed in 1992, the nature of the civil war changed as loosely allied mujahedin groups started fighting each other (Rubin 1996, p. 1). The civil war took a new turn at the end of 1994 with the emergence of the Taliban. Since then, fighting between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, spearheaded by the General Masood, have caused continuous waves of displacement (AI November 1999b).

In 2000, fighting took place mainly in Takhar, Baghlan and Kunduz Provinces, in northeast Afghanistan, displacing more than 300,000 persons. Most of the displaced sought refuge within their home provinces while others found shelter in neighbouring Badakshan Province. Following the strategic capture of Taloqan by the Taliban on 5 September 2000 additional displacement occurred north and east of the city with large waves of IDPs ending up in Dasht-I-Qala and Khoja Bahauddin districts, in Takhar Province. Other areas of displacement in 2000 included Mazar-e-Sharif, northern Takhar (Afghan-Tajik border), the Panjshir valley and Kabul.

Figures

The UN estimates that the total number of people displaced at the end of 2000 ranges between 600,000 and 800,000 persons and includes displacement caused by drought and conflict, (IRIN 5 March 2001 / UNOCHA 6 April 2001). The total number of conflict-induced IDPs at the end of 2000 was estimated to range between 300,000 and 400,000. (UNICEF 8 March 2001; USCR 2 February 2001; IRIN 8 February 2001). Included in the conflict-induced figures are an estimated 100,000 people displaced since 1999 such as those in Kabul, the Panjshir valley or northern Hazarajat (Office of the UN Coordinator for Afghanistan 19 January 2001)

It should be noted exact figures have been very difficult to obtain due to several reasons. Distinguishing between drought and conflict-induced displacement has not been easy especially in regions such as Mazar-e-Sharif or Kabul where both groups of victims are mixed together. Internally displaced are integrated with host populations making identification difficult to the extent that some members of the local population have also been known to masquerade as IDPs in order to obtain assistance. The frequent movement of IDPs has also complicated estimates. (OCHA 17 October 2000)

Finally ongoing displacement and limited access to needy populations in several regions of Afghanistan (i.e. Dar-e-Suf), due to bad weather or volatile security conditions, further complicate the task of getting a comprehensive picture of the situation in terms of figures.

Patterns of displacement

Four major patterns of displacement have been identified during the last twenty years of displacement: movements towards the mountains nearest to home areas; refuge to major cities such as Kabul, Jalalabad and Herat; refuge in Pakistan; and for populations in the southwest, refuge in Iran. (WFP October 1999) Although areas of fighting differ slightly from year to year the displacement patterns tend to remain the same.

The regions hardest hit by the conflict are mainly located in the north (Balkh, Baghlan, Kunduz, Faryab, Jowzjan, Samagan and Saripul provinces) and northeast (Takhar and Badakhshan) of the country.

In the north, approximately 116,000 persons are displaced by drought and conflict, most of them spread over at least 27 different camps/shelters in the different provinces. No estimate is available on the proportion of conflict-induced IDPs. UNICEF noted that most IDPs were male and female adults whilst the young had often stayed back in their place of origin. Most live in public buildings and temporary shelter, as it has been the strategy of the relief community to prevent further displacement by avoiding establishing IDP camps, which could attract more displacement.

In the northeastern provinces of Takhar and Badakhshan it is estimated that 116,000 are currently displaced and have taken shelter in 12 locations under the control of the Northern Alliance. (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

Protection

The general human rights situation in Afghanistan is extremely poor, due to the civil war and continued political instability. Both Taliban and anti-Taliban forces have been responsible for random bombardment of civilian areas during 2000 (HRW 15 December 2000). In Taliban areas, strict and oppressive laws have been imposed, including severe repressive measures on the rights of women.

Some 10,000 IDPs, stranded on islands on the Afghan-Tajik border since September and exposed to shelling are still waiting for permission to cross into Tajikistan. (OCHA 31 January 2001 Hum. Sit. Report No.8) UNHCR has been responsible for relief operations to the stranded IDPs through Tajik-controlled areas. On March 13 UNHCR suspended its operation arguing that there was a misuse of relief supplies as they were reaching armed fighters of the Northern Alliance living with the IDP population. Three conditions were to be met by the Tajik government if assistance is to resume. First, the combatants have to be clearly separated from the civil population. Second, the civilians are to be moved to safer areas and third, unrestricted access has to be provided to the displaced population. MERLIN (the lead health agency) has recently released a report indicating that the health status of the displaced has seriously deteriorated in recent weeks and there seems to be a general consensus among NGOs that the preconditions set by UNHCR are unworkable and should be reviewed. (IRIN 11 April 2001)

Subsistence needs and coping strategies

The predicament of the displaced is compounded by the effects of the drought, which has severely aggravated the limited capacity of the host population to provide food and accommodation. It should be noted that the local population is sometimes more vulnerable than the newly displaced, especially in drought-stricken areas. (UNRCO 4 July 2000). This seems to be a persistent feature in Afghanistan where often the displaced are those who can afford to travel out of the conflict/drought-stricken area, while those who remain behind are even more vulnerable.

Nutritional and mortality surveys conducted by ACF in the Shomali plains and the Panjshir Valley in August, and in Mazar-e-Sharif in November show that while high levels of vulnerability were detected among the local and IDP population, the latter were not at greater risk. (ACF August, November 2000). Nutrition surveys compiled by WFP over the last months show that acute levels of malnutrition have only been observed in three locations –Badgis (MSF), southern Faryab (MSF) and Shamali (ACF). (WFP 14 March 2001)

In north Takhar, which had already been badly affected by conflict in autumn 1999, an urgent need for food and shelter has been identified. (OCHA 17 October & 21 December 2000)

Humanitarian access

Access to the IDPs in the Panjshir Valley and in northern Hazarajat has been difficult for aid agencies as the Taliban have, since December 1999, been reluctant to allow humanitarian convoys across the front lines. In January, the UN organized a food convoy for IDPs in the Darra-e-Souf valley (southern Samangan) using 1,500 donkeys. (IRIN 9 March 2001) More recently, access problems to the same region were bypassed using

food airdrops (UNSG, 20 November 2000; BBC, 8 June 2000). ICRC has described the situation as "dramatic" with many villages inaccessible due to the snow and the mining of roads. (ICRC 8 March 2001)

National and international response

Assistance

Relations between the Taliban and aid agencies have remained strained due to consistent interference with UN and NGO operations (U.S. DOS 26 February 1999, sect. 4). Following the UN sanctions imposed on Afghanistan in November 1999 and again in December 2000, relations have not improved and the sanctions continue to have a negative impact on the ability of UN agencies and NGOs to render assistance to IDPs. (USCR 2 February 2001)

Assistance to the internally displaced has also proved beyond the capacity of the Taliban state, which lacks both the capacity as well as the inclination to provide assistance. Both sides to the conflict have seemed to be more inclined to devote all available resources to the war effort, leaving the international community to deal with the humanitarian needs. (USCR 2 February 2001) The capacity of the local authorities to provide assistance has also been very limited and has varied according to the region. Local communities and authorities have extended some form of assistance to the IDPs in the northeastern region, mainly in the form of cooked meals and dry foodstuffs, while assistance in other regions (e.g. Hazarajat) has often proved to be beyond the capacity of the local authorities.

The new Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Kenzo Oshima, on his three-day visit Afghanistan in mid-February urged the Taliban authorities to divert resources for fighting to help the Afghan people. He also underscored that a halt in fighting would certainly encourage donors to improve their contributions for assisting the population. (IRIN 15 February 2001)

Low funding is yet another constraint imposed on humanitarian agencies. The review of the assistance programme for 2000 shows that only 48 percent of the US\$ 221 million requested has been forthcoming. A total of US\$ 229 million has been requested in the 2001 Appeal (OCHA 17 November 2000).

Coordination

Within the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (SFA), developed in 1998, a Principle Common Programming (PCP) has been agreed upon by the assistance community to help establish priorities, programs and projects based on the needs of Afghans. (PCP, 3 December 1999) With regard to the internally displaced, a cooperation agreement, signed by ICRC, UNOCHA, WFP and UNHCR in 1997 designated ICRC as the lead agency for assistance. In addition, IDP Task Forces have been set up in Kabul and in Islamabad to

monitor and assist more closely the needs of the displaced. NGOs also participate in these meetings that take place every two weeks. (USCR, 1998; UNOCHA, 18 April 2000).

On the regional level, efforts have been deployed during 2000 to ensure a better coordination between agencies. Regional Coordination Offices (RCO) as well as Technical Working Groups (TWGs) have been established in each region. The extent to which coordination is centralized depends on the specific requirements of each region. Coordination activities in the Hazarajat region, for example, are designed to cope with the complexities of programming in a mountainous region with scattered population and non-existent infrastructure. Therefore coordination in that region is "light" and operational agency autonomy is emphasized.

(Prepared 12 April 2001)

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

General

General characteristics of land and people

- Afghanistan has a long history of internal strife due its geographical and ethnic fragmentation

"[F]or decades, Islamic movements, communists and tribal warriors have struggled for control of a nation that is geographically and ethnically fragmented. Afghanistan is still largely a tribal society, divided into many tribes, clans and smaller groups. Considerable variation in the types of terrain, and obstacles imposed by high mountains and deserts, account for the country's marked ethnic and cultural differences. Muslims comprise 99 per cent of the population of Afghanistan, approximately 80 per cent of them Sunni and the remainder Shi'a followers. The Shi'a minority is concentrated in central and western Afghanistan.

The Pashtuns (also called Pathans) are the largest single ethnic group constituting some 40% of the population of Afghanistan. They are predominantly Sunni Muslims and live mainly in the center, south and east of the country. The British-drawn Duran Line of 1893 demarcated the border of modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan with little or no thought to the Pashtun people who lived on either side.

The Tajiks are the second largest group, whose language is Persian. Most of them are Sunni Muslims, but Shi'a Muslim Tajiks are also found in the West of the country (around and in the city of Herat), and in Kabul.

The Hazaras are of Eastern Turkic origin and followers of the Shi'a Muslim confession using Farsi as their lingua franca.

The Uzbeks and Turkomans are followers of the Sunni Muslim tradition and are ethnically and linguistically Turkic.

Other Afghan Turkic groups include the Kypchak, Kazakh, Aimaq, Wakhi and Kirghiz. The Nuristanis live in the middle of the Hindu Kush mountain range in four valleys, with each valley having its own district language/dialect - Kati, Waigali, Ashkun and Parsun. The Baluchis and Brahuys practise Sunni Islam and their languages are Brahui and Baluchi." (FAS September 1998)

Socio-economic profile of Afghanistan (November 2000)

- Economic decline has exacerbated the level of poverty and economic hardship throughout the country

"Despite efforts on a number of fronts, political resolution of the conflict remains elusive. Under these circumstances the ailing Afghan economy continues to deteriorate and foster poverty and unemployment. There are few formal-sector employment possibilities, no major rehabilitation or development projects and no major private sector investment to support income. Transit trade with neighbouring countries remains a key sector of the "legitimate" economy. Cross-border trade through Iran and Turkmenistan has expanded as Afghanistan adjusted to the suspension of flights and border restrictions with Pakistan. Trade in narcotics and, presumably, arms constitute the mainstay of the "criminalised" economy.

The recent Taliban reorganisation of the public sector has worsened urban poverty. Several central ministries have downsized - the Ministry of Higher Education by 6,000 employees and the Ministry of Education by 12,000. Female teachers who were no longer allowed to work but were still on the payroll have now lost their incomes. While the redundancies have been implemented, the announced pay increases have not materialised, and the precarious state of public finances has meant that politically weak ministries are in arrears in salary payments.

After relative stability in exchange rates in 1999, the Afghani depreciated more rapidly in 2000. The economy remains open and prices rapidly adjust to exchange rate movements. However, public sector workers with salaries fixed in Afghani, and rural workers with employment contracts that include a fixed cash element, are highly vulnerable to this instability.

The regional drought has emerged as the dominating factor affecting the socio-economic situation in the medium term. It comes at a time when much of the population is already highly vulnerable. Some, particularly in the Central Highlands, have had to sell their assets or go into debt to cope with reduced crop production in 1999 and 2000. Moreover, in the centre and north of the country people have faced conflict and displacement that compound the drought and related problems. Lack of assets and the high level of dependence on agriculture and livestock raising mean that many families have nothing to fall back on. The migration of people from drought-affected areas to urban areas, particularly to Herat, is resulting in fewer and fewer job opportunities." (OCHA 17 November 2000)

"The ongoing conflict continues to affect all aspects of civilian and economic life in many parts of Afghanistan. Significant economic resources are diverted for the continuation of the war at the expense of civilians. Military employment offers an opportunity of economic survival to many young men and their families. At the same time, the absence of effective and legitimate institutions of governance allows the development of large-scale criminalised economic activities, linked in particular to narcotics production and marketing.

The nation's transportation and communication systems, heavy and small-scale industries, education, and agricultural infrastructure are the most seriously damaged sectors. This economic decline has exacerbated the level of poverty and economic hardship throughout the country. Largely dependent on subsistence agriculture, the country has witnessed diminishing income levels, declining food security, and reduced access to essential services. In addition, a wide range of disparities exists between different regions and within each region.

The value of the Afghan currency continued to fall, having severe repercussions on individual purchasing power. Those unfortunate enough to be on fixed salaries and those households lacking male labour power are particularly affected. In addition, due to the 16 percent reduction in the cereal harvest for 1999 the overall food security situation in Afghanistan is expected to deteriorate." (UNOCHA, UNRCO November 1999, pp. 16-17)

Drought and economic disruption in the northeast (December 2000)

"Drought

As throughout the country, the drought had widespread though varied effects. As the north-east is food deficit and, on a regional level, dependent on external imports, on a sub-regional level dependent on internal redistribution of surpluses (eg. Faizabad on Rustaq and Taloqan), and on a local level generally dependent on neighbouring areas or small scale imports, any reduction in production inevitably has far-reaching ramifications. Rainfed cereal crops, which traditionally provide the majority of the region's cereals, were almost totally lost throughout the area. In many areas harvests of autumn wheat produced zero yields (ie. harvesting the same as was sown) or sub-zero yields (ie. harvesting less than was sown). In some areas (eg. parts of northern Takhar) farmers did not attempt to harvest perhaps a third of the cultivated area (a widespread pattern developed of animals being grazed on failed wheat). Spring wheat was a total failure. Whilst respectable yields were obtained from some irrigated areas, many areas experienced reductions in yields of up to two-thirds. Both lowland areas irrigated by main canals, specifically those at the end of water courses, and small upland irrigated areas were similarly affected with many areas having only received a fraction of the required water.

The livestock sector was also badly affected. Pasture at low and moderate elevations was totally burnt and, contrary to initial expectations, high altitude pasture was also affected with only 50-60% of the previous year's growth. The seasonal nomads or kuchis, which traditionally move from the four north-eastern provinces to the Shiwa "ailoqs" or pastures in NE Badakhshan, moved around one month earlier and with much larger numbers of animals than normal (70-80% more than usual) ie. animals entrusted to them by non-kuchis who did not normally send animals to summer pastures but whose lowland pasture had dried out. With reduced growth and increased numbers of animals the carrying capacity of the pastures was quickly exceeded. Kuchis consequently returned to lowland

areas, themselves pasture deficient, earlier in the autumn than was normal (many of their areas of origin were also badly affected by the autumn conflict).

Economic disruption

The regional economy witnessed considerable contraction during the period as a result of a number of factors. Internal production was obviously reduced as a result of the drought, whilst both external import as well as internal trade were severely reduced as a result of the conflict. Additionally, local and extra-local employment opportunities were severely reduced as a result of both the conflict and the drought.

The region depends primarily on two import routes – from Mazar through Taloqan, and from Tajikistan through Ai Khanoum in Takhar (the Ishkashim crossing is insignificant). Both have been badly affected by the conflict. Transportation of food, medicine, fuel, etc. from Taloqan is now blocked, whilst the import of foodstuffs and fuel from Tajikistan was interrupted due to autumn conflict with a resultant increase in basic prices (diesel tripled in price in one month).

Of major concern was the serious reduction in the casual labour market, at district, provincial and regional level, throughout the region, starting at the harvest season which should have been the busiest time of year. Casual labour, both agricultural and non-agricultural, has traditionally compensated for production shortfalls amongst agricultural communities, and has traditionally sustained many chronically food deficit areas (eg Darwaz). Its absence deprived the region of its principal economic safety net. Additionally, the lack of a dynamic urban economy anywhere in the region, its under-developed external trade links, and its physical isolation (movement out of the region is quite restricted) further compounded its vulnerability and further limited its capacity to cope with the impact of the drought and the war." (UNOCHA December 2000)

The Civil War

The emergence of the Afghan opposition

- The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) seized power in a military coup on April 27, 1978 and imposed a Marxist reform program which ran counter to deeply rooted Islamic traditions, provoking a growing insurgency
- Increase in Soviet military assistance from December 1979 following a new bilateral treaty of friendship and cooperation between the two countries
- Strained relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union in 1979 together with a deteriorating security situation laid the basis for the Soviet occupation initiated on 27 December 1979.
- Afghan freedom fighters (mujahidin) made it almost impossible for the Soviet installed communist regime to maintain a system of local government outside major urban centers
- In 1984, the mujahidin began receiving substantial assistance in the form of weapons and training from the U.S. and other outside powers. In May 1985, the seven principal Peshawar-based guerrilla organizations formed an alliance to coordinate their political and military operations against the Soviet occupation

- Following the Geneva Accords from 14 April 1988, the Soviet Union began to withdraw its military forces on 15 February 1989

"During the year and a half before the Soviet invasion, the world knew little about the guerilla war that was going on inside Afghanistan. Though, there were some earlier anti-government activities against the government in Kabul, but the Afghan Jihad or resistance gained international recognition immediately after the Soviet invasion of 1979. The People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came to power as a result of a military coup, on April-27-1978. [...]" (Maiwandi, 1999)

"Nur Muhammad Taraki, Secretary General of the PDPA, became President of the Revolutionary Council and Prime Minister of the newly established Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Opposition to the Marxist government emerged almost immediately. During its first 18 months of rule, the PDPA brutally imposed a Marxist-style 'reform' program which ran counter to deeply rooted Islamic traditions." (FAS September 1998)

"[A] call to Jihad or holy war was issued by religious and nationalist circles, which received a widespread response in the countryside. Within a few months of their takeover, the PDPA and its army was engaged in quelling uprisings in various parts of Afghanistan." (Maiwandi, 1999)

"By the summer of 1978, a major revolt in the Nuristan region of eastern Afghanistan spread into a country-wide insurgency." (FAS September 1998)

"By September 1978, Taraki, the Marxist President of Afghanistan, struck back and called a gathering of religious scholars in Kabul, and declared Jihad or holy war against those trying to oppose the regime [...]" (Maiwandi, 1999)

"[I]n September 1979, Hafizullah Amin, who had earlier been the Prime Minister and minister of defense, seized power from Taraki after a palace shootout. Over the next two months, instability plagued Amin's regime as he moved against perceived enemies in the PDPA. By December, party morale was crumbling, and the insurgency was growing." (FAS September 1998)

"The Soviet Union moved quickly to take advantage of the April 1978 coup. In December 1978, Moscow signed a new bilateral treaty of friendship and cooperation with Afghanistan, and the Soviet military assistance program increased significantly. The regime's survival increasingly was dependent upon Soviet military equipment and advisers as the insurgency spread and the Afghan army began to collapse.

By October 1979, however, relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union were tense as Hafizullah Amin refused to take Soviet advice on how to stabilize and consolidate his government. Faced with a deteriorating security situation on December 24, 1979, large numbers of Soviet airborne forces, joining thousands of Soviet troops already on the ground, began to land in Kabul under the pretext of a field exercise. On December 26, these invasion forces killed Hafizullah Amin and installed Babrak Karmal,

exiled leader of the Parcham faction, as Prime Minister. Massive Soviet ground forces invaded from the north on 27 December 1979." (FAS September 1998)

"After the December 1979 Soviet invasion, Afghanistan became the world's leading producer of refugees and displaced persons. [...] An estimated 2-3 million people were internally displaced by the war, taxing the meagre resources of Kabul (whose population grew from about 600,000 to over 2 million) and other towns." (Rubin 1996, p. 1)

"But soon it became apparent to the Soviets and the rest of the world that crushing the resistance was not a task that could be accomplished easily or quickly. Following the invasion, the Karmal regime, although backed by an expeditionary force of about 120,000 Soviet troops, was unable to establish authority outside Kabul. As much as 80% of the countryside, including parts of Herat and Kandahar, eluded effective government control. An overwhelming majority of Afghans opposed the communist regime, either actively or passively. Afghan freedom fighters (mujahidin) made it almost impossible for the regime to maintain a system of local government outside major urban centers. Poorly armed at first, in 1984 the mujahidin began receiving substantial assistance in the form of weapons and training from the U.S. and other outside powers.

In May 1985, the seven principal Peshawar-based guerrilla organizations formed an alliance to coordinate their political and military operations against the Soviet occupation. Late in 1985, the mujahidin were active in and around Kabul, launching rocket attacks and assassinating high government officials. The failure of the Soviet Union to win over a significant number of Afghan collaborators or to rebuild a viable Afghan army forced it to bear an increasing responsibility for fighting the resistance and for civilian administration.

[...]

Following the 14 April 1988 agreement between Afghanistan, Pakistan, the USSR and the US, the departure of Soviet forces commenced in mid-1988 and was completed in 1989. The agreement, known as the Geneva accords, included five major documents, which, among other things, called for U.S. and Soviet non-interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the right of refugees to return to Afghanistan without fear of persecution or harassment, and, most importantly, a timetable that ensured full Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan by February 15, 1989. About 14,500 Soviet and an estimated one to two million Afghan lives were lost between 1979 and the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. (FAS September 1998)

Escalation of the civil war and ethnic tensions after the Soviet withdrawal

- The Civil War escalated after the Soviet withdrawal due to the fact that the mujahidin were neither party to the negotiations nor to the 1988 agreement and, consequently, refused to accept the terms of the accords

- After the fall of Najibullah's communist government in 1992, areas of Afghanistan plunged into lawlessness as loosely allied Mujahideen groups started fighting each other for control of territory and administrative institutions
- At the end of 1994, the nature of the civil war changed with the emergence of Taliban who claimed their aim to be to rid Afghanistan of corrupt Mujahideen groups.
- After 1995 there were increasing reports of violations of human rights on ethnic grounds committed by rival factions
- Following the Taleban capture of Kabul on 26 September 1996, the non-Pashtun forces allied again as they did in the Northern Alliance of 1992

"[T]he mujahidin were neither party to the negotiations nor to the 1988 agreement and, consequently, refused to accept the terms of the accords. As a result, civil war did not end with the Soviet withdrawal, completed as scheduled in February 1989. Instead, it escalated. [...]" (FAS September 1998)

"[F]ighting continued between government and opposition forces until the communist government finally collapsed in 1992. The fall of the government did not bring peace, however, as the loosely allied and fractious Mujahideen groups started fighting each other for control of territory and administrative institutions. Despite the formation of a coalition interim government, central political authority was weak and unstable, and areas of Afghanistan plunged into lawlessness." (AI November 1999)

After 1992, there have been continuous waves of displacement following rounds of fighting among former mujahedin (Islamic resistance) groups and portions of the old regime's army. (Rubin 1996, p. 1)

"During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the political and military objectives of the Mujahideen largely overrode their different ethnic backgrounds. Even in the early years following the collapse of the pro-Soviet government, alliances between armed groups - which were short-lived at any rate - were based on loosely shared struggles for power and not on ethnic identities. (AI November 1999b)

In an attempt to resolve the differences between the various militias that grew stronger with the demise of their common enemy, "[t]he leaders of the Peshawar-based mujahidin groups agreed in mid-April [1992] to establish a 10-member leadership council composed of mujahidin leaders and presided over by the head of the Jamiat-i-Islami, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, pending elections. In June the Leadership Council elected Rabbani as President." (FAS September 1998)

"At the end of 1994, a new political and military force - the Taleban - emerged on to the scene. Stating as their aim to rid Afghanistan of corrupt Mujahideen groups, the Taleban have succeeded in capturing large areas of country from opposing armed groups. They are now said to control around 80 per cent of Afghanistan. Fighting however continues between the Taleban and opposition forces and the political situation remains volatile.

With the emergence of the Taliban in late 1994, the nature of the civil war in Afghanistan shifted once again. Compared to the Mujahideen groups of the past, the Taliban have appeared to be a more unified force, albeit still very loose in structure. As they have succeeded in capturing all major towns in the country, their policy of disarming opposition groups has resulted in a reduction in acts of banditry and extortion. However, despite the improvements brought by the Taliban in some aspects of personal security, serious human rights abuses have continued to be reported in Taliban-controlled areas." (AI November 1999b)

"Since 1995, tension along ethnic lines appears to have sharpened. There have been reports of atrocities committed against members of the ethnic groups after their areas have been captured and re-captured by rival factions. Human rights abuses have included massacres and mass arrests of civilians, brutal ill-treatment of the detainees 'disappearances' of many young men and some young women. At times, these atrocities appear to have been based on a mixture of ethnic hostility and political enmity." (AI November 1999b)

"The capture of Kabul by the Taliban on 26 September 1996 quickly realigned political forces within Afghanistan and the region. The non-Pashtun forces allied again as they did in the Northern Alliance of 1992. The anti-Taliban Northern Alliance is composed of the ousted ethnic Tajik president, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Commander Ahmad Shah Masoud and their Jamiat-i-Islami forces, and General Abdul Rashid Dostum and the ethnic Uzbek Junbish-i-Milli party. The Northern Alliance is headed by nominal President Rabbani, who holds power with de facto Defense Minister Masood as his primary military backer. After the defeat of the Tajik Commander Masood, the Alliance was clearly under the leadership of the Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum." (FAS August 1998)

Continued civil war and political instability in 1998

- In 1997 the Taliban changed the name of the country to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, with Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, as head of state and commander of the faithful
- The Taliban made significant advances into territories in the north and center of the country which were under the control of General Abdul Rashid Dostam, and by the Hezb-i-Wahdat, led by Ustед Karim Khalili
- As of 1998, several provincial administrations maintained limited functions but civil institutions were mostly nonexistent. There was no constitution, rule of law, or independent judiciary

"Afghanistan in 1998 continued to experience civil war and political instability. There was no functioning central government. The Pashtun-dominated ultra-conservative Islamic movement known as the Taliban controlled 85 percent of the country, including Kabul, the capital and largest city. In 1997 the Taliban changed the name of the country to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, with Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, as head of state and commander of the faithful. There is a six-member ruling council in Kabul but ultimate authority for Taliban rule rested in the Taliban's inner Shura (Council), located in the southern city of Kandahar, and in Mullah Omar. Territories previously held in the north and center of the country by General Abdul Rashid Dostam, an ethnic Uzbek, and

by the Hezb-i-Wahdat, led by Ustед Karim Khalili, of the Shi'a Hazara ethnic minority, fell to Taliban forces during the year. Mazar-i-Sharif, the last major city to remain outside of Taliban control, fell to Taliban forces on August 8; the city of Bamiyan fell to the Taliban on September 13. Former President Burhanuddin Rabbani claimed to be the head of the Government and controlled most of the country's embassies abroad and retained Afghanistan's United Nations seat after the U.N. General Assembly deferred a decision on Afghanistan's credentials. Rabbani and his military commander, Ahmed Shah Masood, both Tajiks, continued to control some largely ethnic Tajik territory in the country's northeast. However, Masood's forces remained within rocket range of Taliban-held Kabul. As of year's end, the Taliban and Masood's forces continued to battle on multiple fronts. Several provincial administrations maintained limited functions but civil institutions were mostly nonexistent. There is no constitution, rule of law, or independent judiciary." (U.S. DOS 26 February 1999)

Peace efforts stalled as fighting continues (1999)

- In April 1999, talks on possible arrangements for power sharing were held in Ashqabad between representatives of the Taliban and the United Front
- After these talks stalled in April, they were followed by efforts on the part of the six-plus-two group in Tashkent in July to find a formula for peaceful settlement of the conflict
- Despite the effort by the six-plus-two group, the Taliban launched a major military offensive on areas north of Kabul in July and since then there has been no direct political contact or meeting between the Taliban and the UF
- On 5 July 1999, the United States of America imposed financial and economic sanctions against the Taliban, and on 14 November 1999, UN sanctions imposed in accordance with resolution 1267, adopted on October 15, 1999 entered into force.
- In October, the UN special envoy for Afghanistan resigned.
- On 14 of November, sanctions were imposed on Afghanistan due to the refusal of the Taliban to extradite Osama Bin Laden, an accused terrorist, to a country where he could be brought to justice.
- Iran announced that it would be initiating talks between the warring parties in Afghanistan, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and neighboring countries to try to end the civil war.

"Political initiatives to resolve the crisis [during 1999] in Afghanistan remain stifled. At the beginning of the year, there were some reasons for optimism when talks on possible arrangements for power sharing were held in Ashqabad between representatives of the Taliban and the United Front. These talks stalled in April, and were followed by efforts on the part of the six-plus-two group (China, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the United States of America, and Uzbekistan) in Tashkent in July to find a formula for peaceful settlement of the conflict. By the end of July, however, the Taliban launched a major offensive on areas north of Kabul. Initiatives by the Government of Pakistan to facilitate reconciliation between the two Afghan parties have also failed to bear fruit. At the end of 1999, all formal political initiatives to end the conflict appeared to have collapsed." (UNOCHA, UNRCO November 1999, p. 15)

"Since the Tashkent meeting, there has been no direct political contact or meeting between the Taliban and the UF. UNSMA has tried to act as a go-between to keep some contacts alive and has succeeded on occasion in channelling messages between the two leaderships. But the essential stand of both sides remains unaltered. The Taliban insist that the UF must embrace the Emirate system while the UF question the Taliban's popular mandate to make this demand. A large bomb attack, which occurred outside the residence of the Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar in Kandahar on 25 August and which was apparently designed to kill him, is likely to further reduce the already low level of trust between the two sides. The UF's announcement on 14 September of its intention to form a new 10-member cabinet of ministers will harden the divide between the UF and the Taliban.

(...)

In another development, the United States of America on 5 July [1999] imposed financial and economic sanctions against the Taliban. It is understood that those measures will remain in place until Osama bin Laden, who is accused by the United States in connection with terrorist acts, is expelled or extradited from Afghanistan. United States officials underlined that the imposition of the sanctions was not designed to harm the people of Afghanistan and that the United States would remain one of the largest providers of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people." (UN SC 21 September 1999, paras. 2, 3, 5)

"By the end of October, the front line area had been re-established some fifty kilometres north of Kabul and almost all gains made by the Taliban in Kunduz and Takhar had been re-taken by the opposition, leaving their supply lines open to re-arm and re-equip during the winter months. Throughout the period, continuous fighting has taken place around the Dar-e-Souf area in Samangan Province. Renewed operations of similar intensity to those in 1999 are expected in spring 2000." (UNOCHA, UNRCO November 1999, p. 15)

"In October, the UN special envoy for Afghanistan resigned, expressing frustration with the warring factions' lack of commitment to peace." (USCR, June 2000)

On 14 November 1999, sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations were imposed on Afghanistan in accordance with Security Council resolution 1267, adopted on October 15, 1999 due to the refusal by the Taliban to turn over Usama Bin Laden so that he can be brought to justice. (UN SC 15 October 1999, para. 3)

"Iran has announced an initiative to try to end the long-running civil war in neighbouring Afghanistan. The foreign minister, Kamal Kharazi, said he would be in communication with the warring parties in Afghanistan, neighbouring countries and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

The move by Iran comes a few weeks after visits to Tehran by the Pakistan military leader, General Pervez Musharraf, and the ousted Afghan President, Barhanuddin Rabbani. Relations between the Taleban and Iran, which supports Mr Rabbani, improved

after Tehran opened its borders to allow the Taleban to import much-needed food." (BBC, 29 December 1999)

Peace efforts during 2000

- During February, Mr. Vendrell, the new Secretary General special envoy to Afghanistan toured the region to discuss the peace process.
- The Taleban proposed that a broadly based, multi-ethnic and representative government be answerable to the Emir-ul-Momineen and that the form of government would be the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.
- The United Front favours a political solution based on the establishment of a provisional government composed of all the factions and representative of the main ethnic groups until such time, hopefully in two years, as a loya jirgah, or a grand assembly, could be convened or elections organized.
- The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) invited the United Front and the Taliban to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for separate talks with the OIC mission with a view to convening eventual face-to-face negotiations between the two sides. [Mr. Vendrell] represented the United Nations as an observer at these separate meetings, which took place from 7 to 9 March in Jeddah.
- The two Afghan warring factions met again in Jeddah for a second round of talks. No progress were made with regards to the peace process.
- Mid-June, Mr. Vendrell met with the former King of Afghanistan to discuss the loya jirgah process.
- From June to September, Mr. Vendrell met with heads of both warring parties, as well as with General Dostum and President Rabbani.
- Both sides agreed on the principle of negotiations mediated by the UN envoy. Mr Vendrell consulted with various players during September and October.

"From 3 to 23 February, Mr. Vendrell [the new Secretary General's special envoy] visited Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation, having already visited Washington D.C., prior to his departure. In Kabul, he held meetings with Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, Chairman of the Taliban Council of Ministers, and Maulawi Wakil Ahmed Mutawakil, the Taliban Foreign Minister. In Dushanbe, he held discussions with Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, and Commander Ahmed Shah Massoud and was received by Enomali Rakhmonov, the President of Tajikistan. In Dushanbe, Islamabad, Tehran, Tashkent and Moscow, he had meetings with the Foreign Ministers and other senior authorities of the respective Governments.

(...)

The two Afghan parties stated their readiness to cooperate with him [Mr. Vendrell] in the search for a political solution to the Afghan conflict. Both expressed their opposition to terrorism as well as their commitment to progressively eradicate drug cultivation. They also stated their respective position with regard to the establishment of a broadly based, multi-ethnic and representative government. The Taliban authorities proposed that such a government be answerable to the Emir-ul-Momineen and that the opposition accept the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan as the form of government. This condition, however, is clearly unacceptable to the United Front, which favours a political solution based on the

establishment of a provisional government composed of all the factions and representative of the main ethnic groups until such time, hopefully in two years, as a loya jirgah, or a grand assembly, could be convened or elections organized.

While the Taliban authorities said they were not opposed in principle to eventual elections or to a loya jirgah, they mentioned two other 'alternatives' for ending the conflict, namely the surrender of the opposition or a military victory. On the issue of a ceasefire, [Mr. Vendrell] formed the impression that neither side ruled out a new offensive in the spring or summer, the Taliban because it had not given up hopes of a military victory and the United Front because it might aim at regaining the territory it had lost to the Taliban.

President Khatami, in his capacity as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), launched a diplomatic initiative in February. An OIC delegation, led by the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, and composed of the other members of the OIC Committee for Afghanistan, toured Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Saudi Arabia. Following this mission, OIC invited the United Front and the Taliban to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for separate talks with the OIC mission with a view to convening eventual face-to-face negotiations between the two sides. [Mr. Vendrell] represented the United Nations as an observer at these separate meetings, which took place from 7 to 9 March in Jeddah. (...) Although the two warring factions were unable to reach an agreement or to move closer to a political solution in Afghanistan, both sides agreed to hold another round of talks after the haj season. (UNSG, 10 March 2000)

"The second round of indirect talks between the two warring factions was held at Jeddah from 8 to 10 May, again with the participation of [Mr. Vendrell] as an observer. The talks were once more conducted under the chairmanship of Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Zarif. The Taliban delegation was headed by its Minister of Education, Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi, while that of the United Front was led by Dr. Abdullah, the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

The talks concluded with an agreement for a comprehensive exchange of prisoners of war between the two sides, to be conducted through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). A special team consisting of representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, UNSMA and the OIC secretariat was set up to help facilitate the implementation of the agreement.

The two sides also agreed to respect their existing commitments not to target the civilian population and to allow the unimpeded passage of humanitarian convoys to the civilian population on both sides of the front lines. To my regret, the agreement on exchange of prisoners has so far not been implemented. However, recent signals that there may be some progress on this issue are encouraging.

[Mr. Vendrell] visited Rome on 12 and 13 June for a meeting with the former King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, and members of his entourage, as well as for talks with senior officials of the Italian Government. [Mr. Vendrell] has also held numerous meetings with

independent Afghan personalities in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, including many who are supportive of the *loya jirgah* process. (UNSG, June 2000)

"During the period under review [June-September 2000], (...) Francesc Vendrell, has continued his contacts with the two Afghan warring sides and other Afghans, as well as with the Governments of the region. On 5 September he was received in Kandahar by the head of the Taliban movement, Mullah Mohammad Omar. He also held a separate meeting on that occasion with the Taliban Foreign Minister, Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkil, with whom he had held previous rounds of talks in Kandahar on 24 June and in Kabul on 27 July. [Francesc Vendrell] also travelled to Dushanbe on 24 June for discussions with the Commander of the United Front, Ahmad Shah Massoud, and to Faizabad on 29 July to meet the President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Burhanuddin Rabbani. On 1 August he met in Tashkent, in the course of a visit to Uzbekistan, with Acting Foreign Minister Abdullah. He has also maintained contact with other United Front leaders, including Mohammad Ismail Khan, former Governor of Herat, and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, leader of the *Jumbeish-e-Melli-ye Islami-ye Afghanistan*." (UNSG 18 September 2000, 3.)

"Most recently, [Francesc Vendrell] has concentrated his efforts on securing an agreement by the two warring parties to initiate a process of dialogue. On 30 October 2000, in separate letters addressed to [Francesc Vendrell], both the Taliban and the United Front agreed to enter into a process of dialogue under my good offices aimed at bringing about, in the shortest possible time, an end to the armed conflict in Afghanistan through political means (see A/55/548-S/2000/1077, annexes I and II). They have also agreed that this process should be conducted either through direct meetings between the two sides, either with my active participation or that of [Francesc Vendrell], or indirectly through my intermediation or that of [Francesc Vendrell]. Notable in the agreement is the commitment of the two sides to participate in the dialogue with serious intent and in good faith; and not to abandon the process unilaterally, but rather to pursue it without interruption until the negotiating agenda, to be agreed by the two sides, is exhausted.

Following this agreement, [Francesc Vendrell] has begun to shuttle between the two sides to discuss elements for the negotiating agenda. In the event that he considers that there is sufficient basis for an eventual agreement, he would schedule a meeting of the two sides, possibly before the end of 2000. In the meantime, the Taliban authorities have appointed the Minister of Education, Amir Khan Muttaqi, as head of their negotiating team, while the United Front has indicated that Acting Foreign Minister Abdullah will conduct the negotiations on their side.

[Francesc Vendrell] has met on two separate occasions this year, in June and October, with the former King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, and members of his entourage to exchange views on the situation in Afghanistan and to discuss the former King's ideas on how a *loya jirga*, a traditional grand assembly, could be convened inside Afghanistan. He has also held a series of meetings in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran

and Germany with independent Afghan personalities, including many who support the ex-King's proposal for the convening of an emergency *loya jirga*. " (UNSG 20 November 2000, 12-14]

Military developments in 2000

- Despite the winter, fighting never came to a halt between January and March, with the Taleban launching attacks in Jowzjan province [north], Samangan, Kunduz and the Shomali plains. The northern Alliance fought back and recaptured most of the lost grounds.
- Fighting continued in the provinces of Jowzjan, northern Baghlan, Sanagan, Ghor and Kunduz between March and June.
- Fighting intensified from July to September. First, the Taleban suffered a military setback in the Shomali area north of Kabul with heavy losses and little ground gains. However, at the end of July they succeeded in capturing Bangi subdistrict (cutting a strategic supply route for the UF) and in September they captured Taloqan, a UF stronghold.

"Although fighting was at low ebb during the reporting period [January-March], mainly because of severe winter weather and the occurrence of the holy month of Ramadan, it has never come to a complete halt. The flow of weapons and other war-making materials into Afghanistan has continued throughout the period, enabling both sides to prepare for spring offensives.

On 20 January, the Taliban launched a new offensive in Sar-e-Pul in the northern province of Jowzjan, with air assaults and ground forces composed of several thousands fighters, and captured the main district of Sang Charak. The Uzbek fighters, as well as the local population, fled to the area of Balkhab.

In mid-February, the Taliban forces attempted to approach the main district of Dara-e-Souf in the province of Samangan. Despite a few clashes on the ground between the two sides and a series of Taliban air raids, the United Front has so far been able to defend the area.

Following an increasing number of reports that both sides were preparing for new offensives at front lines to the north of Kabul, the Taliban forces, on 1 March, initiated fresh fighting in the province of Kunduz and the Shomali Plains. Simultaneously, the Taliban continued their attacks in the province of Samangan in the Dara-e-Souf area where the United Front renewed their efforts to resist. The Taliban initially achieved significant progress in Kunduz and, on 2 March, captured Sher Khan Bandar, a port town on the Amu Darya river and the town of Imam Sahib. At the front lines to the north of Kabul, the Taliban advanced only to a very limited extent after some vigorous fighting. By 5 March the United Front had dispatched additional forces from the northern part of the province of Takhar and succeeded in recapturing ground lost in Kunduz. The United Front claims to have recaptured the towns of Imam Sahib and Sher Khan Bandar. Similarly, on 6 March the front lines to the north of Kabul were pushed back to the same location as in late February. In the area of Dara-e-Souf, the most recent fighting led to the capture of some additional areas by the United Front." (UNSG, 10 March 2000)

"Small- and medium-scale fighting has continued in Afghanistan throughout the reporting period. The usual winter lull came to an end on 10 March when the Taliban launched an attack against United Front positions at the northern entrance to the strategic Salang tunnel. This attack was repelled.

During the first half of March, the United Front gradually recaptured a number of towns in Sar-e-Pul in the district of Sang Charak in Jowzjan Province and declared on 18 March that the district was under their control. During the second half of March and the beginning of April, the entire district was retaken by the Taliban.

On 13 March, Taliban forces attacked positions held by the United Front in the district of Burka in the northern province of Baghlan in an apparent attempt to cut off the supply road running east of the front lines. That attack was repulsed.

Between the beginning of March and the end of April, Taliban forces carried out a number of attacks on Dara-e-Souf in Samangan Province. The United Front has so far been able to defend the area.

On 13 April, United Front local forces recaptured two districts in the province of Ghor, Saghar and Shahrak, the main parts of which were conquered by the Taliban last autumn. The fighting, still ongoing, seems to have brought with it a pattern of human rights violations, with the torching of family homes and ethnic cleansing.

Throughout the reporting period, both sides have continued preparations for a major organized offensive. Despite several postponements, observers believe that each side now has in place the military capacity for such an offensive. Indeed, a heavy concentration of forces was noticeable at the front lines both in the north of Kabul and in the northern provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan. Amid heightening tensions, both sides have frequently exchanged artillery shells and launched limited attacks in order to gain operationally important territory. On 7 April, the Taliban advanced from the Nejrab valley, to the north-east of Kabul, into a side valley of strategic importance, but could not hold the ground. A number of clashes occurred between 15 and 25 April at the front lines both at the Bagram airport in the north of Kabul and in the Ghorbandi valley to the north-west of Kabul. The opponents also clashed several times both at the Salang tunnel beginning on 19 May and in Kunduz as of 22 May.

Furthermore, increased tension was noticeable along the Afghan-Uzbek border during the first half of June, when the Taliban deployed forces mainly at Hairaton town in Balkh Province ostensibly in response to the statement by the Russian Federation regarding possible air strikes against alleged terrorist training camps inside Afghanistan.

The supply of weapons and other war material into Afghanistan has continued during the spring, providing both sides with the necessary means for the expected major spring offensive. The presence of non-Afghan volunteers, mainly from religious schools in Pakistan, among the Taliban forces is reported to be significant." (UNSG, June 2000)

"The belligerents' long preparations for a major offensive culminated, in July and August, in two rounds of intense fighting. In the first round in the Shomali area north of Kabul, the Taliban suffered heavy losses but gained no ground. These events were generally regarded as a severe setback for the Taliban and a victory, even if temporary, for the United Front. However, the offensive launched by the Taliban on 28 July in the provinces of Baghlan and Takhar resulted in their achieving two central military aims, the capture of the subdistrict of Bangi on 6 August, thereby cutting a major United Front supply line to the Panjshir Valley, and the fall on 6 September of Taloqan, a United Front stronghold and the last large town under its control. The flow of weapons and other war matériel into Afghanistan continues.

Offensive north of Kabul

On 1 July the Taliban launched an extensive attack, involving 5,000 to 7,000 fighters, in five directions north of Kabul, concentrating on Bagram Airport with minor activity in other Shomali areas and in the district of Nejrab, further east. The United Front forces were not taken by surprise, having earlier engaged the Taliban with artillery fire and rockets. Initial gains by the Taliban on the ground were reversed, and by 2 July the fighting had by and large subsided. On 9 July the Taliban attacked United Front positions south of Charikar town to the north of Kabul. They again initially took some ground, which later in the day was recaptured by the United Front. 26. Both sides sustained heavy losses in the hostilities of 1 and 9 July, with an estimated 200 to 400 killed and 500 to 650 wounded, around 75 per cent of these losses accruing to the Taliban. United Front losses stemmed mainly from civilian casualties as a result of Taliban air strikes. The outcome of the fighting was in general regarded as a severe setback to the Taliban.

Baghlan/Takhar campaign

From mid-July the Taliban started preparations for a new offensive, this time in the northern province of Baghlan, bringing in 8,000 to 10,000 fighters, including non-Afghan elements, mainly from religious schools in Pakistan and other sources. The United Front defence was least strong in Baghlan, as the United Front leadership had pinned their hopes on the possible about-face of the top local commander in the province, Bashir Baghlani. The United Front's hopes were dashed when Baghlani was arrested by the Taliban on 25 July.

On 28 July the Taliban launched the offensive against the United Front's front lines west of Nahrin town, quickly advancing about 25 kilometres. Between 29 July and 6 August they captured the towns of Nahrin and Burka in Baghlan Province, as well as Eskamesh and Bangi in neighbouring Takhar Province, the latter being of decisive importance for the United Front's defence of Taloqan.

After the Taliban succeeded in advancing from Bangi to as close as 5 to 8 kilometres from Taloqan on 7 August, for almost a month the battle over Taloqan flowed back and forth in numerous attacks and counter-attacks west, north-west and south of the town. The Taliban forces were supported by air assaults, but the United Front's extensive

minefields proved to be the main obstacle, preventing the Taliban from progressing further on the ground. On 4 September the Taliban, reinforced by fresh units and supported by an increased number of tanks, artillery fire and air assaults, launched a vigorous attack on Taloqan from four directions, resulting in the capture of the town in the early hours of 6 September. The fall of Taloqan is a severe blow to the United Front. Both sides sustained heavy losses in the Baghlan/Takhar campaign. The civilian population, for the most part living in United Front-controlled areas, also suffered casualties as a result of Taliban air attacks and artillery shelling. (UNSG 18 September 2000, 24-29)

"In September and early October the victorious Taliban forces secured wider areas around Taloqan and embarked upon a series of attacks to the north, capturing the districts of Khwajaghar, Dashti Archi and Emam Saheb in Takhar Province. At this point, Badakhshan Province was the sole province left entirely under control of the United Front.

On 14 October, the United Front launched a successful counterattack at a moment when the Taliban forces were rotating units and releasing the veterans from seven weeks of sustained fighting, replacing them with fresh units. The districts of Emam Saheb, Dashti Archi and Emam Saheb were rapidly recaptured and the United Front forces advanced towards Taloqan from the east and north. After 10 days of progress, the United Front counter-offensive ebbed and the Taliban was able to push the attacking forces back. As of 5 November, the confrontation lines were more or less the same as at 13 October, and the situation appeared to have developed into a stalemate.

The Taliban campaign in Baghlan/Takhar engaged around 13,000 to 15,000 Taliban fighters after reinforcement, while less than half that figure fought on the side of the United Front. The fight for Taloqan in particular was tense. Both sides sustained heavy losses in terms of people killed, wounded or captured, estimated in total at 6,000 to 9,000; 65 per cent of those casualties can be attributed to the Taliban forces.

This year's military setback put the United Front under intense pressure. A series of meetings were hurriedly convened with the evident purpose of saving the alliance from disintegrating and inviting non-United Front commanders to join the fight against the Taliban. Apart from a reported meeting between the two Uzbek commanders, Generals Dostum and Abdul Malik, in the eastern Iranian city of Masshad earlier in the year, two potentially significant encounters among key anti-Taliban commanders Massoud, Dostum and Ismail Khan took place in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in October and November, as a response to the perception of increased foreign support to the Taliban. It was agreed at their first meeting that the United Front would establish a new military council, to include themselves and other key commanders." (UNSG 20 November 2000, 23-27)

Outside interference in Afghanistan by neighbouring states (December 2000)

- Pakistan provides fighters and logistical support to Taliban. Other "friendly" states include Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
- Russia and Iran provide arms and logistical support to UF via Tajikistan.
- Inter-governmental agreements on the ban of arm supply to Afghan warring parties not equipped with efficient enforcement mechanisms
- Interference by neighbouring states is the main factor driving ongoing conflict and displacement

"Human Rights Watch has undertaken extensive research into the support provided to the two major forces who, as of December 2000, were fighting for control of the country: the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), established by the Taliban movement, and the Islamic State of Afghanistan, headed by the National Islamic United Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (the "United Front"). By late 2000, the IEA controlled some 90-95 percent of Afghanistan's territory, with resistance continuing in the far northeast and other pockets throughout the north.

Human Rights Watch research in Afghanistan and adjacent countries has identified the major transit routes used to move arms and other equipment, the suppliers, the role of state and non-state actors, and the response of the international community. This memorandum summarizes these findings, setting out basic information concerning the provision of arms, munitions, training, and military advisory assistance-and the systemic violation of the laws of wars by all those receiving this assistance. This is presented as the basis for Human Rights Watch's recommendations to the United Nations and states who have influence in Afghanistan to stop the arms flow and other military assistance to all parties to the conflict there.

The principal supplier of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is Pakistan. Its official denials notwithstanding, Pakistan has assisted the Taliban forces by facilitating the recruitment of fighters, offering military training, and planning pivotal military operations, while allowing arms for the Taliban to transit its territory. The extent of this support, particularly during the Taliban's offensive in the north in late 2000, was criticized implicitly by the U.N. Secretary General in a report to the General Assembly in November. In the report, he expressed his distress that "a significant number of non-Afghan personnel, largely from Pakistani madrassahs, are...taking active part in the fighting, most, if not all, on the side of the Taliban," and that "there also appears to be outside involvement in the planning and logistical support of [the Taliban's] military operations."

Diplomatic observers interviewed by Human Rights Watch in Afghanistan and Pakistan in July and October 2000 have also reported that Pakistani aircraft assisted with troop rotations for Taliban forces during combat operations in late 2000, and senior members of its intelligence agency and army were involved in planning military operations. Private and semi-private agencies in Pakistan, including political parties, religious institutions and business cartels, have provided enormous support to the Taliban with the full knowledge of government officials even when their actions violated Pakistani law. Finally, the Pakistani army has facilitated the recruitment of Pakistani madrasa (religious school) students, including children, to fight with the Taliban.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have also provided financial support to the Taliban. At least until 1998, Saudi Arabia provided funds and heavily subsidized fuel to the Taliban through Pakistan. Through their relationship with traders in the UAE and in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), the Taliban are also linked with local and provincial administrators and with officials in the UAE who benefit from the vast smuggling networks that link the three countries.

The parties that comprise the United Front obtain arms primarily from Iran and Russia. Iran has provided rockets, ammunition, and mines. Iran has also provided military training to United Front forces. The Russian Federation has enabled the transportation of Iranian aid, while providing considerable direct assistance itself, including crucial support services and, reportedly, helicopters recently. Tajikistan is the principal country through which assistance from Iran and Russia to the United Front transits, including through the joint Russian-Tajik military base at Kulab.

Though there have been numerous agreements by Afghanistan's neighbors and other states involved in the conflict to end arms supplies as part of a larger peace process, none of these agreements has been backed by any enforcement mechanism. On July 21, 1999, at a meeting in Tashkent of the Group of Six-plus-Two, comprising the countries bordering Afghanistan plus the U.S. and Russia, the delegates signed an agreement subsequently known as the Tashkent declaration in which they "agreed not to provide military support to any Afghan party and to prevent the use of our territories for such purposes," and called upon "the international community to take identical measures to prevent delivery of weapons to Afghanistan." Action by the United Nations to bar military support to all parties to the conflict could make effective the measures agreed previously by some of the states principally responsible for the ongoing flow of training and advisory support, weapons, and other military assistance." (HRW, 15 December 2000)

"The main cause of internal displacement in Afghanistan has been war. At present the principal factor driving ongoing conflict is interference by neighbouring states, most significantly in the form of Pakistani backing for the Taliban. Even if the Taliban were to control all major urban centres in Afghanistan, this would be unlikely to spell the end of conflict: indeed, it could be the signal for a change in the nature of the conflict. From an intra-elite struggle involving perhaps 100,000 armed fighters to a mass ethnic conflict with fighting at a local level between groups of differing ethnic identities. As long as outside interference in Afghanistan continues, the phenomenon of internal displacement and the burdens it places on donors will persist." (William Maley, 1998, p. 158)

For more detailed information on external military support to the Taleban and the United Front see "[Fueling Afghanistan's war](#)", HRW, 15 December 2000

Natural disasters

Alarming regularity of natural disasters in Afghanistan (1998-2001)

- A severe drought has hit Afghanistan in 2000, affecting mainly the southwest but also other parts of the country.
- Between June 2000 and June 2001, it is estimated that half of the population will be affected, 3-4 million severely and 8-12 million moderately.
- The local authorities have assisted in the displacement of population away from the drought-affected areas.
- As the drought continues, it is likely that people will start to migrate to urban centres.
- On June 12, 1999 a forest fire in the Kunar province displaced 3,000 persons.
- On 11 February 1999, an earthquake struck the provinces of Wardak and Logar, affecting about 18,600 families.
- Following an earthquake on 30 May 1998, affecting the districts of Rustaq, Chah-Ab and Shar-e-Buzurg, some 4,000 persons were killed, 17,000 families affected and 16,000 homes damaged or destroyed.
- On 4 February 1998, the Rustaq district in Takhar Province was struck by an earthquake that affected 24 villages, killing about 2,300 persons and destroying around 8,000 houses.

Natural disasters occur with alarming regularity in Afghanistan. During the last three years, the country has been affected by three major earthquakes and one forest fire. The country is currently experiencing its worst drought since 1971.

"About 12 million Afghans are affected by drought, three to four million severely. The extremely low level of precipitation has destroyed almost all the rain-fed crops and decimated the livestock. The cereal deficit has exceeded 2.3 million tons, more than double that of the previous year. As the next harvest is not expected before May 2001, emergency food will be required to assist people who are dependant on rain-fed agriculture as well as other vulnerable populations. Failure to assist these people will result in large scale internal migration as well as to neighbouring countries" (OCHA 17 November 2000)

"Afghanistan is currently in the grip of the worst drought since 1971. The winter 1999-2000 witnessed much less snowfall than 1998-1999, which was itself a drought year. With both rain and snowfall down, less water is available in the rivers and in the water table. In particular, those areas at the end of water chains will be most severely affected. Unlike Pakistan, Afghanistan does not receive summer rains. It is thus probable that there will be no rain until late 2000 (if the rains do not fail again). The next chance for a normal crop from rain-fed areas will not be until 2001 because the vast majority of the cultivated land produces only one crop per year.

While initial assessments showed southwest Afghanistan to be the most affected area, it is now confirmed that the whole country has been severely affected. Long-term intervention will be required by the international community to alleviate the effects of the

drought on the most vulnerable population groups. Preliminary results of the WFP/FAO crop assessment survey show that rain-fed crops in the north failed almost completely. The Central Highlands are also seriously affected.

The people most affected are rain-fed wheat producers whose crop, normally harvested between May and July 2000, has almost totally failed. These include 2.5 million rain-fed wheat farmers in northern Afghanistan. **A preliminary estimate suggests that between now and June 2001 at least half of the population of Afghanistan may be affected by drought, three to four million people severely and another eight to twelve million moderately.** Livestock owners, especially kochis, are the second most affected group.

The water table has been decreasing and continues to drop in all urban areas in the country because the aquifers have not been sufficiently recharged. Urban residents across the country rely largely on shallow hand dug wells for drinking water. These are increasingly going dry. Although some of the cities have piped water supply schemes, which tap into deeper aquifers, most systems have fallen into disrepair and do not cover large segments of the population. Where they have the means, people are deepening their wells. Those unable to afford this are relying on neighbours and public wells often at considerable distances from their homes. This problem is worse in rural areas, where distances to safe drinking water are long. While serious all around the country, the problem varies in intensity in different districts.

(...)

[Regarding population movements related to this drought] it should be borne in mind that kochis, as nomads, migrate every year along traditional routes. At issue during this drought stricken year is the nature of those movements, which have in some cases occurred earlier than usual, and which, due to the widespread area of the drought, may cause more economic stress or fuel conflict among both kochi and non-kochi families. The local authorities in southern Afghanistan have assisted in the evacuation of several thousand families from the Registan areas by truck over the last four months. While benign in intention, this movement may have interrupted traditional coping mechanisms. As the situation stands, several hundred of those families have taken refuge around Kandahar City. There is also the likelihood of migration of non-kochi families. In May, there have been reports of two to three trucks of displaced people daily leaving severely drought-affected districts such as Dai Kundi and Sharistan. In particular, people who have experienced total crop failure and who have no alternative income are selling remaining household goods and leaving rural areas. They intend to migrate to the towns in search of work or to reach neighbouring Pakistan or Iran. Already, migration of people from drought affected areas is exacerbating employment problems in the southwest.

(...)

Clearly, as the drought deepens and the number of families left without assistance increases, there is a risk of population movements towards the urban centres despite the strategy to try to keep families where they are. If this occurs, it may be necessary to set up facilities to provide assistance especially in Kandahar, Mazar, Jalalabad, and Kabul.

Food, shelter, and potable water will be needed for such drought-related IDPs." (UNOCHA, 1 June 2000)

A forest fire, which erupted on June 12, 1999 in the forests of the Sholake Valley in the Kunar province and was reported extinguished on 6 July , affected around 12 villages and displaced about 3,000 people. (Deutsche Presse Agentur 19 June 1999; UNOCHA 6 July 1999)

On 11 February 1999, an earthquake struck the provinces of Wardak and Logar, affecting about 18,600 families and causing massive destruction of rural homes and infrastructure over a wide area. (UNOCHA 25 February 1999)

Following an earthquake on 30 May 1998, affecting the districts of Rustaq, Chah-Ab and Shar-e-Buzurg, some 4,000 persons were killed, 17,000 families affected and 16,000 homes damaged or destroyed. The situation of the affected population was further exacerbated by the lack of appropriate shelter, water sanitation and health facilities. (UNOCHA 24 July 1998)

"In February 1998, an earthquake shook the province of Takhar in northeastern Afghanistan. Killing almost 5000 people and leaving 20,000 homeless, this was one of the most severe natural calamities to have hit Afghanistan in recent years. The situation of the survivors is exacerbated by the winter climate and remote location; and Afghanistan's civil war. Although the area of the earthquake has been largely spared the consequence of the 18-year conflict, there is no national structure left to render assistance. Supplies have been brought across front lines and across the border from neighboring countries Tajikistan. Before the earthquake, Takhar was controlled by the northern coalition opposed to the Taliban government. A temporary cease-fire enabled access for some aid agencies but it is unlikely that this will hold. Thus, victims of this natural disaster find their fate tied to the civil war, with assistance and protection compromised." (William Maley, 1998, p. 158)

Human rights violations

Taleban forces accused of killing 100 to 300 civilians in Yakaolang district (January 2001)

- 100 to 300 civilians killed by Taleban forces following the recapture of Yakaolang district in December 2000.
- Taleban have reportedly carried out massacres of the Hazara population on a number of occasions
- Hundreds of Hazara men and women separated from their family by the Taleban in May 1999

"Amnesty International today condemned the summary execution of scores of Afghan civilians by Taleban forces after their capture of the district of Yakaolang in December 2000. The victims, all male and as young as 13 years of age, are thought to number

between 100 and 300. Most of the killings reportedly took place in villages around Nayak, and were accompanied by mass arrests.

'This brutal treatment of civilians simply has to end', the human rights organization said. 'These deeply disturbing reports once again underline the need for action by the international community to ensure protection of the civilian population in Afghanistan.'

The executions followed the recapture of Yakaolang from the anti-Taleban Hezb-e Wahdat party in fierce fighting in December 2000. It is thought that the latest reported executions are in retaliation for Taleban losses in the course of their conquest of the district. A Taleban commander is alleged to have ordered his forces to kill all men between the ages of 13 and 70 whom they consider to be anti-Taleban.

Hezb-e Wahdat claims support from the Hazara ethnic group in Afghanistan. On a number of occasions the Taleban are reported to have carried out massacres of the Hazara population - as well as burning their homes, arresting men and boys and confiscating their land and other belongings. Control of the region has passed back and forth between the two factions in the course of the fighting.

Whilst in control of the district Hezb-e Wahdat fighters are reported to have treated with brutality those they considered to have collaborated with the Taleban.

Scores of Hazara civilians are reported to have been the targets of systematic killings by Taleban guards arriving in Yakaoland following a previous conquest in May 1999. In addition, hundreds of men, and in a few instances women and children, were reportedly separated from their families by the Taleban forces and to date there has been no news of their whereabouts." (AI 23 January 2001)

See also "[Situation of human rights in Afghanistan](#)", UN General Assembly, 30 August 2000

Violations of international humanitarian law by both parties (December 2000)

- Taliban & UF violate international humanitarian law by attacking civilians targets.

"Both the Taliban and the parties constituting the United Front have repeatedly committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, including indiscriminate aerial bombardment and shelling, summary executions, and the use of antipersonnel landmines. During the past two years, Taliban offensives have been accompanied by the use of scorched-earth tactics in the Shomali plains north of Kabul, summary executions of prisoners in the north-central province of Samangan, and forced relocation and conscription. Military setbacks have left United Front forces defending home territories in northeastern and central Afghanistan. There have nevertheless been reports of abuses

in areas that have temporarily been held by United Front factions, including summary executions, burning of houses, and looting. The principal targets in these attacks have been ethnic Pashtuns and others suspected of supporting the Taliban. The various parties comprising the United Front also amassed a deplorable record of attacks on civilians between the fall of the Najibullah regime in 1992 and the Taliban's capture of Kabul in 1996.

Examples of violations of the laws of war by the Taliban and the United Front are set out below.

Examples of violations by the Taliban

August-October 2000: According to displaced persons who had fled to United Front-held Faizabad, the Taliban bombed residential areas of Taloqan and surrounding villages in the weeks before the city fell to them on September 5, 2000. Bombs, shells, and cluster munitions were heavily deployed throughout the city including residential areas, destroying many homes. After the Taliban consolidated control of the villages, they carried out summary executions of suspected sympathizers of United Front commander Ahmad Shah Massoud.

May 2000: Taliban forces summarily executed at least 200 prisoners near the Robatak pass, northwest of the town of Pul-i Khumri. The prisoners were men taken during sweep operations throughout Samangan and neighboring provinces in late 1999 and early 2000.

1999: After retaking the central city of Bamiyan in May, Taliban forces summarily executed civilians, primarily ethnic Shi'a Hazaras; burned homes; and used detainees for forced labor. The town of Dara-i Suf was bombed with incendiary cluster munitions, burning down the entire central market and destroying wells and homes.

July 1999: A Taliban offensive in the Shomali plains was marked by summary executions, the abduction and disappearance of women, the burning of homes, and the destruction of other property and agricultural assets, including the cutting down of fruit trees. According to a report by the U.N. Secretary-General dated November 16, 1999, "The Taliban forces, who allegedly carried out these acts, essentially treated the civilian population with hostility and made no distinction between combatants and non-combatants."

August 1998: After capturing Mazar-i Sharif on August 8, Taliban troops killed scores of civilians in indiscriminate attacks, shooting noncombatants and suspected combatants in residential areas, city streets, and markets. In the days that followed, Taliban forces carried out a systematic search for male members of the ethnic Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbek communities. Scores and perhaps hundreds of Hazara men and boys were summarily executed, while thousands of men from various ethnic communities were detained first in the city jail and then transported to other cities. Altogether, at least 2,000 civilians may have been deliberately killed in the city. Many others were killed in aerial bombardments and rocket attacks as they fled south of the city. There were reports that women and girls,

particularly in certain Hazara neighborhoods, were raped and abducted during the Taliban takeover.

September 1997: Retreating Taliban forces summarily executed ethnic Shi'a Hazara villagers near Mazar-i Sharif, after having failed to capture the city. According to the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan, in a report dated March 12, 1998, fifty-three villagers were killed in one city, Qezelabad, and some twenty houses set on fire. In the village of Sheikhabad, a total of thirty elderly people are reported to have been killed. Killings of a similar type were also reported in other villages in the area.

Examples of violations by United Front factions

Late 1999 to early 2000: Internally displaced persons who fled from villages in and around Sangcharak district recounted summary executions, burning of houses, and widespread looting during the four months that the area was held by the United Front. Several of the executions were reportedly carried out in front of the victims' family members. Those targeted in the attacks were largely ethnic Pashtuns and, in some cases, Tajiks.

April 1999: After taking control of Bamiyan city on April 21, forces belonging to United Front faction Hizb-i Wahdat beat and detained residents suspected of supporting the Taliban, and burned their houses. Hizb-i Wahdat relinquished control of the city to the Taliban, after heavy fighting in early May 1999.

September 20-21, 1998: Several volleys of rockets were fired at the northern part of Kabul, with one hitting a crowded night market. Estimates of the numbers killed ranged from 76 to 180. Although a spokesperson for United Front commander Ahmad Shah Massoud disclaimed responsibility, the attacks were widely believed to have been carried out by Massoud's forces, who were then stationed about 25 miles north of Kabul. In a September 23 press statement, the ICRC described the attacks as indiscriminate and the deadliest that the city had seen in three years.

Late May 1997: Some 3,000 captured Taliban soldiers were summarily executed in and around Mazar-i Sharif by two United Front factions: Junbish forces under the command of General Abdul Malik Pahlawan and Hizb-i Wahdat forces led by General Muhaqqiq. The killings followed Pahlawan's withdrawal from a brief alliance with the Taliban, and the capture of the Taliban forces who were trapped in the city. Some of the Taliban troops were taken to the desert and shot, while others were thrown down wells and then blown up with grenades.

January 5, 1997: Junbish planes dropped cluster munitions on residential areas of Kabul. Several civilians were killed and others wounded in the air raid, which also involved the use of conventional bombs.² (HRW, 15 December 2000)

Main displacements in Afghanistan

The Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989)

- 1998: 2 million IDPs in Afghanistan due to Soviet-Afghan war (mainly in Kabul)
- Pastoral nomads also affected by war and not included in the above figure
- Returnees from Pakistan also excluded from "IDP" category

"The Soviet-Afghan War (1979-89) created significant internal as well as external displacement. In 1988, the UN estimated the number of IDPs in urban centres and remote rural areas at more than two million.

Anecdotal evidence of massive increases in the population of Kabul suggested that it was the main point to which IDPs fled, an understandable decision since it was the most heavily protected of all Afghan cities.

However, two other forms of internal displacement deserve to be mentioned.

The first relates to pastoral nomads, estimated in 1979 to number 800,000. Such nomads normally fall outside the definition of IDPs, and some nomadic groups, such as the Zala Khan Khel, opted for external exile. Others remained in Afghanistan, but were prevented by landmines and other war-related factors from exploiting traditional pastures. To an extent therefore, they were "internally displaced", although the diversity of the nomad economy makes it almost impossible to estimate the scale of the problem.

The second form relates to repatriating refugees from Pakistan and Iran who have been prevented by ongoing conflict from returning to their homes, and who are thus "internally displaced". The 1992/93 spontaneous repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan was the largest and one of the fastest in UNHCR's history, but there is a dearth of reliable statistics on the exact scale and distribution of the problem of secondary internal displacement." (William Maley, 1998, p. 156)

Conflict-induced displacement (1994-1998)

- In 1994, the majority of those displaced in the Kabul area following fighting for control of the city between forces of General Dostam and Rabbani to become internally displaced rather than refugees since both Pakistan and Uzbekistan closed their borders during the year
- Following an attack by the Taliban in March 1995 repelled by Rabbani's forces, a large return movement to Kabul was triggered, further fueled by a subsequent cease-fire
- New displacements occurred in October 1995 following a new Taliban offensive against Kabul
- In August 1996, the Taliban launched a major offensive in eastern Afghanistan during which they on September 27
- In November 1996, fierce fighting in Badghis province in northwestern Afghanistan between local forces who switched their allegiance to the Taliban and the opposition alliance, displaced an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 people

- During 1997, the main displacement took place in areas north of Kabul, including Jabol Seraj, Charikar and Gulbahar where a fierce battle between the Taliban and other forces raged
- During 1998, the Taliban made significant advances into the northern provinces that had been the opposition's main strongholds; in July the Taliban launched a successful offensive against the town of Mazar-e Sharif where they after having taken control in August, massacred thousands of noncombatant members of the Hazara population

In 1994, the main displacement was caused by fighting between forces led by General Abdol Rashid Dostam, an Uzbek, and President Borhanoddin Rabbani, a Tajik for control of Kabul. "[P]akistan's closure of its border with Afghanistan in January and Uzbekistan's closure of its border later in the year caused most of those who fled to become internally displaced rather than refugees. In January, fighting spread to the Mazar-I-Sharif area, which had been relatively calm since 1992 [...]." (USCR 1995, p. 99)

In March 1995, Rabbani's forces repelled the first Taliban attack against Kabul. Subsequently, "[t]he president sought to promote a sense of normality in the capital. He encouraged the more than 100,000 displaced persons who were living in public buildings to move to empty houses and apartments, and reopened Kabul University.

In June, Rabbani and the Taliban agreed to a temporary cease-fire. Tens of thousands of displaced Kabulis had been pouring back into the capital since April, but the cease-fire triggered an even larger return. [...]" (USCR 1996, p. 96)

In October 1995, new displacement was caused by a new Taliban offensive against Kabul. Thousands of families from Kabul's outer suburbs moved to more central areas. While some displaced families and refugees were still returning to Kabul between mid-October and the end of December, more than 58,400 again fled the city. (USCR 1996, p. 96)

During 1996, fighting continued on and off in various regions of Afghanistan. Only southern Afghanistan, which had been under the control of the radical Islamist Taliban group since 1995, was devoid of fighting. (USCR 1997, pp. 124-125)

"The most significant fighting occurred beginning in August, when the Taliban launched a major offensive in eastern Afghanistan. On September 11, the Taliban captured Jalalabad, not only one of the main gateways to Pakistan, but also the site of two large camps that housed more than 137,000 internally displaced persons. Two weeks later, Taliban forces attacked Kabul. After initially resisting the Taliban attack, President Burnhanuddin Rabbani and his forces abandoned the capital, which the Taliban took over on September 27.

Following its takeover of Kabul, the Taliban continued advancing to the north, but was blocked by the forces of Rabbani and General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who agreed upon a formal alliance with Rabbani on October 10. [...].

"Fierce fighting also erupted in November in Badghis province in northwestern Afghanistan. The fighting, between local forces who switched their allegiance to the Taliban and the opposition alliance, displaced an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 people, including thousands of Koochis, members of a nomadic Pashtun group. More than 6,000 of the displaced sought refuge in Herat, the largest city in western Afghanistan, where UNHCR and the Taliban authorities set up camps to accommodate many of them. [...]" (USCR 1997, pp. 124-125)

During 1997, the main forcible relocations took place in areas north of Kabul, the capital, including Jabol Seraj, Charikar and Gulbahar where a fierce battle between the Taleban and other forces raged. Forcible relocations of non-Pushtuns by the Taleban militia and of Pushtuns by the anti-Taliban forces in the province of Badghis, were reported. Thousands of civilians, mainly Tajik, were forced from their homes by the Taleban, in some instances by the deliberate destruction of water supply and irrigation systems. (AI November 1999a)

"During 1998, the Taliban made significant advances into the northern provinces that had been the opposition's main strongholds. [...]"

In July the Taliban mounted a successful offensive against Mazar-e Sharif, the opposition's de facto capital and northern Afghanistan's most important city. After they captured the city in August, Taliban fighters reportedly massacred thousands of noncombatant members of the Hazara population. Estimates of those killed ranged from 2,000 to more than 10,000." (USCR 1999, p. 123)

"[T]hese attacks were reportedly in retaliation for the thousands of Taliban soldiers massacred by anti-Taliban forces when the anti-Taliban forces retook the city after a brief Taliban occupation in 1997." (U.S. DOS 26 February 1999)

Conflict-induced displacement in 1999

- The fighting during 1999 took place mainly in the northern and central part of the country.
- On May 9, most of the population of Bamiyan evacuated as the Taliban took control of the city. By August, 66 percent had returned to Bamiyan
- At the end of August, the Taliban started a large-scale military offensive across the Shomali plains north of Kabul which led to the capture of most of the Shomali plains. The northern alliance counter-attacked and regained most of the lost territories.
- After the initial attack failed, the Taliban carried out a scorched earth policy in the Shomali plain area.
- Between 100,000 and 150,000 persons were forced to flee the Shomali plains during the Taliban offensive of whom 50,000 were relocated by the Taliban. The brunt of the displaced sought refuge in the Panjsher Valley as the rest fled to Kabul.

"The continuing internal conflict resulted in many instances of the use of excessive force. After a lull in the early part of the year, the conflict intensified in the northern and central

areas of the country, and much of the fighting during the year took place in areas inhabited by non-Pashtun minorities.

In late April, the Taliban bombed cities held by the Northern Alliance, such as Taloqan, Dara-e-Suf, and Jebel-u-Seraj. In September, the Taliban bombed Taloqan again, resulting in the deaths of civilians, property damage, and the displacement of residents.

On May 9, the Taliban recaptured Bamiyan. Most of the population evacuated the city and took refuge in the mountains. The U.N. reported that 361 infants and 138 adults died as a result of cold and hunger following their escape to the mountains. According to reports received by Amnesty International, those who remained in Bamiyan later were targets of systematic killings (...). There were reports of summary executions carried out by the Taliban after they entered the city. It was estimated by AI that hundreds of men and some women and children also were taken away by the Taliban after the capture of Bamiyan.

On May 14, the Taliban took Yakaolang, the second largest city in Bamiyan province. Approximately 150 persons, including women and children, reportedly were taken captive by Taliban forces from Berson village and transferred to Parwan province. Hundreds of men, and in some instances women and children, reportedly were separated from their families and taken away from Yakaolang (...).

Most of the civilian population was displaced from the area of the conflict in Bamiyan province by mid-May. However, 66 percent returned by August, including Hazaras and Tajiks." (U.S.DOS, 25 February 2000, 1 g.)

"According to Western nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), by late May there were more than 70,000 displaced people in the Bamiyan area. Other sources reported that as many as 115,000 civilians became internally displaced in the Bamiyan area between March and May." (USCR, June 2000)

In late July, the Taliban launched a major offensive into the Shomali Plains, some 25 miles (40 km) north of Kabul. The Taliban forces reportedly included many foreign volunteers and recruits, including child soldiers under the age of 14. The Taliban and their allies pushed the Northern Alliance forces out of the plains and caused a major exodus of the civilian population. More than 100,000 people fled to the northeast, into the Northern Alliance-controlled Panjshir Valley, and another 10,000 fled to Kunduz Province. The Taliban reportedly forced more than 40,000 of the plains' ethnic Tajik residents to move to Kabul. In just one four-day period in early August, 20,000 forcibly displaced persons from the Shomali Plains arrived in Kabul. (...)

A disproportionate number of those forced to go to Kabul were women and children. Taliban forces reportedly separated more than a thousand persons, mostly men but including some women, from their families during the trek from the Shomali Plains to Kabul. Members of the group taken away by the Taliban were not seen again.

The Taliban's hold on the Shomali Plains did not last long. A week later, Northern Alliance forces recaptured the area. By then, however, the Taliban had destroyed almost everything in sight, including homes, crops, orchards, and irrigation systems. The Taliban regrouped and once again advanced into the plains, but were stopped at Charikar and Bagram. The renewed fighting and purposeful destruction of the area forced thousands more displaced persons into Kabul, raising the number of displaced there to nearly 60,000.

Most of the displaced in Kabul found shelter with local families. An estimated 15,000, however, set up a makeshift camp on the grounds of the former Soviet embassy." (USCR, June 2000)

"In September the Taliban increased pressure on Northern Alliance positions north of Kunduz city and to the east of Khanabad in Takhar province. On September 25, the Taliban launched a major offensive in northern Kunduz province, near the Tajikistan border. They recaptured the Amu Darya river port of Sher Khan Bandar and the nearby districts of Imam Sahib and Dasht-e-Archi." (U.S. DOS, 25 February 2000, 1. g.)

Conflict-induced displacement in 2000

- Displacement occurred from Nahrin and Burqa (Baghlan province) and from Iskhamish (Takhar province) to southern Baghlan and southern Takhar following a Taliban assault.
- More displacement took place around Taloqan with surrounding villagers moving into the town to escape fighting.
- Displacement also occurred northward and to Badakshan. Additional displacement include movements from Takhar and Kunduz to Dashti-i-Qala, Rustaq and Khoja Bahauddin.
- More people fled to Khoja Bahauddin and Dashti-i-Qala following Taloqan's capture by the Taliban on 5 September 2000 while some others fled to Kalafgan, Farkhar and Keshem (Badakshan)
- Following the capture by the Taliban of the town of Sang Charak and the Valley of Gosfandi in Sara-e-Pol province in January 2000, 20,000 IDPs evacuated the town and have to rely on local food charity with sub-zero temperatures.

"In northern region/Mazar, there are over 100,000 civilians displaced by drought and/or conflict. This number includes at least 8,900 families (over 53,000 people) displaced by conflict in Kunduz and Baghlan Provinces. Accurate assessments are proving difficult given shifting front lines, as well as old IDP caseloads in the area from 1999. Recent assessments in Faryab indicate that coping mechanisms in some districts are exhausted, and that child mortality is at 5.2 per 10,000." (Office of the UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, 19 January 2001)

"A slow but steady influx of families from Shamali to Kabul has been reported in the past few weeks. This influx appears to be much higher than usual in autumn, probably the result of the latest shift of military alliances in Shamali and alarming rumours about new fighting, but also because food is becoming scarcer in the plains." (IASC, 1 December 2000, 34)

"The first movements of internally displaced persons (IDPs) of the summer occurred in early August after a Taliban assault on Nahrain and Burqa (Baghlan Province) and Ishkamish (Takhar Province) in late July. Populations moved primarily into the upland areas of southern Baghlan (e.g. Khost wa Fereng, Andarab) and southern Takhar, as well as some towards Taloqan.

Displacement continued as the Taliban moved eastwards towards Taloqan, when populations from areas west (e.g. Bangi) and immediately north of the city (e.g. Baharak) moved either into the city or northwards. At this stage the first movements of IDPs from Taloqan into Badakhshan (to Keshem and Faizabad) occurred, though numbers were moderate. A higher level of displacement occurred from Archi (Kunduz Province) and Khoja Ghar (Takhar Province), eastwards across the Kokcha River to Dasht-i-Qala, Khoja Bahauddin and Rustaq (Takhar) as conflict spread.

A second large wave north and east from the Taloqan area - into Kalafgan and Farkhar (Takhar) and Keshem (Badakhshan) and to a lesser degree Faizabad - occurred following the final capture of Taloqan on 5 September following over a month's fighting. Many of the IDPs subsequently moved further afield, including some which looped round into Taliban-controlled Taloqan. After the fall of Tangi Farkhar around 1 October the majority of IDPs moved out of Keshem. Further eastwards, increased displacement occurred across the Kokcha River as conflict spread within Khoja Ghar (Takhar), emptying the district. Many of these IDPs, and the host population, subsequently moved within Dasht-i-Qala and into Khoja Bahauddin districts. With few public buildings, the districts of Khoja Bahauddin and Dasht-i-Qala quickly became saturated and large numbers of IDPs consequently remained under soft shelter outside." (OCHA, 17 October 2000)

"Taleban forces in Afghanistan have made further gains in their fighting against the opposition forces of Ahmad Shah Massood. The Taleban took the town of Sang Charak and the valley of Gosfandi in Sara-e Pol province after several days of fighting, and Mr Massoods' forces also conceded they had lost further ground elsewhere. Meanwhile, a senior opposition commander, Ustad Mohammad Mohaqiq has appealed to the international community to send urgently needed aid to people forced to flee their homes in Sang Charak.

He said about twenty-thousand people were homeless, many living out in the open in conditions made awful by the winter weather." (BBC, 28 January 2000)

Conflict-induced displacement in 2001

"Northeastern Afghanistan currently has about 100,000 people displaced by fighting in various locations. Over the last three months, displacement due to conflict or drought has occurred from parts of Ragh and Shar-i Buzurg to north Takhar, Kunduz and Pakistan. Those areas where it was possible to continue food for work (FFW) activities throughout the winter produced relatively small numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs)." (OCHA 9 April 2001)

"Over two thousand families from Yakawlang have fled their homes [in March 2001] - due to the unstable security conditions - to safer places in the central region insofar, reports informed. These displaced families have sought refuge in Sartarnuk, Bukak, Jarda, Sia-Dara, Yarbalaq, Rustam, Andar, Zararang, Suleimani, Ziarat, Sia-Boomak and Bedak areas.

While surveys are ongoing to identify the displaced households, the current figure comes after earlier reports, estimating the IDP toll up to 1500.

Similarly, scores of other families have poured in Yakawlang from the district's surrounding villages, while the conditions of those who stayed behind in Yakawlang has been noted 'appalling'.

Furthermore, other eleven locations for the displaced families from Yakawlang have been identified inside the district itself." (Information & Communication Unit of the Hunger Belt Programme 26 March 2001)

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

General

Defining the IDPs in Afghanistan

- A distinction is made between principal internal displacement and secondary internal displacement in Afghanistan. The second category includes pastoral nomads, repatriated Afghans and those displaced by natural disasters.
- In defining the IDPs, it should be taken into account that some IDPs have resettled with friends or families but that they are still as vulnerable as other IDPs. Furthermore, the mobile nature of the Afghan society adds to the problem of defining who is an IDP. Nomads, for instance could sometimes be included in the IDP category.

"In defining internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan, a distinction is made between principal internal displacement and secondary internal displacement (NRC 1998):

Principal internal displacement - victims of conflict who chose to remain in Afghanistan rather than flee to neighbouring countries.(...) It also includes people displaced due to blockades that have prohibited free movement and the flow of goods. The resulting economic insecurity has forced many of these people to leave their homes. This group faces the loss of property rights, access to land and livelihoods.

Secondary internal displacement - this includes other groups, such as:

pastoral nomads, estimated in 1979 to number 800,000. Nomads normally fall outside the definition of IDPs and some nomadic groups, such as the Zala Khan Khel, opted for external exile. Others remained in Afghanistan but were prevented by land-mines and other war-related factors from exploiting traditional pastures. Some nomads have relocated to the lands and property of other displaced groups, complicating and even prohibiting the return of those with traditional rights;

repatriating Afghan refugees who returned from Pakistan and Iran between 1992 and 1993, and who have been prevented by ongoing conflict from returning to their homes; and

those displaced by natural disasters: for example, two earthquakes devastated areas in the provinces of Wardak and Logar in February 1999 destroying the homes of an estimated 100,000 people.

(...)

[But] problems arise in defining the displaced due to the following:

The difficulty in determining at what stage a person should no longer be classified as displaced. Resettlement in Kabul or with friends or relatives does not mean that coping mechanisms and self-reliance have been re-established and that the physical and psychological effects of displacement have disappeared.

The need to determine why people become displaced. A number of people leave because of the protracted nature of the conflict and their inability to feed their families. This situation is exacerbated due to the mobile nature of Afghan society discussed below. Since these people sometimes do not go far, leave in small numbers and stay with friends, they are not considered to be displaced.

Forcing a distinction between different groups such as nomads and other displaced groups. Nomads face a disruption in their means of livelihood and are not always able to resume their lives. Arbitrarily excluding nomads is rather simplistic. (WFP, October 1999)

Estimated figures of the total number of internally displaced persons

Total number of IDPs as of April 2001: 300,000-400,000

- As of April 2001, the total number of conflict-induced IDPs is estimated to range between 300,000 and 400,000
- UNHCR estimates that 16,000 IDPs are sheltered in the ex-Soviet Embassy, another 55,000 to 60,000 spread over Kabul and approximately 50,000 IDPs in the Panjshir Valley.

The UN estimates that the total number of people displaced at the end of 2000 ranges between 600,000 and 800,000 persons and includes displacement caused by drought and conflict, (IRIN 5 March 2001 / UNOCHA 6 April 2001). The total number of conflict-induced IDPs at the end of 2000 was estimated to range between 300,000 and 400,000. (UNICEF 8 March 2001; USCR 2 February 2001; IRIN 8 February 2001). Included in the conflict-induced figures are an estimated 100,000 people displaced since 1999 such as those in Kabul, the Panjshir valley or northern Hazarajat (Office of the UN Coordinator for Afghanistan 19 January 2001)

It should be noted exact figures have been very difficult to obtain due to several reasons. Distinguishing between drought and conflict-induced displacement has not been easy especially in regions such as Mazar-e-Sharif or Kabul where both groups of victims are mixed together. Internally displaced are integrated with host populations making identification difficult to the extent that some members of the local population have also been known to masquerade as IDPs in order to obtain assistance. The frequent movement of IDPs has also complicated estimates. (OCHA 17 October 2000)

Finally ongoing displacement and limited access to needy populations in several regions of Afghanistan (i.e. Dar-e-Suf), due to bad weather or volatile security conditions, further complicate the task of getting a comprehensive picture of the situation in terms of figures.

Total number of conflict-related IDPs in Afghanistan by region as of February 2001

Takhar and Badakshan province : 84,000 + 10,000 (Tajik-Afghan border)

Mazar-e-Sharif : 53,000

Panjshir Valley : 75,000 + 10,400 (new arrivals Takhar)

Kabul: 16,000 + 60,000

Jalalabad : 2,600

Hazarajat: 5,000

Total: 316,000 IDPs

(USCR 2 February 2001)

(Office for the UN co-ordinator for Afghanistan 19 January 2001)

(WFP 4 August 2000, 25 August 2000)

(UNHCR, 14 July 2000)

(IASC 1 December 2000)

(IRIN 8 February 2001)

"(...)straight addition shows that about 470,000 people have left their homes, the preponderance of whom are internally displaced inside Afghanistan. In addition, the totals represent only new IDPs and do not include at least 100,000 old IDPs from 1999, such as those in Kabul, Panjshir, or northern Hazarajat, or the many layers of displaced people over the years who have sought safety in Kabul. Moreover, these totals do not take into account all displacement that is likely to have occurred, such as within remote districts to other remote districts (e.g. Ghor); into urban centres but outside of camps (e.g. Herat); or into Iran. Therefore, this total number of IDPs/refugees should be assumed to be reasonably accurate for now, and if anything, on the low side." (Office of the UN co-ordinator for Afghanistan 19 January 2001)

According to UNHCR figures, the number of IDPs at the beginning of July stands as follows:

16,000 IDPs staying in the ex-Soviet Embassy compound in Kabul

55,000 to 60,000 registered IDPs in Kabul, spread out in the city, staying with relatives, etc.

Approximately 50,000 IDPs (7,568 families) in the Panjshir Valley. These figures exclude IDPs in the areas of Gulbahar, Jabulsaraj and Char-I-Kar (UNHCR, 14 July 2000)

Total number of IDPs at the end of 1999: 500,000-700,000

- According to USCR's estimates, the number of IDPs at the end of 1999 ranged from 500,000 to 750,000.
- UNHCR estimates that some 259,000 newly displaced persons in 1999 were still in need of aid and protection at the end of the year.
- OCHA estimates the total number of IDPs to be around 1,200,000 at the end of November.

"The number of internally displaced Afghans is unknown. In recent years, Taliban offensives in northern Afghanistan have displaced hundreds of thousands of people. Many are thought to have returned home as the lines of battle shifted from their home areas to new ones. Camps for displaced persons in Jalalabad that once housed more than 120,000 people are now closed. Yet most of Kabul's present population is displaced. A survey of Kabul's population carried out by the ICRC found that 83 percent of those interviewed had been displaced from their homes at one time or another.

During the year, more than 350,000 people were newly displaced, particularly from Bamiyan and other areas of Hazarajat (115,000), Darae Souf near Mazar-i-Sharif (50,000), the Shomali Plains north of Kabul (170,000), and Taloqan (16,000). Many of those who fled, perhaps as many as 150,000, later returned home, but some 200,000 remained displaced. Based on the number newly displaced in 1999 who were still displaced at year's end and on the number displaced in Kabul and other areas from previous years, USCR estimates the number of internally displaced persons to be 500,000 to 750,000." (USCR, June 2000)

According to UNHCR's figures, some 259,000 newly displaced persons in 1999 were still in need of aid and protection at the end of the year. (UNHCR, June 2000)

"[I]n addition to the existing concentration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in urban areas - which are estimated at over one million - the fighting in 1999 has resulted in a further wave of displacement. Civilians have often been the direct targets of conflict and have had no option but to flee. This has meant that more than 200,000 additional people have lost their livelihoods and are reliant on either international assistance or help from fellow Afghans for their survival." (UNOCHA, UNRCO November 1999, p. 17)

Total number of IDPs at the end of 1998: 540,000-1,000,000

- The main displacement during the year occurred following fighting due to significant Taliban advances into the northern provinces.
- Based on an estimated 60,000 people outside Kabul, 360,000 people displaced in Kabul, and an estimated 120,000 displaced people living at Sar Shahi camp, USCR estimates the total number of IDPs between 540,000 and 1,000,000
- In a report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan to the Commission on Human Rights on its 55th, it was stated that there were more than 2,000,000 internally displaced persons in the end of 1998

During 1998, the Taliban forces made significant advances into the northern provinces of Afghanistan.

"Informed observers estimate that hundreds of thousand of Afghans besides those at Sar Shahi are internally displaced, but no reliable statistics regarding them exists. [...]"

The U.S. State Department's estimate of the number of displaced persons in Afghanistan was 300,000 in 1998, but other sources believed the number could be a million or more. The International Committee of the Red Cross provided relief assistance to approximately 60,000 people outside Kabul, and reported that there were about 360,000 people displaced in Kabul.

If the above 420,000 people are added to the 120,000 displaced people living at Sar Shahi camp, the minimum number of internally displaced persons in Afghanistan would be 540,000. USCR therefore estimates that the total number of internally displaced Afghans in 1998 was no less than 540,000 and as high as 1 million." (USCR 1999, p. 123)

In the report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan to the Commission on Human Rights on its 55th session by Mr. Kamal Hossain, Special Rapporteur, it was stated that there were more than 2,000 000 internally displaced persons in the end of 1998. (Commission on Human Rights 24 March 1999, para 17)

For further information on the Massacre in Mazar-I-Sharif in August 1998, see Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: The Massacre in Mazar-I-Sharif](#) [External link]

Number and location of IDPs in 1997: 445,000

- 445,000 IDPs in 1997, mainly as a result of fighting in Herat and Kabul
- 3 main groups: IDPs in Jalalabad (120,000); IDPs in Herat and Panjsheer valley fleeing fighting in Badghis (78,000); IDPs in Kabul from Shomali valley (200,000 + 47,000)

"Afghanistan has approximately 445,000 recently displaced people. The bulk of these are victims of the Taliban seizures of the Persian-speaking cities of Herat in September 1995, and Kabul in September 1996. However, approximately one million people were displaced during earlier phases of the Afghan conflict, and their situations shed light on various difficulties in defining internal displacement. (...)"

Number and location of IDPs

There are three major groups of IDPs in Afghanistan at present:

IDPs in the Sar Shahi camp near Jalalabad, and elsewhere in the vicinity of Jalalabad itself.

IDPs in northern Afghanistan, some in camps in the vicinity of Herat; and IDPs from the Shomali valley north of Kabul, the bulk of whom are currently located in the Kabul conurbation.

There are approximately 80,000 persons in Sar Shahi camp, which was established for victims of the rocketing of Kabul carried out by the forces of the Hezb-I-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar between June 1992 and March 1995. Anecdotal reports suggest that half as many again may be living in the Jalalabad conurbation, making the total in the area 120,000.

Most of the IDPs in the Heart area are the victims of armed conflict around the province of Badghis, which broke out in October 1996. By the late 1997, 5000 families, with an average of six members each, were receiving international assistance, the bulk of them in the Maslarkh camp. A further 4000 families were receiving help in the Pul-I- Khumri area, and 4000 in the Panjsher valley, suggesting a total of 78,000 persons. Since mid-1997, there have been further displacements in northern Afghanistan as a result of the escalation of conflict between the Taliban and their opponents.

The largest displacements by far have been from the Shomali valley to the north of Kabul. These began following a Taliban assault on opposition positions, and reflected a systematic intent on the part of the Taliban to clear the area of potential opponents. In the writer's view, the flight of these IDPs was largely a result of the "ethnic cleansing". By July 1997, 200,000 IDPs had entered Kabul from the Shomali valley and a further 47,000 were reported by UNHCR to have fled to the north, mostly from the same region. Some have since returned to the Shomali valley following the recapture of the northern half of the valley by the Taliban's opponents." (William Maley 1998 pp. 156-157)

Areas of displacement and location of IDPs

Western region overview (March 2001)

- Severe drought has caused massive displacement in western Afghanistan, with people moving mainly to Herat where 90,000 IDPs are sheltered in 6 camps.
- 2000 IDPs arrive in Herat on a weekly basis and this flow is expected to increase with the melting of snow.

"Western Afghanistan shares a border with Iran to the west and Turkmenistan to the north. Herat is the center for the region. The region has four large provinces Herat, Badghis, Ghor and Farah. With no rain and little snow for the past three years, Western Afghanistan is facing a drought situation in 2001. It is estimated that the drought has resulted in an average of 75% loss in crops and 50% reduction in livestock assets. As a result of the drought, many people have been forced to migrate from these three provinces to Herat city in search for humanitarian assistance.

Herat city has the highest concentration of IDPs in camps. Since the establishment of the IDP camps in October 2000, there are now a total of six camps in the city with a total estimated population of 90,000 (as of February 25 th , 2001). The number of IDPs in Herat is increasing daily as evidenced by over 2,000 people arriving on a weekly basis to the city.

As many of the areas in this region will remain un-planted this season (March/April)- due to seed shortage, water shortage, draught-power (oxen) shortage, and lack of food to sustain their existence whilst awaiting the next harvest, it is anticipated that with the melting of the snow in the nearby province (Ghor) in March/April, more IDPs will arrive in Herat in search for assistance.

A lot of effort has been made to alleviate the suffering experienced by the IDPs but much more is needed in order to meet their basic requirements and to sustain them in the coming months till there is a possibility of returning to places of origin for the next crop. For the IDPs to return to their villages and prepare for the next crop (autumn 2001), the conditions will have to be favourable in sufficient water as well as adequate supports and resources (seeds, fertilizer, draught power, health services, food assistance etc). " (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

Southern region overview (March 2001)

- Main cause for displacement is the drought.
- 24,000 extremely vulnerable IDP families are scattered in over 210 locations in the Southern region.
- Helmand and Kandahar are the most affected provinces
- Returnees are also affected by the drought situation in a region which has traditionally been a high-returnee area.
- As a result of a concerted effort by the aid community and the authorities to avoid attracting more people from the rural areas there are no IDP camps.
-

"Southern Afghanistan borders Pakistan and consists of five provinces- Helmand, Nimroz, Zabul, Kandahar and Oruzgan and has an estimated population of 3 million people. The current drought situation is a result of three successive years of lack of adequate water supply. There are approximately 24,000 extremely vulnerable IDP families scattered in over 210 locations in the Southern region. The two most affected provinces are Helmand and Kandahar. The drying up of the Arghandab river (main river which provided water for agriculture) as well as the hand dug wells, has meant that people have been relying on drilled wells, which are increasingly drying up also. The drought has inevitably led to a poor horticulture harvest and food security has deteriorated considerably.

In addition to the vast number of people who have been affected by the drought due to lack of agriculture harvest, there are a large number of people who have lost all their livestock. The Baluchi Kuchi families, nomadic people, are one of the groups of IDPs now in this region. Most of the kuchis have lost large portions of their herds through death or sale of the livestock. The difficult circumstances in this region also affect returnee populations as this has traditionally been a high-returnee area.

Unlike the Western region, there are no IDP camps in this region. In fact, there has been a concerted effort by the Aid community and the authorities not to support the formation of 'camps' as this may be seen as a 'pull' factor and attract more people to come to the urban areas or to leave their homes in search for assistance. However, many people still have left their homes and come to the urban areas in search for assistance and to find a way to

earn money to support their families. The IDPs have settled in various locations- in abandoned buildings as well as with host families, who themselves are 'vulnerable' and have been affected by the drought. One of the challenges therefore is the provision of assistance to such a widespread area which in effect requires a lot of careful planning and logistical support and more resources overall. " (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

Northern region overview (March 2001)

- Displacement started in October 2000 and led an estimated 116,000 persons to flee their homes to escape fighting and/or famine
- 44% of the displaced in the camps are under 18 years and 30% are women
- Most IDPs do not live in camps but sought refuge in abandoned public buildings and temporary shelters.

"Northern Afghanistan borders Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and consists of Balkh, Baghlan, Kunduz, Faryab, Jowzjan, Samangan and Saripul provinces. The total estimated IDP population for this region is over 116,000 (both drought as well as conflict IDPs).

The IDPs in this region started movement into different locations of Balkh, Baghlan and Kunduz provinces in October 2000. It is estimated that there are 51,000 IDPs living in 27 different camps/shelters in these 3 provinces and more IDPs from neighbouring provinces are expected to arrive due to the ongoing drought situation and the lack of resources available to them in their current provinces. Of the total population in the camps at this time, an estimated 44% are children under 18 years and 30% are women.

[Mazar-i-Sharif (Balkh province)]

Most of the IDP's population are adult male and female members whilst most young family members have apparently stayed back in their place of origin. Like in the Southern region, the IDPs in Northern region do not live in camps but instead have been accommodated in abandoned public buildings and temporary shelters. The main concern for the IDPs is related to food security. They have left their homes in the villages to come to the urban centres in the hope of finding better conditions and work. However, their arrival to Mazar-I-Sharif, the regional centre has led to a sharp drop in the daily labour wage, making it virtually impossible to generate sufficient income to feed a family.

Up till now, the priority of the relief assistance has been to focus on the worst affected areas in an effort to discourage people from leaving their homes. Although aid has been given to those who have left their homes, this assistance has been more ad-hoc. Reports are now showing that the conditions of both the IDPs and those that have remained in their villages are becoming dire. There is not enough food to eat as evidence by children foraging for grass and weeds to supplement their diet." (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

"Another 100,000 displaced persons are in Mazar-e-Sharif and nearby areas. These include more than 46,000 people displaced by fighting in late 2000 in Kunduz and Baghlan provinces." (USCR 2 February 2001)

"In northern region/Mazar, there are over 100,000 civilians displaced by drought and/or conflict. This number includes at least 8,900 families (over 53,000 people) displaced by conflict in Kunduz and Baghlan Provinces. Accurate assessments are proving difficult given shifting front lines, as well as old IDP caseloads in the area from 1999." (Office of the UN co-ordinator for Afghanistan 19 January 2001)

See also: "[Women and children among the most vulnerable in IDP camps in the north \(March 2001\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[Discrepancies in nutrition data show need for more detailed surveys \(March 2001\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[Outbreak of cholera and measles in the north \(December 2000\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[Recent IDP children in Mazar not at greater risk of malnutrition than other children \(November 2000\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)];

Samangan Province

"A UN assessment of Darra Souf in October reported that up to 35,000 people may still be displaced in the area as a result of fighting. A further 14,000 have left the area. The displaced are spread out in different villages; some living with friends and relatives and others occupying makeshift shelters and caves. Most were able to take some possessions with them when they fled the fighting, but the poorest have largely exhausted whatever resources they had. As many as 1,000 households may require immediate food and non-food assistance. In addition, WFP will provide the displaced with wheat." (RNIS 29, December 1999)

"In Darra Souf (Samangan Province), conflict has persisted all year. An estimated 49,000 people have been displaced from central Darra Souf (especially the area from Tangi Yaqub to Shorab). Of these, some 14,000 people have left the area for Mazar, Pulikhumri, and Pakistan. Some 35,000 people are displaced within the district." (UNOCHA 14 October 1999)

See also : "[People in Dara Suf prevented by the military to move in search of support \(August 2000\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[UN airdrops food in the Darra-e-Souf area \(June 2000\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)] and "[UN uses 1,500 donkeys to carry aid to the Darra-e Souf Valley \(January 2000\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]

North-eastern region overview (March 2001)

- 116,000 people are estimated to have been displaced in the provinces of Takhar and Badakhshan during the last offensive of the Taliban. A large portion of them have moved towards the northern provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan.

- 10,000 persons who fled the fighting in August and September are stranded on several islands in a river along the Afghan/Tajik border. They are in a kind of no man's land since the Tajik government has so far refused to allow them to enter Tajikistan. Living and shelter conditions are poor.

"The provinces of Takhar and Badakshan border Tajikistan and are located in the northeastern part of Afghanistan. People living in these two provinces are mostly Tajik and traditionally Northern Alliance loyalists (non-Taliban). These provinces are amongst the most underdeveloped in the country and the overall economic condition of the population is poor. Until August 2000, Northern Alliance had full territorial control over both these provinces. In late August, the Taliban initiated a major offensive to dislodge alliance forces from these areas. With the intensification of fighting major displacement of civilian population took place. A large number of people rendered homeless and moved towards north and northeastern part of Takhar and Badakhshan province.

The authorities have estimated that a total of 116,000 people have been displaced during the last offensive and have taken shelter in 12 locations of Badakshan and Takhar provinces under the control of Northern alliance. A large portion of population crossed the frontline and moved towards the northern provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan presently under the control of Taliban.

Most of the displaced people have taken shelter in temporary makeshift shelters, dilapidated government buildings and destroyed houses abandoned by families during the fighting. About 10,000 people have moved to Faizabad city in Badakshan province and the remaining people have taken shelter in Takhar province. During the period of hostilities, families had to move from one place to another in search of safety and as a result, have lost all their belongings." (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

"Meanwhile, in Kunduz and Baghlan Provinces in northern Afghanistan, the regional task force on displaced persons (IDPs) is making fresh attempts to develop a better understanding of the situation of those families recently displaced due to conflict.(...)

The displaced are in Khanabad, Aliabad, Kunduz City, and Imam Saheb (all in Kunduz Province) and in Charshanbe Tapa, Old Baghlan, New Baghlan, Pulikhumri, Doshi and Dhand-i-Ghauri in Baghlan Province. (OCHA 17 January 2001)

"IDP families affected by the armed conflict in Kunduz and Takhar continue to arrive in various parts of Baghlan and Kunduz provinces. According to international NGOs, there are 260 families in Khanabad District of Kunduz Province. There are reports of an unaccounted number of IDP families from Sherkhan Bandar moving towards the Kokcha River --a branch of the Amu River-- through Emam Sahib to Dasht-e-Archi and its environs.

Estimates from the aid community working in Kunduz suggest that the conflict-related IDPs in Kunduz City are some 700 families.

Baghlan Province continues to receive IDP families mostly from Nahrin, Ish-kamish, Hazar Bagh, Amber Koh, Dasht-e-Archi, Khoja Ghar, Bangi, Emam Sahib and Burka. The UN negotiated with the authorities to move all IDP families from the open into public buildings.

In new Baghlan over 630 registered IDP families live in five public buildings, where construction of latrines and wells, distribution of food and emergency relief and provision of basic health services and mine awareness are ongoing. Several hundred IDPs are living with local host families.

Like new Baghlan, Pul-e-Khumri also has IDPs, mostly from the same locations. Seven hundred displaced families in Pul-e-Khumri include old IDPs from Darra Souf, who consist of only women and children and are without male members. Distribution of food and relief supplies, construction of latrines and wells and provision of basic health services are ongoing.

Old Baghlan has seen the most re-cent arrival of IDP families from the frontlines. According to a joint UN/NGO assessment a total of 865 families, living in makeshift camps, have been registered. A series of UN/NGO and ICRC meetings has been held with the senior provincial authorities to negotiate the provision of shelter for them in public buildings.

Charshanbe Tapa, situated 54km from Pul-e-Khumri in north Baghlan, currently hosts 670 families (4,650 persons), who used to be rain-fed land holders and have recently been displaced due to fresh fighting in these areas. Work continues on emergency relief, construction, sanitation and health sectors for these displaced families." (OCHA 5 December 2000)

"A clearer picture of the IDP situation in the Northeast is emerging. The people displaced from Taloqan two weeks ago, when the Taliban captured this key opposition base, have moved to seven areas. In Faisabad, Keshem and Rustaq, most families have gathered in district centres. In Dashti-Qala, Khost wa Fereng, Farkhar and Warsaj, IDPs are spread throughout the districts." (WFP 21 September 2000)

See also: "[Gaps in the assistance in the northeast \(February 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[ACTED, SNI and MSF provide shelters in Takhar and Faizabad \(December 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Response by the international community in the northeast \(December 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Self-reliance status of IDPs in north-eastern Afghanistan \(October 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[IDPs in the northeast in need of food and shelter \(December 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Patterns of displacement in the north-east \(December 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]

IDPs stranded at the Afghan-Tajik border

"Among those displaced in Takhar Province are some 10,000 persons who fled the fighting in August and September who are stranded on several islands in a river along the Afghan/Tajik border. They suffer periodic attacks by the Taleban and receive little assistance because their location is accessible only Tajikistan. UNHCR has repeatedly

appealed to the Tajik government to permit the refugees to enter. However, in contravention of international law, Tajikistan has consistently refused them entry." (USCR 2 February 2001)

"In Kumsangir, about 1500 displaced families, most from Imam-Sahib and some from Dashti Archi, are living on an island along Pianj River. Food, which the IDPs/refugees brought from their villages, is fast depleting. The health status of the IDPs was fair, although a few children seemed to be undernourished. Overall, however, the living and shelter conditions of the IDPs are poor.

In Pianj, there are 400 families, and 90 fighters are living amongst them. The refugees come from Kalbot, Khwajagar, Kartok, Hazarbagh, and Tazalaqai in Kunduz and Takhar provinces. Food, which the IDPs/refugees brought from their villages, is coming to an end. Living conditions are poor. The IDP/refugees have built reed huts and clusters of 4 to 5 families live in one place. Very few roofs are water resistant. Children have poor clothing and there is a need for blankets and shoes. The IDPs/refugees are concerned that it will be very difficult for them to survive over the winter.

The status of the affected people is unclear, as the border is not demarcated. Some are IDPs, while some are indeed refugees. The realities of the situation place the group in a type of 'no-man's land'. Most of the IDP/refugees are actually the families and kin of Northern Alliance fighters. They have been on the island since the loss of Imam Sahib, Khwajagar and the adjoining area, often going back and forth. The mission found that there is a need to assess in-depth the specific circumstances of the vulnerable for limited interventions. Consideration is being given to moving these displaced families to a more secure area further away from the frontlines where some assistance could be provided." (IASC 1 December 2000,21-23)

See also: "[UNHCR's suspension of relief operations at the Tajik-Afghan border put IDPs at risk \(April 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Nutritional assessment at Afghan-Tajik border show rapid deterioration \(April 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[International response to the IDP crisis at the Tajik-Afghan border \(February 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[IDPs stranded at Tajik-Afghan border exposed to shelling \(January 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[10,000 stranded IDPs at Afghan-Tajik border not accessible through Afghanistan \(January 2001\)](#)" [Internal link];

Central region overview (March 2001)

Hazarajat

"The area known as Hazarajat comprises Bamiyan province and parts of adjacent provinces. The exact boundaries are open to debate, but for the purpose of this study are taken to be those of the old Shura area. This comprises the districts of Shebar, Bamiyan, Panjao, Waras, Yakawlang (Bamiyan province); Balkhab (Jowzjan); Dar-e-Souf (Samangan); Lal o Sari Jangal (Ghor); Dai Kundi, Sharistan (Uruzgan); Malistan, Jaghori, Nawor (Ghazni); Behsud I and Behsud II (Wardak). Although it would be possible to argue for a historically larger concept of Hazarajat, all of these districts would

be generally recognised as being part of Hazarajat and so this definition fits with agencies' operational realities. The area so defined also includes all of the poorest Hazara districts.

[...]

Conflict and inability of the population to feed itself means that population movements, both temporary and permanent, have long been a feature of Hazarajat. Currently, there are three main types of population movement in Hazarajat: migration out, mainly in search of work; returnees from Iran, usually at least to some extent forced; and IDPs, caused mainly by the conflict. The line between voluntary migration and forced displacement is not always clear in practice, especially when considering population movements caused by food shortages.

[...]

The 1992-4 fighting in Kabul in some ways benefited Hazarajat, as educated people fled the city for safer places — and whilst some went to Quetta, Iran, and even further afield, a small educated group came back to Hazarajat, where they provide the core of professional staff for many agencies. Fighting in Mazar in 1997 and 1998 brought more IDPs, as did the fighting in Bamiyan in 1998. Most recently, in May 1999, the fighting and destruction in Bamiyan town and surrounding villages sent terrified families fleeing to the hills. Many came through Yakawlang and their stories precipitated a wave of IDPs from there also, although these were not as desperate as the Bamiyan IDPs as they were at least able to take things with them. At that time Solidarites recorded a total of 13,032 families, or 89% of the population, leaving Bamiyan. Of these, 5,615 went to Behsud and 1,987 to the mountains of Koh-i-Baba. Others went to Pul-i-Khumri, Kamard, Kabul and even further afield. The weather at that time was still very cold and Solidarites recorded that 155 children died of cold and 78 women and old people died of hunger and cold, plus a further 23 from the fighting. The number of single women heading households rose from 24 in January to 248 by August. At the end of 1999, 424 IDP families from Bamiyan were still known to be living in central Hazarajat. 150 of these were in Yakawlang, mostly living with relatives, mainly in far away villages; 53 more families were in Panjao centre; 23 in Lal centre; and most of rest in the remote areas of Targai, Mur and Tarapas. There were also IDPs from the fighting in Dara e Suf, 25 in Lal centre." (UN's Coordinator Office, March 2000, Part I)

"[Number of displaced persons]: 50,000 people [mainly exodus from the region]

Status: This number includes an exodus of 45,000 people from the central highlands to other parts of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. According to the UN Regional Coordinating Officer, three quarters of this number indicated they were leaving for Iran (90 percent) or Pakistan (10 percent). The 25 percent who remained behind in Afghanistan are located in Kabul [east] , Ghazni [south east] and Herat [west]. A further 5,000 are estimated to have been displaced in late January due to violent clashes near Yawkawlang, in Bamiyan Province. Relief agencies expect that impoverished residents in the central highlands will try to cope over winter by reducing their food consumption. UN sources estimate a high mortality over winter as many families who chose to remain are unprepared." (IRIN 8 February 2001)

Bamiyan Province

"After the traditional lull during winter, fighting has progressively intensified. In February, opposition forces briefly captured the Hazarajat town of Yakowlang, 100 kilometres west of the provincial capital, Bamiyan, and briefly Bamiyan itself. The Taliban offensive to capture these areas caused significant levels of destruction and displacement. Sporadic guerrilla activity has taken place in the eastern, northwest and western provinces throughout the year." (UNOCHA, UNRRCO November 1999, p. 15)

"Between March and May 1999, some 115,000 people were uprooted in Bamiyan, fleeing to the neighboring districts and provinces, to Kabul, northern Afghanistan and to Pakistan. People displaced from Bamiyan have sought refuge in all surrounding districts, including Kamard, Yakaolang, Panjao, Waras, Behsud 1 and Behsud 2. Central Bamiyan and parts of neighboring Saigan District and Shibar were totally depopulated by the climax of the fighting on 15 May. Many of these displaced people have been relocating from one district to another, trying to find accommodation and food to enable them to survive the winter. (UNOCHA 14 October 1999)

"Following clashes between the Taliban and Hezb-e-Wahdat forces in the central highlands in the beginning of 1999, it was reported that " [t]here was a steady exodus of the civilian population from Bamiyan from February to mid-April 1999 and that the civilian population had been almost totally displaced from the area by the end of the conflict there in mid-May." (UN GA 30 September 1999, para. 19)

"[M]ost of the population evacuated the city and took refuge in the mountains. They were facing a serious situation given the weather in the cold mountainous areas and the acute shortage of food. It was reported that a group of 150 people, including women and children, were taken captive by the Taliban from Berson village and transferred to Parwan province.

Yakawlang was also evacuated by people who feared being killed or arrested by the Taliban. A few families managed to reach Ghazni while others went to Panjab or Bahsood districts." (UN GA 30 September 1999, paras 13, 14)

See also: "[Solidarity provides shelters in Bamiyan \(April 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Taleban forces accused of killing 100 to 300 civilians in Yakaolang district \(January 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Killing and house burning in Bamiyan \(1999\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Return of IDPs to Bamiyan \(June-September 1999\)](#)" [Internal link]

Kabul

"Since Sept. 1999 over 20 thousand IDPs from the Shomali plains have been living in the ex-Soviet Compound in Kabul. UNICEF has provided health-related and other support to this group in co-ordination with various partners. Through STC-US UNICEF has provided psychosocial and education support. UNICEF also provided winter packages in collaboration with other partners to 4000 IDP families in the complex. There are an

unknown number of IDPs also scattered amongst families in Kabul. It is unlikely this group of IDPs would return to Shomali as their homes and agriculture was almost completely destroyed by the scorch earth policy of the Taliban. In the past weeks, Kabul is witness to a new wave of IDP families from the drought and conflict affected areas of Hazarajat. Some have walked for over 17 days and there are reports of children having died on the way. In addition, over 50 thousand IDPs continue to live in the Panjshir valley from Shomali." (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

"A slow but steady influx of families from Shamali to Kabul has been reported in the past few weeks. This influx appears to be much higher than usual in autumn, probably the result of the latest shift of military alliances in Shamali and alarming rumours about new fighting, but also because food is becoming scarcer in the plains. (...)

The newly arriving families usually are accommodated with relatives in the city. Although a number of relief programmes for vulnerable people (including IDPs) are being implemented in the city, it is difficult to identify and include the ever-increasing number of widely spread vulnerable population." (IASC 1 December 2000, 34-35)

According to UNHCR figures, the number of IDPs in Kabul at the beginning of July stands as follows:

16,000 IDPs staying in the ex-Soviet Embassy compound in Kabul
55,000 to 60,000 registered IDPs in Kabul, spread out in the city, staying with relatives, etc.

(UNHCR, 14 July 2000)

"Of the tens of thousands of people, who were initially forced to leave their villages and travel to Kabul in August, a significant proportion traveled on to Pakistan before the onset of winter. In Kabul, regular food inputs from WFP for some 3,000 vulnerable families housed in the ex-Soviet Embassy have been matched by joint UN/NGO non-food distributions. In addition, UNICEF, together with NGOs, has supported the provision of basic services (safe water, health care, and education) and undertaken winterisation measures to buildings in the compound.

The bulk of the displaced population still in Kabul continues to reside in the homes of relatives, who are themselves often poor and vulnerable. To address these needs, an ECHO-funded programme has been launched in the city to provide employment for some 4,000 families during the winter." (OCHA, 29 February 2000)

According to UNHCR, there were an estimated 107,000 IDPs in Kabul as of November 1999. (UNHCR 11 November 1999)

"In the Afghan capital, two separate groups of displaced exist: those who have sought shelter in a former diplomatic compound, and those who have dispersed throughout the city." (UN Press Release 13 August 1999)

"20,000 families have been registered entering Kabul between August and now [November], of which some 12,500 persons (mostly women and children) are currently living in the ex-Soviet compound, while others have found shelter with relatives/friends." (UNDP Afghanistan 10 November 1999)

See also: "[Save the Children/US and UNICEF provide health care in the former Soviet Embassy in Kabul \(August 2000\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[UN and NGOs arrange for educational activities for IDP children in Kabul \(August 2000\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[Subsistence needs among IDPs outside the Soviet Compound in Kabul \(November 1999\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[Precarious living conditions for IDPs in the diplomatic compound in Kabul \(October 1999\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[IDP children in ex-Soviet embassy suffer from a range of problems \(October 1999\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[Increased malnutrition among IDP children in the ex-Soviet compound \(October 1999\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[Shelter conditions of IDPs in Kabul \(November 1999\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)]; "[Only one in three IDPs of the ex-Soviet Embassy is employed \(November 1999\)](#)" [[Internal link](#)];

Panjsheer valley

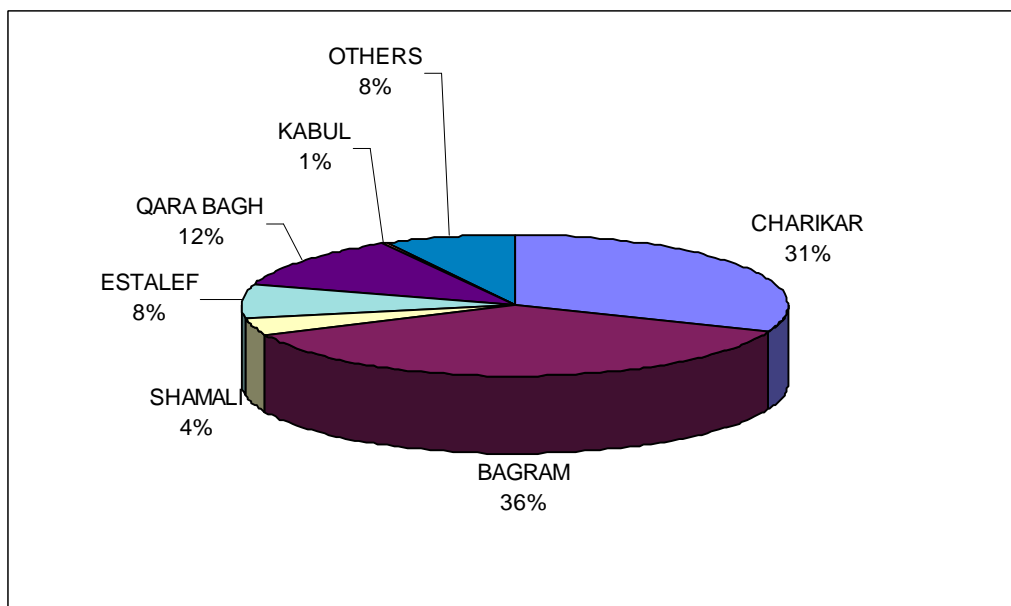
"A recent WFP-OCHA mission to Panjshir Valley confirmed that around 300 families displaced there by last year's fighting in the Shamali remain in poor condition, awaiting improvements in the political environment to allow their safe return home. They are expected to spend a second winter in the Valley and have by now depleted their assets and savings. Many of these households sent individual family members, at considerable risk, to cultivate their land in the Shamali this summer, but these efforts were largely in vain as the drought decimated the crops. WFP intends to assist these families to ensure their food security this winter. In addition to the Shamali IDPs in the Panjshir, a new group of about 1600 households have recently fled fighting in Takhar, to side valleys in Andarab. Their present circumstances are not perceived critical, but WFP is monitoring their movement and conditions." (WFP 25 August 2000)

"Panjshir Valley is hosting 75,000 IDPs who fled fighting in August 1999, when their houses and crops were destroyed. " (WFP 4 August 2000)

"(...) the number of IDPs that have settled in Panjsheer Valley is apparently still comprised between 30,000 and 40,000 people while less than 10% among them have found shelter in public buildings such as schools, mosques or administrations."(ACF, March 2000, p. 4)

The following table shows the characteristics of the displaced beneficiaries (39% of the patients) of the ACF feeding centres.

Place of origin	Number	Percentage
Charikar	301	31.1%
Bagram	360	37.2%
Shamali	37	3.8%
Estalef	75	7.8%
Quara Bagh	115	11.9%
Kabul	5	0.5%
Others	74	7.7%
Total displaced families	967	100.0%
Date of arrival in the area	Number	Percentage
<3 months	51	5.3%
>3 months and <6 months	116	12.0%
>6 months and <12 months	800	82.7%
Housing	Number	Percentage
Rented house	319	33.0%
With local family	98	10.1%
Non off. Camp	54	5.6%
Relatives	49	5.1%
Pub. Buildings	196	20.3%
Off. Camp	251	26.0%
Total displaced families	967	100.0%



"They come from every part of the Shamali plains but most of them are originally from Bagram (36.0%), from Charikar (31.0%) and from Estalef (8.0%). Almost all displaced families have settled within the area more than six months ago, just after the fighting resumed in the Shamali plains last summer (98.2% of the households)." (ACF, March 2000, p. 11)

According to UNOCHA, the total number of IDPs in the Panjshir in October 1999 was between 60,000 and 65,000 persons. (OCHA 14 October 1999).

See also: "[International assistance provided to the IDPs in the Panjshir Valley \(July 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Prospects for the IDPs in the Pansheer valley \(March 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Situation precarious for displaced households in the Panjsheer Valley as unemployment is high \(March 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Indiscriminate bombing of IDPs in the Panjshir Valley \(February 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Acute malnutrition among children in Shomali plains and Panjsheer Valley, but IDP children not at greater risk \(August 2000\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[Shelter conditions of IDPs in the Panjsheer Valley \(September 1999\)](#)" [Internal link];

IDPs in Jalalabad (December 2000)

- 400 families (~2,600 people) are displaced in Jalalabad city

"In eastern Afghanistan, relatively less affected by drought than other areas, the drought has exacerbated the overall situation and forced some people to leave their place of origin and became either refugees in Pakistan or seek shelter internally. With the border of Pakistan closed since 9 November, more than 400 displaced families have taken up residence in Jalalabad City.

(...)

In view of the increasing number of IDPs in the region due to the drought and continuing war in the North, UN agencies have developed a contingency plan of intervention in case the situation worsens. In the context of this worsening scenario, the assistance community would be engaged only in life-saving activities such as: (a) direct relief supplies; (b) provision of potable water; (c) emergency health services; and (d) resettlement." (IASC 1 December 2000, 58-60)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Four major patterns of displacement (October 1999)

- The momentum of displacement increases with the fear and terror that follows each fighting.
- Collective fear, fear of reprisal, house-to-house search, checking operations, recruitment of young conscripts cause people to move.
- Recently, in the Panjshir Valley, evacuation preceded the attacks.
- The areas most affected by displacement are the strategically important ones
- Over the last 20 years, 4 major patterns of displacement have emerged: movement towards the mountains nearest to the area abandoned; refuge to major cities; refuge in Pakistan and refuge in Iran

"By tradition Afghans are a highly mobile people. The current patterns of displacement accentuate the normal patterns of movement and as a consequence there is now continuous movement in and out of the Panjshir Valley, both northeast towards Pakistan and southwards. Even within the context of the mobile Afghan society, the major population shifts experienced over the past 20 years represent a significant state of disruption. Though the events resulting in mass movements of people may differ from place to place, the root cause of displacement is conflict. During the Soviet occupation the most immediate and obvious cause was the bombing of villages and the destruction of harvests, livestock and, of course, people. Although often people do not flee at first, the momentum of mass movement increases with the fear and terror that follows each event. In some cases it is collective fear which causes people to move, fear of reprisals following a resistance operation, house-to-house searches, checking operations, recruitment of young conscripts, punitive operations conducted by both sides, and the taking of young girls. In the most recent offensives in the Panjshir Valley, a repeat of 15 years ago, village evacuation, sometimes forced, precedes bombardment or attack. The areas most affected are strategically significant: towns, lines of communication and military strongholds where entire valleys (the Panjshir) or mountain areas (the central mountains of the Hazaradjat) are affected.

During the 20 years of displacement, four major patterns of internal movement have developed: movement towards the mountains nearest to the area abandoned; refuge to major cities such as Kabul, Jalalabad and Herat to regions in the southeast; refuge in Pakistan; and, for populations in the southwest, refuge in Iran." (WFP, October 1999)

Displacement in north-eastern Afghanistan

Patterns of displacement in the north-east (December 2000)

- Displacement occurred from Nahrin and Burqa (Baghlan province) and from Iskhamish (Takhar province) to southern Baghlan and southern Takhar following a Taliban assault.
- More displacement took place around Taloqan with surrounding villagers moving into the town to escape fighting.
- Displacement also occurred northward and to Badakhshan. Additional displacement include movements from Takhar and Kunduz to Dashti-i-Qala, Rustaq and Khoja Bahauddin.
- More people fled to Khoja Bahauddin and Dashti-i-Qala following Taloqan's capture by the Taliban on 5 September 2000 while some others fled to Kalafgan, Farkhar and Keshem (Badakhshan)

"The first large IDP movements of the summer occurred in early August after a successful Taleban assault on Nahrain, Burqa and Ishkamish in late July. These movements involved populations moving primarily into the upland areas of southern Baghlan (eg. Khost wa Fereng, Andarab) and southern Takhar, as well as some towards Taloqan.

Displacement continued as the Taleban moved eastwards towards Taloqan, compelling populations from areas west (eg. Bangi) and immediately north of the city (eg. Baharak) to move either into the city or northwards. At this stage the first movements of IDPs from Taloqan into Badakhshan (to Keshem and Faizabad) occurred, though numbers were moderate. A higher level of displacement occurred from Archi (Kunduz province) and Khwagaghar (Takhar), eastwards across the Kokcha river to Dasht-I Qala, Khoja Bahauddin and Rustaq as conflict spread. Part of the population of Imam Sahib district was also displaced immediately northwards into the marshes along the Anu Darya following the withdrawal of opposition forces from that area.

A second large wave north and east from the Taloqan area – into Kalafghan, Farkhar, Keshem and to a lesser degree Faizabad - occurred following the final capture of Taloqan on 5 th September following over a month's fighting. Many of the IDPs subsequently moved further afield, including some which looped round into Taleban-controlled Taloqan. After the fall of Tangi Farkhar around 1 st October the majority of IDPs moved out of Keshem. Further eastwards increased displacement occurred across the Kokcha river as conflict spread within Khwagaghar, emptying the district. With the front-line reaching the Kokcha in December many of these IDPs, plus the host population, subsequently moved within Dasht-I Qala district and into Khoja Bahauddin district.." (UNOCHA December 2000)

Striking differences in the pattern of displacement between displaced from southern and northern Shamali (1999)

- Most IDPs from southern Shamali were displaced suddenly and had to fled empty-handed, while those displaced from northern areas were in a more advantageous position

"Wide variation existed in terms of material possessions and assets, livestock and food resources levels amongst the IDP population. IDPs from southern Shamali have, generally speaking, much less in all respects than those from other areas as they fled either as the Taliban took their areas or immediately after, and consequently most fled essentially empty handed. In addition, they have generally been unable to return due to the ongoing conflict. Those from northern areas are in a more advantageous position having had more forewarning of the initial Taliban advance, less distance to travel to the Panjshir, the ability to return to collect possessions (at times collectively) and, importantly, closer links and connections with the present host population." (UN GA 30 September 1999, para. 27)

PROTECTION CONCERNS

General

The threat of landmines remains (August 2000)

Key developments since March 1999: Landmine casualties continued to decline. An estimated five to ten people were injured or killed by mines every day in 1999, compared to an estimated ten to twelve people in 1998 and an estimated twenty to twenty-four people in 1993. In 1999, 110 square kilometers of land were cleared of mines and UXO, which constitutes 24% of the total of 465 square kilometers cleared since 1990. In 1999, 21,871 antipersonnel mines, 1,114 antitank mines, and 254,967 UXO were destroyed. Donors contributed US\$22 million to mine action in 1999. A total of 979,640 people received mine awareness education in 1999, and about 6 million since 1990. The opposition Northern Alliance continued to use antipersonnel mines.

Mine Ban Policy

At least in part because of its unusual international political status and situation, Afghanistan is not a party to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, or Taliban authority, now controls over 90% of country, but Afghanistan's seat at the United Nations is still occupied by the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani, known as the Islamic State of Afghanistan or Northern Alliance, which was ousted by the Taliban in September 1996. Northern Alliance forces are currently engaged in continued fighting with Taliban forces in the north of Afghanistan.

In October 1998, the supreme leader of the Taliban, Mullah Muhammed Omer, issued a lengthy, detailed statement from Kandahar proclaiming a comprehensive ban on antipersonnel mines. In 1999 and 2000, the Taliban has reaffirmed its support for the ban on landmines on a number of occasions. On 1 March 2000, the Afghan Campaign to Ban Landmines (ACBL) and member organizations organized an event in Kabul to commemorate the anniversary of the entry into force of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. Several high-ranking officials of the Taliban participated as well as UN officials and representatives of international agencies and NGOs.

The head of the Taliban's Office of Disaster Response, which includes a Department of Mine Clearance, Mohammed Yousef, used the occasion to confirm the October 1998 declaration condemning the use, production, trafficking, and stockpiling of antipersonnel landmines. He said "if someone uses a mine in a Taliban-controlled area they will be punished according to Islamic Shariat" and went on to state that the Taliban had not used landmines since the 1998 policy declaration. The deputy head of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Abdul Rhman Hotak, said that "prevention of the use of this

weapon which kills without discrimination is necessary and its use is irrational." He called on all countries of the world to join the ban on landmines. Both officials closed by describing the Taliban's strong support for mine clearance.

For its part, the Rabbani government declared its support for an immediate and comprehensive ban on antipersonnel mines in a statement to the UN Human Rights Commission in March 1996. However, the Northern Alliance forces admit to continued use of mines since that time. The Rabbani government was absent from voting on UN General Assembly Resolution 54/54B in support of the Mine Ban Treaty in December 1999, just as it had been absent on similar resolutions in 1997 and 1998.

[...]

Landmine Problem

A total of about 717 square kilometers of land remains contaminated by mines and UXO. This includes 337 square kilometers of affected land classified as high priority. A major socio-economic impact study conducted by the Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA) under the auspices of the Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan (MAPA), and published in December 1999, revealed that affected land consisted of 61% grazing land, 26% agricultural land, 7% roads, 4% residential areas, and 1% irrigation systems. The survey was conducted in eighteen out of Afghanistan's twenty-nine provinces and covered a total number of 3,656 minefields and 20,645 villages. It indicated about 1,600 villages were affected by mines and UXO.

Refugees and internally displaced persons are still reluctant to return home, in part due to fear of mines. A total of 12,216 families were repatriated in 1999, including 72,098 individuals.

See *Landmine Monitor Report 1999* for a list of fifty antipersonnel mines found in Afghanistan and their countries of origin. Two more antipersonnel mines have since been added to the list: the YM-I mine from Iran and the RAP-2 mine from Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

Mine Clearance

From 1990 to April 2000, a total of 465 square kilometers of contaminated area has been cleared in Afghanistan. That includes 207 square kilometers of mined land and 258 square kilometers of mostly unexploded ordnance (UXO) from battlefields. In the same period, 205,842 antipersonnel mines, 9,199 antitank mines and 1,054,738 UXO were cleared.

In 1999, 110 square kilometers of land were cleared, including 34 square kilometers of mined land and 76 square kilometers of mostly UXO from battlefields. In 1999, 21,871 AP mines, 1,114 AT mines and 254,967 UXO were cleared.

In February 2000, the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) stated that fourteen national and international NGOs employed approximately 5,000 people to implement mine action projects in Afghanistan. This is a significant increase over the 3,900 employees reported in *Landmine Monitor Report 1999*. The majority of employees are Afghan, but there are also a number of Pakistanis and a few international workers.
[...]

Coordination and Planning

The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) is coordinated by the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA). Tasks are given to the mine action agencies by a coordinated plan of action by MAPA who may act in regards to a regular work plan or on ad hoc basis if communities or organizations request it on an emergency basis. In 1999 and 2000 mine action is divided into five regions:

Central region: Kabul, Parwan, Kapisa, Bamiyan, Wardak, Logar, and Ghazni provinces

Northern region: Baghlan, Samangan, Balkh, Jozjan, Faryab, Kunduz, Takhar, and Badakhshan provinces.

Southern region: Urozgan, Zabul, Kandahar, Helmand, and Nimroz provinces

Western region: Badghis, Ghor, Herat, Farah provinces

Eastern region: Nengerhar, Kunar, Laghaman, Paktia, Paktika provinces

MAPA has offices in each region with both expatriate and national regional coordinators looking after the program and reporting to the main office of MAPA in UNOCHA Islamabad. MAPA maintains the MAPA mine action management information system, a database containing a wide range of information and data including records of mined areas, cleared areas and data on landmine incidents and injuries. MAPA prioritizes both the area needing clearance and the area needing marking into high and low priority categories.

For maps of the geographical spread of landmines, see
["Total Mined Area Remaining as at end of November 1998"](#) and
["High Priority Mined Area Remaining as at end of November 1998"](#)

See also ["Mines hamper return and resettlement of IDPs"](#)

General insecurity due to a combination of widespread poverty, protracted conflict and serious human rights violations (June 2000)

- General insecurity is due to widespread poverty, protracted conflict and severe human rights violations, including separation of men from families, their arbitrary detention, violence against women, the use of child soldiers, indiscriminate bombing and the use of landmines.
- With another season of fighting on the horizon, there is every reason to fear that the pattern of targeting civilians and subjecting them to a wide range of violations will continue.

"Decades of war have had a devastating impact on traditional coping mechanisms and means of survival. Growing poverty and the limited availability of, and access to, basic social services mean that the vast majority of Afghans are denied their basic human rights. Indeed, it is all too apparent that the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized, who for the most part constitute the same group, suffer a formidable human rights deficit. They are unable to enjoy such fundamental rights as the right to food, adequate shelter, health, education and a means of livelihood. In addition, they have little or no possibility of judicial recourse and are largely denied the possibility of shaping decisions that affect them. The deepening and fast-spreading drought is likely to exacerbate an already difficult human rights situation. Unless more determined and committed action is taken by the international community and the relevant Afghan authorities to address the underlying causes of poverty and to invest in programmes that will strengthen the coping capabilities of the poor, the human rights challenges faced by Afghans will continue to increase.

The immediate and direct effects of the war are equal cause for concern. With another season of fighting on the horizon, there is every reason to fear that the pattern of targeting civilians and subjecting them to a wide range of violations will continue. Since [the] last report in March, it has become apparent that the indiscriminate bombing of areas that are clearly residential continues to take place. Bombing by the Taliban authorities of Taloqan on 20 May resulted in the death of a humanitarian aid worker and six of his seven children. (...)

The aid community also faces difficulties in maintaining unhindered access to all Afghans in need of assistance; in a number of instances, the right of civilians to receive assistance has been denied, in contravention of international law." (UNSG, June 2000)

"[T]he combination of widespread poverty and protracted conflict, including the deliberate abuse of civilians and means of livelihood, continues to take an incredible toll. Deplorable socio-economic conditions coupled with the direct and indirect impact of the war makes Afghanistan one of the most deadly places on earth, particularly for women, children and others made vulnerable by years of unceasing conflict and growing impoverishment.

(...)

The separation of men from families, their arbitrary detention, violence against women, the use of child soldiers, indiscriminate bombing and the use of landmines continue to add to the dismal human rights record of Afghanistan." (UN SC 21 September 1999)

"The overall human rights situation is extremely poor. Serious human rights violations continued to occur, and citizens were precluded from changing their government or

choosing their leaders peacefully. [...] Armed units, local commanders, and rogue individuals were responsible for political killings, abductions, kidnappings for ransom, torture, rape, arbitrary detention, and looting. Prison conditions are poor. Summary justice was common. In Taliban areas, strict and oppressive order is imposed and stiff punishments for crimes prevail. The Taliban's Islamic courts and religious police, the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtues and Suppression of Vice (PVSV), enforced their extreme interpretation of Islamic punishments, such as public executions for adultery or murder and amputations of one hand and one foot for theft. For other infractions, Taliban militiamen often decided right or wrong and meted out punishments such as beatings on the spot. Various factions infringed on citizens' privacy rights. Both Taliban and anti-Taliban forces were responsible for the indiscriminate bombardment of civilian areas. Masood's forces have continued rocket attacks against Kabul. Civil war conditions and the unfettered actions of competing factions effectively limited the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, and movement. (...)" (U.S. DOS 26 February 1999)

Security Council expresses its concern about the Human Rights situation in Afghanistan (April 2000)

- Security Council condemns forced displacements conducted in 1999 by the Taliban, as well as the deliberate targeting of civilians, the destruction of their assets, the summary executions etc.
- The Security Council also stresses the discrimination against women and girls at all level of the Afghan society, and although it welcome the incremental progresses made recently, it encourages the Taliban to make more significant steps.

"The Security Council stresses its grave concern at the human rights situation in Afghanistan, which is unacceptable. It expresses particular alarm at the continuing disregard by the Taliban of the concerns expressed by the international community. The Council strongly condemns the forced displacement of the civilian population, notably that conducted by the Taliban in 1999, the deliberate targeting of civilians and the destruction of their assets and means of survival, summary executions, arbitrary detention of civilians and forced labour of those in detention, the separation of men from their families, indiscriminate bombing and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. It calls upon all Afghan parties, especially the Taliban, to put an end to such practices and to ensure the protection of civilians.

(...)

The Security Council condemns the continuing grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, in all areas of Afghanistan, particularly in areas under the control of the Taliban. It remains deeply concerned about continued restrictions on their access to health care, to education and to employment outside the home, and about restrictions on their freedom of movement and freedom from intimidation, harassment and violence. The Council notes the recent reports of modest progress regarding the access of women and girls to certain services, but considers that such incremental improvements, while welcome, still fall far short of the

minimum expectations of the international community, and calls upon all parties, particularly the Taliban, to take measures to end all violations of human rights of women and girls."

Tajik minority faces harassment and forced displacement (August 1999)

- As part of a policy of forced displacement, Tajiks' houses and agricultural infrastructure have been burned and destroyed.
- 8,000 children and women have reportedly been separated from the men and relocated and held prisoner in a camp near Jalalabad. They have later been transferred to the ex-Soviet Embassy.
-

"In August [1999] the *Taleban* systematically burned the houses and crops and destroyed the agricultural infrastructure of Tajik civilians living in areas north of Kabul as part of a policy of forcible displacement. Hundreds of children and young men were reportedly recruited by the *Taleban* from destitute families in Kabul and elsewhere to cut Tajik-owned vine trees and to seal their irrigation tunnels.

Among the tens of thousands of Tajiks from the Shamali plains forcibly displaced in August were some 8,000 children, women and elderly men reportedly separated by the *Taleban* from their male relatives and sent to the deserted Sarshahi camp near Jalalabad where they were effectively held prisoner by *Taleban* guards. Following international concern about their situation, the *Taleban* moved them to the bombed-out former Russian embassy in Kabul.

Tens of thousands of Tajik families who fled to the Panjshir valley received meagre assistance from the international community until late November when the *Taleban* agreed to the despatch of UN humanitarian aid from Kabul." (AI, January 2000)

See also : "[Taliban accused of separating men from their family during relocation](#) "

Extremely poor human rights situation for women (1998-1999)

- The treatment of women and girls continued to deteriorate during 1999, including rape, kidnapping, forced marriage, trafficking and widespread discrimination
- Violations of the human rights of women are not exclusive to the areas controlled by the Taliban, even though they have imposed severe repressive measures on women

"During 20 years of conflict, women have been killed indiscriminately in fighting between opposing sides and thousands of women and children have been displaced or forced to flee the country as a result of systematic human rights abuses. In addition, women have been abducted and raped by members of the various warring factions, often being treated as the spoils of war." (UN Commission on Human Rights 14 July 1999, para. 5)

"It is argued that the Taliban have established a degree of security in the areas under their control. On the other hand, they have imposed severe repressive measures, especially

with regard to women. Violations of the human rights of women are not exclusive to the areas controlled by the Taliban. Although little information is available about areas controlled by the Northern Alliance (United Front), it would appear that women are at risk of being raped by armed groups." (UN Commission on Human Rights 14 July 1999, para. 13)

"The human rights situation for women was extremely poor [in 1998]. Violence against women remained a problem throughout the country, and women were subjected to rape, kidnaping, and forced marriage. Trafficking in women and girls was a problem. The treatment of women and girls continued to deteriorate. There was widespread discrimination against women and girls, especially in areas under Taliban control. The Taliban imposed strict dress codes and prohibited women from working outside the home except in limited circumstances in the health care field. Girls generally were prohibited from attending school, particularly in Kabul and other urban areas. The Taliban allowed only a few girls' schools to operate in rural areas and small towns, as well as in camps for internally displaced persons at Kandahar and Herat. Worker rights were not defined. Child labor persists." (U.S. DOS 26 February 1999)

Movement-related Needs

Limited freedom of movement in and out the ex-Soviet Embassy for IDPs (October 1999)

- Afghan officials say that men are free to leave the camp, but women need a pass.
- There is still uncertainty as to the reality of this freedom of movement.

"There were concerns that initially people were not free to leave the ex-Soviet compound in Kabul when they initially relocated. Compound officials gave assurances that men were free to come and go without passes but women needed a pass because they could not be recognized with their heads covered. There is still concern that families who might want to contact relatives in the city or even seek work are being prevented from doing so. Official assurances and tangible proof of freedom of movement for civilians in and out of the compound are still required." (WFP, Octobre 1999)

People in Dara Suf prevented by the military to move in search of support (August 2000)

- Conflict & drought affected population in Southern Samangan province have been reportedly prevented by the military from migrating in search of support

"A joint WFP-OCHA mission returned from Dari Suf in southern Samangan, a region also hit by both, drought and insecurity. The population there is reportedly demonstrating a high level of famine-related distress, but the military forces have been preventing them

from migrating to areas where they could expect some support, while at the same time not allowing delivery of food to the area. Cost of food at local markets is very high and daily labour wages are reported to have dropped to an equivalent of one kilogram of wheat. Normally they are around six to seven times higher in comparative terms. After many weeks of negotiation, WFP finally received authorisation from the Taliban to move food into the area and the local population cleared the road from mines. Some 400 tons of wheat and 7 tons of supplementary feeding commodities reached Dari Suf on 19 August and are expected to benefit around 8,000 people." (WFP 25 August 2000)

Restrictions on freedom of movement of non-Pashtun Afghans (1998)

- In July 1998, hundreds of people fleeing to Pakistan were stopped in the Jalalabad area by Taleban guards who took away Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek and Panjshiri men and boys
- Following the Taliban takeover of Mazar-i Sharif in August 1998, the Taliban set up checkpoints to control those fleeing

According to Amnesty International, "[n]on- Pashtun Afghans were barred from moving about the country freely while many continued to be detained solely on the basis of their ethnicity. In July 1998 alone, hundreds of people fleeing to Pakistan were stopped in the Jalalabad area by Taleban guards who took away Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek and Panjshiri men and boys as young as 12. Pushtun travellers were allowed to proceed. Some of the detainees were classified as 'important' and sent to Kandahar, where thousands of such prisoners were held. Some men were released on payment of a ransom. Women, children and the elderly of non-Pashtun families were sent to camps near Jalalabad with no material support." (AI November 1999a)

"In the first weeks following the takeover of Mazar, persons trying to leave the city were routinely stopped at checkpoints. Taliban officials, looking specifically for Hazaras searched vehicles detained the people they found. "[T]hose who could convince the authorities that they were not Hazara or who had identity cards from other cities managed to pass.

Other checkpoints where refugees were questioned included Zabul and Qandahar." (HRW November 1998, sect. VI)

Life and Personal Security/ Personal Liberty

IDPs stranded at Tajik-Afghan border exposed to shelling (January 2001)

- End January 2001, 10,000 IDPs are stranded at the Afghan-Tajik border and exposed to sporadic shelling

"Recent rains and snowfall have made life more difficult for the 10,000 Afghan IDPs/refugees stranded in the islands on the bank of the Pyanj River along the Tajik-Afghan border. On Sunday, 27 January, some shelling involving rockets and small arms were reported in the island near border post 13. According to the Russian Border Forces (RBF), a few makeshift huts were destroyed but no casualties were reported. Sporadic shelling continued to hit the settlement near border post 9. International organizations are continuing to provide humanitarian assistance despite difficult conditions, while the final decision regarding admission of the displaced is awaited." (OCHA, Hum. Sit. On the Tajik-Afghan border, 31 January 2001)

Indiscriminate bombing of IDPs in the Panjshir Valley (February 2000)

- On 14 February, indiscriminate bombings in the Panjshir Valley have caused the death of 8 civilians and have hampered UN's effort to provide assistance to the IDPs in this area.
- Other indiscriminate bombings of civilians have reportedly occurred in different frontline areas in Afghanistan.
- On 18 November 1999, a Taliban warplane bombed the Bazarak market area where some IDPs were staying in tents and a public school

"The Secretary-General deplors the indiscriminate bombing in the Panjshir Valley in Afghanistan, which occurred on Monday, 14 February, and resulted in the death of eight civilians. These bombings have horrendous repercussions for the civilians in the area, the internally displaced persons and humanitarian agencies. Such military activity has impeded United Nations efforts to provide assistance to the internally displaced persons in these areas through a cross-line operation. One of the bombs fell a mere 200 metres from the United Nations Office in the Bazarak/Changaram area, while others fell nearby. The Secretary-General is also gravely concerned that civilians are still being deliberately targeted in different frontline areas in Afghanistan. He appeals to all parties involved to respect the rights of non-combatants to be treated as civilians, as well as their right to receive humanitarian assistance. He reiterates his call on all parties to cooperate fully with the United Nations in the provision of relief assistance for the survival of affected populations." (UN, 17 February 2000)

"United Nations staff based in Bazarak in the Panjshir Valley of Afghanistan have confirmed that a Taliban warplane bombed the Bazarak market area on 18 November 1999. The bombs hit the location where some IDPs are staying in tents and one of the public schools. Twelve people died, of whom ten were displaced persons. Of the fifty-six injured, twenty-four were hospitalised.

The area which was bombed is three and one half kilometres from the United Nations office in Bazarak. [...]" (UNOCHA 19 November 1999)

Killing and house burning in Bamiyan (1999)

- Following an Taliban move into Bamiyan in April, many who could not flee were killed.

- Hundreds of men, women and children were taken away and remained unaccounted for at the end of 1999
- 200 homes were burned along the road between Shiber and Bamiyan.

"As the *Taleban* moved into Bamiyan in April to capture the area from *Hezb-e Wahdat* — a party which draws its support from the Hazara minority — many who did not, or could not, flee were deliberately killed. Estimates varied widely, but hundreds of men, and some young women and children, who were separated from their families and taken away, remained unaccounted for at the end of 1999.

In addition, the *Taleban* burned more than 200 homes in villages along the road between Shiber and Bamiyan. Verbal condemnation of these house burnings by the *Taleban* leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, did not prevent similar abuses by *Taleban* guards later in the year." (AI, January 2000)

Attacks on civilians fleeing Mazar-I-Sharif (August 1998)

- Civilians fleeing Mazar-I-Sharif following the takeover by the Taliban on August 2 were fired upon with rockets by the Taliban, and they were also reported to have been robbed by Hizb-I Wahdat forces moving ahead of the civilian crowd

Following the entering of Taliban troops into Mazar-i Sharif on August 2, "[a]t least hundreds of civilians headed south on the main road out of the city, some in cars or other vehicles but many on foot. In the words of one witness, the road was 'black' with people and cars. Many families left as soon as they could after the Taliban arrived on August 8. One witness who fled with his family described 'a solid line of people from Mazar to Tangi Awlie,' an area just south of Mazar on the way to the mountains. Another witness stated that the road was so crowded with fleeing civilians that cars drove over the bodies of those killed because there was no way to go around them.

Moving for the most part ahead of the civilian crowd was a contingent of Hizb-i Wahdat troops, estimated by one well-informed source at about 700. The Hizb-I Wahdat forces reportedly robbed civilians of cash and cars as they left. There were also reported to be a number of Junbish and Jamiat troops on the road.

For at least two days after the takeover, the road was hit by rockets fired from Taliban positions west of Mazar. A source interviewed by Human Rights Watch stated that there were most likely BM-21 Grad (Hail) multiplerocket launchers, commonly known as Katyushas. An unknown number of civilians on the road were also killed when they were bombed by Taliban airplanes; witnesses stated that the bombs scattered hundreds of grenade-sized munitions over a wide area on the road. Eyewitnesses said that hamlets and small markets along the road were also destroyed in bomb and rocket attacks. In one such incident, witnesses said that rockets hit an area called Tangi Shadyan on the southern outskirts of the city at about 12:00 p.m., killing at least fifty. Cars and trucks carrying people were struck, and one witness stated that 'people were in pieces' along the road. A

witness who left immediately when the Taliban arrived told Human Rights Watch that he and his family carried with them nine bodies of a family that had been killed in a rocket attack on the road, including two women, three men, and four small children, and buried them in farmland on the way to the mountains." (HRW November 1998, sect. VII)

Camps for IDPs used as lures for joining Taliban forces (1998)

- WFP says that IDPs have been promised food and shelter for their family if they agreed to fight with the Taleban.

"According to the head of the World Food Program, 'The Taliban basically have been using camps [for the displaced] as lures for fresh troops to join the front line.' They reportedly promised to provide food and shelter for the families of men who joined the armed ranks of the Taliban." (USCR 1999, p. 123)

Women and children

Women and children among the most vulnerable in IDP camps in the north (March 2001)

"The office of the UN Coordinator for Afghanistan confirmed on Friday that more than 260 people in northern Afghanistan had died of cold and hunger as conditions within displacement camps continued to deteriorate.

It said an estimated 117,000 people were living in miserable conditions as a result of drought, civil war, or a combination of both in northern areas.

Although assessments of the area have been limited, northern parts of the country, including the northern provinces of Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh, Samangan and Saripul, are particularly affected, according to the UN.

A recent assessment of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in various small camps and settlements in the northern provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan indicated that over 200 people had died due to cold and hunger following a cold spell in the area, according to the UN.

The deceased were predominately children and elderly people among some 23,000 IDPs in 16 camps in Baghlan. Local authorities had tried to accommodate the displaced in abandoned public buildings since their arrival last autumn. However, recent arrivals have been forced to live in overcrowded makeshift camps where poor sanitation, disease and cold, as well as a lack of safe drinking water, continue to take their toll.

In Kunduz, 60 people out of some 8,000 assessed were confirmed to have died from exposure. Given difficulties in assessing the situation, the death toll could be higher, according to the UN. Some 27,000 people IDPs were living in another 30 camps in the area, the UN stated." (IRIN 5 March 2001)

UNICEF involved in the protection of IDP children and women (March 2001)

"Opportunities will be sought to develop protection/psychosocial interventions with partners in the concerned regions, including establishing support networks, recreational and sports activities. This is a big challenge in Afghanistan where there are very few partners with experience in this area of work. These networks will also be utilized for the purpose of monitoring the rights situation of the children and women to the extent possible in the current context of Afghanistan (including physical and emotional security, ethnic/linguistic discrimination and recruitment by armed forces).

IDPs are coming from different backgrounds and experiences. The change brought about by loss of status, death of loved ones, lose of valuable property and life's savings and also the mere situation of being displaced results in immense adjustment difficulties. Children and women are particularly vulnerable in such turbulent times as they are faced with multiple burdens and have a lower social status. It is therefore necessary to put systems in place that will allow people to express themselves and release some of the tension they are facing. It is therefore anticipated, with appropriate partners, to make a quick assessment of the situation and begin implementation of a psychosocial programme. This programme is expected to address more of the social/recreational needs of the IDPs in targeted camps - beginning with a pilot. In Herat, UNICEF has already undertaken a survey of female headed-households and has supported a NGO partner to provide counselling training to female health workers who will maintain systematic contact with IDP women. Recreational/sports activities are also being planned by UNICEF through NGO and civil society partners.

While UNICEF Afghanistan has Development and Protection APOs in Herat and Mazar, as well as a joint Development/Protection Assistant in Faizabad, and the Development and Protection Officers at ACO level, the temporary secondment of a Child Development/Protection officer with experience in conflict and IDP situation might be sought to provide support at the field-level. The Child Protection Officer who has also been the Emergency Focal point has visited Herat, Mazar, Kandahar, Kabul and Panjshir IDP locations and especially recently in February 2001 in Herat and Mazar supported colleagues in the development of some relevant activities. In addition, UNICEF is using its network of female CRC trainers, education monitors, social mobilizers...to reach more girls/women amongst the IDPs." (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

Discriminatory policies against women (2000)

- Women continued to face discriminatory policies as regard to education, employment and freedom of movement in 1999.

- Unconfirmed reports state that a number of Taleban officials had agreed to education for young girls and employment for a small number of women.
- Taleban have reportedly recruited children as guards.

"As in previous years, women were forced to comply with the discriminatory policies of the *Taleban* who imposed severe restrictions on their education, employment and freedom of movement. Tens of thousands of women effectively remained prisoners in their homes, with no scope to seek the removal of these restrictions. Women who defied them were subjected to systematic ill-treatment. Reports that a number of local *Taleban* officials had agreed to education for young girls based on a strict religious curriculum, or to employment for a small number of women, were not backed by official statements from the *Taleban* leader.

The *Taleban* reportedly recruited Afghan children and deployed them as guards at checkpoints, as patrols in the streets, and as security guards in stadiums during the execution of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishments. Eyewitnesses testified to the presence of child combatants in *Taleban* military ranks." (AI, January 2000)

IDP children in ex-Soviet embassy suffer from a range of problems (October 1999)

- Out of the 12,995 IDPs sheltered at the ex-Soviet Embassy, over 8,500 are children.
- These children face a number of problems, among them: security threats, exposition to diseases, no school opportunity, no playground, limited diet, exposition to family separation

"According to the latest reports, of the 12,995 IDPs from the Shomali area living at the abandoned ex-Soviet Embassy, over 8,500 are children. These children suffer from a range of problems as they:

live in dangerous conditions where the chance of accidents is high;
 live in close quarters with children who have not been immunized and are exposed to disease;
 have no opportunity to attend school;
 have no play area;
 have a limited diet and are prone to malnutrition; and
 experience family separation and loss of community identity." (WFP, October 1999)

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

Needs of IDPs by geographical location

IDPs in the northeast in need of food and shelter (December 2000)

- Majority of IDPs in the northeast of rural origin and have very low general assets and food stocks.
- Shelter is a major concern , especially in Dasht-I-Qala and Khoja Bahauddin.

"The socio-economic status of the majority of IDPs was a source of concern. The majority of the IDP population were rural in origin and had both very low general asset levels and, if any, very limited food stocks (this was partially dependent on at what stage pre-conflict they were displaced, their areas of origin, and the possession or otherwise of pack animals). Those from Khwagaghar, Hazar Bagh and Archi, presently in districts east of the Kokcha (principally Dasht-I Qala and Khoja Bahauddin), were considered to be highly vulnerable on account of three factors. Firstly, the impact of the autumn 1999 conflict on their areas of origin, and the huge losses of property and assets which resulted. Secondly, the impact of the recent drought on the rainfed agriculture which predominates in those areas and the very low harvest which they obtained this year (confirmed by WFP assessments). And thirdly, the similar impact of the drought on present host communities (again confirmed by WFP assessments) whose ability to support them in terms of food stuffs and housing is restricted. As was expected, these IDPs had extremely limited, if any, access to food supplies, other than food aid.

Shelter proved to be a major concern. IDPs in Dasht-I Qala and Khoja Bahauddin, were totally saturated with over 8,000 IDP families of which nearly half spent the autumn in the open (over 1000 were subsequently housed in rehabilitated houses). In Rustaq, they were predominantly accommodated with local people, as was the case in Keshem. Those in Faizabad split between public buildings, living with local people and under temporary shelter outside." (UNOCHA, December 2000)

Depleted coping mechanisms throughout Afghanistan (August 2000)

- War and erosion of traditional coping mechanisms have severely weakened population's coping capacity
- 50 % of Afghanistan's urban population highly vulnerable
- Women without husband are particularly vulnerable as employment is scarce.
- Rural areas are not better off. Due to war and drought farmers are forced to resort to poppy cultivation to survive.

"The coping capacity of the civilian population has been severely weakened as a result of the war and the erosion of many traditional coping mechanisms including in particular the role of extended family networks. According to a survey conducted by ICRC in 1999 a "remarkable 83 percent of Afghan respondents say that the war forced them to leave their homes." More than half of the respondents (53%) reported that a member of their immediate family was killed during the conflict and 16% reported knowing someone who was raped.

The majority of the population struggles to survive at near subsistence levels. According to several food security surveys, around 50% of Kabul's population (approx. 1.7 million) and other major urban centers are highly vulnerable. In other words, they fall below the WFP-determined minimum income level required per person per month to meet minimum food and essential non-food needs. The minimum income level for Afghans in Kabul is \$4.30 per person per month for food and an additional \$2.75 per person per month for essential non-food needs. (WFP/VAM Report, May 1999.) The situation of females is such that practically all the households without an able-bodied male are vulnerable; they rely on food aid, children's work, and begging to survive. The cut-back in the limited possibilities that were available for women's employment outside the home will further exacerbate this situation.

The level of vulnerability in rural areas is also of major concern. In some areas, for example in Hazarajat, the combination of war and drought has resulted in a significant increase in morbidity and mortality. In other areas, deepening economic hardship has seen a growing number of farmers resort to poppy cultivation. Last year opium was cultivated in a record 90,980 hectares; this was 44% higher than the record set in 1998. While 96% of the current opium production is limited to seven provinces (Helmand, Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Jawzjan, Qandahar, Oruzgan, and Balkh), there is a danger that the dire economic conditions would lead to expansion of opium cultivation in other provinces. Throughout Afghanistan, the impact of the war on the economic infrastructure has been devastating. Transportation and communication facilities are derelict. For Afghans, there are very few job opportunities outside the subsistence economy on the one hand and the criminalized economy on the other." (OCHA 17 August 2000)

Prospects for the IDPs in Panjsheer Valley (March 2000)

- With the summer in sight and both sides pushing again for military activity, the chances for returning home are scarce for the IDPs.
- ACF foresees that the period between April and July 2000 will be insecure in terms of food availability for the population of the Panjshir valley.
- ACF stresses the need for a constant monitoring of the food situation and the vulnerability of the IDPs.

"Recently, fighting resumed again from time to time in the Shamali plains, mortgaging chance of the IDPs to reintegrate their place of origin in the short term. Lots of troop

movements have been registered on both sides of the frontline, as a prelude to the resumption of the wider conflict in the region.

Until next summer (and the first harvest), the population of the Panjsheer valley – both the residents and the displaced – is still at risk of facing some food shortage, especially in case the traffic through the northern passes remains for a long time uncertain and since it is obvious that fighting will resume soon on the frontline, preventing any access across the Shamali plains; this might render even more precarious a nutritional situation that is already tensed and *Action contre la faim* is therefore advising to continue to run a network of supplementary feeding centre over the spring and the summer, especially since there is every indication that the period between April and July 2000 is going to be insecure in terms of food availability, with a food shortage that might peak between May and June.

If we go further into details, the situation of the displaced within the Panjsheer is dynamic and far from predictable. Three case scenarios were developed – fighting ceases in the Shamali plains and the IDPs return home (highly improbable but would have a positive impact for both the displaced and the host communities), humanitarian corridor between Kabul and the Panjsheer closes, escalated fighting in the Shamali plains and advancing further northwards. The humanitarian corridor is already closed and the latter scenario is the one that is the most probable this coming summer. In any case, both of them would have a negative impact for both the displaced and the host community.

All remaining assets will be sold.

Levels of malnutrition (especially in the <30-month age group) will begin to increase

The incidence of female adult malnutrition and infant malnutrition will be seen.

Influx of IDPs from their place of origin into the Panjsheer and thus movement of IDPs from Gulbahar into the valley.

Increased level of vulnerability when compared to the displacement earlier in the year due to harsh winter conditions.

Food commodities prices increase which have a detrimental effect on displaced and host community. Access for international organisations and logistical supplies to enter the valley are not possible. Increased levels of malnutrition and health problems (hypothermia, respiratory infections etc.)

It is therefore important that the situation within the Panjsheer is constantly re-assessed with a view to reduce the level of vulnerability faced by the population (ACF, March 2000, p. 13-14)

Subsistence needs among IDPs in the Panjsheer Valley (March 2000)

- As of March 2000, the number of IDPs in the Panjsheer Valley ranges from 30,000 to 40,000.
- IDPs from southern Shamali fled with very few assets and have been unable to return.
- IDPs from northern Shamali had more time to prepare and brought more assets with them. Furthermore, due to their closer links with the host population they often found shelter with them.

- Between 50 and 75% of the IDPs had no food supply, 12-15 % had supplies for up to three weeks and none had supplies for a longer period.

"(...) the number of IDPs that have settled in Panjsheer valley is apparently still comprised between 30,000 and 40,000 people while less 10% among them have found a shelter in public buildings such as schools, mosques or administrations.

Wide variation existed in terms of material possessions and assets, livestock and food resources levels amongst the population of internally displaced persons. When they arrived in the Panjsheer, the displaced split into two different groups with very different needs. IDPs from southern Shamali have had, generally speaking, only very few possessions in all respects than those from other areas due to their hasty departure and the scorched earth policy that was inflicted upon them; consequently, most fled not really empty handed but with very few assets either as the Talêban took their area or immediately after. In addition, they have generally been unable to return due to the ongoing conflict. Those from northern areas were in a more advantageous position having had more forewarning of the initial Talêban advance, less distance to travel to the Panjsheer, and had therefore time to bring more of their assets with them. Furthermore, they had the ability to return to collect possessions and, importantly, closer links and connections with the present host population. Those with connections or relatives in the Panjsheer valley found shelter with them.

The others, identified as being to be the most vulnerable groups over the winter and spring 1999 / 2000, were first those that quickly overwhelmed public building; those arriving later, without links to the valley and once public building had become full, were compelled to erect outdoor shelters, either within official camps or in the open.

The data collected from the general population indicated that between 50 and 75 per cent of IDPs had no food supplies, 12-15 per cent had food supplies for up to three weeks while none had food supplies for longer period. Additionally, around 20 per cent of the population had lost sheep, goats, cattle or donkeys. As a result of the lack of food and of poor hygiene conditions, the vulnerability of the groups that did not found shelter with local residents has largely been exacerbated while their standards of living and their health and nutritional status have largely deteriorated (leading to a situation of concern with problems of communicable diseases – specifically acute diarrhoea and an outbreak of cholera – and ARI)." (ACF, March 2000, p.4)

Subsistence needs among IDPs outside the Soviet Compound in Kabul (November 1999)

- IDPs from the same region are often grouped together with relatives.
- 3 out of 4 IDPs surveyed occupy a room in a relative's home without payment. The others pay an average of 2\$/month for a room.
- Two thirds of those interviewed inhabit living quarters that are felt to be a risk to their health.
- Only one in three (employable, if female?) able-bodied adult IDP indicates that s/he has been able to find work in the city since arrival.

- A third of IDP families report that they had brought livestock from their village, although most had been forced sell these. On average, funds raised from these sales, however, are estimated to be sufficient to provide for typical family needs for almost 2 months.
- Access to safe water does not seem to present major problems for most IDP families, who are able to obtain this from within the compound or nearby.
- Many of the IDP reported that they are unable to afford the costs of health-care.
- More than a third of those interviewed reported that relatives had tried return to their homes in the past month, but had not always been able to get checkpoints to recognise the official permissions that had been obtained. Four out of five families interviewed reported that their homes and crops had been destroyed.

The following information has been taken from a report by UNRCO in Kabul in November 1999 on principal issues from IDP case studies on IDPs outside the Soviet Compound in Kabul

"Living arrangements/location

IDP families, even though temporarily settled in the city, continue (for a variety of reasons) to feel insecure. This should be borne in mind in attempts to survey/register, as well as to provide on-site assistance.

Of those interviewed, most families come from Qarabagh, Istalef and Mir Bacha Kot. Those from the same village/district are, in many cases, grouped in host area/families, which might be significant in planning livelihood-support activities.

The concentration of IDP families (per host household) appear to be highest in districts 4, 7, 9 and 16, when compared to districts 10 & 11. Three quarters of those interviewed are able to occupy rooms in relative's homes without payment. The rest pay on average \$2 room/month. There are a number of sparsely-populated districts in the city to which IDP families have still not gravitated.

Living conditions

Two thirds of those interviewed inhabit living quarters that are felt to be a risk to their health (insecure structures, often with no windows or floor covering, and inadequate ventilation). Mattresses, pillows and household utensils are the items most commonly borrowed by IDP families from their hosts/relatives, with three-quarters of those interviewed relying on such loans, and also cash contributions. An absence of fuel for cooking/heating is a major problem, and many are reduced to burning rubbish, with an inevitable impact on their health. Most families are reported to have some access to an outside space or yard, but often without the possibility of cultivation.

Livelihoods/assets

A quarter of IDP families were recorded as having no potential bread-winner (i.e. with female or disabled head of household). Only one in three (employable, if female?) able-bodied adult IDP indicates that s/he has been able to find work in the city since arrival. The widespread loss of assets and sources of livelihood (i.e agricultural production)

requires IDP families to find manual work to obtain cash. Both IDP and host families seem to have a high proportion of children between 5 and 15 years old, some of whom are forced to work. A third of IDP families report that they had brought livestock from their village, although most had been forced sell these. On average, funds raised from these sales, however, are estimated to be sufficient to provide for typical family needs for almost 2 months. The size of food stocks among those IDP families interviewed is meagre, ranging from sufficient food for a family for 1 day to 1 week. Remittances from those working outside of the country seem, for the time being, to be insignificant in meeting the needs of IDP families.

Begging is the only way that some IDP families earn money, but it is only possible to meet a fraction of the estimated needs of a typical family in this way.

Access to services

Access to safe water does not seem to present major problems for most IDP families, who are able to obtain this from within the compound or nearby. There were no recorded cases of families using obviously unsafe sources.

Water storage containers should be included in relief distributions.

Health

Many of the IDP reported that they are unable to afford the costs of health-care. Based on impressions of a growing risk of malnutrition among young children of the more vulnerable IDP families, there will be a need to take account of ongoing ACF activities in supplementary/therapeutic feeding in the districts where IDPs have settled.

Conditions in/access to Shamali

More than a third of those interviewed reported that relatives had tried return to their homes in the past month, but had not always been able to get checkpoints to recognise the official permissions that had been obtained. Those with influence seem to have no difficulty in travelling, or even bringing goods back. Four out of five families interviewed reported that their homes and crops had been destroyed. Others acknowledged that they had benefitted from contacts with certain commanders to save their property. A quarter suggested that remaining livestock had been stolen after their departure.

In addition to perceived insecurity, the need to invest in reconstruction was cited as a major constraint to return. External support might be crucial in their ability to resettle in their original villages in the spring." (UNRCO, November 1999)

Subsistence needs among displaced from the Shamali in the Panjshir Valley, Kabul and Bamyan (1999)

- IDPs in the Panjshir Valley face serious food shortage

- In Kabul, the survival of IDPs over the winter depend to a large extent on their ability to bring stored wheat and other supplies from their places of origin
- Identified needs of those displaced from Bamyan between March and May 1999 include food on an emergency basis, opportunities for self-reliance, shelter and health care

People who fled the fighting between Taliban and Northern Alliance troops in August in the Shomali Plains and sought refuge in the Panjshir Valley face lack of food since the area is a cereal deficit area and cannot meet the food needs of both displaced and host populations. (WFP 27 October 1999)

Concerning IDPs in Kabul, it was reported that "[w]hile most families seem to have few (if any) domestic possessions to retrieve from their homes, their ability to survive the winter in Kabul might hinge on being able to bring stored wheat and other supplies from their villages. [...]" (UNRCO 5 November 1999)

Among those displaced from Bamyan between March and May 1999, the principal needs identified in surveys were "[f]ood on an emergency basis; employment opportunities for cash income for people who have lost their crop, bazaar and business assets; shelter and help in rebuilding burnt houses; health including reactivation of the hospital; and agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizer." (OCHA 14 October 1999)

Health

Outbreak of cholera and measles in the north (December 2000)

- Measles has been reported in Faryab province and in the north where it is expected to be "in the thousands"
- Cholera has been reported in Kunduz where there is a high number of IDPs

"Despite the success of National Immunisation Days (NIDs), insufficient routine childhood immunisation is being provided, e.g. against measles. Under the current circumstances, where large-scale poverty and hunger are producing severe and moderate levels of malnutrition, and a large population forced to live in very congested and crowded space due to displacement, measles are likely to occur, as has already happened in southern Faryab. Over 41% of the confirmed cases of measles in south Faryab are reported to be among children between 5-15 years, which points to the need for measles vaccination for children up to 15 years. In response, UNICEF in collaboration with MSF and SCA will provide vaccine and equipment for immunisation campaigns in December for children between six months and fifteen years in southern Faryab and parts of Takhar province where a substantial number of IDPs have moved. Cholera was reported in parts of Kunduz province, especially Khanabad where there is a high concentration of IDPs from Banghi valley, and WHO has reported that Acute Respiratory Infection cases are on the rise and are expected to worsen. (IASC, 1 December 2000)

"A measles outbreak among internally displaced people (IDP) in the north of Afghanistan, was expected to be "in the thousands", a spokesperson for the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) in Peshawar told IRIN on Thursday.

Dr Shbon Roohullah, chief technical adviser for the SAC said that of the 80,000 internally displaced Afghans fleeing fighting in the north, a significant number, estimated to be in the thousands had been detected with measles. Earlier this year at least 250 children in the Taker and Badakshan provinces had died in a measles outbreak. "When there is a death rate of 250, it follows that the number of incidences is in the thousands - maybe about three or four thousand," Dr Roohullah told IRIN.

A joint measles and polio eradication campaign had been conducted in June this year when around 30,000 children were vaccinated and a second campaign began this week. However, Dr Roohullah called the latest outbreak "devastating" and urged more donor support to eradicate the disease. "This is one area that is preventable. We can do something to stop it but only through proper coordination."

The SAC currently runs 41 vaccination centres in Afghanistan in the provinces of Taker, Badakshan, Kunduz and Baghlan. It is also carrying out a malnutrition survey among children visiting the clinics and is distributing high protein biscuits to children and pregnant women." (IRIN 19 October 2000)

Precarious living conditions for IDPs in the diplomatic compound in Kabul (October 1999)

- IDPs living in the ex-Soviet Embassy suffer from a number of ailments associated with the stress of displacement. They are in need for better sanitation and have limited access to medical supplies.
- Some IDPs are suffering from diarrhoeal diseases as well as skin and eye infections.

"IDPs suffer from a number of ailments associated with the stress of displacement and living in crowded, unsanitary conditions with inadequate clothes, food and heating. With regard to the IDPs living in the ex-Soviet compound, it was noted that there is still an urgent need to continue to address a number of sanitation issues (latrines, safe water and waste-water disposal). The NGO CARE has undertaken a number of measures in support of better sanitation, but more still needs to be done. IDPs also mentioned that although they had access to medical facilities, frequently medicines were either not available or unaffordable. Currently most medical supplies are available only through the market and are beyond the purchasing capacity of most IDPs. It is also important to ensure that vaccinations are provided to children given the high population density in the centres and the elevated risk of infection." (WFP, October 1999)

"United Nations monitoring indicates that the living conditions for the displaced living in the diplomatic compound in Kabul are far from ideal and that some residents are suffering from diarrhoeal diseases as well as eye and skin infections." (UN Press Release 13 August 1999)

Gender Restrictions limit access to health care for women (1997-1998)

- Taliban decrees have severely restricted access for women to health care
- Other factors restricting the access to health care for Afghan women include poverty, distant or poor services, low literacy rates, lack of appreciation of health needs and lack of female health care personnel
- In 1998, a Health Commission was established in Kabul to monitor the issue of women's access to health facilities

"While most Afghans lack any access to adequate medical facilities, such access was made even more restrictive for women under Taliban rule. In 1997 the Taliban announced a policy of segregating men and women in hospitals and directed most hospitals in Kabul to cease services to women and to discharge female staff. Services for women were to be provided by a single hospital still partially under construction - a drastic reduction in access to, and the quality of, health care for women. Several orders concerning the provision of emergency and non-emergency medical aid for women were given and reversed in 1997. Women were permitted to seek treatment from female medical personnel working in designated women's wards or clinics; they were permitted to see male doctors if accompanied by a male relative. Erratic reversals in policy continued throughout 1998, with the effect that women often were prevented from obtaining adequate medical care. On June 25, the Taliban prohibited all doctors from treating female patients in the absence of the woman's husband, father, or brother. This decree, while not universally enforced, made treatment extremely difficult for Kabul's widows, many of whom have lost all such male family members. Further, even when a woman is allowed to be treated by a male doctor, he may not see or touch her, which drastically limits the possibility of any meaningful treatment. Health care for both men and women also was hampered by the ban on images of humans, which caused the destruction of public education posters and hampered the provision and dissemination of health information in a society with massive illiteracy. (U.S. DOS 26 February 1999, sect. 5)

The access to health care of Afghan women is further restricted by "[p]overty, distant or poor services, low literacy rates, lack of appreciation of health needs and lack of female health care personnel [...]".(UN Commission on Human Rights 14 July 1999, para. 17).

In 1998 Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) conducted a survey of 160 Afghan women in Kabul and in Pakistan, and found that 77 percent reported poor access to health care in Kabul, while another 20 percent reported no access at all. Of those surveyed, 71 percent reported a decline in their physical condition over the last 2 years. In addition, there was also a significant decline in the mental health of the women surveyed. Of the participants, 81 percent reported a decline in their mental condition; 97 percent met the diagnostic criteria for depression; 86 percent showed symptoms of anxiety; 42 percent met the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder; and 21 percent reported having suicidal thoughts 'extremely often' or 'quite often.' There have been unconfirmed reports that the suicide rate among women in Kabul has increased significantly since the Taliban takeover of the city." (U.S. DOS 26 February 1999, sect. 5)

"[A] Health Commission was constituted in Kabul in 1998 under the Ministry of Public Health, with membership drawn from NGOs, United Nations agencies and local health authorities, to monitor the progress of the decisions and agreement reached between the international community and local health authorities over the issue of women's access to health facilities in Kabul. The hospitals in the city are reportedly now treating and admitting women and men on an equal basis, except for one hospital, where funds are awaited to construct a separate entrance and access for women patients." (UN Commission on Human Rights 14 July 1999, para. 18)

For an executive summary of the Report by PHR, see ["The Taliban's War on Women: A Health and Human Rights Crisis in Afghanistan"](#) [External link]

Nutrition

Nutritional assessment at Afghan-Tajik border show rapid deterioration (April 2001)

"Action Against Hunger – UK (AAH) conducted a nutritional investigation at post # 13 in order to get an indication of the nutritional status of children of less than five years of age. The purpose was to provide information to all concerned partners assisting the refugees.

The investigation was conducted on the 10th of April, following the visit of MERLIN to the site on the 3rd of April.

[...]

TARGETED POPULATION

The target population was children under five years of age.

For the nutritional assessment with MUAC, the target group was children from 6 months to 59 months (between 65 and 110 cm of height).

For the nutritional assessment with Weight for Height percentage, the target group was children from 0 month to 6 months (between 49 and 64.9 cm of height).

[...]

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For children between 6 and 59 months

Compared to the previous rapid nutritional assessment conducted by AAH at the same site on the 9th of February, the results show a noticeable deterioration of the situation.

MUAC cut-off	Number of children 10th of April	%	Number of children 9th of February	%
< 110 mm	1	0,45 %	0	0%
110 – 119 mm	5	2,28 %	1	0.62%
120 – 125 mm	11	5,02 %	0	0 %
> 125 mm	202	92,2%	160	99,38%
TOTAL	219	100%	161	100%

On the 10th of April, 7.75% of the screened children were malnourished or at risk of malnutrition, compared to 0.62% on the 9th of February.

The nutritional situation is still not of serious concern (less than 3% of malnourished children) but the rapid deterioration is a matter of great concern.

A regular surveillance of the nutritional situation – to be linked with potential distribution of food / assistance - is therefore highly recommended in order to assess any further deterioration, which could lead to much higher rates of children at risk of mortality.

The potential increase in infectious diseases in summer – especially diarrhoeal diseases and malaria – could also dramatically affect the nutritional status of children.

Further assessments should also target not only children under 5 years of age, but also children up to 11 years of age (height less than 130 cm). This could be easily achieved given the good organization in the camp and participation of the population to the assessment that has been noticed.

For the children under 6 months of age

The situation is not acute according to the results of the assessment. Nevertheless, 17 children only were screened and results may not show an accurate picture of the situation. Due to time and security constraints, very few visits of lactating women at home could not be paid.

One can assume that the situation may deteriorate in the coming weeks and that the children under 6 months of age are particularly at risk.

According to Merlin observations – and one interview of a lactating mother conducted during the assessment - mothers with babies seem to drink very little (no more than two or three cups of tea) in order to avoid urinating as there are no sanitation facilities on the island.

Lack of food, but also psychological aspects due to the precarious situation on the island, can lead to poor production of breast milk by mothers. Food, supplemented with proteins (BP5 would be appropriate) should therefore be supplied in priority to lactating mothers.

* * *

During previous visits to the site by Merlin doctors, scurvy cases were observed, which can be addressed with distribution of Vitamin C tablets to the patients. This is to be considered as an emergency response as distribution of fresh vegetables would be more appropriate but would appear to be difficult to achieve, as well as supplementation of food with CMV (Complex of Vitamins) – special equipment would be required to mix the CMV with the food in a proper way.

Iodine deficiency is also an area of great concern as goitre prevalence among women seems to be high – among six women examined at home, four of them had goitre." (ACF 10 April 2001)

For a more global view of the nutrition surveys carried out in 2000, see "[Nutrition surveys carried out in 2000](#)", WFP, March 2001

Differences in levels of malnutrition between local and IDP children are small in the northeast (December 2000)

"The MUAC screening was implemented 28/10 to 3/11 [2000], in connection with a SCA measles acceleration campaign in the districts of Dashti Qala, Yangi Qala and Rustaq. The screening gave the following results:

Districts	Children Screened 1y – 5y	Severe Acute Malnutrition (S.A.M.) MUAC<110mm	Global Acute Malnutrition (G.A.M.) MUAC</=125 mm
Dashti Qala: IDPs	1381	2.6%	11.5%
Dashti Qala: Locals	628	2.2%	10.8%
Rustaq: Predominantly Locals	1081	1.9%	10.3%
Yangi Qala: Predominantly Locals	1554	4.0%	16.6%
Total:	4644	SAM Average: 2.9%	GAM 12.8%

The results show that among the 4644 children screened, a total average of 12.8% suffer from global acute malnutrition (GAM). While the figures for Dashti Qala indicate that levels of malnutrition are slightly higher among IDPs compared to local children (GAM: 11.5 > 10.8), these results are nevertheless lower than the results from screening predominantly local children in the neighboring district, Yangi Qala (GAM: 16%)

We therefore conclude that a significant level of malnutrition exists among children in general, while differences in levels of malnutrition between local and IDP children seem small.

With the lack of baseline data, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding to what extent the figures reflect a recent increase of malnutrition. We nevertheless assume that the significant influx of IDPs, in combination with the recent drought and scarce food supplies, does aggravate the general capacity to sustain sufficient levels of nutritional intake. SCA clinic staff have also confirmed that the numbers of malnourished patients have increased lately. SCA has therefore chosen to propose a project of supplementary feeding." (SCA December 2000)

Major need for complementary food assistance in northern Takhar (December 2000)

- Population in Takhar already very vulnerable before current drought and fighting as they were already exposed to fighting in autumn 1999
- Supply route cut by fighting and food and fuel prices have risen
- Major need for complementary food assistance
- Between 40 and 60 % of IDPs in need of food

"By early autumn the impact of the drought had been seriously exacerbated by conflict, which resumed in some of the worst drought affected areas of northern Takhar, both from which and into which large-scale displacement occurred. These areas were some of those areas that had been badly affected by the conflict of autumn 1999 and which had seen widespread destruction of property, infrastructure, assets, and livelihoods. Their populations were consequently among the most vulnerable in the country.

Currently 13,000 families, up to 80,000 people, are known to be displaced within the region. To compound matters further, the region's main supply route, through Ai Khanum in north Takhar, has been blocked due to the conflict, which now inhibits imports of food and, critically, fuel. By November, the cost of one seer (7 kilos) of wheat in Faizabad had increased from Afs 260,000 in October to Afs 370,000, and fuel had increased by a factor of four with a knock-on effect on all other goods.

An attempt has been made to provide these displaced families with food aid, and the majority has received wheat from WFP. Due, however, to supply constraints, the ration

provided is less than desired (100 kg for a two-month period) and consists of only wheat rather than mixed food commodities. A number of NGOs are attempting to secure funding for complimentary foods so as to address this need, though with very limited success. A major need therefore still exists for complimentary food assistance." (OCHA 21 December 2000)

"Following military advances by Taliban forces in the Northeast last week, the severely drought-affected areas in northern Takhar are now additionally hosting and supporting a large number of people who fled their homes in Taloqan. Prior to this IDP influx, there was already a need for around 5,000 tons of food aid (wheat) for the drought victims. The extent of the war-related displacement and the level of IDP needs are currently under review in seven districts in Takhar and Badakhshan provinces. It is anticipated that 5,000 to 10,000 families are scattered throughout the area and that 40 to 60 percent of them are in need of food and shelter." (WFP 15 September 2000)

Recent IDP children in Mazar not at greater risk of malnutrition than other children (November 2000)

"8.8% of the surveyed children were internally displaced persons that had arrived in Mazar city since June 2000 (which corresponds to the most recent wave of IDP's). They had most often moved due to the drought, fighting or economic difficulties. There was no statistical association between whether a family was a recent IDP and the child's nutritional status ($0.47 < RR < 2.80$; $c^2 = 0.09$ $p = 0.76$). In other words, a child from a recently internally displaced family is not at a greater risk of malnutrition than a child who has been residing in Mazar since longer." (ACF, November 2000)

Acute malnutrition among children in Shomali plains and Panjsheer Valley, but IDP children not at greater risk (August 2000)

- 18,2 % global acute malnutrition rate in Panjsheer Valley
- Explanations of these high figures include period of highest diarrhoea, poor availability of health care and sanitation, frontline in the north prevent food supply
- IDPs (14,3% of population) are not at greater risk than local population.
- Compared to other rural areas affected by food shortage, it has been found an average proportion of malnourished children of 12,6 % amongst the under 5 year old children in public buildings, including 3,8 % of severe cases.
- For the 6-29 months category, the average proportion of malnourished children reached 17,1 %, including 4,9% of severe cases in public buildings.
- Overall level of vulnerability for the IDPs from northern Shamali (unofficial camps and public buildings) was found to be approximately 80 %. Displaced from southern Shamali were still found to be vulnerable with the overall level placed at 90 %.
- ACF launched an emergency operation with the opening of five SCFs to provide nutritional curative and preventive care to the local and displaced population of the southern mouth of the Panjsheer Valley and the northern part of the Shamali plains.

"The acute malnutrition rates found in the Panjsheer Valley and Shamali Plains (2.8% severe; 18.2% global) are by far the highest found in any nutritional surveys conducted by *Action contre la Faim* in Afghanistan, since this organisation started its programmes, in 1995.

To compare, the global acute malnutrition rate found in the rural district of Sharestan (a part of Hazaradjat), during nutritional screenings conducted in October 1999, was 3.7% (expressed in Z-scores). In urban areas, nutritional surveys yielded rates varying from 2.8% in Kabul (February 2000), 7.8% in Kabul (October 2000), 5.7% in Kandahar Based on a nutritional assessment done among 403 children. (May 2000), and 7.3% in Herat (July 2000).

Possible explanations

Diarrhoea

The survey was conducted in August, which corresponds to the season where the incidence of diarrhoea greatly increases, thereby making children much more vulnerable to malnutrition. This is confirmed by the high number of death due to diarrhoea among children under five years, and by an increase in the number of admissions (of both moderate and severe cases) in ACF feeding centres during the summer months. This increase is also seen in other regions of Afghanistan.

Health care and sanitation

The availability and access to health care is very poor, in particular in the Shamali plains where the presence of the front line limits the activities of aid agencies. This can be seen in the very low measles vaccination coverage rate found in the survey (29.4 % of children between 9 and 59 months, including only 6.8 % as proven by a card), and in the high mortality rate. Since the region is a very remote rural area, the living conditions are very basic with a deplorable water and sanitation situation. In particular the main source of drinking water is the river which is an important vector for contamination by many diseases.

Food security

The population of the Panjsheer Valley and the Shamali plains is highly vulnerable in terms of food security for several reasons. The supply of food and other products, as well as trade opportunities, are limited by the presence of the frontline in the south, and the harsh climate and relief and tense political situation in the North. The high density of population puts pressure on the land and makes it difficult for families to meet their needs with the local agriculture production.

Out of 920 families (where a mother was interviewed), 132 (14.3%) were IDPs, and 788 (85.7%) were not displaced.

There was no association between the nutritional status of a child and whether his family was internally displaced or not ($\chi^2 = 0.57$, $P=0.754$). This means that IDP children were

not at greater risk of malnutrition than children who were not displaced from their homes." (ACF, August 2000)

"Although the nutritional surveillance undertaken by *Action contre la faim* has not proven any alarming prevalence of malnutrition, or excess of mortality, the nutritional status of the population was even so a matter of deep concern.

Indeed, compared to other rural areas affected by food shortage, it has been found an average proportion of malnourished children of 12.6% (in Z-Score) amongst the under five year old children in public buildings, including 3.8% of severe cases [compared to some rural areas of the Hazâradjat also affected by food shortage such as Shahrestan district where the global acute malnutrition rate reached 3.7% in Z-Score in October 1999, while in Kabul it was up to 8.7% in February 1999] ; in official camps it reached 12.0% including 1.9% of severe malnutrition.

The nutritional status of the 6-29 months category was particularly more precarious since it reached levels of concern with an average proportion of malnourished children of 17.1% (in Z-Score), including 4.9% of severe cases in public buildings (and it reached 28% in official camps, including 2% of severe cases !). Furthermore, 13.8 per cent of the under five year old children were found at risk of mortality (including 5.9% at high mortality risk).

In conclusion, it was found that the 6 to 29 month age groups had a greater risk of being malnourished than the older children are. At this age, children are more susceptible to infection and disease, as it is during the transition period between exclusive breast-feeding and the introduction of the family plate. Increased levels of food insecurity can result in an erratic or abrupt transition to weaning resulting in an unbalanced diet for the young child. This often results in increased sensitivity to infection and the beginning of the vicious cycle of malnutrition and infection.

The nutritional status of the targeted population within the sample population was found to be of concerned and actions had to be taken to prevent and treat malnutrition.

Overall level of vulnerability for the IDPs from northern Shamali (unofficial camps and public buildings) was found to be approximately 80 %. Displaced from southern Shamali were still found to be vulnerable with the overall level placed at 90 %.

Therefore, *Action contre la faim* decided to launch an emergency intervention based on the opening of five SFCs that would provide appropriate nutritional curative and preventive care to the local and displaced population of the southern mouth of the Panjsheer Valley as well as the northern part of the Shamali plains." (ACF, March 2000, p.4-5)

For more information see ACF, "Supplementary Nutritional Assistance to Vulnerable Individuals and Integrated Health Education Activities, IDP settlements of the southern

mouth of the Panjshaar valley (Province of Parwan). Central region-Afghanistan", March 2000

Overall food security situation expected to deteriorate because of worst drought since 1971 (June 2000)

- Afghanistan's cereal production suffered a setback in 1999, following a very mild winter and late and erratic spring rains. With the severe drought of 2000, the situation grew much worse.
- FOA/WFP sent an assessment mission to Afghanistan from end-April to end-May to estimate the cereal harvest and cereal import requirements for the year 2000/2001.
- Rainfed crops (wheat and barley) have almost totally failed and irrigated cereal production has also been severely affected by drought, resulting in an estimated reduction of (irrigated) wheat production by some 33 percent compared to 1999.
- The production of secondary crops (rice, maize, barley) is also estimated to have declined by 53 percent compared to 1999 and 66 percent compared to 1998.
- The cereal import requirement in the 2000/01 marketing year (July/June) is estimated at a record high level of 2.3 million tonnes, more than double last year's volume of 1.1 million tonnes.
- Millions of Afghans of all categories - sedentary, transhumant and nomad - have little or no access to food through markets and their access to food through self production has been severely undermined by drought.
- The situation is likely to worsen in the coming months as the few remaining coping mechanisms are exhausted.
- Severe limitations on access to food due to lack of income-generating activities and employment opportunities outside agriculture increase as displaced people add to the supply of casual labour while few additional employment opportunities are created

"Following a strong recovery in 1998, Afghanistan's cereal production suffered a setback in 1999 due to late and erratic spring rains, shortages of irrigation water as a result of the mildest winter in 40 years with very low snowfall, and high incidence of yellow rust and sunnpest that damaged crops in the north and west of the country. The situation took a serious adverse turn in 2000 with a countrywide severe drought as a consequence of lack of rains and very little snowfall in winter. It is against this background that an FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission, supported by UNDP, was fielded to Afghanistan from end-April to end-May to estimate the 2000 cereal harvest and cereal import requirement, including food aid needs, for the marketing year 2000/01.

The Mission visited 17 provinces in different regions of the country. To support the work of the Mission, WFP fielded survey teams of national agronomists to collect detailed information on crop production and livestock situation. These teams carried out sample surveys in 28 out of 31 provinces. The Mission also benefited from discussion with UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, Afghan authorities, and many NGOs. Available relevant reports and documents were reviewed. Area and yield estimates for various crops in different regions were based on field visits involving interviews with farmers and crop cutting where feasible, data generated by survey teams, and discussions with UN and NGO personnel knowledgeable about particular regions and areas.

During its extensive field visits, the Mission observed that rainfed crops (wheat and barley) had almost totally failed, except in a few pockets in different regions. Irrigated cereal production was also severely affected by drought, resulting in an estimated reduction of (irrigated) wheat production by some 33 percent compared to 1999. The production of secondary crops (rice, maize, barley) is also estimated to have declined by 53 percent compared to 1999 and 66 percent compared to 1998. The Mission thus estimates the 2000 total cereal production at 1.82 million tonnes - down by 44 percent compared to 1999 and by 53 percent compared to 1998. As a result, the cereal import requirement in the 2000/01 marketing year (July/June) is estimated at a record high level of 2.3 million tonnes, more than double last year's volume of 1.1 million tonnes. A generous estimate of commercial cereal imports of about 1 million tonnes, some 31 percent higher than the estimate for last year, leaves a huge gap of 1.3 million tonnes. WFP emergency food aid, in pipeline and under mobilization, amounts to 225 000 tonnes, leaving an uncovered gap of over 1.0 million tonnes. A shortfall of this magnitude, if unmet, could have disastrous implications for the population.

Millions of Afghans of all categories - sedentary, transhumant and nomad - have little or no access to food through markets and their access to food through self production has been severely undermined by drought. Their purchasing power has been seriously eroded by the lack of employment opportunities within and outside agriculture, decline in cash crop production such as onions, potatoes, almonds, apricots and poppy (that provides employment for many even though for a short period of time) and the poor condition and high rates of mortality of livestock. The situation is likely to worsen in the coming months as the few remaining coping mechanisms are exhausted. In Afghanistan, rains normally start in October/November. Even if precipitation improves in the next season, wheat harvests will not be available until May/June 2001. However, if rains fail again the magnitude and dimensions of the needs for 'life saving' alone would be enormous." (FOA/WFP, 8 June 2000, p. 1-2)

"The overall food security situation in Afghanistan is expected to deteriorate because of the 16 per cent reduction in the cereal harvest for 1999 following the driest winter in 40 years. As a result, there will be a greater reliance upon external food assistance [...]" (UN SC 21 September 1999, para. 25)

"[T]he drop in production is due to a shortage of irrigation water as a result of the mildest winter in 40 years with very low snowfall, late and erratic spring rains. High incidences of yellow rust and sunpest have also damaged crops in the north and west of the country. In addition, agricultural recovery remains severely hindered by damage to irrigation structures and land mines.

Despite stable prices and well-stocked food shops in the first half of 1999, access to food is severely limited by a scarcity of income-generating activities and lack of employment opportunities outside agriculture. This problem appears to be increasing as many displaced people add to the supply of casual labour while few additional employment opportunities are created. Low purchasing power is the single most important impediment to food security.

In urban areas, typically the major determinant of a household's ability to meet the minimum requirement per person per month is its male labour. If the major sources of household income are children's or women's work at home, then these households are more likely to have per capita income below the necessary for minimum food expenditure. [...]. In rural areas, the landless, particularly in the highlands, are among those who have the most difficulty attaining minimum food needs." (ACC/SCN 28 September 1999, p. 41-42)

For further information on the food situation in general, see "[Special Alert: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment, Mission to Afghanistan](#)", 8 June 2000

ACF survey shows that IDP children in Kabul are not at greater risk of malnutrition than other children (February 2000)

- Action contre la Faim (ACF) has been implementing a nutritional surveillance system since November 1995
- Sudden decrease in the prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 years in Kabul due to the gradual stabilisation of the political situation, the return of NGO's and the reopening of ACF feeding centres.
- An increase of acute malnutrition should not be excluded during the summer
- IDP children are not at a greater risk of malnutrition than other children.
- The prevalence of stunting remains extremely high

"*Action contre la Faim* conducted an anthropometric survey at the beginning of February 2000, in order to evaluate the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age and of their mothers, in Kabul city. This survey is part of the nutritional surveillance system implemented by *Action contre la Faim*, and is the follow-up of the six previous nutritional surveys conducted in November 1995, May 1996, December 1996, June 1997, December 1997 and February 1999." (ACF, February 2000, p. 7)

Acute malnutrition

"There has been a surprisingly considerable decrease in the prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 years compared to the past 5 years. Surveys in 97 yielded global malnutrition rates of 6.9% (June), 7.5% (December), and the malnutrition rate further increased last year up to 8.7% (February 1999).

This sudden decrease is difficult to explain, since the economic situation does not seem to have improved: food prices have continued to increase, the Afghani has continued to lose value compared to US\$, and employment opportunities are still precarious (daily labour, poorly paid jobs...). The amount of food aid distributed in Kabul (especially by WFP, CARE, ICRC, and GAA) has remained constant over the past 3 years, and there have been no particular improvements in health care services or sanitation in the city.

A potential explanation for the improvement in the nutritional status would be that the gradual stabilisation of the political situation since the Taliban conquest of the South-eastern regions of Afghanistan (up to 1996, when Kabul was taken) has enabled economic activity to resume, with increased trading and business opportunities between and within cities or provinces (Kabul, Kandahar, Ghazni, Jalalabad), as well as with neighbouring countries (Pakistan, Iran, etc.). The benefits of this increased activity would have slowly trickled down to the most vulnerable sections of the Kabul population and have had an effect on the nutritional status only now.

The return of several NGO's, which had evacuated Afghanistan after the political crisis of July 1998, may also have contributed to the decrease in the malnutrition rate, not only through the aid programmes but also through increased employment opportunities. The reopening of ACF feeding centres (18 supplementary feeding centres for moderate malnutrition and 17 therapeutic feeding centres for severe malnutrition), which this survey showed cover 50% of malnutrition cases, has probably also had an impact on the nutritional status of children under 5.

An increase in the prevalence of acute malnutrition in the coming months should not be excluded since the prevalence of diarrhoea, *and consequently of malnutrition*, usually increases considerably during the summer months (May to September)." (ACF, February 2000, p. 5-6)

Internally displaced children

"64 (6.8%) of the surveyed families were internally displaced persons (IDP) since July 1999, 863 (92.1%) were Kabul residents or had been in Kabul since before July 1999, and for 10 families (1.1%) the information could not be obtained (no present adult from that family).

There was no statistical association between whether a family was a recent IDP and the child's nutritional status (RR=0; 2= 1.91 p=0.167). In other words, a child from a recently internally displaced family is not at a greater risk of malnutrition than a child who has been residing in Kabul since longer. These results do not necessarily indicate that IDP's are not more vulnerable than other families, but the prevalence of malnutrition in the population is too low to make such statistical analyses with the present sample size." (ACF, February 2000, p. 23)

Chronic malnutrition

The prevalence of stunting remains extremely high, indicating that the families have been suffering from a poor economic situation for several years. This high rate of stunting is also linked to the poor sanitation and hygiene practices, repeated episodes of disease (especially diarrhoea in the summer), as well as a lack of a balanced diet (the diet is composed essentially of wheat and is lacking vitamins and minerals). The issue of stunting should be seriously addressed since chronically malnourished children are much more vulnerable to disease, acute malnutrition, and have a poorer psychomotor development." (ACF, February 2000)

For more information on the survey, see: ACF, "Nutritional & Mortality Survey, Kabul-City, Afghanistan", February 2000

Increased malnutrition among IDP children in the ex-Soviet compound (October 1999)

- According to ACF, the malnutrition situation of the IDPs in the ex-Soviet compound has worsen from 8% moderate malnutrition in August to 13.6% in October.
- The under-five respiratory diseases rose from 15% in September to 22% in October.

"An Action contre la Faim (ACF) screening of the malnutrition situation in the ex-Soviet Compound found 13.6 percent of moderate malnutrition and 1.5 percent of severe malnutrition (ACF, personal communications) an upward trend compared with the 14 August screening which found eight percent moderate malnutrition and 2.6 percent severe malnutrition. ACF will continue to monitor the situation in the compound. There was also an increase in under-five respiratory diseases from 22.6 percent in October 1999 compared with 15 percent in September 1999." (WFP, October 1999)

Food insecurity for IDPs (October 1999)

- IDPs are at risk of hunger and malnutrition as the destruction of agricultural infrastructure, fruit crops and trees have exacerbated their food insecurity.
- An estimated 20% of the 140,000 population living in the Panjshir Valley will have difficulties in accessing food in the next year.
- Because of the inflexibility of existing assistance programmes to quickly integrate newly displaced people, households have developed ways of sharing the entitlements of host families from assistance programmes.
- About 450,000 people in Kabul both receive, and are dependent on, food aid.
- It has been reported that access to distributed food was irregular and some groups were discriminated against, especially during the distribution of bread by the authorities.

"Reports on the national food-security situation in Afghanistan generally do not focus specifically on the food-security situation of IDPs. However, the following picture is emerging with respect to the recent wave of displacement:

Reported destruction of agricultural infrastructure, fruit crops and trees could exacerbate food insecurity, putting thousands of IDPs at risk of hunger and malnutrition.

Displaced people in the Panjshir Valley currently receive food from limited distributions by local authorities (whose stocks are reportedly diminishing); food stocks such as wheat brought from their homes (up to 20 percent of IDPs); and fruit, maize and vegetables picked from the resident populations' crops. As these sources of food were expected to diminish dramatically, WFP provided 108 tons of wheat flour for distribution as bread to the most vulnerable groups, representing a half-ration for 28,800 people for two weeks (WFP 1999b). A VAM food-needs assessment in the Panjshir Valley in September 1999

estimated that the poorest 20 percent of the 140,000 population will find it difficult to access food during the next year. Many of these people are directly affected by the influx of IDPs fleeing the Shomali plains, the majority relocating to the food-deficit areas of Kabul and the Panjshir Valley.

Many of the displaced people reaching Kabul found shelter with relatives in a number of districts (4, 11 and 15). Through discussions with both host families and the recently displaced, a number of concerns were raised indicating that both groups were under stress to meet the food needs of all members residing together. These discussions with newly displaced and host women at the WFP-assisted women's bakeries shed some light on how these people were coping. Because of the inflexibility of existing assistance programmes to quickly integrate newly displaced people, households have developed ways of sharing the entitlements of host families from assistance programmes. For example, hosts continue to receive subsidized bread but give the recent IDPs the opportunity to feed their children in the supplementary feeding programme.

According to WFP VAM estimates, around 160,000 people in Kabul are extremely food insecure and a further 420,000 are marginally food insecure. Currently, a total of about 450,000 people in Kabul both receive, and are dependent on, food aid. Approximately 270,000 of these people are currently able to buy bread at subsidized bread shops under a WFP project. However, the newly displaced do not have access to subsidized bread since the lists are not periodically updated. (late 1996 early 1997 was the last time a comprehensive update occurred).

WFP is supplying corn-soya blend (CSB) rations to the people camped in the ex-Soviet embassy (generally referred to as the ex-Soviet compound) in Kabul. Other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are providing essential non-food items. The food provided in the compound is not sufficient to meet the full dietary needs of the 12,995 people and appears insufficient even as a dietary supplement. At the time of writing WFP was providing a theoretical food ration of 150 g per person per day to cover the needs of 3,000 people. In actuality, the 450 kg of CSB porridge was being distributed to 12,995 people. Based upon rough estimates each person is getting a ration of about 1,650 calories if the sugar, raisins and oil are included. Even with the bread distribution by authorities, the caloric intake falls below standard nutritional requirements. Compound residents also reported that access to distributed food was irregular and some groups were discriminated against, especially during the distribution of bread by the authorities. About 40 percent of the residents in the compound stated that food was the major reason they stayed in the compound, otherwise they would find alternative accommodation." (WFP, October 1999)

Very limited access to food supplies among IDPs (1999)

- A survey among the displaced in the Panjshir Valley indicated that between 50 and 75% had no food supplies, 25-50% had food supplies for at least one week, 24-33% had food supplies for at least 2 weeks and 12-15% had food supplies for up to 3 weeks.

"[T]he data collected from the general population [of the IDPs from Shamali plains that sought refuge in the Panjshir Valley] indicated that between 50 and 75 per cent of IDPs had no food supplies; 25-50 per cent had food supplies for at least one week; 24-33 per cent had food supplies for at least 2 weeks; and 12-15 per cent had food supplies for up to three weeks. None had food supplies for longer periods. Additionally, around 20 per cent of the population had lost sheep, goats, cattle or donkeys." (UN GA, 30 September 1999, paras. 30-32)

Shelter

Shelter and heating urgently needed in northern Takhar as winter approaches (December 2000)

- Many families are sheltered under plastic sheeting in northern Takhar
- IDPs in Dasht-i-Qala & Khoja Bahauddin sleep in the open
- IDPs in Rustaq are in local houses
- IDPs in Keshem are both outside and inside

"While many families were able to find shelter with the local population, many were not and remained either under gilims or plastic sheeting in the open or within the compounds of local people. With the arrival of winter, agencies are presently attempting to rehabilitate damaged houses in north Takhar and winterise public buildings there and in Faizabad, and, funding permitting, to encourage local people to accommodate further IDPs (local people are already shouldering most of the IDP burden). Tents have been provided in some areas in north Takhar and in Faizabad as it will not be possible to find shelter for all IDPs, though this is a poor option in light of the severity of the winter in this area.

A number of agencies - MSF-CH, ACTED, Concern and SNI - are looking into providing stoves and coal for both those under soft shelter and those in public buildings, though full funding has still not been received." (OCHA 21 December 2000)

"The shelter situation amongst IDPs is mixed - those in Dasht-i-Qala and Khoja Bahauddin are predominantly in the open or sleeping outside though within compounds of houses belonging to local people; those in Rustaq are in spare or intentionally vacated rooms of local houses; those in Keshem are both inside with local people and in compounds though actually outside; and those in Faizabad are split between public buildings, living with local people and under temporary shelter outside. The shelter situation in north Takhar is a primary concern - large numbers are living outside in Dasht-i-Qala and Khoja Bahauddin and several sizeable spontaneous camps have emerged." (OCHA 17 October 2000)

Shelter conditions of IDPs in the Panjsheer Valley (September 1999)

- About 50 to 70 per cent of the displaced have found shelter with local families, while others are either housed in public buildings or live in makeshift shelters

"As of 3 September 1999, it was reported that the United Nations mission to the Panjshir Valley (Northern Afghanistan) had found that up to 100,000 persons have been displaced by recent fighting in the area. [...] In Panjshir, about 50 to 70 per cent of the displaced have found shelter with local families, while others are either housed in public buildings or are out in the open." (DPI 3 September 1999)

"The IDPs who arrived first quickly overwhelmed public buildings or, in the case of those with connections or relatives in the Panjshir valley - which were more inclined to be those from northern Shamali - found shelter with them. Those arriving later, without links to the valley and once public buildings had become full, were thus compelled to erect makeshift outdoor shelters. Of this population, many subsequently either found accommodation amongst the local population or moved onwards, with the phenomenon of the reduction of the outdoor IDPs being remarked on by many witnesses. The health situation was very typical of IDP/refugee situations with communicable disease problems, specifically acute diarrhoea and an outbreak of cholera. [...]". (UN GA 30 September 1999, paras. 27-28)

Shelter conditions of IDPs in Kabul (November 1999)

- Between August and November 1999, 20,000 families had been registered entering Kabul
- 12,500 of those, mainly women and children, were staying in the ex-Soviet compound while others had found shelter with friends and relatives
- Surveys suggest that many host families are supporting four or five displaced families in over-crowded conditions, and that the burden of their support will increase as winter comes

"20,000 families have been registered entering Kabul between August and now, of which some 12,500 persons (mostly women and children) are currently living in the ex-Soviet compound, while others have found shelter with relatives/friends." (UNDP Afghanistan 10 November 1999)

"The presence of tens of thousands of families displaced from the Shamali Valley continues to affect the lives of the residents of Kabul. Most of the displaced have found refuge with relatives, who are mainly poor. Surveys suggest that many host families are supporting four or five displaced families in over-crowded conditions, and that the burden of their support will increase as winter comes. As temperatures drop, the need for adequate shelter and heating will intensify.

Families staying in the ex-Soviet compound also face a grim winter. Efforts continue to winterize the compound, but most rooms are now occupied by between four and seven

people. While so far health conditions are stable, due to the provision of water and basic sanitation, living conditions during winter are expected to become more difficult." (UNOCHA 2 November 1999)

For further information on subsistence needs among IDPs outside the Soviet Compound in Kabul, see "[Subsistence needs among IDPs outside the Soviet Compound in Kabul \(November 1999\)](#)" [Internal link]

Shelter conditions of displaced within the district of Darra Souf (October 1999)

- Displaced in Darra Souf spread out among villages, some living with friends and relatives and others in makeshift shelters and caves
- IDPs dependent on begging and local resources for survival

"In Darra Souf a current United Nations assessment of the area has found that up to 35,000 people may still be displaced there as a result of fighting which has persisted most of the year. The displaced are spread out among villages, where some are living with friends and relatives while others occupy makeshift shelters and caves." (UNOCHA 26 October 1999)

"[N]o international assistance has been received, and the displaced population is dependent entirely on begging/local resources for survival. As winter approaches this population becomes even more vulnerable." (UNOCHA 14 October 1999)

Water

Drought affects water supply for IDPs (July 2000)

- Only 23 % of the total population have access to safe water (19% rural and 23% urban).
- IDPs in the ex-Soviet Embassy as well as in the Panjshir Valley have been provided with safe water through community handpumps wells or by pumping piped water from borewells.
- Water supply operations have been increasingly difficult to support due to limited resources.
- Considering the current drought, it is expected that the water supply situation will become increasingly difficult for IDPs over the summer.

"It is estimated that in Afghanistan only 23 percent of the total population have access to safe water (19 percent rural and 35 percent urban), and only 12 percent have access to safe excreta disposal (8 percent rural and 23 percent urban).

In the ex-Soviet compound as well as in the Panjshir Valley, IDPs have been provided with a safe supply of water through community handpumps wells or by pumping piped water from borewells. 200 trench latrines and 1,600 bathrooms have been constructed by ACTED with UNICEF assistance for IDPs in the Panjshir. Due to limited resources, it is becoming increasingly difficult to support the water supply operation for IDPs in the ex-

Soviet compound. Furthermore, IDPs who moved into village areas have created an overcrowding situation. Considering the current alarming reports of shortages of drinking water, there is a definite risk for disease outbreaks during the summer season." (OCHA, 6 July 2000)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Gender discrimination restricts education for girls

The Taliban impose severe restrictions on education for girls in urban areas (1998)

- Most of the opportunities for girls' education eliminated by the Taliban in areas that they have taken over
- Despite the severe restrictions, girls' schools were allowed to operate in Kandahar and in camps for internally displaced persons in Herat

"The Taliban have eliminated most of the opportunities for girls' education that existed in areas that they have taken over; however, some girls' schools still operate in rural areas and small towns. More than 100 NGO-funded girls' schools and home-based women's vocational projects were closed in Kabul on June 15. The Taliban stated that schools would not be allowed to teach girls over the age of 8, and that the schools that were closed had violated this rule. In the future, the Taliban stated that it would license girl's schools, and that teaching in such schools would be limited to the Koran. Some girls reportedly are receiving an education in informal home schools, which are tolerated by the Taliban authorities in various parts of the country. It also is reported that several girls' schools remain open in Kandahar, although in Herat, which was captured by the Taliban in 1995, girls' schools have remained closed except in the refugee camps maintained by international NGO's. Some families sent girls abroad for education in order to evade the Taliban's prohibitions on females attending school in most urban areas." (U.S. DOS 26 February 1999)

Education for IDP children

UNICEF to facilitate education for IDP children (March 2001)

- UNICEF is envisaging flexible schooling opportunities for girls and boys in the IDP camps.
- Many children have never been to school before being displaced

"The IDP situation may remain for some time to come. In light of this there is a need to address the development/education needs of the children. Also, education in itself provides helps to provide structure and a sense of stability and normalcy in IDP children's lives, and thus helps to strengthen children's psychosocial wellbeing. Flexible schooling opportunities for girls and boys, if permitted by the authorities, may be the solution to this. These education activities will target all children in the IDP camps, but will only be undertaken on condition that girls and boys will be able to participate. Activities will

therefore target the girl child and other disadvantaged children in the IDP camps specifically.

Many IDP children did not attend school in the past, but some children's education was disturbed by internal displacement. UNICEF has begun a survey of the education situation amongst IDPs in Herat. A similar exercise is being discussed with a partner for the Northern Region. SCA has already undertaken an education survey in the Northeast. UNICEF and SC-US have gained experience in providing primary education and other child-focused interventions (playgrounds, sports, skill development) from the 1999 IDP crisis in Kabul. This is being reviewed by SC-US and should provide insights in and lesson for other such situations - though each IDP group comes with its own background and lives within a unique context.

A phased approach will be used towards addressing the development needs of IDP children. In the camps that are newly established, as a first step, UNICEF will mobilise literate/educated adults (as much as possible women) to set-up classes and organise children. For these classes, resource people/literate girls and women will be provided with simple health education material, children's magazines and BBC storybooks, and some initial orientation to prepare children for schooling. This will proceed to a second phase of organised grade level primary education, with some more informal education activities continuing as well. The Development activities will be closely linked with those related to Protection. " (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

UN and NGOs arrange for educational activities for IDP children in Kabul (August 2000)

- Schooling needs are difficult to meet in the absence of cooperation from the formal education system.
- UNICEF and Save the Children manage a primary school for IDPs in the ex-Soviet Embassy in Kabul with more than 2,650 children enrolled.
- UNHCR funds rehabilitation and reconstruction of primary schools, provides teaching materials and support local NGOs in the training of teachers.
- Kabul authorities provided two buildings for use as schools.
- UNICEF, Save the Children (US) and Children in Crisis (CIC) are involved in education activities for displaced children.

"The school in the IDP camp is the only place where children have an opportunity to learn and to be with their peers in a stimulating environment. Most of these children have never been to school and the demand for education for both boys and girls is high. The school offers a good opportunity to provide these children with basic numeracy and literacy skills. The school is a place where they can be away from the overcrowded homes and the barren, stressful environment of the camp where people are in a constant flux, trying desperately to meet daily needs. For the families, their children's daily three hours at school is a time when they can be sure that their children are safe outside the house.

During the implementation of the project, there has been a constant high demand for primary education with, at present, a waiting list of 240 children. A good relationship with the Ministry of Religious Affairs has been established and all basic issues have been resolved. SC/US continues to advocate for the change of the Ministry of Education's present policy towards girl's education.

30 teachers were trained and received classroom support. These teachers are working as employees of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. For many of these teachers it is the first time that they received have training regarding children's learning. It has been a struggle to motivate the teachers to move away from their traditional teaching practices, but many teachers are now trying and showing improvements.

As the IDP school is been implemented through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, many discussions have taken place, covering covering a wide range of educational issues. Both sides had to make concessions. However, SC/US believes that the concessions they had to make do not jeopardize children's learning. The recommended text books are used in the classrooms, both boys and girls attend school and have the same curriculum, and the curriculum as recommended by the Ministry of Education is used rather than the MoRA curriculum.

As of July 2000, an average of 2400 children is attending the school in the IDP camp. An average of 40% of these students are girls. Most children are in first grade (90%), and small numbers of children in grade two (5%) and grade three (3%).

The children are taught by 30 male teachers through a two shift system. The teachers received an initial training and regular classroom support. All children and teachers were supplied with the necessary materials." (SCF August 2000)

"In the absence of cooperation with the formal education system, it is very difficult to support the schooling needs of dispersed IDP populations. The situation is somewhat simplified where IDP populations are concentrated, requiring special services. In Kabul City, UNICEF funds, and Save the Children manages, a primary school for IDPs from the Shomali Valley. The school is housed in the former Soviet Embassy Compound. By providing structure to children's lives, the school addresses their psychosocial as well as educational needs. However, obtaining agreement for this school, involved lengthy and difficult negotiations with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, now formally in charge of girls' education. The issues debated including ensuring girls' access to the facility, educational content for girls and boys, and the approval of the textbooks. More than 2,650 children (of which about 40 percent girls) are now enrolled in the IDP school. UNHCR funds rehabilitation and reconstruction of primary schools that must serve the entire community equitably with access to both girls and boys and provides teaching materials. UNHCR is also active with regard to capacity building, for example through local NGOs, training for teachers is carried out for both women and men." (OCHA, 6 July 2000)

"UNICEF, Save the Children (US) and Children in Crisis (CIC) are discussing educational activities for internally displaced children in Kabul. They also visited the two buildings provided by the authorities for use as schools. The renovation of these buildings is underway. UNICEF Kabul in collaboration with SCF-US drafted criteria for the selection of teachers and head masters, which was approved by the Ministry of Rehabilitation after a few modifications. It was agreed that the teachers would have to pass a test for both religious and modern subjects. Based on this 30 applicants were interviewed and 11 selected." (UNOCHA, 14 December 1999)

Education not available for the most recently displaced (October 1999)

- Discussions are underway to provide the IDP children in the ex-Soviet compound with schooling.
- As they have to seek food or employment, have not been to school before or can't afford school supplies, the recently displaced children don't attend school.

"For recently displaced families, for the most part education is not available. There is still discussion as to whether schooling will be made available to the children residing in the ex-Soviet compound. Conversations with a number of the recently displaced living with friends indicated that there was no possibility of sending either boys or girls to school. The reasons given included the need for children to seek employment including begging; the need to remain anonymous; the fact that children have not been to school before; and their inability to buy school supplies." (WFP, October 1999)

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Issues of self-reliance

Self-reliance status of IDPs in north-eastern Afghanistan (October 2000)

- IDPs in northeastern Afghanistan are of rural origin and have little assets and food stocks
- Urban IDPs from Taloqan are self-reliant

"In general, the majorities of the IDP population are rural in origin and possess both low general assets and very limited food stocks. Many who were able to bring food stocks with them have exhausted them by now, as many are well into their second month of displacement.

Those from Khoja Ghar, Hazar Bagh (Takhar) and Archi (Kunduz), presently in districts east of the Kokcha (principally Dasht-i-Qala and Khoja Bahauddin), are considered to be highly vulnerable on account of (a) the impact of the autumn 1999 conflict on their areas of origin, and the huge losses of property and assets which resulted; (b) the impact of the current drought on the rainfed agriculture which predominates in those areas and the very low harvest which they obtained this year; and (c) the similar impact of the drought on present host communities, whose ability to support them in terms of food stuffs and housing is restricted. It is expected that these IDPs will have extremely limited access to food supplies, other than food aid.

The majority of IDPs from Taloqan (who moved to Keshem) are an urban population. Minorities among them have been able to transfer their businesses to Keshem, and are consequently self-reliant. The majorities, however, has limited assets and resources and include a large proportion who had previously been displaced, or moved as economic migrants, to Taloqan. Among the latter, those who had enough funds were the first to flee from Taloqan to Faizabad." (OCHA 17 October 2000)

Situation precarious for displaced households in the Panjsheer Valley as unemployment is high (March 2000)

- 62% of the IDPs in the Panjsheer Valley are unemployed and completely dependent on international aid

"Rate of unemployment remains high since 36% of the households are said without regular source of income, whereas the incidence increases up to 62% among displaced families, entirely dependent on international humanitarian assistance." (ACF, March 2000, p. 15)

IDPs' coping strategies (October 1999)

- IDPs from northern Shomali travel back and forth to cope with their situation.
- Some IDPs practice a reduced form of seasonal farming to maintain ties with their homes and to earn income.
- Some IDPs are more vulnerable as others as regards to coping options.

"IDPs from northern Shomali appear to be travelling back and forth to monitor the situation, harvest crops and collect household items and supplies. Initially, due to insecure conditions, the men returned and handled the traditionally female task of caring for livestock. Currently, according to women interviewed by the mission, it is generally women without young children who make these journeys due to uncertainty over whether it is safe for males to return, for example, there is fear that young males could be recruited.

Returning to the home area appears to be an important coping mechanism, at least during the harvest period, for IDPs living in Kabul as well as for those residing in the Panjshir Valley. In some places, communities practice a reduced form of seasonal farming, commuting from their place of refuge without resettling or investing in their land, infrastructures or assets in order to maintain ties with their home areas and to earn income.

The ability to cope with displacement varies considerably, depending on the options available to a particular family. Those IDPs who have fled the frontline areas and those forced to leave without notice, sometimes with not even enough time to retrieve their shoes, have the fewest options. The elderly, the sick, pregnant women and children are also particularly vulnerable. The long walk, poor food, and lack of shelter and sanitation all contribute to the increasing vulnerability of the displaced, often making the recently displaced more vulnerable than other IDPs." (WFP, October 1999)

Only one in three IDPs of the ex-Soviet Embassy is employed (November 1999)

- Problems identified include lack of potential bread-winner in many families, difficulties in finding work and meagre food stocks

"A quarter of IDP families were recorded as having no potential bread-winner (i.e. with female or disabled head of household). Only one in three (employable, if female?) able-bodied adult IDP indicates that s/he has been able to find work in the city since arrival. The widespread loss of assets and sources of livelihood (i.e. agricultural production) requires IDP families to find manual work to obtain cash.

Both IDP and host families seem to have a high proportion of children between 5 and 15 years old, some of whom are forced to work. A third of IDP families report that they had brought livestock from their village, although most had been forced sell these. On

average, funds raised from these sales, however, are estimated to be sufficient to provide for typical family needs for almost 2 months."

The size of food stocks among those IDP families interviewed is meagre, ranging from sufficient food for a family for 1 day to 1 week.

(...)

Begging is the only way that some IDP families earn money, but it is only possible to meet a fraction of the estimated needs of a typical family in this way." (UNRCO November 1999)

The Taliban impose ban on women to seek employment (1997)

- As they entered Mazar-I-Sharif in May 1997, the Taliban banned women from working and receiving education, as well as to leave the city
- Subsequently, the Taliban allowed women to work under certain conditions

"Following the capture of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban imposed numerous restrictions on women, including an edict banning them from seeking employment.

In keeping with this policy, when the Taliban entered Mazar-i-Sharif on 24 May 1997, they immediately announced that women were banned from working and receiving education. Women were reportedly also not allowed to leave the city. After the departure of the Taliban from the city in June 1997, foreign aid agencies in Mazar-i-Sharif were instructed by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan to stop employing female Afghan staff. The instructions were reported to have been issued by the Jehadi (Holy War) Shura (Council) in the northern part of Afghanistan (then not under Taliban control) which is headed by the Governor of Balkh province. This entailed a reduction in the activities of international aid agencies. Subsequently, it was reported that Afghan women would be allowed to work only in agencies headed by women or to be employed as nurses and doctors in hospitals. It is believed that only 20 per cent of the female workforce in the health sector is currently employed. Public participation severely restricted by the civil war." (UN Commission on Human Rights 14 July 1999, paras. 35, 36)

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

General

Taliban accused of separating men from their family during relocation (2000)

- Men were reportedly separated from their family during relocation.

"There were reports that dozens of trucks used to relocate displaced persons were filled only with women and children, indicating that adult men may have been separated from their families by the Taliban. Both men and women reportedly were separated from their families by the Taliban; according to one international human rights organization, some 1,000 ethnic Tajik men were separated from their families during the exodus and detained by the Taliban. The whereabouts of most of those separated from their families remained unknown at year's end." (U.S. DOS, 25 February 2000, 1 g.)

See also "[Tajik minority faces harassment and forced displacement](#)"

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Systematic destruction of property by Taliban forces during attacks in 1999

- Reports of systematic destruction of property in the fighting for control over Bamyan in 1999

Following the fighting for control over Bamyan in 1999, it was reported that there had been "[s]ystematic destruction of the housing stock and that 15 per cent of houses in Bamyan have been totally destroyed while another 21 per cent have been partially destroyed. The inhabitants of Bamyan have reportedly lost two thirds of their most important assets during the conflict such as livestock (66 per cent of all cows were lost), household goods and commercial vehicles and that shops have been sold, looted or destroyed. (GA 30 September 1999, para. 21)

"[H]ouse burnings were reportedly worst in Istalif, Farza, Kalakan and Guldara with lesser levels in Qarabagh and parts of Bagram district. [...] The reports of systematic destruction of property and agriculture by the Taliban forces in the Shamali plains were denied by officials in Kabul who suggested that a protective strip 200 metres on either side of the main road was being cleared. This was not, however, borne out by independent reports which noted that homes and villages far from any main road had also been destroyed." (GA 30 September 1999, para. 26)

Permission to return from Kabul to retrieve possessions discontinued (November 1999)

- Permissions for IDPs to return to their villages of origin to retrieve possessions have been discontinued.

"Reports suggest that the process whereby those displaced to Kabul were able to obtain official permission to return to their villages of origin to try to retrieve possessions has now been discontinued. While most families seem to have few (if any) domestic possessions to retrieve from their homes, their ability to survive the winter in Kabul might hinge on being able to bring stored wheat and other supplies from their villages. There are indications that the transport of such goods by civilians is currently prohibited, although the reasons for this are not clear." (UNRCO Kabul 5 November 1999)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

Return and resettlement during 1999

Most of the persons displaced in Herat between 1996-1998 have returned (October 2000)

"Herat City had a population of some 50,000 persons displaced by conflict between 1996 and 1998. They were assisted by ICRC and UN/NGOs. In 1998, most of the IDPs returned to Badghis and Fariyab, while some 1,200 families decided to remain in IDP camps or with local families in Herat City." (OCHA 3 October 2000)

Significant resettlement in the districts of northern Shamali (September-November 1999)

- As of November 1999, UNRCO Kabul reported that almost two-fifths of the population in the districts of northern Shamali were resident or resettled

It is difficult to provide information on the process of return of internally displaced persons. But it should be noted that there is a willingness on behalf of the authorities to countenance temporary return, as this will help to stabilize the situation. (UNRCO 19 November 1999)

According to UNRCO in Kabul, almost two-fifths of the population in the districts of northern Shamali is resident or resettled.

District	Estimated Current Population	Percentage of normal population
Charikar	36,000	20%
Bagram	10,000	10%
Gulbohar	25,000	50%
Jebel as Saraj	46,000	40%
Kohestan	82,500	80%
Jemal Agha	48,000	80%
Sayed Khil	20,000	50%
Total	267,500	40%

(UNRCO 20 November 1999)

IDPs living outside the Soviet compound in Kabul face obstacles in return to Shamali (November 1999)

- Cited problems include non-recognition at checkpoints of official permissions to return, destruction of homes and crops and general insecurity

"More than a third of those interviewed reported that relatives had tried return to their homes in the past month, but had not always been able to get checkpoints to recognise the official permissions that had been obtained. Those with influence seem to have no difficulty in travelling, or even bringing goods back.

Four out of five families interviewed reported that their homes and crops had been destroyed. Others acknowledged that they had benefitted from contacts with certain commanders to save their property. A quarter suggested that remaining livestock had been stolen after their departure.

In addition to perceived insecurity, the need to invest in reconstruction was cited as a major constraint to return. External support might be crucial in their ability to resettle in their original villages in the spring." (UNRCO November 1999)

Return of IDPs to Bamyan (June-September 1999)

- Some 87,000 displaced from Bamyan between March and May returned in June and September, while about 28,000 remained displaced due to e.g. lack of money for travel expenses, destruction of houses and lack of food

From June to September, out of those 115,000 displaced from Bamyan between March and May 1999 to neighboring districts and provinces, "[s]ome 87,000 people - three-quarters of those displaced - returned to their places of origin, while about 28,000 persons continue to be displaced." (UNOCHA 14 October 1999)

"[T]he reasons cited for the failure of others to return were lack of money for travel expenses, destruction of houses and lack of food. It had been reported that 361 infants and 138 adults had been killed by cold and hunger during the spring displacement. There were also reports of widespread summary executions (at least 40) and arbitrary arrests during the most recent conflict. Numerous persons are believed to have been taken prisoner or hostage." (GA 30 September 1999, para. 19)

Obstacles to return and resettlement

Low funding constrain return programmes (February 2001)

"Beyond immediate relief aid, helping Afghan refugees and IDPs return home when it is feasible for them to do so should also be a high international priority -- but the international response to these needs has not been generous. The ICRC has a return program planned for 10,000 families; Sweden has donated \$600,000 for seed; Japan has a program to help returnees; and UNHCR hopes to resume a repatriation program from Pakistan in April. The needs are much larger than what these few donors have contributed." (RI, 9 February 2001)

Conflict in the northeast hampers return movements (February 2001)

"It is realistically expected that the conflict in Takhar will continue well into 2001 and that support to IDPs will continue to be required. It would appear most likely that the lines will become relatively static with a possibility of westward movement. Any IDP return will obviously be determined by the security situation in their areas of origin. As the planting season for spring wheat will end in March this will mean that the majority of IDPs will not have planted anything this year and will conceivably require food assistance throughout next winter, even if they are able to return. Non-food item assistance may also be required following any possible return. It should be noted that any return would obviously be preceded by military changes that would, inevitably, result in IDPs flows starting to move in the opposite direction ie. towards Kunduz. If, on the other hand, the front lines move eastwards – ie. towards Badakhshan - then it is to be realistically expected that the existing IDP caseload plus obviously the local population will be displaced in this direction. In this scenario it would be expected that assistance would be required" (UNOCHA February 2001)

Mines hamper return and resettlement of IDPs (February 2001)

"Afghanistan is the most heavily mined country in the world, according to U.N. mine-clearing experts. The U.N. estimates that there are 5 to 7 million landmines and over 750,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance throughout the country, sown mainly during the Soviet occupation. However, some NGO's estimate that there may be less than 1 million mines. There have been claims that 162 of 356 districts are mine-affected. The most heavily mined areas are the provinces bordering Iran and Pakistan. The landmines and unexploded ordnance cause deaths and injuries, restrict areas available for cultivation, and slow the return of refugees. At the end of 1999, according to the NGO Halo Trust, mines covered more than an estimated 420 square miles, including over 285 square miles of grazing land; over 100 square miles of agricultural land; almost 25 square miles of roads; 7.5 square miles of residential area; and over 2 square miles of irrigation systems and canals. From 1995-97, new mines are believed to have been laid over 90 square miles of land, reportedly mainly by the Northern Alliance in the western provinces of Badghis and Faryab. Additional newly mined areas were reported but not confirmed during the year in the conflict areas north of Kabul. The Northern Alliance reportedly laid these in response to the Taliban's summer offensive. Taliban leader Mullah Omar reportedly banned the use, production, trade, and stockpiling of mines in 1998. Despite

the general prohibition on the depiction of living things, the Taliban allowed the visual depiction of persons in demining educational materials.

An estimated 400,000 Afghans have been killed or wounded by landmines. Currently casualties caused by landmines and unexploded ordnance are estimated at 10 to 12 per day. In some parts of the country, including in Herat and Kandahar, almost 90 percent of households are affected by the presence of landmines. An estimated 96 percent of civilian mine and unexploded ordnance casualties are male. Approximately 53 percent of mine and unexploded ordnance casualties occur in the 18 to 40 age group, while 34 percent of the casualties involve children, according to the U.N. Mine Action Center. Landmines and unexploded ordnance resulted in death in approximately 30 percent of cases and in serious injuries and disability, including amputation and blindness, in approximately 20 percent of cases.

With funding from international donors, the U.N. has organized and trained mine detection and clearance teams, which operate throughout the country. Nearly all areas that have been cleared are in productive use, and approximately 1.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons have returned to areas cleared of mines and unexploded ordnance. Nevertheless the mines are expected to pose a threat for many years. In 1997 the 4,000 mine clearers suffered from an accident rate of 1 per week. However, clearance rates and safety have increased for clearance teams assisted by dogs. U.N. agencies and NGO's have instituted a number of mine awareness campaigns and educational programs for women and children in various parts of the country, but many were curtailed as a result of Taliban restrictions on women and girls." (U.S. DOS February 2001, g.)

"Mines pose a major threat to the return and resettlement of displaced families. Over 60,000 km² of high priority agricultural and residential areas were cleared in the Paghman district of Kabul province and handed over to property owners for use in early September 1999. At the same time, about 300 displaced families were reported to have returned to rebuild their homes in the residential area of Kandahar after it was cleared of mines (OCHA 1999a)." (WFP, October 1999)

For further information on mines, see also: ["The threat of landmines remains"](#)

Due to the ongoing conflict, return and resettlement has been very limited (July 2000)

- The areas of the 1999 displacements are still very close to the frontlines, therefore returns to areas of origin and reintegration activities have been limited.
- UNHCR monitors and reports from the area of return.
- In 1999, efforts to support the return of IDPs still in Herat and Mazar-I-Sharif to Kabul and Badghis did not materialize.

"Most of the areas from which massive displacement took place in Afghanistan in 1999 are still very close to frontlines, and livelihoods have been destroyed. Return to areas of origin therefore has taken place on a small scale, and activities of reintegration are

limited. UNHCR facilitates return and reintegration, including through monitoring activities and reporting in the areas of return. Efforts in 1999 to support the return of some IDPs still in Herat and Mazar-I-Sharif to Kabul and Badghis did not materialise given the huge IDP crisis during the year." (OCHA, 6 July 2000)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Volatile security situation and bad weather hamper access to IDPs in Bamiyan province (March 2001)

- Security situation is volatile in Bamiyan province
- Humanitarian aid to the region is minimal.
- Fighting in Yakawlang area and Bamiyan City have forced hundred of families to flee the their homes in search of safer areas.

"While efforts are underway to rush humanitarian assistance to the IDP families from Yakawlang region currently stationed in Panjao and Behsood districts, the security situation in the area remains pre-occupying. An alarming risk of resumption of fighting still prevails in several parts of Bamiyan province.

With the currently swelling IDP toll in several localities in Bamiyan province, the amount of humanitarian aid reached the area is considerably minimal - rendering the destiny of these vulnerable people in the hands of the icy cold weather and unstable security conditions.

Following the eruption of fighting in Yakawlang area and Bamiyan city, hundreds of families have fled their homes to safer places. Scores of these families from Yakawlang and Bamiyan have arrived in Lal-o-Sarjantal, Panjao, centre as well as surroundings of Behsood including Koh-e-Beron.

Insofar, a total of 85 MT of wheat, out of the Yakawlang quota, is on the distribution programme to these IDP families. The items distributed to each family comprise of one bag of wheat, three quilts, two tarpaulins, one shawl and two pairs of cloths for women and children.

A group of 300 IDP families from the Yakawlang were positioned in Ghurghuri area, five km from the Panjao bazaar, that is under control of the opposition forces. The Hunger Belt teams held negotiations with the warring sides, holding the control of the area, to obtain permission for the food distribution to the IDP families on the other side of the battlefield. This is based on the fourth objective of the Access & Mobility Programme; "Affirming the principle of unhindered humanitarian access, by addressing all political barriers to free movement of the humanitarian personnel and relief goods between the zones of different political controls in the Hunger Belt".

The Hunger Belt Access & Mobility, Nutrition as well as the Information and Communication teams are carrying on their activities as beneficiary selection rapidly

progresses in the area. Reports from the region call the distributed assistance 'insufficient', and claim it would merely cover the beneficiaries' 15-20 days needs.

The Hunger Belt Famine Relief Emergency Programme is planning to despatch an additional consignment of some 100 MT wheat to the IDP families temporarily settled in Yakawlang district.

Following the recent heavy snowfalls, February 19-20 of 2001, the Hunger Belt Access & Mobility Programme has carried out the road clearing activities in the different zones of the Hunger Belt region to keep the routes accessible for all teams involved in the programme." (Information & Communication Unit of the Hunger Belt Programme 12 March 2001)

10,000 stranded IDPs at Afghan-Tajik border not accessible through Afghanistan (January 2001)

"Stranded on the islands between Afghanistan and Tajikistan is a displaced population of 10,000 people, comprising civilians mixed with fighters. They are not currently accessible from Afghanistan, and are not easily accessible from Tajikistan. So far, the government of Tajikistan has withstood all appeals to provide the civilians among this group, including the ill, asylum in Tajikistan. Their need for assistance and protection is real; however, the aid community is extremely limited in the extent to which it can assist a group comprised of civilians and combatants." (Office of the UN co-ordinator for Afghanistan, 19 January 2001)

Massood's forces welcomed NGOs in 2000 (February 2001)

There were reports in 1999 that Masood's commanders in the northeast were "taxing" humanitarian assistance entering Afghanistan from Tajikistan, harassing NGO workers, obstructing aid convoys, and otherwise hindering the movement of humanitarian aid (see Section 4). There were no reports of such behavior during the year, and, on the contrary, the Masood forces appeared welcoming to NGO's." (U.S. DOS February 2001)

Southern Samangan province and Panjshir valley difficult to access (August 2000)

"The issue of access primarily affects Dari Suf in southern Samangan province and Panjshir Valley. In Dari Suf, serious food deficits among the population have been persistently reported. Clearances have now been received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNSECOORD for a UN mission to Dari Suf from 2-12 August, in which WFP will play a lead role. Panjshir Valley is hosting 75,000 IDPs who fled fighting in August 1999, when their houses and crops were destroyed. WFP succeeded in delivering 200 tons of wheat and 60 tons of CSB to Panjshir Valley over the past 10 days, but heavy fighting on 29 July resulted in the closure of the main access route from the north." (WFP 4 August 2000)

Access to IDPs has been very difficult since January due to the conflict and the drought (June 2000)

- As a result of conflict and drought, the UN agencies have had problems in accessing those in need. IDPs in Panjshir and in northern Hazarajat have been very difficult to reach since January.
- UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan stressed to the need for unhindered humanitarian access to needy populations
- In recent months, the UN has not been granted the permission to assist the IDPs across front lines.
- No progress were made since March in the discussions between the authorities and the UN team on the issue of access to the Panjsheer Valley.
- On December 6, the first UN crossline convoy reached the Panjsheer Valley from Kabul

"The United Nations humanitarian agencies continue to experience difficulties in accessing those in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of conflict and drought. Insecurity in certain regions has been the cause of restrictions placed by the authorities on the free movement of humanitarian personnel. Since January, the United Nations has been unable to obtain agreement from the authorities for the reopening of the corridor for assistance to internally displaced persons in the Panjshir valley. Similar difficulties are being experienced in accessing displaced communities in northern Hazarajat. The United Nations continues to work with the authorities at the highest level to resolve these difficulties, although progress is slow." (UNSG, June 2000)

"United Nations Co-ordinator for Afghanistan Erick de Mul returned from Kabul on 18 May. De Mul spent most of this week in Afghanistan's capital holding discussions with officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. In addition to discussing the current deepening drought affecting the country, the UN Co-ordinator stressed the need for free and unhindered humanitarian access to needy populations in compliance with international humanitarian law.

Since last summer, the United Nations has provided limited assistance to displaced persons who fled their homes due to fighting. At that time, the United Nations called on both parties to the conflict either to accept responsibility for assisting the displaced or to allow them to return to their areas of origin in safety and dignity. There are currently estimated to be over 100,000 people still displaced from the Shamali Valley in both the Panjshir Valley and Kabul City, as well as thousands of displaced persons in other areas. While the United Nations was able to conduct cross lines relief operations into Panjshir in winter, in recent months Taliban authorities have not granted permission for such operations." (UNOCHA, 19 May 2000)

"Since the UN team came back on 4 March from the Panjshir Valley, after reassessment of the displaced population in the valley, discussions were held with authorities in order to prepare for another cross line operation to assist persons displaced into Panjshir during last summer's fighting in the Shamali Valley north of Kabul. No real progress has been made. The front line was active early March and sporadic fighting occurs. Various

options exist to bring assistance to the valley if a cross line operation cannot be resumed." (UNOCHA, 18 April 2000)

"Access to the Valley is still a major cause of concern as only one of the two passes into the valley is sporadically open during the winter months. Reaching the Valley from Faizabad through this pass requires a ten-day drive in good weather conditions, which are quite rare at this time.

To obtain access across the front lines from Kabul, a joint commission was established under UN auspices, comprised of representatives from the Taliban and the Northern Alliance.

The first UN crosslines convoy successfully made the trip from Kabul on 6 December. The eight-truck convoy carried 90 MT of wheat flour, 1,000 coats, and 10,000 sweaters. It is planned to send in four more convoys as soon as possible, which will deliver a total of 750 tons of wheat and non-food items. (UNOCHA, 7 December 1999)

UN airdrops food in the Darra-e-Souf area (June 2000)

- UN has airdropped food for stranded IDPs who had sought refuge in Dahane Shorab, in the Darra-e-Souf area since last year's Taliban attack in the region.
- Access to the remote was made difficult by the nearby frontline which renders the access by the north impossible.
- When the local hosts found themselves in a similar situation of deprivation due to the drought, some IDPs returned to their burned houses and tried to survive by eating wild plants.

"The United Nations has made an emergency air drop of food aid to a remote area of Afghanistan. It acted in response to reports of deaths related to the drought. About 17 people are believed to have died in the last two months in one village in the Darra-e Souf area in northern Afghanistan. Those dying are the most vulnerable, people who have already lost almost everything because of the war.

The UN rarely makes air drops of relief aid in Afghanistan but it decided to fly in one tonne of high energy biscuits, as an emergency response. (...)

Access to this area is extremely difficult. It is a three day donkey trek from the nearest road to the south, itself a day and a half's drive from Kabul. Access from the north should be easier, but roads are cut off by the front line. Reports of deaths centre on the village of Dahane Shorab. Its people fled a Taleban advance last year and found shelter in the nearby town of Darra-e Souf. With loans and charity from local people, and a one-off distribution of food by the UN, they managed to survive the winter. But two months ago, the locals found they could no longer help. Their town, itself devastated by war, was hit hard by drought.

Reports say the refugees returned to their burned out village and tried to survive by eating famine foods. These are the last resort of the desperate, wild plants which provide little nourishment and may even be poisonous. Small children appear to be proving the most vulnerable.

The United Nations has estimated that between a half and three quarters of the Afghan population has been hit by the drought. These are the first reports of deaths. They come where people have been squeezed by a combination of drought and war." (BBC, 8 June 2000)



UN uses 1,500 donkeys to carry aid to the Darra-e Souf Valley (January 2000)

- IDPs in the Darra Souf Valley were reached by a UN donkey convoy transporting food and non-food items.

"The United Nations in Afghanistan has completed a month-long operation to deliver desperately-needed aid to thousands of Afghans made homeless by the fighting between the Taliban and opposition forces.

More than one-and-a-half thousand donkeys were used to carry one-hundred-and-fifty tonnes of wheat and fifteen thousand tents, blankets and quilts along hazardous, snow-clogged mountain routes to the Darra Souf valley in the northern province of Samangan." (BBC, 21 January 2000)

Taliban allow cross lines humanitarian corridor from Kabul to Panjshir (November 1999)

"After repeated requests by the United Nations, the Taliban have agreed to allow a cross lines humanitarian corridor from Kabul to Panjshir. Preparations for using the corridor are underway, with the first step being a reconnaissance of the roads by a UN team including Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) staff.

As earlier reported, of the two access routes into Panjshir from the north one is already effectively closed. The other although still passable is long, slow and in very poor condition." (UNOCHA 23 November 1999)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response to internal displacement

Lack of national capacity to provide assistance to IDPs (February 2001)

- Limited contribution to the relief effort by the Taleban authorities
- The desintegrated Afghan state is generally unwilling and unable to provide aid to the IDPs

"The Taleban authorities have done little to respond to drought-affected Afghans' humanitarian needs. Although members of the Taleban's Ministry of Martyrs and Refugees (MRR) are active in the coordination of relief activities in most localities and sometimes help provide security, they rarely contribute resources to the relief effort. The Taleban appears committed to devoting all of its available resources to its war effort and seems to leave humanitarian relief for those affected by the war and by drought to the international community." (USCR 2 February 2001)

"The Afghan state has largely disintegrated. None of the groups aspiring to exercise national power in Afghanistan has the capacity to provide assistance of any significance to IDPs. Some groups, notably the Taliban government, also lack the inclination to do so, since their main aim is not the improvement of citizen's lives in any practical sense, but rather the enforcement of idiosyncratic standards of moral purity." (Maley 1998, p. 157)

However, it is worth noting that in the case of return, "[t]he authorities are able/willing to countenance temporary return, as they know that this will help to stabilise the situation." (UNRCO Kabul 19 November 1999)

International response to internal displacement

Regional coordination mechanisms (February 2001)

Central region

"The IDP/Kabul Relief Group is responsible for defining and coordinating the assistance delivered to both Panjshir Valley and Ex Soviet Compound IDPs, as well as developing possible exit strategies." (UNOCHA May 2000, Central Region)

In the Panjshir Valley, the UN Mission set up a base in Bazarak in September 1999 to monitor the distribution of WFP food as well as the flux of the population. (UNOCHA 22 September 1999)

Northern region

"The formal establishment of RCB [Regional Coordination Body] and Technical Working Groups took place during this period [January-May 2000]. A provisional meeting of the RCB was held on 2 nd February with it being formally established, after much deliberation over the terms of reference, on 4 th March. All main agencies in the region were involved though a number retained observer rather than participant status. This notwithstanding all agencies participate fully and the basis of effective coordination has been established. TWGs were established for Food Security (initial chair WFP), Emergency Preparedness and Response (initial chair MSF), Education (initial chair IAM) and Health (initial chair UNICEF).

North-eastern region

The formal establishment of TWGs took place during May (the UNRCO made his first visit to the area after resuming responsibility for the area on 9 th May). Four were established, viz Agriculture & Food Security, etc. (covering these areas plus environment, community development, rangeland/ watershed management, etc.) (initial chair Afghanaid); Education (initial chair NAC), Health & Water Supply (initial chair WHO), Infrastructure & Engineering (initial chair ACTED) and Women's Projects (initial chair Afghanaid). A coordinated drought impact assessment was conducted in both Takhar and Badakhshan and a coordinated response strategy was under preparation by the close of the reporting period." (UNOCHA May 2000, Northern Region)

Hazarajat region

"Coordination activities in Hazarajat are designed to cope with the complexities of programming in a mountainous region with scattered population, non existent infrastructure, no functional administrative or commercial center, relatively few assistance actors, seasonal barriers to access and a potentially volatile security environment. In this context, coordination is "light". Respect for operational agency autonomy is emphasised. Coordination meetings are kept to a minimum and the use of communications and networking is prioritised, as against calling everyone together. There is an emphasis on "virtual" coordination and regional presence. It is understood that the RCO should be highly mobile throughout the region, rather than based in one centre; and should facilitate active involvement of actors from all parts of the region rather than those who can easily access a center. In facilitating programming, the approach is similar, inasmuch as encouragement is provided to assistance activities covering the whole region rather than being clustered in one or two easily served areas.
[...]

In the emergency food security response, the role of the coordination structures, as facilitated by the RCO, is (1) to coordinate information gathering on the drought and food shortages; (2) to facilitate planning for multi-agency response; (3) to help link up donors

and implementing agencies for fund raising of the response and (4) to advocate with the authorities on behalf of the assistance programme.

[...]

There has been a high level of cooperation between the UN RCO and ACBAR in Hazarajat coordination, to the extent that the approach could be described as "seamless". Neither NGOs nor UN could claim exclusive ownership over the various coordination structures. Coordination structures in Hazarajat have deliberately been kept open to all organizations actually working in the region.

[...]

The Hazarajat Regional Coordination Body meets twice annually. The spring meeting was held on 24 th May in UNDP Kabul, with participation of seventeen agencies, including international and national NGOs and the UN. Minutes have been circulated. The meeting reviewed key developments in context (repatriation and migration), took reports on and planned coordination support activities, and considered current issues such as the need for agency institutional capacity building." (UNOCHA May 2000, Hazarajat Region)

Relief agencies prioritize aid to rural areas to prevent further displacement (February 2001)

- ICRC is avoiding giving more aid to the IDPs in Mazar in order to minimize their food dependency. Consistent with this strategy, other international relief agencies prioritize aid to the rural areas to avoid further displacement.
- Despite having allegedly received 10 times more wheat than the rural areas, some IDP families in Mazar are reported to be starving.

"An estimated 30,000 internally-displaced people (IDPs) have arrived in Mazar in the last four months and, with labour markets saturated, many have resorted to begging for food. Weak from chronic malnourishment and exposed to the winter cold, many children have died. Many others will struggle to make it through winter.

But these families are unlikely to receive nearly enough support: local community resources are exhausted, the authorities claim they are unable to help and international relief agencies are prioritising what limited aid they have for rural areas, in an attempt to keep people on the land and discourage further influxes into the city. In Herat, western Afghanistan, 80,000 IDPs have been gathered into camps to facilitate relief assistance.

But agencies in Mazar have chosen against establishing camps, as this might lead to further mass migration from the surrounding villages. As a result, the displaced are scattered throughout the 10 districts of Mazar and its outlying areas. Conditions can vary enormously between the displaced groups and it is extremely difficult to have an accurate grasp of their conditions or to ensure that aid is reaching the most vulnerable.

[...]

According to agencies, increasing aid to Mazar will merely draw more people off their land and into greater dependency on relief assistance. Head of the ICRC delegation in

Mazar, Reto Stocker, told IRIN that their priority was to focus on the conflict-affected areas of Ghor and Dar-e-Souf to the south. "Apart from ad-hoc deliveries, we are avoiding giving more aid to the displaced in Mazar.

Our aim is to provide assistance to the worst affected areas to discourage people from leaving their homes," he said. They local authorities say the number of displaced people outside their offices has increased dramatically in the last two months. The head of the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Molavi Fazlrab Shirzad, told IRIN the situation was so bad in Mazar now that local recipients of the WFP bakery project had collectively given their bread to help recently displaced families.

[...]

Mazar city had also received over 40 kg of wheat per person last year, 10 times higher than the volume distributed since the start of the rural programme in July, he said. Hoerz said that the conditions of the displaced in Mazar had to be considered in the context of the region. "We are trying to provide food for one million people in the northern areas. We're not trying to feed the entire population. This is intended as a supplement to what they already have."

Comparatively, it would appear, the displaced in Mazar are generally in better condition than elsewhere in northern Afghanistan. But the response of some aid workers suggests otherwise: confronted with acute misery and starvation, international and national staff of humanitarian agencies have resorted to buying food and supplies for the displaced with their own money.

[...]

The situation has never been so bad, according to Afghan nationals, and it has become increasingly clear that the scale of the crisis is far surpassing the capacity of relief agencies to cope effectively with their limited resources. In recent months, this has forced relief workers into making uncomfortable decisions as to who receives aid. Hoerz agreed that some families were starving." (IRIN 28 February 2001)

See also: "[Discrepancies in nutrition data show need for more detailed surveys \(March 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]

International response to the IDP crisis at the Tajik-Afghan border (February 2001)

- ACTED will post an expatriate staff at Pianj to monitor situation
- Measles vaccination carried out by MERLIN
- ACF's nutrition survey indicate only one severely malnourished children out of 220 screened
- 7,500 IDPs will be food assisted by UNHCR and WFP until June 2001
- 10 tons of food distributed by WFP to 1,524 needy IDPs near Russian border post No 13

"On 6 February, during the regular inter-agency meeting at UNHCR, various aspects of providing a targeted assistance to the displaced population was discussed. ACTED indicated their intention to post an expatriate staff at Pianj who could spend more time within the displaced population on a regular basis to monitor targeted distribution of

humanitarian assistance. The issue of undertaking a light shelter improvement project by ACTED was also discussed. A draft project proposal containing urgent requirements of 10,000 people for a six-months period was submitted to ECHO for consideration. A copy was shared with USAID and SDC to explore the possibility of their partial support for this proposal.

On 1-2 February, an inter-agency mission visited the island near border post 13 to complete the planned distribution of non-food items and monitor the situation of the displaced population. The mission provided additional emergency supplies to the two families whose huts were destroyed and their belongings burnt by the recent shelling. A total of 334 cooking sets and 334 clothing kits were distributed to the families. On 2 February, MERLIN carried out a measles vaccination in the island near border post 13 covering over 90% of the children.

Action Against Hunger (AAH) carried out a rapid nutrition survey and found only one severely malnourished child out of 220 children who were screened. The preliminary information shows that timely interventions by the international community have prevented the spread of acute malnutrition among the displaced children. However, AAH advised continued food distribution in order to prevent any severe malnutrition problem in the future.

Around 10 Mtn of different commodities - enough supply for next two weeks - will be delivered by World Food Programme, Friday 9 February, to the camp where over 1,500 needy beneficiaries were identified by NGOs in charge of food distribution. This food delivery/distribution is the second to take place during last month." (OCHA, Hum. Sit. Tajik-Afghan border, 8 February 2001)

"Following an interagency assessment mission to the Tajik-Afghan border on 16 January, WFP and UNHCR agreed to supply food aid for the Afghan internally displaced persons (IDPs) until 30 June. Some 7,500 IDPs will be assisted.

Following a mission to IDP sites located near the Russian Border Forces Post number 13, on 24 January, WFP decided to distribute 10 tons of food to 1,524 IDPs there. These IDPs have depleted their stocks and were found to be in urgent need of assistance. Shelter materials, blankets and medical assistance were provided as well by other agencies." (WFP report, 2 February 2001)

"On 30 January, the Humanitarian Coordinator called a meeting with officials from different Governmental departments to discuss ways and means of providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan displaced in a safer environment. Representatives from the Ministry of Emergency Situations (First Deputy Minister), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Deputy Minister), Ministries of Interior, Labour and Social Affairs, and the Office of the President attended the meeting. From the aid agencies, UNHCR, OCHA, WFP, ACTED and MERLIN attended. During the meeting, operational hazards and

alternative solutions for providing better access to protection and humanitarian assistance for the displaced population was discussed. The representatives from the Government expressed deep concerns over the strong likelihood of the deterioration of internal security and difficult economic situations, as well as political implications of admitting refugees into Tajikistan. They expressed the willingness of the Government to continue to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the displaced population through the territory of Tajikistan.

On 30 January, the regular inter-agency coordination meeting at the UNHCR Office reviewed the situation of the displaced population, distribution of assistance and the plans for further interventions. During the meeting, representatives of USAID and ECHO expressed their desire to support humanitarian efforts made by the UN and NGOs to assist the Afghan displaced in the current location, as well as in the case of admitting them into a refugee camp within Tajikistan.

The same day, the visiting Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Francesc Vendrell, held a meeting with the Humanitarian Coordinator and Heads of UNHCR and OCHA, and discussed issues related to the displaced population along the Tajik Afghan border.

On 29 January, representatives of OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, ACTED, AAH and MERLIN held a meeting with ECHO's representative at the UNHCR Office to outline the content of a project proposal covering six months urgent requirements for possible funding by ECHO.

On 24 - 26 January, an inter-agency mission comprising representatives from UNHCR, WFP, ACTED and MERLIN visited both locations, and distributed relief items including food commodities to the displaced population. A two-week ration of wheat flour, edible oil, tea and sugar was distributed by WFP and UNHCR among the displaced population near border post 13. Other relief supplies included blankets, mattresses, stoves, and used clothes were distributed. MERLIN's mobile clinic treated patients on the island near border post 13. Later this week, MERLIN will carry-out a measles vaccination campaign among children on the island near border post 13. Action Against Hunger is planning to use this opportunity to undertake a rapid nutrition survey in the island. Food and other relief supplies will be distributed among the population near border post 9 during the course of the week. WHO is planning to send two specialists to the area to collect samples for investigation of diseases and check the quality of drinking water available to the displaced population." (OCHA, Hum Sit. Tajik-Afghan border, 31 January 2001)

See also:

"UNHCR's suspension of relief operations at the Tajik-Afghan border put IDPs at risk" [Internal link]

"Assistance to Tajikistan OCHA Monthly Situation Update No. 2", OCHA, 11 April 2001

"Tajikistan: UNHCR suspends relief to Pyandj fearing aid to fighters", IRIN, 13 March 2001 [External link"]

ICRC stops direct food distribution to IDPs in Kabul in order to promote self-reliance and return (January 2001)

- ICRC has a two-tier approach, providing emergency assistance and helping people becoming self-reliant
- Direct food distribution in Kabul has been stopped after 6 years to force people to return and become self-reliant

"The devastation caused in Afghanistan by years of conflict compounded by a series of natural disasters has compelled the ICRC to take a two-tier approach, providing emergency assistance for those who need it while setting up projects that will help people to support themselves again.

The first priority is of course to come to the aid of people affected by the fighting that is still raging in some parts of the country – especially those who at the same time have been hit by drought. In the last quarter of 2000, for example, the ICRC provided food and other relief supplies for around 35,000 families in cooperation with the International Federation and the Afghan Red Crescent Society. A further 30,000 families will receive the same aid in the coming months. The most vulnerable sections of the population, such as orphans, are also continuing to receive help from the ICRC and the Afghan Red Crescent Society.

However, since most of the country is no longer directly affected by the internal conflict, the ICRC has also decided to launch programmes that will help people to rely on their own means and be less dependent on aid. These include the rehabilitation of over 800 irrigation systems a year and the distribution of seed, fertilizer and agricultural tools – a programme which will be expanded this year to help farmers recover from the drought. In Kabul, the ICRC plans to distribute seed as part of an income-generating project. At the same time it will continue its major programme to repair water-supply systems and latrines, which has considerably improved the health of tens of thousands of people.

The need to place the emphasis on projects that encourage self-sufficiency is the main reason why the ICRC has taken the difficult decision to stop distributing food directly to vulnerable families in Kabul, as it has been doing for six years. Other factors which led to this decision were the increasing availability of food in the city, which has not been directly affected by the conflict for four years, and the possibility for many of the city's displaced people to return to their villages and cultivate their own land.

"For two years we deliberated long and hard about this," said Olivier Durr, head of operations for the country in Geneva. "It is always difficult when you are faced with such large-scale needs as those in Afghanistan. In the end, however, we felt that priority had to be given to an approach that enabled people to support themselves instead of relying on humanitarian aid." (ICRC, 18 January 2001)

Response by the international community in the northeast (December 2000)

Assistance

"Many agencies have been involved with addressing, within a coordinated framework, the IDP situation in the north-east.

Local communities, the local authorities and international agencies extended a variety of assistance to IDPs over the August-September period. Although ensuring that priority needs were addressed through initial small-scale interventions in support of eg. the local authorities (which were providing cooked meals or dry foodstuffs in various areas), in general international agencies initially delayed a fuller involvement until the situation became clearer and it became apparent that it was both a larger-scale and a protracted crisis. The main exception to this, in the initial period of the crisis, was the provision of medical assistance.

By late September it had become clear that the situation would not prove ephemeral as conflict persisted west of the Kokcha river. As food needs were paramount an initial distribution of WFP wheat (50kg/family) took place via NGOs for 5500 families. A subsequent distribution took place in November for 11,000 families (50kg/family/month) (and a further one in February 2001). Complimentary to WFP wheat (WFP in the region was not in a position to provide a mixed ration) a number of NGOs were able to access funding for other foodstuffs, though this was very limited in scope.

By the end of September shelter needs had become a priority issue (until this time both IDPs and local populations were habitually sleeping outside) as winter rains (and snow) had started. Shelter materials were consequently provided in Dasht-I Qala and Khoja Bahauddin by ICRC and UNOCHA through ACTED and SNI and in Faizabad by UNOCHA through MSF. ACTED subsequently rehabilitated 1175 damaged houses which were used to house IDPs.

In summary, WFP, through NGOs, has distributed sizeable quantities of food aid (totaling 3000MT to 11,000 families); UNOCHA has provided non-food items and funding; ACTED shelter construction, non-food items and complimentary food; MSF-Switzerland medical services and non-food items; SNI food and non-food item packages; the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan medical services; ICRC and Mercy Corps International non-food items; FOCUS food and non-food items; Concern and Terres des Hommes food items; UNICEF and WHO medical supplies. The majority of accessible IDPs have now received some form of assistance, both food and non-food. Efforts continue to increase the level of assistance to those most vulnerable. Of concern is the fact that many have and continue to be geographically inaccessible, though attempts continue to overcome this.

A joint assessment mission was carried out in the Panjshir in August with WFP.

[...]

Coordination

Effective coordination occurred throughout the reporting period in response to both the drought and the IDP emergencies. A coordinated drought assessment was carried out followed by a series of strategy planning meetings to ensure that high and moderate drought impact areas were fully covered. Frequent IDP coordination meetings were held and a joint agencies concept paper was prepared in the early autumn. Regular Health TWG and Education TWG meetings took place, as did an Agriculture workshop in Ishkashim to review approaches and strategies for Badakhshan.

Plans were being drawn-up in the summer to develop a 'recovery plan' for Badakhshan though this was regrettably put on hold due to the IDP emergency." (UNOCHA February 2001)

International assistance provided to the IDPs in the Panjshir Valley (July 2000)

- 7,568 (~50,000) are displaced since August 1999 in Panjshir Valley with additional IDPs in Gulbahar city, Jabul Seraj and Charikar
- WFP main feeder of the IDPs. UNICEF, ACTED, ACF & other NGOs distribute non-food items.
- 1142 temporary stone houses built by ACTED with IDPs paid with food. ACTED repaired 1,258 rooms while OXFAM provided water and winterized school and buildings.
- MSF, ICRC, Norther Alliance provide health care.
- Local/host population more vulnerable than IDPs.
- ACF operates 5 supplementary feeding centres and set up a nutritional and food security surveillance system
- Assistance provided limited but sufficient
- Some return has occurred during spring

SITUATION IN THE PANJSHIR VALLEY AT END JUNE/EARLY JULY 2000

Introduction:

"Since end July/early August 1999, thousands of idps are concentrated in the Panjshir valley, sheltered either in temporary stone shelters, in repaired houses or public buildings, under tents or accommodated by relatives and neighbors. The latest WFP assessment done at end February 2000 identified 7,568 families in the valley. This assessment did not take into account idps families who are said by the authorities to be sheltered in Gulbahar city, Jabul Seraj and Charikar.

Assistance provided to idps since last fall:

Food:

At the onset of the idps movements, authorities and ngos distributed bread to families, assisted by ACTED, and some cash. Then, WFP made four wheat distributions:

- in September/October 1999, targeting 8,500 families (100kg/family).
- in December 1999 thanks to a cross line operation, targeting 8,635 families (100kg/family) and 9 mt of vegetable oil.
- in early March targeting 6,950 families (50kg/family).
- in June, 7015 families received 50kg of wheat and 553 families received 100 kg (not served in March).

Non food items.

When idps moved from Shamali Plain towards Panjshir valley, blankets, tarpaulins and other necessary items like jerrycans and cooking utensils were distributed by several organisations and NGOs. At the time of the food distribution, UNICEF children jackets, sweaters and shoes were distributed to families (2/family). In June, 4,500 pairs of children shoes were distributed. Some tarpaulins have been provided to ACF for the supplementary feeding centres and to Abdara camp for procuring shelter for children who are attending school courses, thanks to teachers who are idps. Later on, ACTED built improved shelters as teaching space. Stove and 450 kg of coal per stove were provided to families, in temporary shelters, including schools, along the valley and in Gulbahar, where most of the times 4 families at least are sheltered in one room.

Shelters.

Temporary camps with tents were set up to shelter families who had just moved into the valley. Very quickly ACTED started to build temporary stone houses, with one room per family, on various sites placed along the valley. Idps were employed in the construction of the shelters receiving food for work provided by WFP. Advised by the authorities and for security reasons, a few camps were established quite high in the valley that proved very inconvenient for families during the winter (severe coldness, isolation of the place and remoteness from the main center, Gulbahar). 1,142 new shelters were built. 234 temporary shelters were not filled at the end of April, because of cold and remoteness. During the wheat distribution of June, a deal was made between WFP and the authorities that families still under tents would receive a bag of wheat only when they would be shifted to unoccupied shelters, that proved efficient. The delay in placing idps in temporary shelters postponed the construction of latrines and washrooms in those northern sites.

Many houses along the valley had not been maintained and could be repaired. 1,258 rooms were repaired, whilst ACTED entered in a contract with house owners, who would provide one room for one family. New temporary shelters, repaired houses, winterized schools in the valley and winterised buildings in Gulbahar received stoves and coal for the winter from ACTED; latrines were built in the surrounding of the temporary shelters and one washroom was set up outside of each shelter unit or repaired house. Oxfam provided water trucking in Gulbahar and operated a water pumping station in Abdara camp up to the end of March. This water trucking and pumping station operation has been taken over by AMI afterwards.

Along the valley, some schools and madrassa had been taken over by idps. Oxfam decided to winterize those schools in installing doors and windows for each room inside the schools. Latrines, washrooms and kitchen space were added in the courtyard of the schools. Health education was provided to families, as the sanitation was deplorable and the use of latrines not well known by the families. Oxfam trucked water.

In Gulbahar, close to the old textile factory, a large set of buildings was winterized by Oxfam, enabling some 600 families to be sheltered (Shashsat Koti). In the Albironi University and Dormitory, and some schools in the Shashsat Koti area, more families were accommodated with the assistance of Oxfam, providing water trucking and latrines, washrooms, kitchen space. Health education and distribution of soap and buckets completed the assistance. Same assistance was provided to the winterized schools along the valley.

Some people still remained under tents during the whole period from fall to summer 2000, most of the time because the pressure of the authorities was such that they had no choice. There were ghost tents too, filled in with people only when assessment teams were visiting idps locations and tents were pitched in front of the assessment teams, which detected very easily the subterfuge.

ECHO (direct and through UNOCHA/UNDP), UNICEF, OFDA, Netherlands Government were the main donors to the above global operation.

Health services.

Before the events of last fall, several organisations or ngos were already in the north of Shamali plain or in the Panjshir Valley. ICRC had a delegation in Gulbahar, supporting hospitals and clinics and operating an orthopedic center in Gulbahar. MSF France is established in Rokha from where they support clinics in the valley; Aide Medicale Internationale is established in Safed Sheer, north of the valley and supports clinics along the valley. Health posts and clinics are supported by the MOPH of Northern Alliance; WHO provided emergency kits to MOPH in the valley through the convoy in December. After the influx of idps, all organisations and ngos brought assistance through the various clinics they support and in providing water to idps camps, like in Anaba by MSF France. Others distributed non-food items when they had stocks coordinating with other implementers. Medecins du Monde established in January/February an MCH clinic in Bazarak targeting like all the other ngos/organisations local population and idps. It proves the clinic is attended more by local population than idps. Mid December, in Anaba, the Italian NGO Emergency opened a hospital for civilian victims of war, running 24/24 hours.

Nutritional centres.

Action contre la Faim, after a nutritional survey between October and December 1999, started to operate five supplementary feeding centres, targeting pregnant women, lactating mothers, all children between 6

and 29 months and malnourished children under five years of age, either from the idp or local population. Centres are situated in Anaba (close to the Anaba official camp), Shashshat Koti in Gulbahar (winterised building), close to Abdara winter settlement, in Rokha and in Jabul Seraj. Weekly dry rations are distributed made of a mix of CSB, vegetable oil and sugar, or made of a ration of rice, lentils or peas and vegetable oil when supply was difficult from WFP. Here again, the most vulnerable are found within the local population (60%) and only 40% within the idps community. Every week 5,000 people (24% of pregnant and lactating women vs 76% of under-five children). ECHO is providing the cash component of the project, whilst WFP the food component.

ACF also very recently set up a 'nutritional and food security surveillance system' across northern Shamali and the Panjshir valley. The area has been divided into homogeneous zones based on socio-economic and environmental criteria: 3 rural areas (northern & southern Panjshir and northern Shamali), idps camps (official and non-official) and semi urban areas. The objective is to compare the vulnerability of each of the above areas, to identify vulnerable pockets as well as to define the proportion of households that would be in need of assistance. Furthermore, ACF will implement a nutritional survey (30 clusters of 30 children randomly chosen across Shamali plain and Panjshir valley) throughout the whole area during August 2000. With results from both the surveillance and the survey, ACF would be in a position to design its strategy for the months after summer period, depending on the military and civilian movements within the area.

Conclusion and recommendations:

The assistance provided to idps in the valley is at a minimum level but sufficient considering the time of the year. There are reports that idps who were sheltered under tents have moved down during Spring and early Summer to hopefully work their land, if it was not too close to the frontline and mined. It seems that harvesting has been done earlier than usual, considering the most probable offensive. The drought seems to have affected some places, up north in the valley and far from the Panjshir river in the fact that the water table is lowering like in other parts of Afghanistan mainly due to poor snowing during the winter and low Spring rains.

Undoubtedly, if another serious offensive occurs, again thousands of idps will flee up north the valley, not only new idps but also those who were displaced last year and were sheltered in the north of the Plain. Assistance in terms of food and non-food items supply will have to be provided to those new idps. Khawak and Anjuman passes are open roughly until October.

Latest information:

During the night 30th June/1st July, fighting broke out at places called Senjed Dara, Charikan and Khoja Sairan north of the Shamali Plain and close to the Bagram airport. People started to leave their homes and authorities transported them by trucks to the

existing camps in the Valley like Anaba and Abdara. Some even went higher in the valley in Rokhah. Most of the people are considered as former IDPs who had settled for the summer in Gulbahar and close to their fields to harvest.

The UNRRCO is considering the possibility of sending more food to the area and non-food items in case fighting develops further and a serious influx of IDPs occurs." (UNRRCO, 4 July 2000)

Summary of the international response to internal displacement (July 2000)

- Note that ICRC is not mentioned although it has been designated in 1997 as the lead agency for assisting IDPs in Afghanistan
-
- * Food Security includes basic agricultural inputs
- ** Education includes vocational training and capacity building
- *** Protection includes mine awareness activities, UACs

	Coordination	Emergency Nutrition	Health	Food Security*	Non-Food	Shelter	Education**	Water Sanitation	Protection***	Return/Reintegration/Rehab.
UN Agencies										
FAO				X						
OCHA	X				X				X	
UNDP	X			X	X					X
UNESCO										
UNFPA										
UNHCR					X					
UNICEF		X	X				X		X	
WFP		X		X						X
WHO			X					X		
NGOs										
ACF										
ACT										X
ACTED						X				
CARE								X		X

DACA AR								X		X
GAA										X
HNI										
ISRA							X			
KNF										
MEDAI R										X
NCA								X		
OXFA M					X	X				
SCA										
SC-US							X		X	
SNI						X				

Principle Common Programming in Action (December 1999)

- PCP is an attempt by donors, UN agencies and NGOs to improve the coherence and effectiveness of international assistance to Afghanistan based on the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (SFA)
- Co-ordinating bodies set up within this framework include Regional Coordination Bodies (RCBs) at the field level, the Afghanistan Programming Body (APB) at the national level, the Afghanistan Support Group (ASG) and the Agency Coordination Body for Afghanistan (ACBAR)

"The concept of PCP was developed as a result of intensive discussions and consultations during 1997 and 1998 with donors, UN agencies and the NGO community – an effort by all stakeholders towards improving the coherence and effectiveness of international assistance to Afghanistan.

PCP is a direct response by the assistance community to operationalize the concepts articulated in the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (SFA), which was finalized in September 1998. The SFA provides the basis for an assistance strategy and field-based arrangements for PCP. It contains five key strategic objectives which were used to establish five respective Thematic Groups. These Thematic Groups developed strategies which formed the basis for projects and programmes contained in the Consolidated Appeal for 1999.

(...)

PCP is a mechanism for establishing the assistance community's priorities, programmes and projects, based on agreed goals, principles and the needs of Afghans.

(...)

The purpose of PCP is to ensure that needs identified together with Afghan constituencies are translated into coherent, principled and cost-effective programmes." (PCP accessed 28 November 1999)

Current coordination arrangements consist of Regional Coordination Bodies (RCBs) at the field level, thematic Groups - one for each strategic objective - where the concerned partners jointly discuss issues of analysis, programming and prioritization of assistance activities, and an Afghanistan Programming Body (APB) at the national level.

Other Co-ordination bodies include Afghanistan Support Group (ASG) and the Agency Coordination Body for Afghanistan (ACBAR). (PCP 3 December 1999)

For further information on the co-ordinating bodies within the framework of the PCP, see

["Agency Coordination Body for Afghanistan \(ACBAR\)"](#),
["Afghanistan Programming Body \(APB\)"](#),
["Afghanistan Support Group \(ASG\)"](#) [External links]

For further information on the strategic framework see,

["Strategic Framework for Afghanistan, Towards a Principled Approach to Peace and Reconstruction"](#), WFP, 12 September 1998

United Nations assist IDPs in collaboration with NGOs (December 1999)

- UN assists approximately 300,000 IDPs in Kabul, Panjshir, Hazarajat, Darra Souf, Kunduz/Baghlan/Pulikhumri and Khoja Ghar (Takhar).
- Several NGOs assist the UN agencies, among them ACTED, FOCUS, CARE, Save the Children (US), Oxfam, Aide Medicale Internationale, Action contre la Faim, CCA, Shuhada, GAA, MEDAIR and Solidarites.
- In Kunduz and Takhar, more displacement took place due to fighting in October and November. ICRC, WFP and two other NGOs are providing the relief.
- In Darra Souf, where 5,000 and 7,000 persons have been displaced during the year, the UN is coordinating a one-off response for the most vulnerable.
- In Bamyan valley, IDPs who have been unable to return are a cause for concern.
- In the Panjshir Valley, an estimated 50,000 are in need for food and about 30,000 in need of shelter.
- In Kabul, more than 16,000 persons (10,000 children) from the Shomali have settled in the ex-Soviet compound. Food for work and cash for work programs are being finalised to assist the IDPs who outside the ex-Soviet compound (~4,000)
- An IDP group including UN agencies, NGOs, and ICRC meets every two weeks in Kabul to discuss and coordinate the assistance to the IDPs in Kabul as well as in Panjshir.

"Because of fighting in 1999, the United Nations is carrying out an assistance programme for approximately 300,000 displaced Afghans in Kabul, Panjshir, Hazarajat, Darra Souf

(Samangan Province), Kunduz/Baghlan/Pulikhumri, and Khoja Ghar (Takhar). The total amount of assistance planned up to May 2000 totals US\$ 12.5 million.

Donors of supplies include UN agencies and NGOs including WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNOCHA, and Oxfam. Donors that have pledged or contributed funds include ECHO, USAID, NOVIB, NPO, NCA, SDC, and the governments of Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey.

In addition to UN agencies, several NGOs are involved in the assistance effort. They include ACTED, FOCUS, CARE, Save the Children (US), Oxfam, Aide Medicale Internationale, Action contre le Faim, CCA, Shuhada, GAA, MEDAIR, and Solidarites.

In Kunduz and Takhar, fighting in October and November caused further displacement of civilians. At present most of the displaced are returning to their villages. The ICRC, WFP, and two NGOs are currently involved in supporting IDPs in the areas through the distribution of food and non-food items. One NGO is also planning to assist the local population in repairing damaged shelters.

In Darra Souf district, Samangan province, where 5,000 to 7,000 families have been displaced in the course of the year, the United Nations has co-ordinated a one-off response carried out by an NGO to distribute essential non-food and food items to 1,000 most vulnerable families.

In the Bamyan valley, the first round of food distribution has been completed, reaching all IDPs who have returned to the valley. Large scale cash for work activities continue to provide employment and assist rehabilitation. IDPs who have been unable to return and remained in the neighbouring districts, such as Panjao and Yakaolang, are a cause for concern. ECHO supported projects in the area have reached some of them, but reports from an NGO active in the area indicate that some may be ill prepared for the winter.

In the Panjshir valley, the total number of IDPs is around 65,000; however, there are indications that this number may be reducing significantly. The United Nations and the NGOs estimate that about 50,000 people are in need of food and 30,000 are in need of shelter. Due to cold weather and recent bombing in Bazarakh, a few hundred IDP families have recently left the area. Work to rehabilitate and winterise public buildings in the Panjshir is almost completed: 1,200 houses have been repaired and 330 new shelters have been built by the NGO ACTED. Non-food items (blankets, shelter material, jerry cans, sweaters) have been distributed to the most vulnerable IDPs. In addition, 2,500 metric tons (MT) of wheat have been distributed to 8,500 families.

(...)

In Kabul some 16,000 IDPs, of which 10,000 are children, from the Shomali are housed in the ex-Soviet compound. A joint one-off distribution of non-food items (cooking utensils, blankets, plastic sheeting) has been conducted by the UN and NGOs. CSB (Corn and Soya Blend) distribution by WFP and bread distribution by the local authorities is ongoing. The NGO CARE has almost completed winterisation and water and sanitation works. Heating in the compound is being provided by Save the Children Fund/US. The

overall situation in the compound is significantly improved since August, when the IDPs first occupied it.

A cause of serious concern is now represented by the IDPs who have found refuge in the homes of their relatives, rented rooms or squatted in empty homes in the city. While it is difficult to accurately quantify the number of recent IDPs in the city, over 20,000 families have been registered entering Kabul between August and October. A number of initiatives are underway aimed at obtaining more detailed information on the vulnerability of these IDPs and their host families. Cash for work and food for work programs are being finalised to assist this population. " (UNOCHA, 7 December 1999)

"In Kabul, the IDP group, which includes UN agencies, NGO's and ICRC, meets every two weeks to discuss responses to the needs of displaced families living in the ex-Soviet embassy compound and elsewhere in the city, as well as in Panjshir" (UNOCHA, 18 April 2000)

For a more comprehensive picture of the assistance provided to IDPs until May 2000, see the following OCHA documents: "[Assistance to IDPs in Afghanistan 1999-May 2000](#)"

Establishment of institutional frameworks for assistance to IDPs (November 1999)

- In addition to a cooperation agreement, signed in April 1997 by ICRC, UNOCHA, UNHCR, and WFP which designated ICRC as the lead agency for assisting displaced persons throughout Afghanistan, IDP Task Forces have been established in Islamabad and Kabul
- In September 1999 the UN Mission set up a base in Bazarak in the Panjshir Valley to monitor the distribution of WFP food and the flux of the population

"An institutional framework for assisting internally displaced persons in Afghanistan has been established. A cooperation agreement, signed in April 1997 by ICRC, UNOCHA, UNHCR, and WFP, designated ICRC as the lead agency for assisting displaced persons throughout Afghanistan. To further support ICRC, task forces comprised of international organizations and NGOs have been established in major cities to help provide assistance. However, while this framework shows progress in providing institutional support for internally displaced Afghans, international humanitarian organizations make little effort to identify or assist internally displaced persons outside the camps." (USCR 1998, p.126)

In September 1999, the United Nations set up a task force in Islamabad to ensure food and medicine supply for thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan with cooperation of NGOs." (Xinhua 17 September 1999)

The meetings of the IDP Task Force in Islamabad are attended by UNOCHA, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, ICRC, ACTED, SNI and other NGOs, the membership is not fixed. In addition to these Task Forces, another one has been set up in Kabul. (UNRCO Kabul 19 November 1999)

NGO Co-ordination through the Afghan NGOs' Coordination Bureau (ANCB) (November 1999)

- ANCB co-ordinates the work of 104 NGOs

"ANCB, Afghan NGOs' Coordination Bureau, established on the 27th of November 1991, is a non-governmental, non-political and non-profitable organization operative to coordinate the activities of Afghan NGOs working toward emergency state, rehabilitation and development of Afghanistan." (ANCB accessed 28 November 1999)

ANCB has 104 member NGOs and its head office is temporarily located in Peshawar, Pakistan, with one Sub-Office in Kabul and one in Jalalabad. (ANCB 19 November 1999)

Coordination between WFP and NGOs in Afghanistan (October 1999)

- WFP contracts NGOs as implementing partners, monitors and volunteer collaborators.
- WFP collaborates with NGOs in a wide variety of projects, which include bakery projects for vulnerable groups and food-for-work projects, including irrigation networks and roads, rehabilitation of hospitals and construction of schools.
- About 60 percent of the total programme portfolio is implemented in partnership with NGOs.
-

"NGOs have a long history of involvement in Afghanistan and experience in dealing directly with communities throughout the country. They have been essential to the success of all strategies for assistance and common programming. Since 1995, WFP has worked closely with Afghanistan NGOs in delivering humanitarian aid. NGOs are contracted as implementing agents, monitors and volunteer collaborators. Under the "umbrella" project concept a large NGO contracts with WFP to undertake overall responsibility for project implementation either in one geographical area or one sector. The umbrella NGO may then sub-contract other NGOs, including national NGOs, for project execution.

NGOs prepare project proposals and submit them to WFP for review and appraisal. If found appropriate for WFP assistance, the project proposals are approved. Through this mechanism, WFP collaborates with NGOs in a wide variety of projects, which include bakery projects for vulnerable groups and food-for-work projects, including irrigation networks and roads, rehabilitation of hospitals and construction of schools. About 60 percent of the total programme portfolio is implemented in partnership with NGOs (WFP 1995). Wherever possible, traditional community structures are used to help target the most vulnerable.

International NGOs such as ACTED in Kabul and Mercy Corps International (MCI) in Jalalabad are WFP implementing partners for the bakeries. The Pamir Reconstruction Bureau (PRB) and the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) are

responsible for monitoring the bakery activities in Kabul and Jalalabad, respectively. WFP also has implementing partners for food-for-work activities, such as MADERA (Mission d'Aide au Developpement des Economies Rurales en Afghanistan) and German Agro Action, and works with NGOs such as Oxfam on emergency activities. These complement WFP food with management inputs and a cash component to purchase materials required for the activities. In addition, VAM field workers are trained by WFP before working for ACBAR." (WFP, October 1999)

Selected programmes

Solidarity provides shelters in Bamiyan (April 2001)

"In order to prevent further migrations, and a feared complete evacuation of the province, mainly because of lack of adequate shelter during winter, Solidarity took urgent measures to construct cost-effective houses in Bamiyan in 2000.

The shelter programme initially for 1,100 residential houses, started in early July. In the first stage, construction of 546 residential houses against 125 tonnes of wheat was planned. Vulnerable families headed by widows, orphans and disabled persons were given priority.

In the second stage, which started in September, 544 houses were constructed against 111 tonnes of wheat for returnees, people with no job or land, orphan/female-headed households, families with their males imprisoned or missing and vulnerable farmers.

After the completion of the second stage in mid-December, 1,100 houses were handed over to the families. Based on the positive outcomes and experiences gained from this programme, 423 new houses were surveyed.

The programme played a key role in reducing out-migration. Furthermore, this programme has encouraged the inhabitants of the province who had migrated to repatriate, and already there is a steady trickle of refugee families returning to their houses.

The project had a deep psychological effect on the mind of both the 1,500 direct beneficiary families and the entire residents of the area." (UNOCHA 12 April 2001)

WHO activities on behalf of IDPs (April 2001)

"To strengthen the health service delivery, WHO provided medical supplies to IDPs camps in Badakhshan, Kandahar and Herat and to hospitals and clinics in various regions of Afghanistan" (WHO 17 April 2001)

"WHO in collaboration with MoPH, UNICEF, other UN agencies and NGOs successfully completed the first round of the 2001 spring NIDs in 95% of Afghanistan. In Badakhshan, Takhar, Bamyan and a few cold areas, the first round is planned for April due to snow-blocked roads this month. The main goal of the pre-planned five rounds of NIDs in 2001 is to stop the transmission of the wild polio virus. During the campaign each district was monitored by an external agency for the quality of campaign. WHO trained 33,420 health workers, vaccinators, supervisors, social mobilizers and volunteers for this round who took active part in the campaign in Afghanistan. All UN agencies and NGOs provided vehicles for monitoring the NIDs. During the campaign all children under five years, including IDPs, returnees, guests and nomads were vaccinated. Local journalists, radios and newspapers played an active role in the campaign.

After the completion of the NIDs first round, NIDs review meetings were organized in all regions and the participants discussed problems and lessons learnt. Their recommendations will be reviewed to prepare strategies by the next round." (WHO 26 March 2001)

"WHO offices in Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Kandahar are facilitating IDPs Health Management Coordination Committees to streamline the response to the IDPs situation. In addition to weekly monitoring the morbidity and mortality in the camps, the Committees share information about resources distributed. WHO provides medical supplies and technical support to MoPH and NGO teams serving the IDPs. WHO received \$110,000 worth of health kits this week donated by the Government of Norway and they are being distributed immediately according to the needs across Afghanistan.

According to a joint UNICEF/WHO assessment mission, the situation of IDPs in Baghlan and Kunduz Provinces is alarming. In addition to UN agencies, ICRC, FOCUS, SCA and MSF are coordinating assistance efforts by providing food, shelter, water, sanitation and health services in the area." (WHO 23 February 2001)

ICRC activities on behalf of IDPs (March 2001)

- ICRC has been designated in 1997 as the lead agency in assisting the IDPs in Afghanistan
- ICRC works closely with the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ACRS) to address the needs of the vulnerable population
- ICRC monitors the abuses of the resident and the displaced population.
-

A Cooperation Agreement signed in April 1997 by ICRC, UNOCHA, UNHCR and WFP, designated ICRC as lead organization in assisting displaced persons throughout Afghanistan

"The ICRC has been operating in Afghanistan since 1980, first out of Pakistan and since 1987 from its delegation in Kabul. The ICRC works to protect people detained in connection with the conflict and imprisoned women and minors. It supports essential

services such as health facilities and sanitation and water supply systems and maintains people's livelihood by improving agricultural and livestock production and assisting vulnerable groups, and by providing prosthetic/orthotic services for the disabled. ICRC assistance programmes have a strong protection component, as they allow delegates to glean first-hand information on the situation of civilians and take action on their behalf if necessary. Together with other local and international organizations, the ICRC works to prevent mine accidents.

[...]

As the lead agency of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in Afghanistan, the ICRC works closely together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) to address the needs of the vulnerable population.

[...]

The International Federation focuses its support to the ARCS on integrated community health care, comprising: community health education (including use of safe water); immunization; health observation and surveillance including nutritional status, epidemiological surveillance; curative medical care; and sanitation and access to safe drinking water. The capacities of the ARCS have been strengthened to that effect. Five additional mobile health clinics have been set up and have so far treated over 25,000 patients, in the south and southwestern areas. In addition, specialized teams have been deployed to construct wells there.

ICRC food assistance planned for spring 2001 in Afghanistan	
Region	Number of beneficiaries (3-month half rations)
Ghor (Chagcharan, Sharak)	10,000 families
Herat	7,000 IDP families
Badakhshan/Takhar	10,000 IDP families
South Ghor/Farah	10,000 famlies
Dar-i-Suf/Amrak	3,000 families
Total Beneficiaries	40,000 families

[...]

The ICRC closely monitors all distributions and seeks to establish the fairest possible registration and distribution procedures in the best interests of the beneficiary populations. In addition, the ICRC keeps a close watch on the areas where it is operating for evidence of abuse (pillaging, intimidation) of the resident and displaced population at the hands of arms carriers and others. Should it come across any problems of that nature, the ICRC urges the authorities concerned to ensure that civilians are protected, as required by international humanitarian law.

[...]

To ensure a coherent response to the needs of the conflict- and drought-affected population in Afghanistan, prevent possible overlap with other programmes and maximize the exchange of information, the ICRC is coordinating its programme with

other humanitarian organizations. All drought-related activities are carried out in close cooperation with the ARCS and the International Federation, while the ICRC as lead agency is responsible for the financing of the operation.

[...]

In addition, the ICRC regularly exchanges information with the UN agencies and NGOs involved, often working in partnership to cover the various needs. Coordination may result either in distributing complementary relief goods to the same target group or in targeting different groups. Logistics are also coordinated closely with trucking companies in order to avoid competition." (ICRC 7 March 2001)

Swedish Committee fo Afghanistan (SCA)'s assistance to IDPs (February 2001)

- SCA set up a programme to counter malnutrition in district of Yangi Qala (Takhar) and Keshim (Badakhshan).
- Health assistance provided in Dashti Qala, Yangi Qala, Darqad, Cha Ab, Keshim, Kalafghan, Farkhar and Warsaj.
- With 13 clinics running, SCA focus on : supplementary feeding project, measles vaccination, repairing of wells and pumps, education for IDPs and distribution of blankets and hygiene articles

" Following a survey on malnutrition in the northern districts of Yangi Qala, Dashti Qala and Rustaq, which showed an average of 12.8% suffering from global malnutrition, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, SCA, is about to inaugurate a project to counteract malnutrition in the districts of Yangi Qala in Takhar and Keshim in Badakhshan province.

SCA provides health assistance in districts of the North-East with high concentrations of IDPs, i.e. Dashti Qala, Yangi Qala, Darqad, Cha Ab, Keshim, Kalafghan, Farkhar and Warsaj.

Some 80 000 people are internally displaced in the northern Afghan provinces of Takhar and Badakhshan. The region suffers from the consequences of the drought, making the influx of IDPs alarming both regarding scarce food supplies and risk of epidemics.

While some of the IDPs reside with host families, others live in tents or under plastic sheets. Their needs of support are those of basic life, such as safe water, sanitation, health care, shelter and food.

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, with activities through 13 IDP clinics, now focuses

- A Supplementary Feeding project
- Measles Vaccination Campaign for 80 000 children
- Repairing of wells and hand pumps
- Assessment and survey on education among IDPs
- Distribution of blankets and hygiene articles

Supplementary Feeding

Clinics in the area, supported by SCA and MSF, have highlighted the increasing existence of malnourished children in the region. A survey has been done, in connection with a Measles campaign in districts of Dashti Qala, Yangi Qala and Rustaq.

The conclusion of the survey is that a significant level of malnutrition exists among the children in general in the area. Among 4644 children screened, a total average of 12.8% suffer from global malnutrition. The acute malnutrition is some 3%. In other areas the malnutrition is reported to be even more severe.

SCA clinic-staff confirms that the number of malnourished patients has increased lately. SCA has therefore chosen to start a project of supplementary feeding.

Malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women will receive supplementary food/BP5 biscuits during the winter-spring 2001.

Each beneficiary will receive a total of six kilograms of BP5, with the maximum of 400 beneficiaries. Two clinics have been chosen for the project; the clinics in Yangi Qala in Takhar and Keshim in Badakshan. Both have MCH (Mother and Child Health Care) service and are upgraded with 24 hour service.

Both districts have a high influx of IDPs; about 4000 families in Yangi Qala and 900 families in Keshim. Yangi Qala had the highest percentage of malnourished children according to the survey.

To maintain a high level of control and to avoid misuse of the BP5, it will be prescribed in small quantities at six visits during a period of sixty days.

The BP5 biscuits, at a weight of 2500 kilograms, have been donated by Canada Fund/CARE and will be transported to Faizabad by PACTEC, paid by SCA, as the ongoing fighting makes it impossible to make any transportation by road. From Takhar SCA vehicles will transport the food supplement to Keshim and to Yangi Qala.

Plan for SCA Health Assistance in the Northern Areas during the 1st half-year of 2001:

Clinics

Enhanced capacity at 9 SCA Routine Clinics in IDP areas.

Three temporary clinic and three mobile clinics.

One SCA clinic upgraded to a 24-hour referral site, with 7-bed ward and capacity for minor surgery.

Support to EPI-program

Logistical and managerial support to ongoing Measles Vaccination Campaign targeting 80 000 children between 6 months and 5 years.

Other assistance

Reparation of wells

Reparations and general maintenance of 277 SCA Wells and hand pumps in the Mawaray Kokcha region in Takhar.

Education

An assessment will determine a possible start of Ad Hoc Education in refugee camps.

Distribution of non-food items to IDPs

1000 blankets are being distributed in IDP camps in Baghlan.

4 MT of hygiene articles donated by People in Need (Czech Republic) are being distributed with assistance from SNI and MCI to IDPs in Mawaray Kokcha. (SCA 12 February 2001)

UNICEF's activities on behalf of IDPs (February 2001)

- UNICEF has provided assistance to IDPs mainly in the areas of health, water and sanitation
- UNICEF targets the needs of IDPs in collaboration with local and regional authorities.
- In November/December 1999, UNICEF provided non-food as well as food items to IDP children in Kabul.
- Cloths were sent to IDP children in the Panjshir Valley. Other relief activities include health education for women, vaccination campaigns and sanitation measures.
- Since 1998, UNICEF gives priority attention to 10 therapeutic feeding centres responding to severe malnutrition.

"UNICEF has provided assistance in the areas of health, water and sanitation as well as provided various non-food items in the past months through its sub-offices and outposts, in co-ordination and collaboration with the authorities, UNOCHA, other UN sister agencies and NGOs.

In total, UNICEF has spent over US\$1,300,000 on the IDP emergency until January 2001. (Excluding vaccination - used from regular supply in stock). Over US\$ 500,000 has been spent on activities/support for IDP's in Herat alone.

Within the health and nutrition section, UNICEF has supported vaccination campaigns, Vitamin A supplementation, essential drugs provision and aspects related to the control of

diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections (CDD/ARI) interventions. UNICEF is supporting activities related to safe motherhood - such as supporting clinics and the referral hospital with basic materials and equipment to manage obstetric emergencies. With regards to nutrition, UNICEF is now in the process of developing a strategy for surveillance and will be pre-positioning items related to supplemental and therapeutic feeding.

With regards to water and sanitation services, UNICEF has in fact played a lead role in coordinating these activities in the various regions. UNICEF has supported the construction of wells, hand pumps, latrines and bathhouses. The provision of health education is an essential part of the water and sanitation related activities and therefore has been an integral part of this project.

UNICEF has provided non-food items such as blankets, warm clothes, shoes, and kitchen utensils/pots amongst IDPs. This was especially important during the second half of January when the IDPs were exposed to a sudden dramatic drop in the temperature. UNICEF was among the agencies that were able to provide immediate assistance especially in Herat, Mazar and Kandahar." (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

"UNICEF is working with local and regional authorities (where possible) and with national and international NGOs to deliver services to women and children in the poorest sectors of the population, including internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In November/December, UNICEF distributed 8,625 clothing items, 17,100 quilts and 4,044 plastic sheets to families of IDP children in Kabul. Water supply (with CARE), education supplies (with SC-US), and nutritional supplements (with WFP) were also provided.

For the Panjshir valley IDPs, 14,000 pullovers were sent for IDP children. Procurement of 7,000 jackets, 5,900 pair boots and 7,000 socks is in process. In addition, UNICEF, with NGOs and other UN agencies is providing health education to women and carrying out a measles vaccination campaign. Trench latrines and bathrooms were being constructed in November/December with ACTED. " (UNICEF, 10 February 2000)

"Since 1995, UNICEF has supported a network of therapeutic and supplementary feeding centres in MoPH facilities and IDP camps in five regions. Based on the results of an assessment mission, it was decided in early 1998 to give priority attention to 10 therapeutic feeding centres (TFCs) responding to severe malnutrition. Renewed fighting in parts of the country, especially in the third quarter of 1999, led to increased displacement and disruption. UNICEF, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) and NGOs, notably Action Contre la Faim (ACF), is developing a preparedness plan to meet the needs of malnourished IDP children." (UNICEF, January 2000)

For further information on UNICEF priority areas of assistance from March to August 2001, see "[UNICEF Afghanistan Proposal for Emergency Assistance to Drought and Conflict IDPs](#)", 8 March 2001

ACTED, SNI and MSF provide shelters in Takhar and Faizabad (December 2000)

"Heavy snow and rain fall has occurred throughout the region during early November, accompanied by a severe drop in temperature. Plans are still being drawn up by ACTED to build hard shelters for those in Takhar, though this will be complicated by the weather unless the rain abates, and by SNI to assist local families to continue to host IDPs. Funding will be required for these activities. Failing the construction of hard shelter, tents will be provided though it is accepted that these will be inadequate due to the likely severity of the winter in this area.

MSF and ACTED in Faizabad, and ACTED and SNI in Takhar, are looking into providing heaters and fuel for both those under soft shelter and those in public buildings, though funding may be a constraint. ACTED has submitted a proposal to UNOCHA for funding to winterise public buildings in Faizabad. MSF will look into winterising schools." (IASC 1 December 2000, 18-19)

MSF's activities in Afghanistan (December 2000)

- MSF has worked in Afghanistan since 1980
- Focus on Afghan women rights
- Mobile clinics in Dashti Qala and Keshem
- MSF works in three health clinics and two hospitals in the Panjshir Valley, long a stronghold of opposition forces.

"Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has worked in Afghanistan since 1980, on all sides of the various front lines. Aid to women, men and children in hospitals, clinics and health posts throughout the country has taken many forms over the years, but has almost always been carried out in conditions of insecurity and quickly changing circumstances.

(...)

MSF is committed to carrying out an independent humanitarian mission in the face of pressure from both the Taliban government, which seeks to place broad restrictions on aid work in the country, and international organizations such as the UN, which has sought to be an umbrella contact between international NGOs and the Afghan government. MSF is, above all, dedicated to maintaining its contact with the Afghan people. Of special concern are the problems experienced by Afghan women with regard to their access to health care: in the Taliban's Islamic state, women are severely restricted in employment, movement outside of the home, and in where they can go to receive medical attention. For this reason, MSF seeks to give women access to both primary and specialized care.

(...)

By mid-summer 2000, both civil war and drought were weighing heavily on the Afghan people. The conflict had intensified, with the Taliban (government) forces taking territory formerly held by the Northern Alliance, the group of opposition forces that has held part of northeastern Afghanistan for the last several years.

When the fighting reached Taloqan, in Takhar province in the north, MSF was forced to evacuate its volunteers, who later rejoined some of the many thousands of people fleeing the advancing front line. Mobile clinics were set up in the areas of Keshem and Dashti Qala to treat the displaced.

By the end of the summer MSF was also closely monitoring the effect of a drought on people in Faryab province, in the north, relying on a network of 19 clinics in five northern provinces to detect signs of cholera, a possible consequence of the drought. The drought is the worst to hit the country in 30 years.

MSF works in three health clinics and two hospitals in the Panjshir Valley, long a stronghold of opposition forces. The area is frequently touched by fighting (it was the object of a renewed government offensive in 1999), and is also home to many displaced people. Both the displaced and residents in this isolated region have limited access to health care. MSF provides primary care and responds to emergencies.

In the province of Badakhshan, also held by the opposition, MSF works in the hospital in Faizabad and supports primary health clinics in Baharak, Ishkashim and Zebok." (MSF 19 December 2000)

CONCERN distributes food and non-food items to IDPs (December 2000)

- CONCERN distributes blankets and mattresses to 3,500 people in Rustaq and Dashti Qala and will extend its aid to another 1,500 IDPs

"Following intense fighting over the summer in Takhar and Kunduz Provinces in the north of Afghanistan - thousands of families were forced to flee their homes. The majority are rural in origin and have very limited resources and food stocks. The current drought in Central Asia has also resulted in a scarcity of food supplies. In areas bordering Tajikistan, some 13,000 of the estimated 72,000 displaced people are without shelter and cannot meet their basic needs.

The need for food, tents and blankets is particularly acute given the harsh winter conditions.

Concern is distributing food and materials for blankets and mattresses to some 3,500 people in Rustaq and Dashti Qala districts. In phase two of the relief operation, Concern will extend its assistance to include a further 1,500 displaced people.

It is envisaged that the work will continue until next April, as the onset of winter means people will be unable to return to their areas of origin. Concern will also place 250 of the displaced families in Desthi Qala district with host families. The host families receive a food package comprising 15 kilos of rice and three litres of cooking oil. The project will also include a latrine construction component aimed at addressing the sanitation needs of these families. Project Spend (estimated) US \$220,000" (Concern, 22 December 2000)

SNI's activities on behalf of IDPs in northern Afghanistan (December 2000)

- SNI involved in distribution of food and non-food items in Dasht-i-Qala, Chah-Ab district and Rustaq
- SNI hires IDPs to repair roads

"SNI, along with other NGO's and with the help of WFP, OFDA, & UNOCHA continue distributions of food and non-food items for the over 50,000 displaced people in Northern Afghanistan. SNI has concentrated its efforts in Nowabad and surrounding villages of Dasht-I-Qala. Beginning the middle of November SNI distributed 100 kg of WFP wheat to over 2,427 families in these areas. Despite rain, muddy conditions, and fuel shortages, the 20 truck loads of wheat (242.7 metric tons) was distributed in about 10 days. Priority was given to widows, orphans, disabled persons, and larger families. A detailed distribution list was computerized and prepared by SNI.

One sign of the projects' success is a beautiful letter that was given to the workers in Nowabad expressing 'thanks' from all the IDP's living in the area. The letter expressed appreciation to SNI and their staff for working in such an "unstable, insecure, and unpredictable situation". The front and back of the letter was filled with signatures and thumbprints from among the IDP's.

On November 22nd, SNI distributed in Chah-Ab district 50kg bag of wheat flour and 2 liters of oil to 110 IDP families. Due to the smaller numbers of IDPs, this district has been largely overlooked by other agencies. After meeting with the governor, and completing our own assessment, it was decided to help, as they had not received any other assistance from other NGOs.

SNI joined resources with MSF and ACTED to distribute one sleeping kit, 6 pieces of soap, and 2 blankets to 1,348 IDP families in Rustaq. NPO provided the survey work for the distribution. The Rustaq authorities have expressed sincere appreciation for the food and non-food items and requested additional help due to the drought, cold weather and unemployment. SNI has hired 10-15 IDP workers to recondition some of the roads in the City of Rustaq providing them with essential wheat for their families." (SNI, 18 December 2000)

Save the Children/US and UNICEF provide health care in the former Soviet Embassy in Kabul (August 2000)

- SC/US involved in health care for IDP women in Kabul and train them to teach basic health care to other IDPs
- Evaluation results of the Health Education programme was satisfactory

"More than 6000 home visits were conducted by the health workers. These home visits proved to be very important for the IDP women, all of whom who are living in overcrowded spaces and are isolated from their traditional social support networks. They are rural women displaced into an urban environment, often without male family members. They lack access to services and do not have the information to respond to emergencies involving either themselves or their children. The home visiting programme provides them with a safety net and has enabled them to better care for their children. The home visits focus on disease prevention and have been successful in keeping child mortality low during the project period despite the bad living conditions within the IDP camp. A special effort was made to promote vaccinations.

The home visits by the health promoters is a 'lifeline' for these displaced women as they are isolated and in an unknown environment. 15 IDP women have been trained to offer basic health education. This training provided them with new responsibilities and subsequently a sense of empowerment through an improved position in their society and increased access to income, information and skills. The present health promoters, although illiterate, have shown themselves to be highly motivated. They have learned important skills and are the appropriate persons to provide support to the IDP women.

Up till July 2000, the following was achieved:

	June 2000	Previous Total	New Total
# of mothers who received health education	823	7467	8290
# of children with ARI identified	15	213	228
Non high risk (Common cold)	11	101	112
High risk (Pneumonia)	4	112	116
# of children with ARI referred to clinic	4	112	116
# of children with ARI received follow up	15	205	220
# of children identified with measles	0	128	128
# of children referred to clinic for vaccination	22	444	466
Mortality of children < 5 years as a result of ARI and measles	0	7	7
Mortality of children < 5 years as a result of diarrhea	2	0	2
# of pregnant women identified	0	84	84
Children not vaccinated	22	255	277
# of children identified with diarrhea	143	163	306
# of children identified with watery diarrhea	115	97	212
# of children identified with bloody diarrhea	28	66	94
Children referred to clinic	28	66	94
Children who receive follow up	143	139	282

In June an evaluation measuring of the impact of the health education activities on the knowledge of women was implemented. The evaluation was a repetition of the base line data collected at the start of the project. The baseline data was collected by the health workers themselves through the use of a pictorial survey form. The evaluation was done by an independent group of women, who were trained in the same survey form. The results show an increase of care giver's knowledge in all areas:

Summary of evaluation of impact of Health education:

Hand washing has clearly improved. Now almost all women answered that hand washing should take place after using the toilet. However, hand washing before feeding is also important and this message should be strengthened. Breast feeding has been promoted and now 100% of the women prefer to breast feed their children. They can also explain quite well why. 98% will continue breast feeding until the child is at least 6 months old. Most women also know now how to prepare ORS. Areas for strengthening include:

1.Safety in the house. An increased number of IDP houses now have potentially dangerous situations with regards to the risk of burns. This risk is due to the fact that each household was provided with a cooking and heating device. Risks regarding falling

from heights have improved but remains an area of concern. Issues regarding play also need further strengthening as this is especially important for children who have experienced war and displacement.

2. Disease management. In particular, the home care measures taken in cases of diarrhea. Frequent fluids intake needs to be stepped up and quick care seeking in case of pneumonia needs strengthening. (For detailed results, see the appendix)." (SC/US, August 2000)

UNCHS (Habitat) activities on behalf of IDPs (July 2000)

- UNCHS's activities focus in six areas (Kabul, Mazar, Kandahar, Herat, Farah and Bamyan) with relocation of IDPs as well.

"While UNCHS (Habitat) does not target Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) directly, working in the six principle urban areas of Afghanistan (Kabul, Mazar, Kandahar, Herat, Farah and Bamyan), much of our work does address the needs of those people who have relocated to these areas.

(...) the relief projects that Habitat implements through its Community Forum programme target the most vulnerable families in the regions, many of whom will be IDPs. Last winter, for example, Habitat implemented a community based winter relief project for vulnerable women in the cities of Kabul and Bamyan. In Kabul the project primarily targeted IDPs. Most of these were people displaced from the Shomali plains by the fighting in that area, unwilling or unable to return to their homes before the winter and in dire need of assistance. Immediate relief in the two cities was provided in the form of income generation opportunities; over 1,700 women identified as the most vulnerable were employed under cash-for-work schemes to make quilts and winter clothes. The items produced were then distributed to a further 20,000 vulnerable women. Again in Kabul the majority of the recipients of these items were IDPs who, in fleeing their homes, had lost most of their household possessions.

Furthermore, in the southwestern region of Afghanistan (Kandahar and Herat) Habitat is currently implementing an emergency intervention aimed at reducing the impact of the drought that is presently gripping the country. A continuous influx of IDPs from the hardest hit rural districts across the southern and western region into the cities of Herat and Kandahar has put additional pressure on already stretched local coping mechanisms. The projects underway are multi-faceted, aiming to improve sanitation and access to water whilst simultaneously decreasing vulnerability by providing food for work to thousands of people. Men will be involved in infrastructure projects addressing the water supply problem and women will be employed as health and sanitation trainers to promote issues such as water conservation and the proper handling of food. Again all of the projects will be implemented in close collaboration with the cities' Community Forums, so as to ensure that those involved really are the most vulnerable. Furthermore, in an attempt to prevent further displacement, a parallel drought awareness campaign will

highlight the need for rural dwellers to remain where they are, and not to abandon their homes for the cities.

Another aspect of Habitat's programme that indirectly addresses the needs of IDPs is the provision of what are known as Neighbourhood Emergency Funds. Another drought related emergency intervention, these aim to promote a demand driven process whereby communities identify their priority needs, for example water tankers or animal fodder, and then plan and manage solutions at a local level. Again many of the beneficiaries of these projects will be people who have been forced to leave their homes and migrate to the urban areas as a result of the drought. Furthermore, where there is an influx of IDPs, the community might choose to use this resource to assist them more directly." (UNCHS, 31 July 2000)

World Food Programme activities on behalf of IDPs (July 2000)

- WFP has made 4 wheat distributions over the last 9 months in the Panjshir Valley
- WFP assistance to internally displaced persons is carried out through both Emergency Operations and through Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO's)

"At the onset of the idps movements [in the Panjshir Valley], authorities and ngos distributed bread to families, assisted by ACTED, and some cash. Then, WFP made four wheat distributions:

in September/October 1999, targeting 8,500 families (100kg/family).

in December 1999 thanks to a cross line operation, targeting 8,635\$ families (100kg/family) and 29 mt of vegetable oil.

in early March targeting 6,950 families (50kg/family).

in June, 7015 families received 50kg of wheat and 553 families received 100 kg (not served in March)." (UNRCO, 4 July 2000)

WFP is carrying out IDP-related activities both through it's Emergency Operations and through protracted relief and recovery operations.

"[E]mergency rations are being distributed to the estimated 50,000 displaced people in the Panjshir Valley who fled severe fighting in the Shomali Plains in early August. WFP plans to distribute 6,000 MT of food over the next eight months;

Daily rations are being provided to 13,000 displaced people, mainly women and children, housed in the former Soviet Embassy compound in Kabul." (WFP November 1999)

WFP is also providing assistance to internally displaced persons under the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO 6064.00) which started 1 January 1999 and will end as of 31 December 1999.

Activities planned under scenario 1 (relief with limited recovery), "[w]ill include bread-making in bakeries, emergency feeding, institutional feeding, and assistance to returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)." (WFP 29 September 1998, para. 17)

Under scenario 2 (relief with recovery), "[t]he Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit within the WFP Regional Office has initiated surveys to identify target groups who are food-insecure, and map areas that are food-deficit and vulnerable to natural calamities. Specific VAM surveys will target the poorest and the most needy internally displaced persons." (WFP 29 September 1998, para. 24)

Among the areas that will be targeted based on these surveys are emergency/disaster-prone areas which have been subjected to civil strife and the resultant displacement of many people and areas of IDP and refugee concentration. (WFP 29 September 1998, para. 24)

Concerning relief activities as of November 1999, there were "[t]hree bakery projects , two in Kabul and one in Mazar, which sell highly subsidized bread to over 330,000 vulnerable people; [...]." (WFP November 1999)

"Emergency rations are being distributed to the estimated 50,000 displaced people in the Panjshir Valley who fled severe fighting in the Shomali Plains in early August. WFP plans to distribute 6,000 MT of food over the next eight months; [...]"(WFP November 1999)

For the full text of PRRO 6064.00 see [Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 6064.00](#), For the full text of PRRO 6064.01 (included in the Afghanistan 2000 Appeal, see [Protracted relief and Recovery Operation 6064.01](#) [External links]

Children in Crisis (CIC) provides food and education to IDP children (July 2000)

- CIC provides education and food for 450 boys in Kabul of whom the majority are displaced.
- Over the winter, CIC has provided support for a joint UNICEF/SCF (US) education project.

"[Children in Crisis] run the Karte Se Day Centre in Kabul for up to 450 boys who come to the centre in two shifts - half of them study in the morning and stay for lunch, while the afternoon children have lunch and then study. The majority of children are displaced.

Over the winter months the staff of Karte Se provided support to an education project for the 15,000 IDPs at the Russian Embassy Compound run by UNICEF and SCF(US). CiC ran 4 teacher training workshops, designed training and educational materials and continues to provide classroom support and monitor teaching standards at the camp. This training programme finished at the end of June. This training has provided CiC a chance to pilot the 'School-Tools' kit in the IDP camp. So far feedback from the donors (SC-US and UNICEF) has been very positive on both the training and the 'School-Tools'" (CIC, 17 July 2000)

For further information on education for IDP children in Kabul, see : "[UN and NGOs arrange for educational activities for IDP children in Kabul](#) "

Church World Service initiates War Displaced Relief Program in response to displacement from the Shamali plains (July 1999)

- ACT provide 2,000 displaced families in Jalalabad with basic shelter materials
- CWS staff and partners visiting camps for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kabul area and assessing winterization needs
- UN set up a base in Bazarak in September 1999 to monitor the situation in the Panjshir Valley

Following the fighting between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance which started in August 1999, the ACT member Church World Service (CWS) - Pakistan/ Afghanistan launched an appeal on 6 August 1999 for a War Displaced Relief Program on behalf of affected civilians in Northern Afghanistan.

The program was to be implemented by CWS, which were to provide 2,000 displaced families in Jalalabad with basic shelter materials - blankets, plastic sheeting, family tents and tarpaulins. (ACT 6 August 1999)

CWS staff and partners are visiting camps for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kabul area and meeting with partners to assess winterization needs, particularly in the sphere of shelter and food aid." (ACT 29 October 1999)

For the text of the appeal, see [War Displaced Relief Program](#) [External link]

For information on other agencies providing aid to those displaced by the recent fighting, see [Reliefweb, "Afghanistan, the Latest"](#) [External link]

Mercy Corps International (May 1999)

"Mercy Corps International is rebuilding bridges, hospitals, health care systems, and other community assets needed to help returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to rebuild their lives. [...].

Under a UNWFP program, Mercy Corps assists bakeries to provide displaced and needy Afghans in Jalalabad with daily bread rations. [...]" (InterAction May 1999)

See "[World Food Programme activities on behalf of IDPs \(1999\)](#)" [Internal link]

Constraints faced by UN agencies and NGOs

UN sanctions hamper humanitarian assistance (February 2001)

- December 2000, US and Russia pushed and obtained UN sanctions on Afghanistan.
- Sanctions will exacerbate civilians suffering and further strain the relationship between Taleban and UN/NGOs
- OCHA has underscored the negative humanitarian impact of these new sanctions

"Even as the UN, governments, NGOs, and others struggle to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Afghan civilians, in December 2000, the UN, spurred by the United States and Russia, voted to impose additional sanctions on Afghanistan (the UN first imposed sanctions on Afghanistan in November 1999).

The sanctions are intended to punish the Taleban for continuing to harbor Osama bin Laden, whom the U.S. government accuses of masterminding terrorist attacks against U.S. targets, and for permitting the presence of so-called terrorist bases on Afghan soil. The sanctions seek to stop the flow of arms to the Taleban.

The United States has said that the sanctions are 'political, not economic,' and that 'trade and commerce, including in food and medicine, continue unabated.'

Nevertheless, the new sanctions are likely to exacerbate Afghan civilians' suffering. They will further strain relations between the Taleban and UN agencies and NGOs, which could put the lives of UN and NGO staff at risk or cause their withdrawal from Afghanistan, which would cripple relief efforts.

Even though the sanctions are being imposed by the United Nations, UN agencies involved in the relief effort have expressed concern about them. An OCHA report on the humanitarian impact of the 1999 sanctions said that these 'had a tangible negative effect on the Afghan economy and on the ability of humanitarian agencies to render assistance to people in the country.' The report added that many individual Afghans feel victimized by the sanctions, believing that the UN 'has set out to harm rather than help Afghans.'

One example of the effects of the sanctions was their impact on Afghanistan's Ariana Airlines. The sanctions prohibited Ariana from landing on UN member states' territories. Pakistan and India banned Ariana flights, even though these carried much needed commodities, particularly medical supplies and medical equipment, to Afghanistan.

In the closing months of its Administration, besides successfully promoting additional UN sanctions against Afghanistan, the Clinton White House considered additional air strikes against what it identified as terrorist bases in Afghanistan. It is not clear what the Bush Administration's position on this will be." (USCR 2 February 2001)

For further information on the sanctions and their impact on humanitarian assistance see: "[Report of the Secretary-General on the humanitarian implications](#)

[of the measures imposed by Security Council resolutions 1267 \(1999\) and 1333 \(2000\) on Afghanistan", UNSG, 20 March 2001 \[External link\]](#)

Understaffing, limited access and shortage of local and international NGOs constrain relief activities (February 2001)

"The UN program for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan is coordinated by OCHA. However, with an expanding program, present OCHA resources seem barely adequate to staff half a dozen regional centers in Afghanistan. UNHCR/Afghanistan now plays only a limited role of facilitating repatriation from Iran -- but UNHCR expertise and resources could be of great use in managing IDP camps. WFP has a far-flung system of food distribution, but many areas of the country are inaccessible due to lack of roads or poor security. Most of the IDPs in Herat, for example, come from areas which cannot be reached by international food aid. In general, due to difficult and dangerous working conditions, there is a shortage of local and international NGOs on the ground in Afghanistan to implement relief and development programs. This will be a serious constraint as the international community attempts to address a worsening humanitarian situation this winter and spring." (RI 9 February 2001)

Strained relations between the Taliban and aid agencies (February 2001)

"On July 6 [2000], the Taliban issued an edict banning women's employment (except in the health care sector) by U.N. agencies and NGO's. Implementation remains erratic, but the U.N. and NGO's kept their female staff at home to avoid open confrontation with the Taliban. On August 16, the Taliban issued an order closing down the World Food Program's (WFP) 25 widows' bakeries, which provide food to the neediest citizens, including many war widows and other female-headed households. On August 17, the Taliban reversed the previous day's decision to close the widows' bakeries, apparently accepting the WFP's explanation that the female staff of the bakeries were not direct hire WFP employees and therefore not subject to the July 6 edict. The arrest in July of a foreign aid worker long resident in the country (see Section 1.d.) and the sudden closure of the widows' bakeries, served as reminders to the international relief community that their programs are at constant risk of closure by the Taliban.

In September the Taliban refused a visa to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan.

During the year, the Taliban continued to pose serious obstacles to the international aid community's efforts to deliver food aid and other humanitarian assistance to citizens (see Section 1.g.).

The Taliban continued to harass domestic and international NGO's. The Taliban has interfered consistently with the operation of the U.N. and NGO's. Tactics used have included threatening to impound the vehicles of NGO's that do not work on projects

preferred by the Taliban, threatening to close projects that do not include Taliban supervisors or workers, and, in the case of one local NGO, the detention of its director and the impounding of all of its equipment in an effort to increase Taliban control of the organization. The Taliban announced in March 1998 that foreign Muslim women, including U.N. workers, would be allowed to perform their jobs only if accompanied by a male relative, a move that continued to hamper NGO and relief operations. The U.N. withdrew its personnel from southern Afghanistan in late March 1998 to protest the assault on a U.N. worker by the Taliban governor of Kandahar Province and the interference with its work by the Taliban. After reaching agreements with local officials, the U.N. returned to Kandahar in May 1999. In April 1998, Taliban authorities rejected the participation of a U.N. official on the U.N. team selected to negotiate with the Taliban on the travel restrictions for foreign Muslim women and other issues, because he was perceived to be "anti-Taliban." In June 1998, the Taliban required all NGO's in Kabul to relocate to a single location in a bomb-damaged former school; those who refused were threatened with expulsion from the country. However, the order was not enforced. In November 1998, the U.N. World Food Program accused the Taliban of looting 1,364 tons of food, stealing trucks from the WFP's compound in Bamiyan, and occupying WFP offices in Bamiyan and Yakaolang.

On June 15, 1999, staff members of an international NGO were detained and beaten by members of the Taliban in Bamiyan Province. After the June 1999 incident, Mullah Omar issued an edict stating that any person causing annoyance to a foreign worker could face punishment of up to 5 years in prison. However, in November 1999 U.N. properties were targeted in organized demonstrations in several cities when U.N. sanctions related to terrorism were imposed on the country. Certain key issues, including the mobility of international female Muslim staff and access by Afghan women and girls to programs, remain largely unresolved.

There were reports in 1999 that Masood's commanders in the northeast were "taxing" humanitarian assistance entering Afghanistan from Tajikistan, harassing NGO workers, obstructing aid convoys, and otherwise hindering the movement of humanitarian aid. There were no such reports during the year (see Section 1.g.)." (U.S. DOS February 2001, section 4)

"The absence of international UN staff from August 1998 to March 1999 had an inevitable effect on the scope and nature of assistance activities in Afghanistan. While the bulk of UN-supported humanitarian activities continued under the management of Afghan professionals, the enforced absence of their international colleagues affected aspects of programme development, training and monitoring. Restrictions on travel for UN international staff members from the USA and the UK remain in effect.

The new security regime that has been put in place as a result of the Supplementary Protocol on Security signed with the Taliban early this year has enabled international staff to return to a number of regions in the country, supported by field security officers in each case. The recruitment of these officers has slowed deployment in some cases, and

resulted in significant additional cost-shared overheads for programmes. Field security officers work closely with official security focal points in the various regions, who effectively respond to security-related incidents affecting UN staff or premises. [...]" (UNOCHA, UNRCO November 1999, p. 16)

Inadequate funding and lack of access constrain relief (November 2000)

- Restriction on access and insecurity have hampered humanitarian assistance
- Except for food, low funding has been observed for the 2000 Appeal.

"In some parts of the country, implementation of assistance programmes has been hampered by restrictions on access to those in need of humanitarian assistance and constrained by high levels of insecurity. Although the United Nations was able to negotiate cross-line operation to provide for some 60,000 conflict-related displaced in the Panjshir Valley in early December 1999, no further agreements were obtained from the authorities for the continuation of such operations during 2000. Similar difficulties were experienced in obtaining access to the communities in northern Hazarajat affected by conflict, drought and economic blockade during the second quarter of the year, although the authorities did allow for some assistance to reach those in Samangan and Dar-e-souf during August. The United Nations Coordinator's office continues to advocate that the authorities give greater respect to the right of civilians to humanitarian assistance." (UNSG 20 November 2000, 54.)

"While the response of the international community to the United Nations drought appeal has been encouraging in terms of food, inadequate resources have been pledged for other relief activities. The current fighting in northern Afghanistan, combined with the drought-related needs of hundreds of thousands of people, is putting the humanitarian community under considerable pressure. The significant lack of resources often means that humanitarian agencies cannot respond to brutal, life-threatening needs. Tens of thousands of new internally displaced persons have already been identified following recent fighting. The fall of Taloqan and other northern cities is one major concern, while internally displaced persons in the Panjshir Valley continue to lack support. The lack of resources is often compounded by difficulties in gaining access for humanitarian agencies." (UNSG 18 September 2000, 38.)

UN agencies work under difficult conditions (July 2000)

- UN sanctions have triggered hostile attitudes towards the UN.
- Following repeated immunity violations by the authorities, UN staff were withdrawn from Kandahar for a couple of weeks.
- UNHCR staff is working under difficult circumstances

"The UN imposed limited economic sanctions on Afghanistan with effect from November 1999. Since then, there have been no commercial flights to Afghanistan. However, UN and ICRC flights in support of the international assistance operation have continued. So far, it would appear that the sanctions have had limited economic effects on the majority of Afghans. However, the psychological effects of sanctions linked, in the minds of many, to the deteriorating socio-economic situation have profound ramifications including the development of hostile attitudes towards the UN." (OCHA, July 2000)

"On 28 March, United Nations staff were withdrawn from Kandahar and operations suspended in the area following repeated violations of United Nations immunity by the authorities. United Nations offices were broken into, property was damaged and staff were intimidated by armed Taliban allegedly in search of escaped prisoners. Operations were resumed on 13 April after senior Taliban officials reaffirmed their commitment to uphold their agreements, to cooperate in maintaining the security of United Nations personnel, property and premises and to respect United Nations immunities in the future." (UNSG, June 2000)

"Communications systems, security services and medical facilities are scarce. As a consequence, UNHCR staff in Afghanistan work under conditions of extreme hardship, isolation and stress. UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies have often been subjected to armed robbery, particularly targeting telecommunications equipment. The Office's work was hampered by restrictions on staff movement, and the UN-imposed ceiling on the number of international staff allowed to be present in Afghanistan at any given time. The imposition of sanctions by the UN Security Council in November 1999 led to demonstrations and out-bursts of anger against the UN in all major cities. All UN offices in Kabul and some offices in field locations were targeted and property was damaged. (UNHCR, June 2000)

Gaps in the assistance

UNHCR's suspension of relief operations at the Tajik-Afghan border puts IDPs at risk (April 2001)

- MERLIN reports a significant deterioration of the health status of the IDPs stranded at the Afghan-Tajik border since UNHCR suspended its relief activities for fear of feeding fighters among the displaced.
- NGOs contend that the conditions set by UNHCR for resuming its activities are unworkable.

"The health status of the 10,000 displaced Afghans camped on the Pyandzh river flood plains on the Tajik-Afghan border has "significantly deteriorated" since the cessation in March of UN-sponsored humanitarian assistance, the British NGO Merlin told IRIN on Wednesday.

Medical Emergency Relief International (Merlin), the lead health agency providing assistance to the population, warned that the conditions of the displaced had "worsened", and that unless some food was distributed soon, there would be an increase in disease and deaths. The Afghans, mainly women and children, have been living on the flood plains since November when they fled the Taliban's advance into northeastern Afghanistan.

UNHCR's relief operations for the displaced were suspended on 13 March for fear of supporting armed fighters of the Afghan opposition Northern Alliance living within the population. Initial relief efforts targeted the most vulnerable, but it was found that assistance was also reaching combatants, constituting a misuse of relief supplies intended solely for civilians. A high-level UNHCR mission from Geneva which visited the flood plains in February concluded that the refugee agency would only re-engage in future assistance if the Tajik government met three conditions: that the combatants be clearly separated from the civilians; that the civilians be moved to a safer area; and that the Tajik authorities provide free and unrestricted access to the Afghans by UN and NGOs.

The consensus among NGOs is that the three preconditions set by UNHCR for the continuance of aid are unworkable. Aid workers say that despite improved access to the population, the movement of the displaced to a safer site by the Tajik authorities was highly unlikely, as was the separation of fighters from their families." (IRIN 11 April 2001)

See also:

["International response to the IDP crisis at the Tajik-Afghan border"](#) [Internal link]

["Assistance to Tajikistan OCHA Monthly Situation Update No. 2"](#), OCHA, 11 April 2001

["Tajikistan: UNHCR suspends relief to Pyandj fearing aid to fighters"](#), IRIN, 13 March 2001 [External link]

Discrepancies in nutrition data show need for more detailed surveys (March 2001)

- MSF-conducted nutritional survey's results in Mazar show that the situation is not as bad as WFP vulnerability surveys indicated.
- The mismatch between an observable food crisis and the MSF nutritional indicators suggest that conditions are not uniform but vary greatly depending on the location.

"Although Afghans are taking extraordinary measures to cope amid a deepening conflict- and drought-related food crisis, the head of Medecins sans frontieres (MSF) in the northern city of Mazar says nutritional data indicate that disaster may have been averted.

Yet these results conflict with all other information on the deepening crisis in northern Afghanistan, including WFP vulnerability surveys that claim most Afghans are unable to meet minimum cereal needs.

Stephane Goetghebuer, head of MSF-Belgium's team in Mazar-e-Sharif, capital of Balkh province, told IRIN that the rate of malnutrition in children under five years was recorded

at between 10 and 13 percent. 'Our nutritional surveys and monitoring do not indicate that the situation has tipped over into disaster,' he said.

Although he expressed confidence in the data, Goetghebuer said that the results did not seem to reflect the gravity of the crisis. In Faryab Province, the MSF assessment team had encountered families who were marrying off their daughters at 13 years of age, much younger than the usual age of at least 16 and a significant sign of the seriousness of the situation, he added.

Thomas Hoerz, head of the WFP sub-office in Mazar told IRIN that he found the MSF nutritional indicators surprising.

'They do not seem to correlate with the other information on the crisis in northern Afghanistan,' he said. 'Normally nutritional data provides one of the most sensitive indicators that the food chain has been severely disrupted but this is not the case here.'

Hoerz said that the results from WFP household surveys showed incomes to be far lower than the bare minimum required to survive. 'In some areas surveyed, we found that the household income was actually half of the cereal value needs, in other words - half of what we consider to be the absolute minimum for survival. This result alone is alarming and when you put these indicators into context, the nutritional indicators seem out of place,' Hoerz added.

Relief workers remain perplexed by the mismatch between an observable food crisis and the MSF nutritional indicators, especially because unprecedented population displacement, confirmed reports of children eating grass, soaring market prices and a saturated labour market all point to a deepening crisis in the coming months.

Goetghebuer pointed out that his organisation's data was not perfect. 'I don't want to give the impression that we know exactly what is happening. We are only present in certain areas and some of our six feeding centres have only been operational for a month. But in those places where we are located, we do have some idea,' he said.

There may be a number of reasons why the MSF data does not correlate with other indicators. Recent UN visits in southern Balkh and Baghlan provinces suggested that the conditions for displaced people and host communities were not uniform but vary greatly depending on location.

Conditions for displaced families in areas where MSF had clinics were comparatively good: in Baghlan province, essential food appeared to be reaching displaced families, while in Charkent district, south of Mazar, local families with land were borrowing food from local shopkeepers for extended periods of time. But assessments in other districts suggested signs of starvation: in the Sehre-e-Sidemesh plain in southern Balkh, and in pockets near Mazar, children have been gathering grass stems and roots to eat.

Thomas Hoertz told IRIN his main concern was that the Afghan system of sharing and redistributing food among members of an extended family, village or clan was so good that it masked malnutrition. 'In Kenya, the Turkana and Masai nomads also had a good redistribution system which meant that we were only aware of their difficulties when entire communities literally fell over dead.

I am concerned for this year in Afghanistan. I have travelled throughout the northern areas and seen what people had to harvest last year. I don't know why these people are still alive.' "(IRIN 1 March 2001)

See also: "[Relief agencies prioritize aid to rural areas to prevent further displacement \(February 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]; "[ACF Response to the OCHA article 'Almost half of children in Mazar malnourished'](#) ", ACF, 3 February 2001 [External link]

Shortage of implementing partners in northern and northeastern region (March 2001)

- Delivery of assistance in the northern/northeastern provinces is difficult due to the shortage of implementing partners and limited government capacity.
- The situation is particularly difficult in the remote areas of Takhar province due to bad roads, inadequate logistic support and insecurity

[...] in some areas, such as the North and the North East regions, IDPs are scattered in different locations of four provinces. This renders delivery of assistance and assessment of the situation very difficult. In provinces like Kunduz, there is a shortage of implementing partners, and also the capacity of MoPH and RRD is limited to respond to the needs of IDPs.

[...]

In the North East region, With the skeleton staff of UNICEF out-posted office in Faizabad, regular assessment of IDP situation, coordination with other aid agencies, and follow up of UNICEF inputs are difficult. Support from UNICEF Mazar sub-office and Islamabad country office staff often becomes difficult due to travel restrictions due to security consideration.

Overland logistic routes for areas under the control of the Northern Alliance have been completely cut off. Obtaining supplies across the Tajikistan border has so far been difficult. In addition, capacity of the local market to obtain essential supplies for IDPs is extremely limited. Airlifting of supplies remains the most feasible option, which is obviously costly. Nevertheless, UNICEF, in co-operation with other international aid agencies, provided immediate support to families who took shelter in Faizabad camps. However, assistance to the population living in far- flung districts of Takhar province has

been a daunting task due to very bad road condition, inadequate logistic support and insecurity.

The scarcity of partners in certain areas, such as psychosocial interventions, and the already over-stretched capacity of many UNICEF partners are another constraints. In addition, the restriction on women's employment outside of the health sector is another constraining factor." (UNICEF 8 March 2001)

Kabul's population to be re-surveyed if all IDPs are to benefit from WFP's bakery project (March 2001)

"The United Nations on Wednesday reaffirmed its commitment to assist vulnerable Afghans in the capital Kabul. According to the Office of the United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan in Islamabad, the statement by UN Coordinator Erick de Mul was made in clarification of a report stating that the World Food Programme (WFP) might halt the general bakery project in the Afghan capital. The bakery project, operational for the last six years, currently provides subsidised bread for some 300,000 residents of Kabul.

According to De Mul, the problem is "that we know we are not reaching thousands of Afghans who have entered Kabul in the last few years and who are in great need." He added that WFP recognises that its bakery lists are not up to date. Unless WFP can re-survey the entirety of Kabul's population, there is no way that these needy families could be included in the bakery project. WFP has repeatedly discussed this issue with the authorities in Kabul, but has not received permission to conduct the necessary surveys.

"Because of a combination of profound poverty, conflict and drought, more people than ever in Afghanistan are in dire need of assistance this year. We are in a fight for funds and for resources to be able to do more and to help as many people as possible. However, resources are always limited.

This is why it is important that we ensure that every bit of aid is directed to those whose very survival would be jeopardised without the help," the UN Coordinator said. Calling for the cooperation of the authorities in Kabul, De Mul said: "With or without a bakery project, we will do our utmost to ensure the people of Kabul receive the help they need." (IRIN 22 March 2001)

Gaps in the assistance in the northeast (February 2001)

Comments in the preceding coordination report about gaps and issues bear both repeating and expanding. A number of points need to be highlighted, specifically about:

(i) the general weakness of the UN in the region, and the failure on behalf of a number of agencies to deploy both personnel and resources commensurate with the prevailing needs

(ii) the need for adequate funding for the chronically under-funded FAO programme so as to provide improved seed production and expanded veterinary services

(iii) the failure to more fully capitalise on the opportunities prevailing eg. the education sector, specifically girl's education and the co-educational tertiary level medical faculty

(iv) the reality that assistance being geographically skewed towards the more accessible (and richer) districts to the detriment of others, and the need for long-term development assistance for peripheral, economically marginal areas. Discussions were actually held about the possibility of developing a long-term recovery plan for Badakhshan though this was, unfortunately, put on hold due to the IDP crisis,

(v) the need, on a national level – within agencies and within the donor community -, to prioritise under-served and vulnerable areas such as Badakhshan.

(vi) the need for further implementing capacity in the region. Attempts were made during the reporting period to convince existing NGOs to strengthen their capacity and to attract new NGOs to the region, with a degree of success. This notwithstanding, capacity on the ground is still high restricted.

The UN Coordinator raised these issues after his visit to Faizabad in the autumn (and again in February 2001). Many were similarly raised as constraints by the RCB when reviewing the papers for the CAP 2001. Attempts to raise funding, through contacts with donors, were ongoing throughout the reporting period.

Additionally, the absence of a UN presence in Takhar province – where there has been the most serious impact of both the conflict and the drought, and where the largest IDP caseloads are to be found – is an issue of concern. Missions to Takhar were affected by the ban on travel due to the imposition of sanctions. This has seriously undermined the ability of the UN and international agencies to respond to the needs of the population most at risk. It is something which will hopefully be resolved during 2001." (UNOCHA February 2001)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACBAR	Agency Coordination Body for Afghanistan
ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ACT	Action by Churches Together
ACTED	Agence d'aide à la coopération technique et au développement
AHSAO	Afghans' Health and Social Assistance Organisation
ANCB	Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau
APB	Afghanistan Programming Body
ARC	Afghan Relief Committee
ARCS	Afghanistan Red Crescent Society
AREA	Agency for rehabilitation and energy-conservation in Afghanistan
ASG	Afghanistan Support Group
CARE	Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere
CIC	Children in Crisis
CWS	Church World Service
DPVPV	Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice
EO/CA	Ecumenical office/Christian aid
EPI	Expanded Immunisation Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAA	German Agro Action
GAF	German Afghanistan Foundation
IAM	International Assistance Mission
ICC	Islamic Coordination Council
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ISRA	Islamic Relief Agency
LEP	Landmine Education Programme
MAPA	UN Mine Action Programme
MDM	Medecins Du Monde
MEDAIR	Christian Relief and Aid Organisation
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NIDs	National Immunization Days
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OI	Ockenden International
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
Oxfam	Oxford Committee on Famine Relief
PCP	Principled Common Programming
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PHR	Physicians for Human Rights
PRB	Pamir Reconstruction Bureau
RCO	Regional Coordinator Office

SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SFA	Strategic Framework for Afghanistan
SNI	Shelter Now International
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendants
UF	United Front (The Northern Alliance)
UNCHS	United Nations Center for Human Settlements
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNSMA	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan
USCR	United States Committee for Refugees
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WES	Water and Environmental Sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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