



PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : AFGHANISTAN

Compilation of the information available in the Global IDP
Database of the Norwegian Refugee Council

(as of 25 October, 2004)

Also available at <http://www.idpproject.org>

Users of this document are welcome to credit the Global IDP Database for the collection of information.

The opinions expressed here are those of the sources and are not necessarily shared by the Global IDP
Project or NRC

Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project
Chemin de Balexert, 7-9
1219 Geneva - Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 799 07 00
Fax: + 41 22 799 07 01
E-mail : idpproject@nrc.ch

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	1
-----------------	----------

PROFILE SUMMARY	8
------------------------	----------

DROUGHT AND INSTABILITY SLOW DOWN IDP RETURN	8
--	---

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT	13
--	-----------

GENERAL	13
----------------	-----------

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LAND AND PEOPLE	13
--	----

THE CIVIL WAR	14
----------------------	-----------

A HISTORY OF CONFLICT (1973-2000)	14
-----------------------------------	----

OVERVIEW OF MAIN CONFLICT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT INCIDENTS (1992-2001)	15
--	----

THE U.S. - AFGHANISTAN WAR	16
-----------------------------------	-----------

US ASK TALEBAN TO HAND OVER BEN LADEN OR FACE MILITARY CONSEQUENCES (OCTOBER 2001)	16
--	----

PEOPLE FLEE MAJOR CITIES TO RURAL AREAS IN FEAR OF U.S. ATTACKS (JANUARY 2002)	17
--	----

THE POST-TALEBAN ERA	19
-----------------------------	-----------

ANTI-PASHTUN VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN DISPLACES THOUSANDS IN THE NORTH (MARCH 2002)	19
--	----

ABUSES BY ARMED MILITIAS, LACK OF FOOD AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FORCE PEOPLE TO FLEE IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN (APRIL 2002)	20
--	----

INSECURITY AND FORCED RECRUITMENT IN THE NORTH CAUSE DISPLACEMENT AND HAMPER RETURN (APRIL 2003)	22
--	----

LAND TENURE PROBLEMS CAUSE RENEWED DISPLACEMENT UPON RETURN (SEPTEMBER 2003)	23
--	----

FACTIONAL FIGHTING IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN FORCE THOUSANDS TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES (AUGUST 2004)	25
--	----

AFGHANISTAN'S WARLORD PROBLEM (2004)	26
--------------------------------------	----

NATURAL DISASTERS	27
--------------------------	-----------

RAIN RETURNS TO SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN AFTER 4 YEARS OF DROUGHT (JUNE 2003)	27
---	----

FLOODS DISPLACE THOUSANDS IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN (JANUARY 2004)	28
---	----

DROUGHTS CAUSE SHARP RISE IN FOOD INSECURITY AS THOUSANDS MOVE IN SEARCH OF WATER (SEPTEMBER 2004)	29
--	----

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS	30
-------------------------------	-----------

LOYA JIRGA ADOPTS NEW CONSTITUTION AMID POLITICAL INTIMIDATION (JANUARY 2004)	30
---	----

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS NOT DISRUPTED BY VIOLENCE (OCTOBER 2004)	32
---	----

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES	34
---------------------------------------	-----------

GENERAL	34
----------------	-----------

WHO ARE THE IDPs IN AFGHANISTAN ? (OCTOBER 2003)	34
--	----

GLOBAL FIGURES	36
BETWEEN 167,000 AND 200,000 IDPs AS OF AUGUST 2004	36
BETWEEN 180,000 AND 300,000 IDPs AS OF END-2003	37
1 MILLION AFGHANS DISPLACED AT THE END OF 2002	39
TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs AS OF MID-OCTOBER 2001 AND PROJECTED DISPLACEMENT	39
TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs AS OF APRIL 2001: 300,000-400,000	41
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION	42
SOUTHERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	42
WESTERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	43
NORTHERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	43
SOUTHEASTERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	44
EASTERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	45
CENTRAL REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	46
VULNERABLE GROUPS	47
KUCHIS IDPs, THE LARGEST OF AFGHANISTAN'S DISPLACED POPULATION, NEED ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS (JUNE 2003)	47
DISPLACED WOMEN ARE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE (JUNE 2003)	48
 <u>PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT</u>	 <u>49</u>
 GENERAL	 49
IDPs OFTEN MOVE BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE CATEGORIES OF RETURNEE, IDP, LABOUR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE (AUGUST 2004)	49
PASHTUNS FLEEING THE ETHNIC TENSIONS IN THE NORTH AND KUCHIS FLEEING THE DROUGHT END UP AS DISPLACED IN THE SOUTH (2003)	50
HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND LACK OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION FORCE PEOPLE TO FLEE IN THE WEST TO HERAT (APRIL 2002)	51
 <u>PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT</u>	 <u>52</u>
 GENERAL	 52
HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION STILL FRAGILE (AUGUST 2004)	52
PROTECTION IS LARGELY DEPENDENT ON SOCIAL NETWORKS (MARCH 2003)	52
U.S. "WARLORD STRATEGY" SHOWS PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT A PRIORITY (DECEMBER 2002)	54
PHYSICAL SECURITY	55
100 VICTIMS OF LANDMINES EACH MONTH IN AFGHANISTAN (AUGUST 2004)	55
RETURNING IDPs FACE PRECARIOUS SECURITY CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES (JUNE 2003)	56
 <u>SUBSISTENCE NEEDS</u>	 <u>59</u>
 GENERAL	 59
HEALTH SITUATION REMAINS DRAMATIC DESPITE SOME PROGRESSES (MARCH 2004)	59
FOOD	60
STEADY DECREASE IN MALNUTRITION IN KABUL IN THE PAST YEARS (JANUARY 2004)	60
ENDING OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN CAMPS PUT THE MOST VULNERABLE AT RISK (JUNE 2003)	62
HEALTH	63

NUTRITION AND MORTALITY SITUATION UNDER CONTROL IN KABUL AND IDP CAMPS IN HERAT (FEBRUARY 2004)	63
DIPHTHERIA OUTBREAKS IN ZHARE DASHT IDP CAMP NEAR KANDAHAR (AUGUST 2003)	64
MSF CONCERNED ABOUT THE RELOCATION OF 12,000 IDPs FROM SHAIDAYEE TO MASLAKH CAMP (JUNE 2003)	65
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF DISPLACED PERSONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS URGENT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS (MAY 2003)	66
WATER AND SANITATION	67
ACCESS TO SAFE WATER AND OTHER URBAN SERVICES IN THE MAIN CITIES IS LIMITED (MARCH 2004)	67
MORE THAN A QUARTER OF KABUL'S POPULATION SPENDS AT LEAST 30 MINUTES TO FETCH DRINKING WATER (JANUARY 2004)	68
INCREASE IN POPULATION IN KABUL HAS HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE SANITATION SITUATION IN KABUL (JANUARY 2004)	69
ALL IDP CAMPS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH SAFE DRINKING WATER FACILITIES (DECEMBER 2003)	70
ONLY 20 PERCENT OF AFGHANS HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER (JUNE 2003)	70
ACCESS TO WATER FOR IRRIGATION SOMETIMES DETERMINED BY POLITICAL ALLEGIANCE (MAY 2002)	71
SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS	71
INFLUX OF RETURNEES AND IDPs IN KABUL HAS CREATED A HOUSING CRISIS (JANUARY 2004)	72
IDPs CITE SHELTER AND WATER AS THE MAIN ASSISTANCE NEEDS FOR RETURN TO THE NORTH-WEST (NOVEMBER 2003)	73
RETURN OF DISPLACED AFGHANS HIGHLIGHTS THE FUNDAMENTAL AND URGENT NEED TO ADDRESS HOUSING AND LAND ISSUES (SEPTEMBER 2003)	73
PROJECTED NEED OF 100,000 SHELTER DURING 2003 (APRIL 2003)	75
RETURNEES IN MAZAR-I-SHARIF ARE IN DIRE NEED OF ACCOMODATION (MARCH 2003)	75
IDPs IN CAMPS IN KABUL NEED HOUSING, CLOTHING AND HEATING FACILITIES (JANUARY 2003)	76
 ACCESS TO EDUCATION	 78
 GENERAL	 78
DESPITE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESSES, MANY CHALLENGES REMAIN (MARCH 2004)	78
MANY RETURNING IDP CHILDREN CANNOT AFFORD TO ATTEND SCHOOL AS THEY HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILY (JUNE 2003)	78
 ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	 80
 SELF RELIANCE	 80
UZBEK IDPs IN HERAT WITH DEPLETED ASSETS HAVE PRECARIOUS LIVELIHOODS (AUGUST 2004)	80
MOST AFGHANS LIVE IN POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION (MARCH 2004)	80
MANY RETURNING REFUGEES AND IDPs DISAPPOINTED BY LIVING CONDITIONS IN KABUL (FEBRUARY 2004)	82
RETURNEES AND IDPs PUT PRESSURE ON THE OVERSTRETCHED RESOURCES OF KABUL (JANUARY 2004)	83
OVERCROWDED JOB MARKET AND LACK OF CULTIVATED LAND MAKE RETURN UNSUSTAINABLE (JUNE 2003)	84

DROUGHT, WAR AND ECONOMIC COLLAPSE HAVE CAUSED WIDESPREAD VULNERABILITY AMONG THE POPULATION (MAY 2002)	84
FEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND INCREASING NUMBER OF JOB SEEKERS LIMIT WAGES AND PURCHASING POWER (MAY 2002)	86
IDPs FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BORROW MONEY OR TO PURCHASE GOODS ON CREDIT (MAY 2002)	87
ACCESS TO LAND	87
ACCESS TO LAND IS ONE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY DISPLACED KUCHIS (FEBRUARY 2004)	87
IDP OPERATION PLAN FOR THE SOUTH ENVISAGES THE CREATION OF A LAND ACCESS WORKING GROUP FOR THE RESIDUAL IDP CASELOAD (OCTOBER 2003)	88
DROUGHT AND GROWTH OF FAMILIES IN DISPLACEMENT MAKES LAND A LIMITED SOURCE OF INCOME UPON RETURN (SEPTEMBER 2003)	89
IDPs RESETTLING IN MAZAR-I-SHARIF CANNOT DO SO UNLESS THEY ORIGINATE FROM THE AREA (MARCH 2003)	90
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	90
IDPs IN CAMPS AND THOSE INTEGRATED WITH COMMUNITIES ARE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS (JULY 2003)	90
 PROPERTY ISSUES	 92
 GENERAL	 92
DISPUTES OVER LAND AND PROPERTY OWNERSHIP PROLIFERATE AFFECTING MANY RETURNEES (JULY 2004)	92
THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF LAND AND PROPERTY DISPUTES (JUNE 2004)	93
OCCUPATION OF HOUSES AND PROPERTY BY COMMANDERS AFFECTS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS COUNTRY WIDE (SEPTEMBER 2003)	95
PROPERTY RESTITUTION IS A KEY PROBLEM FACING RETURNING IDPs, REFUGEES AND THE LOCAL POPULATION (SEPTEMBER 2003)	96
INSTITUTIONS	97
SHURAS AND JIRGAS ARE CUSTOMARY MECHANISMS OFTEN USED TO SETTLE LAND AND PROPERTY DISPUTES (JUNE 2004)	97
PROPERTY DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS ARE GENERALLY WEAK AND SUBJECT TO INFLUENCE (SEPTEMBER 2003)	98
 PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT	 100
 POLICY	 100
OPERATION PLAN FOR THE PROTECTION-RELATED IDPs IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	100
OPERATION PLAN FOR THE REGISTAN KUCHIS IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	102
OPERATION PLAN FOR THE NON-REGISTAN KUCHIS IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	105
OPERATION PLAN FOR THE DROUGHT-AFFECTED NON-KUCHIS IDPs IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	107
RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT MOVEMENTS	109
ONLY 17,000 IDPs ASSISTED TO RETURN FROM JANUARY TO AUGUST 2004 (SEPTEMBER 2004)	109
UNHCR RELOCATES SOME 8,000 IDPs FROM SPIN BOLDAK TO ZARHE DASHT CAMP (SEPTEMBER 2004)	109
OVER A THOUSAND IDPs RETURN HOME FROM KHOST PROVINCE (MAY 2004)	110
82,000 IDPs RETURNED DURING 2003 (DECEMBER 2003)	111

CLOSE TO 93,000 IDPs HAVE RETURNED HOME FROM THE WESTERN REGION BETWEEN FEBRUARY 2002 AND SEPTEMBER 2003 (OCTOBER 2003)	112
RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMMES	113
IDP REPRESENTATIVES VISIT NORTHWEST TO ASSESS CONDITIONS FOR RETURN (FEBRUARY 2004)	113
GOVERNMENT FORESEES A GRADUAL INCREASE OF OPERATIONAL FOCUS FROM REPATRIATION TO REINTEGRATION DURING 2003 (NOVEMBER 2003)	114
ASSISTANCE IS BEING PHASED OUT IN THE WEST (OCTOBER 2003)	116
MAINSTREAMING OF IDPs INTO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IS A STRATEGIC LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE (OCTOBER 2003)	117
NO IMMEDIATE RETURN SOLUTION FOR KUCHI IDPs (JUNE 2003)	119
OBSTACLES TO RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT	121
WEAK NATIONAL AUTHORITY IN THE NORTHWEST AND ABUSIVE COMMANDERS DISCOURAGE RETURN OF DISPLACED PASHTUN (SEPTEMBER 2004)	121
LACK OF ACCESS TO LAND AND HOUSING IS THE MOST PREVALENT OBSTACLE TO RETURN (DECEMBER 2003)	123
LANDLESSNESS PUTS PRESSURE ON THE VILLAGE'S LIMITED RESSOURCES AND LEADS TO RENEWED DISPLACEMENT UPON RETURN (SEPTEMBER 2003)	125
ABSENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORK MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR RETURNEES TO SETTLE IN AREAS OTHER THAN THEIR AREA OF ORIGIN (MARCH 2003)	126
INSUFFICIENT ASSISTANCE UPON RETURN CAN LEAD TO RENEWED DISPLACEMENT, RETURN NOT ALWAYS A VIABLE OPTION (SEPTEMBER 2003)	127
CLUSTER BOMBS HINDER RETURN OF IDPs (DECEMBER 2002)	128
OBSTACLES TO LOCAL SETTLEMENT	128
FINDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR IDPs NOT HIGH ON THE LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES' AGENDA (SEPTEMBER 2004)	128
LOCAL INTEGRATION OF IDPs IS HAMPERED BY THE RELUCTANCE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO ALLOCATE LAND (SEPTEMBER 2003)	130
 HUMANITARIAN ACCESS	 131
 GENERAL	 131
SECURITY HAS DETERIORATED IN MANY AREAS OF THE COUNTRY DURING 2004 (SEPTEMBER 2004)	131
VOLATILE SECURITY SITUATION HAMPERS ACCESS TO IDPs AND CONSTRAINS RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES (JULY 2004)	132
BLURRING OF LINE BETWEEN THE HUMANITARIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL PUT AID WORKERS AT RISK (2004)	135
VISIBILITY OF IDPs IN SETTLEMENTS IN KABUL MAKES THEM EASIER TO ASSIST THAN RETURNEES SCATTERED OVER THE CITY (JANUARY 2004)	137
 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES	 139
 NATIONAL RESPONSE	 139
IDP NATIONAL PLAN PROMOTES RETURN AND SUSTAINED REINTEGRATION (APRIL 2004)	139
RETURN COMMISSION FOR THE NORTH SET UP TO FACILITATE THE RETURN OF REFUGEES AND IDPs TO THE NORTHERN PROVINCES (MARCH 2003)	142
DISPLACED PERSONS COUNCIL (DPC) TO COMPLEMENT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NORTHERN RETURN COMMISSION (NOVEMBER 2003)	143

THE AFGHAN INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (DECEMBER 2003)	144
INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE	145
IOM ASSISTS THE DISPLACED WITH THEIR RETURN AND REINTEGRATION NEEDS (AUGUST 2004)	145
THE OGATA INITIATIVE NOW IN ITS FOURTH PHASE (2004)	146
UNHCR ESTABLISHES AN UNIT TO FURTHER THE UNDERSTANDING OF POPULATION MOVEMENTS (APRIL 2004)	148
EUROPEAN COMMISSION INVOLVED IN RECONSTRUCTION AND THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS (OCTOBER 2004)	148
UN SECURITY COUNCIL MISSION CALLS FOR THE RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW IN THE NORTH (DECEMBER 2003)	149
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE REFUGEE AND IDP RETURN PROGRAMME DURING 2003 (SEPTEMBER 2003)	150
INTER-AGENCY MISSION ASSESSES THE IDP SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN (MAY 2003)	151
RETURNEE MONITORING NETWORK ESTABLISHED IN 2002 BY UNHCR AND PARTNERS (JULY 2003)	152
REFERENCE TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT	153
KNOWN REFERENCE TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AS OF DECEMBER 2003	153
COORDINATION	156
MINISTRY OF REFUGEES AND REPATRIATION IN CHARGE OF COORDINATING ASSISTANCE TO IDPs (JANUARY 2004)	157
MRRD IN CHARGE OF ENSURING THE REINTEGRATION OF THE RETURNING IDPs (APRIL 2004)	157
OVERALL COORDINATION FOR THE IDP OPERATION PLAN FOR THE SOUTH LED BY THE CG FOR RETURNEES AND IDPs (OCTOBER 2003)	158
UNHCR IN CHARGE OF COORDINATING THE DELIVERY OF ASSISTANCE TO IDPs AS WELL AS SUPERVISING THE PROTECTION ACTIVITIES (JULY 2002)	159
NGO COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS (APRIL 2002)	162
ASSISTANCE TO IDPs IS COORDINATED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UN THROUGH THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP1 (APRIL 2003)	163
SELECTED UN ACTIVITIES	164
WFP'S ACTIVITIES RANGE FROM FOOD TO REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE (2004)	164
CONTINUED UN ENGAGEMENT WITH IDPs IN 2004 (NOVEMBER 2003)	166
UNHCR'S STRATEGY IN 2004 AND BEYOND (SEPTEMBER 2003)	166
UNHCR'S SHELTER INITIATIVE HAS HELPED 250,000 AFGHANS DURING 2003 (DECEMBER 2003)	167
UNHCR AND PARTNERS DISTRIBUTE NON-FOOD ITEMS TO URBAN DISPLACED IN KABUL (DECEMBER 2003)	168
FAO DISTRIBUTES SEEDS TO RETURNING IDPs (DECEMBER 2003)	169
UNICEF PROVIDES BASIC EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES TO IDPs (DECEMBER 2003)	169
UN-HABITAT PROVIDES SHELTER TO THE DISPLACED IN THE SHOMALI REGION AND IN JALALABAD (JUNE 2003)	170
UNDP AND UNHCR AIM AT ENSURING A SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT (JANUARY 2003)	172
SELECTED NGO ACTIVITIES	172
NRC PROVIDES IDPs AND RETURNEES WITH LEGAL AID AND CONSELLING (MAY 2004)	172
WHO'S DOING WHAT WHERE ? (MARCH 2004)	173
IRC WORKS ON PROPERTY LAW INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS IDPs' LACK OF ACCESS TO LAND AND HOUSING (DECEMBER 2003)	174
ASSISTANCE GAPS	175

IDP NATIONAL PLAN LARGELY UNDERFUNDED (SEPTEMBER 2004)	175
HRW CLAIMS ONLY A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE RECONSTRUCTION AID HAS ACTUALLY BEEN DELIVERED (JANUARY 2004)	176
ACCORDING TO HRW THE AFGHAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LACKS THE POWER TO DO ITS JOB (JANUARY 2004)	177
UN'S STRATEGY NOT EFFECTIVE IN ADDRESSING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION (JANUARY 2004)	177
LACK OF OBJECTIVE, ACCURATE AND NEUTRAL INFORMATION ON CONDITIONS IN AREAS OF RETURN LEAD TO RENEWED DISPLACEMENT (JUNE 2003)	179
AFGHAN AUTHORITIES NEGLECTING SOUTHERN IDPs, INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES NEED TO ADDRESS THEIR LONG-TERM NEEDS (APRIL 2003)	180
RECOMMENDATIONS	180
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DISPLACED PERSONS COUNCIL (DPC) (NOVEMBER 2003)	180
NEED FOR A COHERENT POLICY OF LAND REFORM TOGETHER WITH A RESTORATION OF PEACE AND SECURITY (JUNE 2004)	182
CONDITIONS FOR RETURN SHOULD BE ASSESSED IN CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE IDPs THEMSELVES (SEPTEMBER 2003)	183
INTER-AGENCY MISSION RECOMMENDS THAT UNDP TAKE THE LEAD IN FINDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE NON-PROTECTION RESIDUAL IDPs (JUNE 2003)	184
INTER-AGENCY MISSION RECOMMENDS ESTABLISHING A SMALL TASK FORCE TO ASSIST THE GOV. DEVELOP A POLICY AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR ALL IDPs (JUNE 2003)	185
NEED TO BETTER INTEGRATE EXISTING INFORMATION ON IDPs (JUNE 2003)	186
GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD ADDRESS THE LONG-TERM NEEDS OF THE DISPLACED (JUNE 2003)	187
AMNESTY CALLS FOR A BETTER MONITORING OF RETURN IN URBAN AREAS (JUNE 2003)	187
CONDITIONS IN AREAS OF RETURN SHOULD BE BETTER MONITORED AND IDPs SHOULD BE BETTER INFORMED (JUNE 2003)	188
DROUGHT-INDUCED IDPs' NEEDS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF CONFLICT-INDUCED IDPs IN THE RETURN PHASE (MARCH 2002)	190
UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND UNAMA SHOULD CLARIFY THEIR STRATEGIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND AID CONDITIONALITIES (AUGUST 2002)	191
IDPs UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO RETURN HAVE SPECIFIC PROTECTION NEEDS (JULY 2002)	192
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	193
<u>LIST OF SOURCES USED</u>	196

PROFILE SUMMARY

Drought and instability slow down IDP return

Nearly three years after the fall of the Taleban, conditions in Afghanistan still do not allow for the return of all the internally displaced people (IDPs). Although undeniable progress has been made in many sectors, for the majority of Afghans living outside Kabul, the last three years have certainly not brought about the changes in their living conditions they had hoped for. The rule of the gun has in many areas replaced the authoritarian rule of the Taleban, with warlords and local commanders effectively in charge of much of the country. Reconstruction and development efforts have been impeded by security problems and donor fatigue. After another year of drought and crop failures, more than a third of the Afghan population remains dependent on food aid. Among them are at least 167,000 IDPs, most of them living in camps in the south and the west of the country. Persistent drought, lack of infrastructure and slow reconstruction have considerably slowed down the pace of return during 2004. Only 17,000 IDPs have made the journey home since the beginning of the year. Unable or unwilling to return to their homes, the remaining IDPs, most of them drought-affected nomadic Kuchi, are now in need of long-term solutions that go beyond humanitarian assistance.

For the estimated 440,000 IDPs who returned home during 2002 and 2003, the main need is for a sustained effort by the international community to deliver on its reconstruction pledge in order to further their reintegration. While many have been able to regain their land and houses and managed to secure some level of sustainable livelihood, others have found that their homes have either been destroyed or are now occupied by others. This has led in many cases to complex land and property disputes that will need to be addressed comprehensively if the reintegration process is to succeed. The government adopted a national IDP strategy in April 2004, calling for a total of \$58 million over the next three years. So far, only one per cent of that amount has been pledged. This funding gap and the absence of security conditions allowing for the return of the displaced nearly three years after the official end of the war calls for an urgent stepping up of the level of commitment of the international community. In the absence of a fundamental increase in assistance, the Afghan people run the risk of losing faith in the promises made by the Western countries and Afghanistan could return to more fighting, bloodshed and large-scale displacement.

Background

Two groups are particularly affected by internal displacement in Afghanistan: ethnic Pashtun displaced from the north-west by persecution and Kuchi, a nomadic group which is also of Pashtun ethnicity. The Pashtun, who are widely associated with the previous regime, fled harassment and human rights violations in the northern regions after the overthrow of the Taleban by a US-led coalition in late 2001. The Kuchi are pastoralists who were forced to abandon their lifestyle when they lost their livestock in a drought that began in 1999. They constitute the largest single group of displaced people in Afghanistan.

Following the defeat of the Taleban, an interim government headed by President Hamid Karzai was established. The new government has had little success in extending its authority beyond the limited area around the capital controlled by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and it remains largely dependent on the financial and military backing of the Western countries. The US "warlord strategy", effective in winning the war against the Taleban, has failed to date to provide a secure environment outside the capital and has instead had the effect of putting much of the country back into the hands of powerful commanders. While millions of Afghans took part in the first ever national presidential elections on 9 October 2004, large parts of the country remain outside the reach of any Kabul-based government. The armed struggle of warlords and local commanders for the control of territories and resources, as well as continued attacks by groups reportedly linked to the Taleban, have created a climate of lawlessness and insecurity throughout much of the country and have produced further displacement. In August 2004,

fighting between rival warlords led to the displacement of several thousand people around the western city of Herat (AFP, 17 August 2004).

At least 167,000 people remain displaced

According to UN statistics, the number of IDPs in Afghanistan decreased sharply from 724,000 in December 2002 to 184,000 one year later (UNHCR, 3 January 2003, December 2003). So far in 2004, only 17,000 IDPs have been assisted to return, leaving 167,000 people displaced in camps (UNHCR, September 2004). The main areas of concentration of IDPs are in Zhare Dasht, Panjwai and other settlements in the south, Maslakh camp in the west, and a number of smaller camps in the north.

IDPs who have returned since December 2001 or who live in conditions similar to the general population have been excluded from the statistics on the assumption that they have attained a minimal level of self-sufficiency (Inter-agency mission, 19 June 2003, p. 2). However, the lack of return monitoring in both rural and urban areas, where large number of IDPs have chosen to resettle, means that little is known about their conditions and if they have attained that minimum level.

It has been reported that many of the refugees and IDPs who went back since 2001 have for many reasons been unable to stay. In a report published by Amnesty International in June 2003, many refugees and IDPs claimed that they were not given enough accurate information on the conditions they would find upon return. Many refugees and IDPs were disappointed with the lack of services and jobs they found in urban areas (AREU, February 2004, p. 7). Those who could afford to travel have sometimes turned around and left the country once again, while many have ended up in a situation of renewed internal displacement (AI, 23 June 2003, p. 26). The exact number of IDPs and the scope of renewed displacement are naturally difficult to ascertain, but the number of people falling under the definition of IDPs could be much higher than the UNHCR's official figure.

Return hampered by drought, insecurity and lack of aid

In early 2004, there were hopes that the two main causes of internal displacement – drought and ethnic-based persecution – would end and that a large number of IDPs would be able to return home during the year. These expectations, however, were not met.

The country is battling a sixth consecutive year of drought and water shortages now affect the population in more than half of the provinces. This has prevented the return of the displaced Kuchi and caused the displacement of several thousand people in the south (UNICEF, 30 September 2004). From 20 per cent in 2003, the proportion of Afghans unable to meet basic food and non-food needs has risen to 37 per cent in 2004. The government, in partnership with the United Nations, launched an appeal in early September 2004 asking for \$71 million to cover the immediate food needs of more than six million Afghans in the following six months. The southern provinces are most affected by drought and food insecurity, but northern provinces such as Badakhshan or Faryab, where many displaced Pashtun originated, are also hard-hit (TISA, 1 September 2004, p.2).

The absence of any national or international force capable of enforcing the rule of law outside Kabul remains a major impediment to the return of the remaining internally displaced people, the protection of human rights, and humanitarian access. In June 2004, some 54 NGOs called on the NATO, which is in command of the International Security Assistance Force since August 2003, to do more to address the deteriorating security situation (CARE 22 June 2004).

The US-led coalition has deployed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in major cities since 2003. These PRTs consist of small numbers of combat troops, civil affairs soldiers and civilian US government officials and are designed to "strengthen the presence of the central government, improve security, and facilitate the delivery of reconstruction assistance" (USAID, 13 March 2003, p.1). Many NGOs have expressed concern that the PRT strategy was not an adequate substitute for efficient security measures and

that the involvement of military forces in the reconstruction process was putting aid workers at risk by blurring the line between the humanitarian sector and the military (CARE, 25 July 2003; AFP, 1 September 2004).

Although ethnic-based persecution against Pashtun has reportedly eased in the north-west, the absence of the rule of law and a pattern of continued human rights abuses by local commanders still resulted in threats of illegal taxation, forced recruitment and illegal land occupation during the year. Only 150 Pashtun families returned to the north-west between January and August 2004 (UNHCR, September 2004).

It should be noted that although the two main groups of displaced – the nomadic Kuchi and the Pashtun – have fled for different reasons, these two categories are not exclusive. Some Kuchi IDPs are also prevented to return because of protection concerns. Displaced from the central and eastern provinces for their perceived association with the former Taleban, displaced Kuchi living in the south continue to face the hostility of the Hazara people who oppose their return and the use of grazing lands (RI, 15 July 2004). Other Kuchi had to flee their homes in the north following the fall of the Taleban, to escape persecution from Uzbek and Tajik groups. Most of them sought refuge in IDP camps in the west where some remain displaced.

Other factors discouraging IDP return include land disputes or lack of access to land, the slow pace of reconstruction resulting in a lack of infrastructure and the absence of job opportunities and sources of income to sustain their return. As a result, many prefer to stay in the camps where access to education, health and food is comparatively much better (Pete Spink, September 2004). One of the main reasons for the slowing down or suspension of reconstruction and assistance work has been the sharp deterioration in security conditions throughout the country. In recent months, aid workers have found themselves increasingly the target of attacks by unidentified armed groups, particularly in the south where the brunt of the displaced are located, but also in other provinces. More than 40 aid or reconstruction workers were killed in the first nine months of 2004 (AP, 4 October 2004). In September the UN pulled out of Herat, following riots and the ransacking of UN premises by a crowd protesting against the sacking of governor Ismael Khan by President Karzai (AFP, 12 September 2004). The impossibility of gaining access to many areas for assessment and monitoring activities has generally constrained planning and project development and considerably affected reconstruction.

In addition to the problem of insecurity, the fact that Afghans have not witnessed substantial improvements in their daily lives is also due to an obvious lack of aid and the growing indifference of donors, whose attention has shifted to other emergencies, in Iraq or Sudan. It was estimated in early 2004 that only two to five per cent of the \$7 billion pledged since the Bonn Conference in December 2001 had resulted in completed projects (HRW, January 2004, p.9). The United Nations and the Afghan government estimated at the Berlin Conference in March 2004 that a total external assistance of \$28 billion would be required over a period of seven years (TISA, ADB, UNAMA, UNDP, WB, 17 March 2004, p.11). Less than a third of that amount has been pledged by international donor in the wake of the conference, leaving some experts to doubt that this would be enough to ensure Afghanistan's reconstruction. By comparison, the United States is spending \$12 billion annually on military operation in Afghanistan (Eurasianet, 5 April 2004).

Land and property issues threaten sustainability of returns

For the millions of Afghans who have returned home since the take-over of the country by the US-led coalition, life is hard and reintegration is slow. In a country devastated by 20 years of civil war and a massive bombing campaign in autumn 2001, the return of such a high number of people has placed an enormous strain on overburdened infrastructures and scarce resources (ACF, January 2004, p. 10). The sustainability of returns is clearly threatened by the wider challenges Afghanistan is facing. In addition to the general instability in around two-thirds of the country, the fragile recovery of the mainly farming-based economy has been blighted by years of drought.

Landlessness, or the loss of land and housing during displacement, is often a major obstacle to returns and a cause of renewed displacement. To benefit from the assistance of shelter projects, the returnee must either

hold title deeds to land or get his community to vouch for him. Many refugees and IDPs are returning to places where they have no land and this is placing a strain on already overstretched resources in villages. Given the importance of land ownership in the process of income generation and as a prerequisite for receiving shelter assistance, many returns have been unsustainable.

For those who do hold a title over land, regaining their land and houses has often proved to be difficult. Many returning refugees and IDPs have found that their homes and land had been taken over by neighbours or confiscated by local commanders. Sometimes different groups return to land to which they think they have a legitimate claim and where ownership is unclear. Sometimes the same piece of land has been allocated to different groups by different authorities, or registration books have been lost or destroyed. Also, forgery of property and land ownership documents often adds to the complexity of resolving these issues. The absence of any independent judicial system to settle land disputes and the influence that can be exerted by powerful community members on the traditional *shuras* (village level councils) means that the most vulnerable, in particular unaccompanied women and those without networks, are often not able to enforce their claims (NRC, June 2004, p. 3). Social networks are crucial to get protection, but also to access land.

Most of those who returned to Afghanistan during 2002 and 2003, as well as many IDPs, headed for Kabul and the main cities. The absorption capacity of urban areas, in particular Kabul, is reaching its limits. The reality of urban migration and the absence of economic opportunities in rural areas mean that IDPs are likely to continue resettling in the cities. This will require substantial reconstruction efforts, in particular shelter, as well as an expansion of the provision of basic services, like water and health care.

Assistance to IDPs: long-term solutions needed

The general instability and the deteriorating security conditions in many areas of the country during 2004 have reduced the extent of assistance provided to IDPs in camps and the capacity of aid agencies to monitor the assistance projects. Aid workers only have limited access, for example, to the IDP camps near Kandahar where the majority of the displaced are located. In an effort to break the cycle of dependency and to encourage those who could to return home, relief food has been progressively replaced by food-for-work and food-for-training in IDP camps since 2003 in the west and south of the country. This has reportedly been effective in sorting out the most vulnerable IDPs from nearby residents attracted to the camps by the possibility of getting an extra food ration (Pete Spink, September 2004, p.36). Other strategies to reduce the number of IDPs have included ceasing assistance in camps while offering return, relocation or integration packages to its residents. Assistance was stopped this summer in Spin Boldak camp, in Kandahar province (UNHCR, 5 September 2004).

The government of Afghanistan has generally acknowledged the problem of internal displacement and has taken measures to address the issue. In addition to a National Return, Displacement and Reintegration Strategy adopted in 2003, the government issued an IDP strategy in July 2003, followed by a Regional Operation Plan for the IDPs in the south issued in October 2003. The overall strategy is aimed at finding durable solutions to the remaining number of displaced while continuing to provide assistance and protection within a timeframe of three years (MoRR & MRRD, October 2003, pp.5-6). The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) has overall responsibility for the returnee and IDP programme, but it is supported in its work by the Consultative Group on Refugees and IDPs (CG1). This group consists of the relevant government ministries, UN agencies and NGOs, and its function is to support the MoRR in coordinating and facilitating work related to the return and initial reintegration of returnees and IDPs. Other ministries involved include the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH), which assume responsibility for the reintegration of IDPs within their respective geographic and programme areas (TISA, March 2003, p.4). Among the international community, UNHCR is the lead agency on IDP issues and provides support to the MoRR and the MRRD in assisting IDPs and finding longer-term solutions for the displaced who are unable or unwilling to return (CG1, 18 July 2003).

In April 2004, a National IDP Plan was developed by the MRRD. The plan encourages a shift from care and maintenance to solutions promoting the return of the IDPs to their areas of origin while ensuring their reintegration and coexistence with receiving communities (MRRD, April 2004). Six months after its inception, the National IDP Plan had not succeeded in attracting the attention of donors. Of the \$58 million needed over the next three years, only \$580,000 or one per cent had been pledged.

Initial findings of a recently-conducted survey for the feasibility of return to the Registan desert – home to most of the nomadic displaced Kuchi – showed a rather bleak picture (UNHCR 29 September 2004). It is estimated that many of the displaced Kuchi, who represent some 80 per cent of the total number of IDPs, are likely to be willing to settle down and abandon their traditional livelihood should they be provided with adequate assistance and training to develop alternative skills. A survey conducted in April 2004 among IDPs in the south showed that an average of 65 per cent of IDPs interviewed wished to return to their place of origin if conditions permitted. Of those who refused to go back, a clear majority wished to settle down locally instead of being relocated to other camps or resettled elsewhere in the country (UNHCR April 2004).

So far assistance has been limited to immediate care, and local authorities, preferring IDPs to return home, have shown little interest in finding more durable solutions that would involve for example allocating land to the displaced (Pete Spink, September 2004 p.35; Inter-agency Mission, 19 June 2003, p.5). Given the lack of capacity and will of the local authorities to place the interests of these IDPs before their own political or economic interests, the international community has a responsibility to ensure that this gap is properly addressed (UNAMA, 7 April 2003).

A Return Commission for the North, set up by the government in 2002 to look into the human rights abuses and to promote the return of the displaced Pashtun conducted an assessment mission during 2003 and identified abuses by local commanders. Efforts are still needed to redress these problems and persuade Pashtun IDPs that conditions are conducive to return. A Displaced Persons Council, comprising displaced Pashtun from five northern provinces, was set up in 2003 and has been working with the Return Commission to increase the participation of the displaced themselves in the return process (UNHCR, 15 November 2003). Go-and-see visits conducted by IDP representatives to the north-west at the end of 2003 and in early 2004 concluded that conditions had improved (UNHCR, 12 February 2004). However, the return of so few IDPs to these regions in 2004 shows that many of them consider that conditions are still not conducive and that the return assistance package provided is insufficient to convince them to go back.

The international community needs to step up its assistance to the displaced people to convince those unwilling to return that they will benefit from sufficient assistance to make their reintegration a success. The current funding gap and the absence of security conditions allowing for the return of the displaced nearly three years after the official end of the war, calls for an urgent stepping up of the level of commitment of the international community to Afghanistan. In the absence of a fundamental increase in assistance, the Afghan people run the risk of losing faith in the promises made by the Western countries and returning to more fighting, bloodshed and large-scale displacement.

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 Brahuis practise Sunni Islam and their languages are Brahui and Baluchi." (FAS September 1998)

See also this ethnolinguistic map of Afghanistan:



Source: Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection

The Civil War

A history of conflict (1973-2000)

"Although its history is marked by international wars and internal conflict, Afghanistan was a united and relatively peaceful country until 1973. Governed by a constitutional monarchy, post-World War II Afghanistan, while among the world's poorest nations, was the site of large projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Soviet foreign aid assistance, and other development projects that seemed to be propelling the country slowly forward. By the early 1970s, a small middle class of largely Western-educated intellectuals and professionals emerged to assume leadership positions and push for social and political change. The influence of this segment of Afghan society was, however, confined primarily to the capital, Kabul.

This period ended in 1973 when Mohammed Daoud Khan, a cousin of Afghan ruler Zahir Shah, overthrew the monarchy and created a national republic. The rise of Daoud Khan's government in 1973 marked the end of the post-War era of stability and the beginning of almost three decades of violence.

The Republic survived only five years. In 1978, a small group of Marxists seized power, but its ideology was not well received in Afghanistan, particularly among tribal leaders and the Islamic clergy. Armed resistance erupted in many rural areas as local traditional leaders rejected the Marxist call for such changes as land reform and the emancipation of women.

By 1979, much of Afghanistan was in open revolt and the collapse of the Marxist government appeared imminent. But in late December 1979, the Soviet army entered Afghanistan to support the government. Afghanistan exploded in revolt. What had been a civil war became a war against foreign occupation. From 1980 to 1989, Afghanistan was plunged into a full-scale resistance war against some 100,000 Soviet troops. The resistance was led by various fundamentalist Islamic organisations based in Pakistan and generously financed by Islamic nations and the West, including the United States.

During this period, over five million Afghans fled to Pakistan or Iran, creating the largest refugee population in the world at that time. These refugees included pastoral nomads, peasant farmers and much of the new middle class. Over one million men were killed in the fighting, creating a large population of widows and female-headed households.

When the Marxist government fell in 1992, the Islamic resistance groups swept triumphantly into Kabul and other major cities. They attempted to create a national government in Kabul based on a loose and unworkable pact among the resistance parties. Afghanistan was ruled for one year by a compromise president, Sheikh Mujadidi, a progressive but ineffectual resistance leader. In 1993, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani was selected to lead the country in what was supposed to be a revolving presidency among the various militia commanders. The presidency, however, never revolved; Professor Rabbani, a Tajik, ruled until the Taliban threw him out in 1996. President Rabbani's control of Afghanistan was tenuous and at times did not even include all of the capital itself, let alone the rest of the country.

Outside of Kabul, militia warlords carved much of Afghanistan into private fiefdoms based largely on traditional ethnic and tribal divisions. The militias that had fought together against the Soviet army now turned on each other. Pushtun commanders threatened Kabul from the south; Hazara resistance groups held parts of Kabul itself, including the area around the university; and Kabul was bombed more than once by Uzbek groups in the north. The country was again mired in sectarian conflict.

Refugees began returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran in 1992. Both asylum countries exerted strong pressure on the refugees to return since, as far as they were concerned, the war that had created the refugees was over. In addition, a change in government in Pakistan led to increased pressure on Islamabad

to end the 'refugee problem' in Pakistan. Pakistan closed camps, offered incentives to the Afghan refugees to return to Afghanistan, and tried several times to close the border to Afghans seeking entry into Pakistan. But since fighting erupted again, repatriation was largely unsuccessful; many of those who tried to return were forced to leave again as the fighting intensified.

By the mid-1990s, a large internally displaced population had developed. Relief agencies opened several camps for the displaced in the Jalalabad area. Other camps were opened in the area around Mazar-i-Sharif in the north and in Herat in the west, near the Iranian border. These camps housed over 400,000 displaced persons.

Out of this political chaos, a new ultraconservative Islamic movement began to assert control. Called the Taliban, meaning religious students, a group of *madrasa* (Islamic school) teachers and their students seized the southern city of Kandahar and the surrounding provinces in October 1994 (Rubin, 1999). The Taliban appeared to offer Afghanistan a new Islamic movement, free of the corruption and infighting found in the so-called Islamic government at that time. But their un-stated goal was to return Afghanistan to Pushtun rule: most of the Taliban leaders are Pushtun and their movement received much of its support from Pushtun leaders in the Pakistani government.

In the beginning, most non-Pushtun areas of the country resisted the Taliban movement; but by 1998, the Taliban had gained control of most of Afghanistan, including Kabul, and seized control of the government. In the Taliban's push to power, thousands of combatants and civilians were killed. Only small areas in the north and the central mountains remained outside of Taliban control in late 2000." (Farr, G. 1 September 2001 pp. 120-123)

Overview of main conflict-induced displacement incidents (1992-2001)

- 60,000 people displaced in March by conflict in Yakawlang District, in the Hazarajat area.
- In the first three months of 2001, displacement has occurred from parts of Ragh and Shar-i-Buzurg to North Takhar, Kunduz and Pakistan

"There have been repeated denials of humanitarian access to communities in need of assistance, in particular in Hazarajat. Fighting has resulted in the displacement of upwards of 60,000 people and further re-cent displacement of most of the population of Yakawlang District." (OCHA 24 May 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, Zardrang, 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)

Number of Displaced by Year, Reason for Displacement, Place and Origin (1992-2000)

Period of Displacement	Reason for Displacement	Number of Displaced	Displacement site	Place of Origin
1992-1993	Fear of reprisal from Islamic militias	400,000	Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad	Kabul
1992-1993	Combat	200,000	Kabul	surrounding provinces
1995	Flight from the Taliban	180,000	Kabul and northern Afghanistan	southern areas
1997	Fighting in the provinces near Kabul and in the north.	600,000	Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif	Areas near Kabul and in the northern provinces
1998	Fighting in and around Mazar-i-Sharif	50,000	Mountainous areas in the north	Uzbeks and Hazaras living in Mazar-i-Sharif
Summer 1999	Fighting north of Kabul in the Shomali Plain	100,000	Panjshir Valley	Tajiks from Shomali Plain
Fall 1999	Fighting in the Shomali Plain	12,995	Kabul, ex-Soviet embassy compound	Tajiks from Shomali Plain
Fall 1999	Fighting in the Panjshir Valley	100,000	Northern provinces	Tajiks from Panjshir Valley
Fall 1999	Fighting around Talaqan in Takhar Province (a Tajik stronghold)	16,000	Areas around Faizabad	Tajiks from the Talaqan area.
Winter 2000	Fighting in the Hazarajat	60,000	Near Behsud or Pul-i-Khumri	Hazaras and Tajiks from Bamiyan area
Summer 2000	Fighting in Panjshir Valley and Shomali Plain	50,000	Kabul and Panjshir Valley	Tajiks from the Shomali Plain and the Panjshir Valley
Summer 2000	Fighting around Talaqan in Takhar Province	15,000	Badakhshan area	Tajiks from Talaqan area.

Sources: United States Committee for Refugees (USCR), June 2000; United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO), March 2000; Bashir/Agence France-Presse (AFP), 7 Aug 2000.

The U.S. - Afghanistan war

US ask Taleban to hand over Ben Laden or face military consequences (October 2001)

- Osama Ben Laden prime suspect of September 11 terrorist attacks.

- USA demand that Ben Laden be extradited from Afghanistan or threaten to bomb the country.
- Taleban refuse to hand over Ben Laden but open to negotiation if solid proof is provided.
- US refuse to negotiate and claims that in order to protect its source of information it cannot make the proof publicly available.

"The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon of 11th September resulted in an immediate charge by the USA that Osama bin Laden was responsible for the attacks. The USA demanded that the Taliban hand over Osama bin Laden, adding that those regarded to be harbouring terrorists would be targeted by any US military action. The Taliban have indicated their willingness to negotiate on a possible handover, if they are provided with solid evidence of his implication in the attacks. The governments of other Islamic countries have stated that a key factor in any consideration of what support, if any, they would be prepared to lend to the efforts of the USA to respond to the attacks is whether the normal standard of proof that is required in any extradition proceedings is also applied in relation to the request to the Taliban. The US government has stated that it will provide evidence of Osama bin Laden's involvement but, at the same time, is saying that, in order to protect its sources, it is constrained in the information that it can make publicly available. This is placing the various Islamic governments whose support is being sought in a difficult position. They know that they depend on moderate opinion within their populations to support any assistance they may opt to give to the USA and that such moderate opinion could easily be radicalised if people felt that their own government was party to hostile military action by the USA against another Islamic state. Similar considerations apply in Afghanistan where the Taliban could assert that the USA had opted not to comply with the normal requirements of extradition proceedings and had, instead, resorted to force. This would place them in a very strong position to recruit volunteers to fight for them and to enforce conscription. The question of what evidence is provided and whether this is felt to be convincing by moderate opinion within Afghanistan and the wider Islamic world is thus crucial to the outcome of the current tensions between the US, and its allies, and the Taliban." (BAAG 4 October 2001)

People flee major cities to rural areas in fear of U.S. attacks (January 2002)

- An estimated 1 million people were already displaced within the country prior to the U.S. attacks, with 400,000 living in overcrowded camps. A additional 4 million were internally stuck or stranded.
- 1/4 of Kabul's population and 1/2 of Kandahar's population has reportedly fled in fear of U.S. strikes. Many have returned.
- UNHCR estimated that up to 2.2 million people could be internally displaced by March 2002
- Taleban have reportedly prevented people from leaving Afghanistan
- Some 20,000 people stranded at the closed Pakistan border have either crossed into Pakistan or dispersed into other areas in Afghanistan

"Even before the threat of reprisals following the terrorist attacks on the US, hundreds of thousands of people had already left their villages for camps outside major cities, where they had heard that food was available. It is estimated that there are more than one million internally displaced and more than four million internally stranded people within Afghanistan already. An estimated 400,000 people were living in these camps, in squalid conditions with little water, shelter or sanitation. In August, Medecins Sans Frontiers estimated that already 20-40 people were dying each day. Some reports now state that people are beginning to leave this camp and are heading for the Iranian border, in the hope of finding better provision there.

Near the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, some 200,000 people are thought to be living in camps outside the city. Because of fighting between the Taliban and opposition forces, it is difficult for aid agencies to reach them. It is thought that many will start to head for the borders of neighbouring countries.

(...)

At greater risk however, are those Afghans who remain in their isolated villages, watching their food run out. They have already eaten the grain they had put aside for next year's planting. Many of them will then have no choice but to sit and wait, in the hope that somehow outside aid will reach them.

At this point it is critical to try to enable people to stay in their villages, many of which are completely cut off by snow during the winter. People will therefore only stay if they are sure they have enough food to last through the winter. If they do not stay, there will be a massive exodus of people to the camps, and the humanitarian situation will become much graver.

If people move to camps, it becomes a huge task for them to return to their villages. Their houses may have been damaged or destroyed, no crops will have been planted in their fields, there will be little food around to help them re-establish themselves. Movement to the camps prolongs the effects of the drought, making it even more important that people be enabled to remain in their villages." (ACT 12 October 2001)

"Displacement of Afghans since 11 September 2001:

Initially, the threat of a US-led military strike on Afghanistan and increased Taleban repression caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes, particularly in major cities. A quarter of the population of Kabul and half the population of the southern Afghan province of Kandahar, the headquarters of the Taleban, were said to have evacuated. Prior to the threat, large numbers of people were not fleeing these cities. The already large number of internally displaced persons was estimated to have grown to a total of 1.1 million, which the UNHCR predicted could rise to 2.2 million internally displaced persons by March 2002. While reports indicated that many of those who had left cities have been returning, the huge number of Afghans who were displaced prior to the events of 11 September remain displaced and in great need of assistance.

Reports have indicated that the Taleban have been preventing some refugees from leaving Afghanistan or from moving towards the borders. In one incident, the Taleban reportedly stopped 30 to 40 Afghan families from Herat on their way towards Iran and prevented the men in the families from continuing, saying that they had to join the Taleban forces and fight. It was reported that the women and children in these families turned back as well because they did not want to be separated from their male family members.

Following the most recent displacement of Afghans, Pakistan authorities have strengthened their efforts to prevent new Afghan refugees from entering Pakistan, citing security concerns and their inability to support additional refugees. On 18 September, Pakistan closed its border with Afghanistan, amid reports that the border closure may have in part been due to a US request; the authorities are reportedly allowing only vehicles with Afghan transit goods and Pakistani nationals to enter. It was reported that a group of over 20,000 displaced Afghans who had been waiting at the border with Pakistan near the city of Quetta, despite reported attempts by the Taleban to stop people from leaving Afghanistan, have either found alternative routes into Pakistan or have moved and dispersed into other areas of Afghanistan.

Despite prior indications that borders would be opened to fleeing refugees in the event of US-led strikes against Afghanistan, President Pervez Musharraf announced on 8 October that the border with Afghanistan would not be opened and that only the sick or infirm would be allowed to enter Pakistan. However, UNHCR is preparing for 1 million additional Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

UNHCR has reported that those crossing into Pakistan are mostly women and children and that refugees have said that men are either staying in Afghanistan or returning immediately after accompanying their families to look after livestock, crops, and property." (AI 9 October 2001)

Displacement increased in the Central, South and East regions as a result of the conflict

"Currently, almost 1.2 million Afghans are displaced inside Afghanistan with the north and west of the country accounting for over 60% of total IDPs. Significant numbers of IDPs do not reside in camps, but are hosted by already vulnerable communities. Camp populations tend to be located near cities. Two camp

populations (Spin Boldak in the South, and Makaki/Mile 46 in the West) comprise asylum seekers, who were thwarted by neighbouring countries when they closed their borders.

The reasons for displacement are complex, recalling that prior to events in September significant numbers of IDPs were accommodated throughout Afghanistan. Around one-half of the current caseload is believed to have fled for reasons of drought, or food insecurity, prior to September. Internal displacement increased in Central, South and East regions as a result of the recent conflict. Subsequently, with growing food shortages, more people have left their homes, particularly from Badhis and Ghor. These IDPs are not expected to return home before the second quarter of 2002, in time for the agricultural season, although food assistance to areas facing current shortages may encourage some to return earlier." (UN 21 January 2002, p. 43)

The post-Taleban era

Anti-Pashtun violence campaign displaces thousands in the North (March 2002)

- Since the fall of the Taliban and the re-emergence of warlords, the pashtuns are subject to murder, beating and looting in northern Afghanistan.
- The intimidation campaign has forced at least 20,000 to flee their villages.
- Three political factions active in the north are the Junbish-i Milli-yi Islami, Jamiat-e Islami, and Hizb-i Wahdat, drawn largely from the Uzbek, Tajik, and Hazara ethnic groups respectively.
- Since the fall of the Taliban, each group has targeted the Pashtun community in areas under its control, partly in reprisal for these communities' real or perceived association with the predominantly Pashtun Taliban movement, and partly as a result of political competition in northern Afghanistan.

"For ethnic Pashtuns in northern Afghanistan, it is payback time. They are paying for the sins of the Taliban, simply because most of the Taliban leadership were also ethnic Pashtuns. In the past month, Human Rights Watch has visited dozens of Pashtun communities in northern Afghanistan, personally documenting the devastation. We visited village after village that had been stripped bare by ethnic militias who had sometimes even taken the window frames. We found case after case of beatings, looting, murders, extortion and sexual violence against Pashtun communities.

(...)

Parts of Afghanistan today are beginning to look a bit like they did in the 1992-96 period when warlords carved up the country and brutally abused the civilian population. That era gave rise to the Taliban. Some of those same warlords are back in power in northern Afghanistan, and their forces are responsible for most of the abuses against Pashtun civilians in the north. Our research implicated all three major factions -- the ethnic Uzbek Junbish party, the ethnic Tajik Jamiat party, and the ethnic Hazara Hizb-i-Wahdat party -- in the offenses against Pashtun civilians." (HRW 20 March 2002)

"Armed political factions in northern Afghanistan are subjecting ethnic Pashtuns to murder, beatings, sexual violence, abductions, looting, and extortion, Human Rights Watch said today. The ongoing campaign of violence and intimidation is forcing thousands of Pashtuns to leave their villages.

Over the last four weeks, teams from Human Rights Watch have visited over two dozen villages and communities across northern Afghanistan, from Faryab province in the northwest to Baghlan in the north central mountains. They have documented over 150 separate incidents of violence and looting over the last

three months, some of them as recent as this week. The testimony of Pashtuns across this large area was consistent in its depiction of violence, looting, and intimidation at the hands of local commanders.

(...)

The three political factions active in the north are the Junbish-i Milli-yi Islami, Jamiat-e Islami, and Hizb-i Wahdat, drawn largely from the Uzbek, Tajik, and Hazara ethnic groups respectively. Since the fall of the Taliban, each group has targeted the Pashtun community in areas under its control, partly in reprisal for these communities' real or perceived association with the predominantly Pashtun Taliban movement, and partly as a result of political competition in northern Afghanistan. The abuses have also occurred in a broader context of violence by armed groups, in which Pashtuns -- lacking political and military power in the north -- are acutely vulnerable.

(...)

Human Rights Watch also received testimony about widely prevalent sexual violence and abduction of women in northern Afghanistan. The testimony was especially striking because of social taboos against discussing such issues. While many women were subject to violence due to the general insecurity in the north, Pashtun women seemed especially singled out for attacks. In central Balkh province, Wahdat and Junbish factions targeted Pashtun women for sexual violence, after women in their own communities suffered similar attacks in the past." (HRW 3 March 2002)

"After suffering more than two decades of war in their troubled country, ethnic minorities in northern Afghanistan are now fleeing persecution.

Some 20,000 people, mostly Pashtuns, have been forced to flee northern Afghanistan under threat of persecution in the past few days, a UN official said on Wednesday.

'We are concerned about minorities in the north who have been forced to flee, particularly from Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar, and other areas in the north, predominantly Pashtuns, who are minorities in those areas,' said UN official Yussuf Hassan.

While Pashtuns are the majority in the country overall, in northern Afghanistan they are a minority in the mostly ethnic Uzbek and Tajik areas.

'In the last few days we have seen thousands of people fleeing southwards, stranded, I would say, on the Afghan-Pakistani border, nearly 20,000 of them,' he said.

These latest victims of the turbulent situation in Afghanistan have fled persecution and violence as old ethnic rivalries return to the surface.

'The story they tell us is that they have been forced from their land, their houses have been looted and the women have been mistreated,' he said." (AFP 21 February 2002)

Abuses by armed militias, lack of food and emergency assistance force people to flee in Western Afghanistan (April 2002)

- Findings of this report indicate that local Afghan forces of Uzbek ethnic origin appear to have systematically abused ethnic Pashtuns particularly in western districts that are primarily Pashtun villages.
- The primary reason people are fleeing their homes and seeking humanitarian assistance in the Shaidayee camp for internally displaced persons (IDP), is that food and emergency aid were not available in their home villages.
- A study conducted by Physicians for Human Rights in Shaidayee Camp in Herat revealed that Pashtun families were two to five times as likely to be victims of human rights violations as non-Pashtuns.

- Abuses against civilians in both the Northern and Western regions include rape, harassment, extortion, land seizure, killings, disappearances, beatings, looting and intimidation.
- The Afghan Interim Government appointed an independent commission to investigate alleged ethnically-based abuses against Pashtuns in Northern Afghanistan, however the capacity of the commission has been limited by the power and influence of the local commanders in these areas

"The collapse of the Taliban regime in November 2001 gave the people of Afghanistan hope that after 23 years of war, the international isolation and human rights abuses that they suffered would come to an end. The Bonn agreement, the installation of the Interim Government, the future prospect of democratic reforms and the deployment of international security forces in Kabul, heralded a new Afghanistan and a promise of international support and cooperation. Yet, armed factional groups have continued to commit human rights abuses against civilian ethnic groups, especially in areas where there is little presence of international or local security. The findings of this report indicate that local Afghan forces of Uzbek ethnic origin appear to have systematically abused ethnic Pashtuns particularly in western districts that are primarily Pashtun villages. The study also shows that the primary reason people are fleeing their homes and seeking humanitarian assistance in the Shaidayee camp for internally displaced persons (IDP), is that food and emergency aid were not available in their home villages.

In April 2002, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) surveyed 509 IDP households in Shaidayee Camp in Herat, Afghanistan. The study revealed that Pashtun families were two to five times as likely to be victims of human rights violations as non-Pashtuns. While it is not clear how many of the abuses were directly ordered by local commanders, violations against ethnic Pashtuns were pervasive enough that commanders and local authorities are likely to be aware of them. Nonetheless, little has been done to insist upon order or to end persecution of the Pashtun. Predominantly Pashtun Afghans associated with the Taliban regime were guilty of many abuses against men, women, and children from minority ethnic groups, and in particular the Uzbeks and Hazaras. It appears now to be the case that some individuals as well as military figures are acting against Pashtun civilians by way of reprisal. Alternatively, some abuses may simply be opportunistic attacks to steal or look for the weakest within a community. Whatever the motivation of the perpetrators, however, the crimes against unarmed ethnic Pashtun families are human rights abuses that set the stage for further ethnic tension within Afghanistan - a development the country can ill afford.

(...)

Civilians in both the Northern and Western regions of Afghanistan have reported human rights abuses in their districts of origin to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations offices. These abuses include rape, harassment, extortion, land seizure, killings, disappearances, beatings, looting and intimidation. Many of these violations have been reported by civilians as reprisals against Pashtuns, the Afghan ethnic group most commonly associated with the Taliban regime.

Recently, the Afghan Interim Government appointed an independent commission to investigate alleged ethnically-based abuses against Pashtuns in Northern Afghanistan, which had been documented by Human Rights Watch. However, the capacity of this commission to effectively address violence against Pashtuns in Northern and Western Afghanistan has been limited by the power and influence of the local commanders in these areas. Even with the removal of the commanders who are reportedly implicated in the abuses against Pashtuns in their communities, especially in Faryab, the violations continue under the watch of other commanders who were placed to protect Pashtun villages from such acts.

Despite measures to protect civilian populations, over the last three months a large influx of long-term internally displaced persons (IDPs) have fled to the Herat province in Western Afghanistan from Ghor, Baghdis, Faryab, Farah, and Balkh provinces, and have settled in Shaidayee IDP camp on the outskirts of Herat city. According to UNHCR, many of the IDPs reported that they fled their home villages due to lack of food distribution and the need for emergency assistance. Others, especially Pashtuns, also reported that abuses had occurred in Pashtun villages in many Provinces in the Western Region.

" (PHR April 2002)

See also:

All Our Hopes Are Crushed: Violence and Repression in Western Afghanistan, HRW, 5 November 2002

Insecurity and forced recruitment in the north cause displacement and hamper return (April 2003)

- UNHCR report continued arrival of Pashtuns IDPs in the south as a result of harassment and insecurity in the north
- Most IDPs are in the south (350,000) in 6 displacement settlements. 15% of them are Pashtuns
- Psychosocial effect of persecution means that IDPs will reluctant to go back to the north for a while
- Forced recruitment by factional leaders in the north force people to flee.
- There is concern that IDPs returning from the western areas will be exposed to forced recruitment

Harassment and insecurity in the North displace ethnic Pashtuns to the South

"The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) maintains that arrivals of internally displaced persons (IDPs) - mostly ethnic Pashtuns - in the south of the country as a result of harassment and insecurity in the north are continuing.

'We do have protection cases, human rights cases of Pashtuns coming from the north, still in small numbers, but continuing,' Maki Shinohara, a spokeswoman for UNHCR, told IRIN in the Afghan capital, Kabul.

There are hundreds of thousands of IDPs throughout Afghanistan today, about 350,000 of whom are in the south, most of them in six displacement settlements in Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

'What is notable is that there are still people arriving at these settlements, fleeing harassment and insecurity from the northern provinces of Faryab, Jowzjan and Badghis,' Shinohara said, noting that in the second half of March, 45 families had arrived at the livestock market in Kandahar, joining some 100 displaced families already there.

According to UNHCR some 15 percent of IDPs in the south are Pashtuns from the north, who might not be able to return in the near future.

'In some specific provinces of the north where there is factional fighting going on, there are some local commanders who have been confiscating land illegally, not only from Pashtuns - there have been others affected too - but mainly Pashtuns,' Shinohara said, noting that the working group of the Return Commission in the north, composed of local authorities and the Afghan Human Rights Commission, was trying to make headway in identifying areas for possible return, and would then visit the displaced Pashtuns in the south with concrete proposals.

'Objectively, even if the situation might be OK for the people to come back, having the experience of being harassed out of their homes or the experience of fleeing from them, does take some time for the people themselves to be convinced and confident enough to go back,' Shinohara said, adding that UNHCR was encouraging dialogue between the villagers as well as with the authorities in the north. 'It's basically up to the authorities to regain the trust of their people and to work on solving the problems which are displacing people,' she said." (IRIN 15 April 2003)

Forced recruitment on the increase in the northern regions

"The senior human rights advisor and the political advisor of UNAMA said that forced recruitment is currently taking place in the northern areas of Afghanistan.

An international source advised that the extent of forced recruitment is on the increase and should be seen in the context of the tension between the various factions in the northern region. The source has received reports indicating that the forced recruitment during the months of August of September 2002 took place particularly in the provinces of Sar-e-Pul, Jowjzan, Balkh and Samangan.

According to the source, forced recruitment is carried out in different ways. Firstly, it was reported, in late August young men were picked up from the street in Sar-e-Pul. Many of these were working for national NGOs. According to the source, forced recruitment is carried out by both sides - by the Junbesh as well as by the Jamiat forces. It is said that Atta has ordered 1000 new recruits to be found for the forces in the Balkh province, while Junbesh are recruiting especially in Samangan and Jowjzan. Other forms of forced recruitment consist of the commandant going to the villages where he negotiates a sum of money in exchange for men. Amounts as high as 10-20 million. Afghani per person have been reported, (approximately between USD 220 and 445 per person). In some instances higher amounts have been mentioned. If the families are unable to pay, the young men are picked up. There are also reports of physical violence in the form of beatings of families.

According to the source, the local community often helps the family to pay. There are also examples of some families in an IDP-camp in the Samangan province having recently been asked to supply 20 recruits, but they only supplied three and sent the rest of the young men in the camp away from the area to another IDP-camp in the Kandahar region (Spin Boldak). There are rumours that forced recruitment involves people as young as 12-13 years, but according to reports, verified by the source, it was actually young men aged between 18 and 20 years.

The source also said that in May 2002, a decree was issued by the president about military service, which according to this decree, must take place voluntarily. However, according to the source it seems unclear whether this decree has come into force, and how it is to be implemented in practice.

Finally, the source expressed concern, that the Pashtuns currently returning from western countries might become a primary target for forced recruitment in the northern regions. The source emphasized that there have not as yet been any examples of this happening, but that it is an issue, which gives cause for general concern.

According to CCA, forced recruitment to the Jamiat forces in Takhar province is also currently taking place. According to the source, these are forces belonging to the commandant Daoud, who is based in Kunduz. CCA has received reports that families, who refuse to supply a recruit, instead must pay 4 million Afghani (about USD 85)." (DIS March 2003, pp. 27-28)

Land tenure problems cause renewed displacement upon return (September 2003)

- The majority of the people constituting the "squatters" in Kabul are urban poor, some of them are also returnees who have become displaced upon return because of land tenure problems
- Land problems continue to generate new displacement with houses attacked and property looted by local commanders.
- The majority of the new urban population has chosen to come to the urban areas seeking better employment opportunities and has not been 'forced' to relocate. Many have become urbanized after many years in exile and do not wish to return to their homes in the rural areas.

- Many of the remaining 600,000 IDPs are unwilling or unable to return.
- Many refugees have become internally displaced upon return to Afghanistan and are still looking for durable solutions.
- Some refugees returning from Pakistan have found that their homes were occupied by a rival ethnic group and they have been forced to set up informal settlements.
- Less than 10 percent of Afghanistan's road infrastructure is paved and some IDPs have ended up in situation of renewed displacement because they could not reach their home areas.

"A substantial number of refugees have also been subsequently displaced upon return, as a result of land tenure problems in their areas of origin, calling into question the sustainability of return for many of them. Though the majority of the people constituting the "squatters" in Kabul are urban poor, some of them are also returnees who have become displaced upon return because their land has been occupied while they were in exile, and who were unable to reclaim it. One such example can be found in sub-district 3 of Kabul province, where 153 families live at the building of the Chaplq shoe factory. (...)

Along the same lines, in sub-district 8 and 10 of Kabul City, a number of Hazara families from Sharistan, have claimed that persons affiliated to two major commanders Toran Abdul Ali and Arif Dawari had occupied their houses and land.

(...)

The same holds true for IDPs returning to their areas of origin. In the Eastern region, 89 Gujur families had returned from Hesar Shahi camp to Baghlan in January 2003. Unfortunately, 86 families did not return to their village of origin of Qalai Murad in Dahane Gure district, and opted to live in Dari Larkhab, and Piazzul villages of Doshi district. The reason being that they have no property, and that the houses they used to live in, had been occupied by members of the Tajik minority, who claim to be the rightful owners.

Land problems continue to generate new displacement. In the North, 62 families were reportedly displaced from Chagatak village in Almar district in Maimana. The commanders there had reportedly looted their houses and property, and occupied their houses. Similarly, 160 families were displaced from the village of Jalaier district of Khuja Namusa district. After the Taliban regime fell, a commander attacked their houses and all their property was looted.

Though a large proportion of the population in the urban areas is originally from other areas, that is not to suggest that most of them have been forced to relocate. The majority has chosen to come to the urban areas seeking better employment opportunities. In addition, given that they have spent many years in exile, many have become quite urbanized in Pakistan and Iran, and therefore do not wish to return to their areas. Due to their prolonged stay in exile, many of these refugees have become urbanized and do not therefore wish to move back to their original rural areas. This is for example the case of the refugee group in Basu Camp, who have indicated quite strongly to UNHCR and the Afghan authorities that they do not wish to return to their areas of origin." (UNHCR 1 September 2003, p. 4)

"For many of the estimated 600,000 IDPs in Afghanistan, return to their homes or places of origin remains a distant dream. IDPs in Kabul city, in the north and in the west of the country are either unable or unwilling to return. In addition, there are large groups of, mainly Pashtun and Kutchi IDPs in southern provinces that are similarly unable to return to their homes in the north. UNHCR has noted that "many of the reasons that have caused people to become internally displaced in Afghanistan are similar to those that have resulted in them seeking refuge abroad. In the same vein, many of the solutions to internal displacement are similar to those for refugees." To this could be added the fact that many refugee returnees have been forced into a situation of internal displacement upon their return to Afghanistan and, therefore, are still in search of a durable solution to their displacement. Amnesty International interviewed a group of Ismaili IDPs originally from Doshi district, Baghlan province, who had returned from Pakistan in 2002 only to find their land occupied by people from a rival ethnic group. Having been prevented by threats of

violence from reclaiming their land, the Ismailis have been forced to set up informal settlements on government-owned land in Pul-i-Khumri.

(...)

The security situation encountered by many returnees on the road to their place of origin or preferred destination is very precarious. Less than 10 percent of Afghanistan's road infrastructure is paved, which has meant that much of the road system is prone to flooding and often impassable during periods of rain. Much of Ghor province in the west of the country was unreachable for this reason during early 2003, and there were frequent reports of fatalities involving vehicles carrying returning refugees and IDPs being washed off the dirt track roads.

Amnesty International has also received reports of IDPs ending up in renewed displacement because of their inability to reach their villages/places of origin. In one case, a group of IDPs were forced to remain displaced within an informal settlement in Chaghcharan city, a main urban centre in Ghor province. They had been transported up to this point by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) but had then been unable to make their way to their villages due to the terrible road conditions." (AI 23 June 2003, pp. 13-14)

See also "[Landlessness puts pressure on the village's limited resources and leads to renewed displacement upon return \(September 2003\)](#)"

Factional fighting in western Afghanistan force thousands to leave their homes (August 2004)

- Troops of Herat's strongman, Ismael Khan have clashed with forces of rival Amanullah Khan in August 2004 and forced thousands residents out of their homes.

"Forces opposed to western Afghan strongman Ismael Khan appeared poised to try and capture the region's most prosperous city Herat Tuesday after capturing a key district, sending residents fleeing in fear of further bloodshed weeks ahead of presidential polls.

Troops loyal to Khan, governor of vast Herat province bordering Iran, have failed to halt the march of rival Pashtun commander Amanullah Khan's forces despite battling them for the last four days, Afghan and foreign intelligence officials told AFP.

Amanullah's forces broke through Ismael Khan's frontline at Astrakan district some 85 kilometres (52 miles) south of Herat city Tuesday morning, officials on both sides said.

'In the morning Ismael Khan's troops attacked Amanullah's. Later the fighting became very tense and Amanullah's troops broke through Khan's frontline at Astraskan,' a local intelligence official told AFP, asking not to be named.

'Around 10.30 am (0600 GMT) they took control of Astrakan district.'

The fresh clashes highlight Afghanistan's edgy security situation as the country prepares for its first-ever presidential elections on October 9. Rife insecurity has already forced the postponement of parliamentary elections until April 2005.

As Amanullah's troops began to march towards Herat airport some 20 kilometres (12.4 miles) south of the city center, citizens living near the airport fled their homes to take cover in Herat, residents said." (AFP 17 August 2004)

See also:

["Residents flee intense Herat fighting", Aljazeera.net, 17 August 2004](#)

Afghanistan's warlord problem (2004)

- According to HRW, Afghans perceive the warlords/local factional leaders and military commanders as a more pressing security issue than the Taliban.
- The warlords dominate government and national institutions at all levels. Most have poor human rights records.
- Although progress in many areas in the two and a half past years, there has been almost no progress on the political development of the country.
- In most provinces, local military commanders or factional leaders act autonomously as de facto government leaders.

"While many observers inside and outside Afghanistan continue to focus on the Taliban as the main threat to human rights and political development, in most parts of the country Afghans told Human Rights Watch that they are primarily afraid of the local factional leaders and military commanders—not the Taliban insurgency. Far from a Taliban problem, most Afghans tell us that their main fear is of *jangsalaran*—the Dari and Pashto word for “warlords.” They say that Afghanistan has a warlord problem—a problem with military factions dominating government and national institutions, including local governments and the army, police, and intelligence services. And as many Afghans say, this warlord problem is ultimately a human rights problem.

Almost all of the warlord factions are implicated in past and ongoing human rights abuses and political repression, much of which Human Rights Watch has documented in previous reports.

(...)

Over the last two-and-a-half years there has been progress in several areas. The Afghan government has gradually re-built some of the apparatus of state power in Kabul. Development efforts have begun in provinces outside of Kabul, including construction of roads, schools, and hospitals, contributing to the growth of Afghanistan's economy. And although the majority of school age girls remain without adequate educational opportunities, millions of girls have returned to school, and universities are functioning. Training has begun of a new Afghan army and central police force. An Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, called for by the Bonn Agreement, was founded and has begun to expand its activities. Limited legal reform processes and training of judges and lawyers have begun.

But Afghanistan's political development has remained stagnant, as many of the Bonn Agreement's most important provisions have been either forgotten or ignored. Militia forces occupying Kabul were never withdrawn from the city, no significant disarmament of militia forces nationwide has taken place (demobilization has been reduced to a goal of less than 40 percent, which will not come close to being met), and many militia leaders have retained their autonomous leadership over what are essentially private armies. Many of the country's various militia forces have fortified their strength. The national Loya Jirgas were held, and a constitution approved, but both processes were marked by widespread threats and political repression by warlord factions, as Human Rights Watch has documented in past reports.¹

Factions and local autonomy

Worse still, Afghanistan's militias remain highly factionalized and autonomous. Officially, all existing military forces are unified under and responsible to the central government, but in reality most forces are controlled by various regional commanders. Most sub-commanders around the country are loyal first to other regional factional leaders, who then maintain varying degrees of overall loyalty to Karzai.

(...)

Over the last two-and-a-half years, many of President Karzai's orders have been defied or ignored by commanders, including General Fahim. In most provinces, local military commanders or factional leaders act autonomously as de facto government leaders. Most of them have little tolerance for political freedoms, and use their localized control of army and police to intimidate opponents.

(...)

In sum, Afghanistan today resembles more a loose confederation of small fiefdoms than a unified sovereign nation. Specific conditions in each region and province vary, but the overarching characteristic across the country is the same: de facto control of local governance lies with militarized faction leaders. Afghanistan's poor security situation is often blamed entirely on the Taliban and other insurgent forces, although in reality many districts are insecure because of violence and instability caused by factions ostensibly affiliated with the government.

(...)

The main military factions around Afghanistan include:

- Jamiat-e Islami-yi Afghanistan (hereafter "Jamiat")/Shura-e Nazar/Nehzat-e Melli
- Ittihad-i Islami Bara-yi Azadi Afghanistan (hereafter "Ittihad")/Daw'at-e Islami
- Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-yi Afghanistan (hereafter "Wahdat")
- Junbish-e Milli-yi Islami-yi Afghanistan (hereafter "Junbish")
- Harakat-e Islami-yi Afghanistan (hereafter "Harakat")
- Durrani Pashtun tribal militias, based in and around Kandahar
- Forces based in and around Herat previously loyal to Ismail Khan (in flux)
- Taliban and Hezb-e Islami insurgent forces

Taken together, these factions control the majority of Afghanistan outside of Kabul. The Afghan National Army—a small set of divisions newly trained and under Karzai's control—have been deployed to some areas, including the cities of Jalalabad, Khost, Gardez, and Herat, but in most cases they are outnumbered by local factional forces." (HRW 28 September 2004, pp. 2-12)

Natural disasters

Rain returns to southern Afghanistan after 4 years of drought (June 2003)

- Rains have returned to southern Afghanistan after 5 years of drought.
- Pastoralist Kuchis have been the worst affected by the drought with thousands forced into displacement.
- Although rain is providing some hope, it will be years before the nomads will be able to build up their flocks again.

"After five years of the worst drought in decades, the rains have finally returned to southern Afghanistan and the villagers are celebrating the filling of the Band-i-Dhala reservoir 35 kilometres (22 miles) north of Kandahar.

The reservoir, which is the main water supply for Shah Wali Kot district, ran dry in June 2000 for the first time since it was built in 1952.

The drought had gradually worsened but the then Taliban government had no plan for coping with the impending disaster.

Known as the breadbasket of Afghanistan and famed for its pomegranates, grapes and other fruit, the lack of rain turned the usually lush Arghandab valley into a virtual desert.

Richer farmers started digging tube wells but their attempts to find water were frustrated as the level of the water table dropped further and further.

Thousands abandoned their parched farms, some moving to other areas in search of a livelihood while more simply became refugees from the drought, which also spelt disaster for nomadic Kuchi herders who were forced to sell their surviving livestock and beg.

'Among all the population, the Kuchis were the most severely affected by the drought,' says Ahmad Zahir of Kandahar's department of agriculture.

'They lost all their livestock, animals and livelihood. Some of their sheep died, some became ill and others they could only sell for just 100 Pakistani rupees (two dollars),' he said.

Kuchis make up more than 70 percent of the 350,000 internally displaced people in southern Afghanistan, according to the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR).

Last winter's and spring rains brought a degree of relief from the drought, although it will be years before the nomads are able to build up their flocks again. Villages and farms along the Arghandab valley have, however, finally received enough water to give them hope." (AFP 6 June 2003)

See also: "[Over 74,000 internally uprooted Afghans return home after easing of drought](#)", AFP, 20 July 2003

"Four consecutive years of drought, lack of water for drinking and agriculture combined with already high debts, mean that an estimated 40 per cent of households in Zabul province, Southern Afghanistan are on the brink of displacement. Almost a third of the population have moved in recent years, many to neighbouring villages. In most villages more than half of the men have left in search for work. Immediate action is required to prevent further displacement and to assist those already displaced within the province. A combination of emergency food distribution and rehabilitation activities such as cash-for-work schemes is needed. In May 2002, CAFOD's Caritas partner CORDAID and its local partner the Voluntary Association for the Rehabilitation of Afghanistan (VARA) identified an estimated 3,000 vulnerable households in two districts in Zabul province in need of emergency assistance, Mizan and Attaghar.

As well as suffering from drought and the large-scale migration of skilled labour, agricultural and irrigation infrastructures had been damaged or destroyed during recent wars. As a result water sources had dried up completely in the mountain valleys and were seriously depleted on the plains. As refugees returned from neighbouring Iran and Pakistan scarce food supplies were being stretched further." (CAFOD January 2003)

Floods displace thousands in western Afghanistan (January 2004)

- More than 5,000 people have been displaced by floods in the western province of Herat.
- Homes and thousands of acres of agricultural land have been lost.
- A UN disaster emergency task force had decided that a joint UN and government mission would be sent to the affected villages.

"More than a thousand families have been displaced and many residential areas and agricultural fields affected after severe rainfall and flooding in the western province of Herat.

According to the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) Thursday's flooding affected Guzara district and some parts of Herat city, the provincial capital. In addition to the families that lost their homes, thousands of acres of agricultural land have been completely destroyed.

'Over 500 families have lost their homes and have been displaced in Kul, Becharkhy and Shamaka villages of Guzara, while around 500 other families lost their homes in Herat city as well,' Nooruddin Ahmadi, head of ARCS' western region, told IRIN from Herat on Monday. Ahmadi added that the disaster had also destroyed many bridges, schools and mosques. 'Around 80 million sq metres of agricultural land had also been destroyed,' he maintained.

ARCS said affected families were in dire need of food and non- food items, mainly tents. 'They have taken refuge in neighbouring villagers' homes and food, clothing and shelter are desperately needed,' Ahmadi explained.

The United Nations in Kabul reported that a disaster emergency task force had decided that a joint UN and government mission would be sent to the affected villages. 'The exact number of displaced people is not known at this time but if a humanitarian intervention is necessary, immediate assistance is available,' Manoel de Almeida e Silva, a spokesperson of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) told IRIN.

Latest ARCS reports indicated that a needs assessment had been conducted and food and other items would be distributed to the most severely affected families on Tuesday. 'We are meeting today with UNAMA and PRTs [US-led civil military Provincial Reconstruction Teams] to see what any of the aid parties can contribute to ARCS emergency response to be distributed tomorrow,' Ahmadi said." (IRIN 19 January 2004)

Droughts causes sharp rise in food insecurity as thousands move in search of water (September 2004)

- 2004 was the sixth year of drought since 1997.
- Water shortages now affect the population in more than half of the provinces.
- This has prevented the return of the displaced Kuchis and caused the displacement of several thousand people in the south.
- From 20 per cent in 2003, the proportion of Afghans unable to meet basic food and non-food needs has risen to 37 per cent in 2004

"Analysis of past rainfall data in Afghanistan and in neighboring central and southwest Asian countries shows that the region has experienced four severe region-wide droughts in the past century. These drought events took place in 1898-1905, 1944-45, 1970-72, and 1997-present. 2004 was the sixth year in which rain and snowfall were significantly below average in Afghanistan, exacerbating the chronic water shortage that has been plaguing the country since 1997. Populations are now threatened in localised pockets in at least 17 provinces across the country. Specifically, this is a result of an increase in temperature by 3.5oC to 4.8oC, accelerated depletion of snow-packs, increased evaporation of surface water and lowered soil moistures, all compounded by a poor harvest and crop failure due to unanticipated water shortage, and outbreaks of pest and plant diseases. Additional contributing factors include the available vegetation that, according to the Normalised Difference Vegetation Index³ is substantially lower than last year; the falling water table documented in many locations; the erosion of riverbanks; and increasing desertification.⁴ Afghanistan's population has also increased by 3 million due to refugee return since 2002, adding pressure to shrinking natural resources.

Reduced precipitation last spring resulted in a harvest that was lower than expected, in particular for cereals. With winter approaching, at-risk populations have little stored food or water. After a record harvest in 2003, the NVRA recently estimated 3,609,338 people are more food insecure in 2004 than a year ago, and are expected to face a food deficit of up to seven months.⁵ Modelling by the NVRA on existing data suggests that 37% of the population will not be able to cover their basic food and non-food needs through the harvest 2005. This compares with an overall food insecurity rate estimated to be 20% after the exceptional harvest of 2003. Nimroz (92%), Kandahar (70%), Paktika (60%), Zabul (57%), Kunar (56%), Logar 54%, Faryab (53%) were all provinces with over 50 percent of the population not being able to meet their basic food needs for the full winter and spring season.

When accounting for population size, Nangarhar, Herat, Ghazni, Badakhshan, and Uruzgan were the five provinces with the largest number of individuals not able to meet their basic food needs until the next harvest. Of these five provinces, Badakhshan, is the most surprising, as reports note that agriculture production was good in the region this year. However, because of the large population size and the under-reporting of poppy income, it shows up as one of the provinces with a large number of individuals in need of assistance. It is important to realize that this large number of individuals is reflective of only 27% of the population needing assistance. A year later, this figure has more than doubled to 6,480,637, with the highest increases in Nimroz, Kandahar, Paktika and Kunar. 92% of the population in Nimroz and 70% of the population in Kandahar subsist on less than 2,100 kilocalories a day.

The key cause of any displacement is the lack of drinking water, as shallow wells and karezes dry up. Displacement could be much higher than documented so far, with people moving within their family support networks. 80-90% of the population access their drinking water from ground water sources. Recently compiled data from MIWRE/FAO indicates that 70-100% of springs, karezes and rivers have dried in the west, south and east of the country. Precise figures are unrecorded but the stress on fragile coping mechanisms is expected to have intensified for those whose households have increased. Population displacement is estimated at close to 4,000 people, with 3,000 displaced from Kandahar and Helmand provinces." (TISA 1 September 2004, p. 2)

See also:

-Emergency Drought Assessment in 12 Vulnerable Southern Provinces, Ministry of Irrigation, Water resources and Environment, 26 July 2004

Political developments

Loya Jirga adopts new Constitution amid political intimidation (January 2004)

- New constitution adopted by Constitutional Loya Jirga on 4th January 2004.
- The relative power of the Pushtun population within the government appears to have been strengthened by the adoption of a strong presidency.
- HRW has criticized the process by pointing to the important role played by warlords and factional leaders
- HRW argues that constitution fails to adequately address the role of Islamic law and its relationship to human rights protections, resulting in potential violations of human rights standards.
- Past war crimes and serious human rights abuses are not addressed.

"Agreement was finally reached on 4th January 2004 on a new constitution for Afghanistan. Discussion at the Constitutional Loya Jirga convened on 14th December was often heated and revealed clear fault lines between Pushtuns and non-Pushtuns, between men and women, between conservatives and liberals and between those who had fought in the jihad and those brought in from the diaspora. There was the inevitable manoeuvring behind the scenes, with the US government, among others, actively seeking to influence the outcome. The participation of 100 women among the 502 delegates ensured that their voice was heard and, although there were comments made from the floor which were indicative of conservative values, there was also a willingness among some of the traditional elements to listen to the perspectives expressed by the women delegates.

It was clear that President Karzai had sought to build Pushtun support for the constitution in advance of the Loya Jirga, in a likely effort to reduce backing for the Taliban in the south, and that he was reluctant to give too many concessions to the other minorities, notably the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmens and Hazaras. These minorities challenged his power by arguing against a strong presidency and, instead, advocating for the creation of a post of Prime Minister or at least a parliament with sufficient powers to maintain an effective check against excessive Presidential power. However, concern was expressed by those arguing for a strong presidency that the absence of a strong party political tradition would leave parliament subject to factional divisions based on the possession of force.

The manoeuvrings surrounding the Constitutional Loya Jirga would thus appear to have strengthened the relative power of the Pushtun population within the government. It is clear from the proceedings that the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkomans and Hazaras now fear a gradual return to the previous Pushtun dominance and this is likely to heighten inter-ethnic tensions and make the ethnic issue a more prominent one in the months to come.

(...)

A key area of debate at the Loya Jirga was whether elections to the National Assembly should be held at a later date than those for the President. Those who were calling for a strong parliament were able to secure a provision that "every effort shall be made to hold the first presidential election and the parliamentary election at the same time". However, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the timing of both elections while many argue strongly for them to be postponed until the security situation is conducive to a free and fair process." (BAAG 31 December 2003)

"Afghanistan's constitution contains new human rights provisions and mandates better political representation of women, Human Rights Watch said today. But domination of the approval process by warlords and factional leaders raises serious concerns about whether the country can hold free and fair elections this year.

'Human rights protections were put on paper,' said John Sifton, Human Rights Watch's researcher on Afghanistan. 'But there were a lot of missed opportunities, and complaints about threats and corruption during the convention.'

Human Rights Watch noted that there were significant achievements at the meeting. The single biggest gain is that women are now guaranteed a substantial number of seats in Afghanistan's bicameral National Assembly. Approximately 25 percent of seats in the Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) are reserved for women; the president is obligated to appoint additional women in the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders). One provision of the constitution also provides specific equality between men and women under law.

The language on human rights in the charter was mixed. The document contains several provisions enunciating basic political, civil, economic and social rights, but little strong language empowering institutions to uphold them. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), created by the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, is given a mandate, but lacks many of the powers necessary for it to credibly protect basic rights.

The constitution fails to adequately address the role of Islamic law and its relationship to human rights protections. Human Rights Watch is concerned that conservative factions could use appointments to the new judiciary to implement interpretations of Islam that may violate human rights standards.

The issue of accountability is also not addressed in the document. Despite Afghanistan's recent history of mass atrocities, the charter does not directly address issues of past war crimes and serious human rights abuses. The AIHRC may be able to delve further into this area-but lacks any specific constitutional mandate to do so.

Human Rights Watch was concerned about the political intimidation and vote-buying that took place before and during the convention. The abuses proved that warlords and local factions continue to dominate Afghanistan's political processes." (HRW 8 January 2004)

See also: [Ending Impunity and Building Justice in Afghanistan](#), AREU, December 2003

Presidential elections not disrupted by violence (October 2004)

- Presidential elections took place on October 9, without major acts of violence, although Karzai's opponents have initially challenged their validity due to widespread irregularities.
- Parliamentary elections have been postponed until April 2005

"Afghanistan's democratization process has cleared two major hurdles. First, the country managed to avoid serious violence on election day, as millions of Afghans turned out to vote for the country's first popularly elected president. Now, a ballot dispute is subsiding, reducing a threat that could have undermined the legitimacy of the vote.

Interim Afghan leader Hamid Karzai appears poised to secure a popular mandate from the October 9 election. Ballot counting has not formally begun, and will not commence until October 13 at the earliest. Tallying all the votes could take weeks, and preliminary figures should take at least several days to compile. Yet, according to an exit poll, Karzai has secured more than 50 percent of the ballots cast, thereby eliminating the need for a run-off between the top two vote-getters. The poll was conducted by the International Republican Institute, an organization with close connections with the Republican Party in the United States, utilizing financial support provided by the US Agency for International Development.

Initially, Karzai's 15 presidential opponents challenged the integrity of the vote, alleging widespread irregularities, especially multiple voting by individuals. International officials did not share that view, downplaying irregularities while emphasizing the high voter turnout. Officials announced over 10 million Afghans had registered to vote. Precise figures on turnout were not immediately available, but by all accounts it was high." (Eurasianet 12 October 2004)

"Political developments during the period under review have tended to focus on the holding of elections, which is the last formal step in the Bonn process. Some of the potential impediments to the conduct of elections for the President and lower house of parliament in September, highlighted in my report of 19 March 2004 (A/58/742-S/2004/230), in particular the difficulty of allocating parliamentary seats among provinces in the absence of convincing census data, have proved to be insurmountable. As a result, the Joint Electoral Management Body took the decision, after consultation with the Government and political parties and based on technical criteria, to hold presidential elections on 9 October and to postpone parliamentary elections until April 2005. The challenges are formidable not only in terms of creating conditions for free and fair elections but also in terms of creating the tools of governance that will enable the future elected bodies to exert their authority effectively. The commitments made by the Afghan authorities and the

international community at the Berlin conference provided a comprehensive strategy for moving the peace process forward. To date delivery on those commitments has been uneven. The increasingly tenuous security situation continues to threaten the gains of the Bonn process. Incidents have involved terrorist as well as factional and criminal activities. Those acts of violence carried out with seeming impunity have resulted in the loss of too many Afghan lives and increasingly of those of international assistance workers. They have hindered the establishment of sustainable national institutions and the delivery of economic and social assistance. The report concludes that, for the peace process to move forward, extremism, factionalism and the illicit drug trade must be addressed resolutely." (UN Secretary-General, 12 August 2004, p. 1)

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

General

Who are the IDPs in Afghanistan ? (October 2003)

- Nomadic pastoralist Kuchi currently represent the single largest IDP group, most of them located in the southern Pashtuns areas of Kandahar and Helmand province. Some Kuchis have been displaced due to human rights violations in the north and northwest and are accommodated in camps in Hirat.
- Most of the other IDPs are Pashtuns displaced by human rights violations and fear of persecution due to their real or perceived association with the former Taliban.
- Some 50,000 IDPs are considered to live in Kabul where they experience social and economic marginalization as they join the long process of urban integration.

Characteristics of displacement

"The distinction between 'conflict-induced' and 'drought-induced' IDPs is an oversimplification of Afghanistan's complex internal displacement problem. Many drought-induced IDPs may not have become displaced had conflict not undermined their normal support capacities. Moreover, the overall national food-security crisis has created widespread levels of acute vulnerability where the only survival strategy is to become 'local' IDPs at or near internationally assisted IDP camps. Indeed, one of the overriding concerns expressed by almost all humanitarian actors is the dilemma they face in providing even the most basic levels of assistance to IDPs in the knowledge that such assistance will likely create new IDPs drawn from among local vulnerable populations. This situation is compounded by the fact that in many areas IDPs are living with host families who are equally destitute and in need of assistance. Moreover, in many cases, IDPs living with host families are not included in registrations and, by extension, in food and NFI distributions.

Notwithstanding the above, an important distinction must be made between those able to return to areas of displacement caused by conflict (where mines are one of the primary constraints to return) and those that were displaced by drought (where the availability of agricultural inputs and the vagaries of climate are the primary constraint). Hence, in much of the south, southeast and central regions, returnees require a basic provision of shelter kits and mine action in their villages in order to re-establish themselves, while in the north and west, return is a much more uncertain and precarious challenge given the risk that ameliorated drought conditions may only be a temporary phenomena." (IDP Unit-OCHA 28 March 2002, p. 3)

IDPs in the South

"The identified categories of IDPs in the South are:

1. Protection related IDP from the Northwest
2. Kuchi IDPs from Registan
3. Other Kuchis
4. Non Kuchi – drought affected IDPs

These categories are not necessarily exclusive (a Protection related IDP can also be affected by drought or be a Kuchi) but aim at facilitating the approach towards identification of solutions focusing on the origin of the IDPs rather on their present location.

(...)

[1. Protection related IDPs from the Northwest]

This category is composed by ethnic Pashtuns originating from Faryab, Sar I Pul, Balkh, Jawzjan, Badghis and Herat provinces. Although a large majority left their places of origin at the end of 2001, some more recent arrivals have been reported. The most recent estimate indicates the figure at approximately 40.000 individuals (about 8.400 families). These protection related IDPs are mostly settled in Zhari Dasht (relocated both from Chaman Waiting Area and from Kandahar Animal Market by UNHCR), and in Mukhtar in Helmand.

(...)

[2. Registan Kuchis]

Registan Kuchis are described as pastoralists who use the Registan as (one of their) their key resource area (s). Registan is a desert area spread over the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz, from where people have been displaced due to lack of drinking water and loss of livestock from 1999 onwards. The Registan Kuchi can be subdivided into two subcategories; those that remain permanently in Reg and those that are seasonal users of Registan.

The first category consists mostly of Beluchi Kuchi, which is the largest category, estimated at 90%. The remaining 10%, in the second subcategory are mostly Pashtun. It has been claimed that a proportion of these Pashtun Kuchi own some land in surrounding districts, which they combine with their livestock rearing.

The various surveys carried out at different times by different agencies reveal large differences in IDP population figures and breakdowns over settlements and categories. A working figure of 6.800 families can be extrapolated from these surveys, of which 6000 are in Panjway and 800 in Maiwand camps. Other Kuchis from Registan are to be accounted for in Spin Boldak, Mukhtar and dispersed Kuchis in Central Helmand province.

(...)

[3. Non-Registan Kuchis]

This category refers to pastoralists, who used to migrate from the provinces in the South towards the Central Highlands, in particular from Kandahar and Helmand to Zabul and Ghazni provinces. The drought caused severe loss of livestock, exacerbated by the lack of access to major grazing areas due to pasture rights' conflicts.

The exact number of 'other Kuchi' is not known, since information between drought affected Kuchi and non-Kuchi is not separated in the data collection. Using extrapolation a figure of 10.000 families for both drought affected Kuchi and non-Kuchi can be obtained, with at least 90% being Kuchi. The working figure for this category is estimated at 9.000 families.

The largest group of this category is currently in Spin Boldak, followed closely by Zhari Dasht and Mukhtar camp.

(...)

[4. Drought-affected non-Kuchis IDPs]

This category can be estimated at some 1000 families scattered in all camps and settlements, and is composed of mainly local rural inhabitants from Kandahar, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces." (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, pp. 2-18)

Click on the map to see the location of IDP camps and settlements in Afghanistan and the estimated figures

Source: UNHCR, August 2004

Urban IDPs in Kabul

[...]several types of populations co-exist in Kabul today:

i) The original Kabulis: This term refers to those people who remained in Afghanistan, in their city of Kabul, during the years of war and armed conflicts, or those who returned from exile back to their former place and position. Kabulis are characterized by classic urban integration and their socio-cultural practices and associated behaviors, which are rooted in ancient urban tradition.

ii) The IDPs: These people are of rural origin, for whom the social integration process is made more difficult by their economic situation and their belonging to the rural world. Upon initial arrival in the cities, IDPs inevitably experience social and economic marginalization as they join the long process of urban integration. The process of urban integration is a subtle one, encompassing all sections of society irrespective of social status, wealth and education.

iii) The former refugees of rural origin: These people discovered and experienced the advantages of urban life in other countries and constitute an intermediary group between the original Kabulis and the IDPs. As a segment of the capital's population they are similar to the Kabulis because of their experience of urban life, but differ by their type of socio-urban integration and the comparison they can make with another society. In addition, former refugees are similar to IDPs because of their still recent rural origins, but differ because of their experience of urban integration, new educational training and professional experience.

To the categories mentioned above in b), one must add widow IDPs and widow returnees from rural areas, who are attracted by the capital in the hope of receiving more services and help and having more security. They constitute a cross group of the population 'without protection', in a deeply patriarchal society. In such a society, protection and social rank are granted by the male members of the family, therefore the economic exclusion of widows and their children is doubled by the social marginalization. The IDP and returnee widows are the most vulnerable social group in the capital, and their successful integration into urban society will be a challenge for post-conflict Afghanistan." (UNCHS/Habitat March 2003, pp. 4-5)

Global figures

Between 167,000 and 200,000 IDPs as of August 2004

- As of August 2004, UNHCR estimates that 167,000 people remain displaced in Afghanistan.

As of August 2004, UNHCR estimates that 167,000 people remain displaced in the country, most of them located in camps in the south near Kandahar. The majority (80%) of the IDP group is constituted

by nomadic Kuchis displaced by the drought. The the rest are Pashtuns displaced since the end of 2001 from the north due to persecution and fighting.

Contrary to what the figures below might suggest, only 82,000 IDPs were assisted to return during 2003. This leaves some 368,000 IDPs unaccounted for if one considers that only 184,000 people remain displaced in early 2004. UNHCR explains that the January 2003 figures were largely inflated. The January 2004 figure was obtained through a revalidation of the number of IDPs during 2003 (thereby applying a stricter definition of what makes an IDP).

Also, it is assumed that those who have returned since end-2001 or locally integrated have attained at least a minimal level of self-sufficiency. Renewed displacement due to the unsustainable returns of both IDPs and refugees (see '[Out of sight, out of mind](#)', Amnesty International, June 2003) is ignored.

[Click here to see a UNHCR map showing the IDP Caseload as of August 2004](#)

Summary of caseload of Internal Displacement in January 2002 - 2004

Region	January 2002	January 2003	January 2004
Central	432,000	107,878	2,821
North	216,000	49,341	11,005
South	413,000	323,099	144,494
East	80,000	73,992	4,703
South-East	20,000	14,381	688
West	171,300	65,700	20,558
TOTAL	1,332,300	634,391	184,269

Source: UNHCR Afghanistan Operational Information 2004

"UNHCR, the Afghan Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation, and IOM (International Organization for Migration) plan to assist 90,000 IDPs return home in 2004. So far, 14,000 IDPs have been assisted this year. There are 188,000 recorded, active IDPs, with the actual total being, perhaps, some 300,000. Active IDP numbers are 145,000 in the South, 20,000 in the West, 20,000 in the Center, 10,500 in the East and Southeast, and 9,000 in the North."(COE-DMHA 10 September 2004, p. 3)

"The Government estimates that at least 2.5 million to 3 million Afghans are still outside the country, in addition to approximately 200,000 internally displaced persons based in the south and west of the country." (UN Secretary-General 12 August 2004, para. 62)

Between 180,000 and 300,000 IDPs as of end-2003

- As of December 2003, UNHCR figures show an "active" IDP caseload estimated at 184,000 IDPs countrywide. 20,500 in the west, 11,000 in the north, 2,800 in the central region, 4,700 in the east and 145,000 in the south and southeast.
- Amnesty International estimated that there were 600,000 IDPs left in the country as of June 2003.

As of end-2003, UNHCR reported an "active" IDP caseload of 184,000 IDPs, with the majority (78%) located in camps in the south near Kandahar. The majority (80%) of this active caseload is constituted by nomadic Kuchis displaced by the drought, while the rest are Pashtuns displaced from the north due to persecution and fighting

IDP breakdown by region (end-2003)

Region	Nb. of Ind.	Ind. %
North	11,005	6%
South	144,494	78%
Southeast	688	0%
East	4,703	3%
West	20,558	11%
Central	2,821	2%
Total	184,269	100%

Source: Monthly IDP Settlement Report, UNHCR, December 2003

"Since January 2003 over 41,000 internally displaced persons have left camps in the south and west of the country. Lingering effects of drought and ongoing security threats, however, have prevented the 300,000 internally displaced persons still living in camps and settlements from returning. The majority of these individuals are in Helmand and Kandahar." (UNGA, 3 December 2003, para. 66)

"Due to the situation in contemporary Afghanistan, it has been difficult to obtain accurate numbers of returns to Afghanistan. What is clear, however, is that in stark contrast to the sizeable return from neighbouring states in 2002, the numbers of people returning to Afghanistan during spring 2003 were significantly lower, due in no small part to the conviction of many refugees that they would be unable to return in conditions of safety and dignity. UNHCR announced on 6 June 2003 that around 158,000 Afghan refugees had so far been assisted to return to their country of origin during the first five months of 2003. Of these 115,000 had returned from Pakistan, while 43,000 had come back from Iran. In the same period in 2002, UNHCR had assisted in the return of over 815,000 people. The overwhelming majority of these returns were from Pakistan and Iran, which in total continue to host over 3 million Afghan refugees. An estimated 650,000 IDPs remain displaced inside Afghanistan. Around 25,000 IDPs returned to their places of origin in the first five months of 2003. By the end of June 2002, in comparison, around 400,000 IDPs had returned to their places of origin." (AI 23 June 2003, p. 6)

"The current IDP population is estimated by UNHCR at around 300,000 of which some 200,000 remain dependent upon WFP food distribution. Of this total, approximately 50,000 are located in the west, some 40,000 in the north, around 50,000 in the greater Kabul area, and the balance of 160,000 in the south. These numbers have been substantially reduced from a peak of around one million at the time of the Taliban's ouster. Return movements are continuing, albeit at diminishing rates, from the Hirat camps and within the north. Those that have returned or locally integrated are considered to have attained at least a minimal level of self-sufficiency." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 1-2)

"The displaced population in the south of Afghanistan, at 350,000, remains extremely high. Most of these are in the provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, where the capacity of the aid community to assist has been severely curtailed by the adverse security situation. Pushtuns are continuing to arrive in the south, fleeing harassment and violence at the hands of the other ethnic groups in the northern provinces of Faryab, Jozjan and Badghis. This displaced Pushtun population represents about 15% of the total IDP population in the south. The balance are nomadic Kuchis displaced by the drought. The total IDP population in Afghanistan now stands at 600,000, a reduction of over half a million as compared with 2002. This reduction largely arises from an easing of the drought. Thus, around 10,000 IDPs left Maslakh and other camps near Herat in February and March for their areas of origin. However, many IDPs have indicated in recent surveys that

they wish to remain in and around urban areas because of the better income-earning opportunities available." (BAAG April 2003, p. 7)

"There are an estimated 600,000 internally displaced people throughout Afghanistan, half of whom are in the southern provinces. About 220,000 of the displaced population are in collective settlements or camps throughout the country. Their main reasons of flight are drought, but there are also those who cannot return because of insecurity and/or harassment." (UNAMA 30 March 2003)

1 million Afghans displaced at the end of 2002

Number of IDPs at the end of 2002

"It is variously estimated that around five million Afghans remain displaced, either internally (some 1 million) or as refugees in neighbouring countries and elsewhere (nearly 4 million). These numbers have been generated over the past two decades in three basic phases. Whereas in the 1980s, large displacements resulted from the Soviet invasion and the ensuing war, internecine conflict was the main cause during the 1990s. Over the past four years, displacement has been a consequence of the effects of a prolonged and severe drought, that was most acute in the western and northern regions, and continuing internal conflict between Taliban and Northern Alliance forces along the north-eastern frontline and in various pockets in the central and highlands regions.

Prior to September 11, 2001, the number of IDPs was estimated by UNOCHA at some 900,000, with particularly heavy concentrations of newly displaced persons in the north and west. Their number is believed to have risen as a result of the conflict during October and November 2001 to around 1.2 million – much of the increase being experienced in the central and southeastern regions and along the Pakistan border. However, given the fluidity of the situation over the past six months, and the protracted absence of international observers, these numbers are but crude and largely unverifiable estimates.

Attempts are now underway to ascertain more reliable statistics on IDPs through registrations conducted by IOM and UNHCR and their partner NGOs. The present paucity of detailed/verifiable information on IDPs continues to constrain the planning and response capacity of humanitarian actors supporting return movements and/or providing in-situ assistance to the displaced. Furthermore, it hampers the capacity of agencies to provide timely and objective information to IDPs concerning conditions in areas of potential return.

Rapid assessment exercises and the production of detailed district profiles are currently ongoing in potential areas of return using standardized survey instruments. When completed, these assessments will generate much of the urgently required information at regional, provincial and district levels, including such data as: population numbers, places of origin, time/length of displacement, ethnic group, conditions of vulnerability, assistance needs in areas of displacement and prospects and expectations for return. However, the exercise appears to be carried out at varying intensities and sometimes with diverse methodologies and/or actors in each region." (IDP Unit -OCHA 28 March 2002, pp. 2-3)

Total number of IDPs as of mid-October 2001 and projected displacement

According to OCHA up to 1,000,000 people were displaced either by conflict or drought before the September 11 events in the U.S.

Kabul :100,000 IDPs

Herat and the West: 200,000 IDPs

Kandahar and the South: 200,000 IDPs
Mazar-I-Sharif and the North: 500,000 IDPs

At the end of September the threat of the U.S. attacks had started to trigger population movements away from most urban areas towards remote villages and border regions. Eastern and central regions have been particularly affected (OCHA 3 October 2001). As of October 19, the total number of IDPs (displaced by conflict and/or drought) is estimated at 1,160,000 (DFID 19 October 2001)

The military campaign started on October 7 has created new population movements of uncertain scale so far. Recent reports have described increasing number of people fleeing the military strikes and arriving at Iran or Pakistan borders that only the women, children and elderly are allowed to cross. A number of camps have been set up along the borders but within Afghanistan territory to accommodate the displaced.

(Click the map below for a full scale [U.S. Government map showing the IDP situation as of 29 October 2001](#). (pdf 296 kb))

With the borders with all neighbouring countries being closed it is projected that over 1,000,000 persons will be further displaced bringing the total displaced population to an estimated 2,250,000 (see "[Projected Displacement in and around Afghanistan - Planning figures](#)", UNDP, 28 September 2001)

The total number of vulnerable people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection inside and outside of Afghanistan is estimated at 7,500,000 people

Populations in need of humanitarian assistance/protection
(All figures should be treated with caution)

Refugees in Iran pre-11 September	1,500,000
Refugees in Pakistan pre-11 September	2,000,000
Refugees elsewhere in region pre-11 September	195,000
New refugees in Iran since 11 September	No estimates available
New refugees in Pakistan since 11 September	20,000
New refugees elsewhere in region since 11 September	1,000
Current estimated Internally Displaced (IDPs)	1,160,000
Current estimated Internally Stranded (ISPs)	4,150,00
Subtotal	5,331,000
UN projected further IDPs/ISPs	2,200,000
Projected Vulnerable Total	7,500,000 (rounded)

Source: Department for International Development (UK), 19 October 2001

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

Panjsheer 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)

Geographical distribution

Southern region overview (October 2003)

- An estimated 145,000 IDPs are concentrated in five major camps in Kandahar and Helmand provinces. Some were displaced due to insecurity in the north (mainly Pashtuns), others were displaced due to the drought in the south (ethnic Kuchis)
- In April 2003, UNHCR estimated the total number of IDPs in the south to be around 350,000.

"The majority of IDPs in this region is concentrated in five major camps in Kandahar and Helmand provinces. There are two categories of IDPs: those from the north-west who fled because of persecution and insecurity and those from south who fled because of drought and economic hardships.

Spin Boldak: There are five sub-camps of IDPs in Spin Boldak holding 4,107 families (21,575 individuals). The vast majority of these IDPs has been displaced due to drought mainly from Zabul, Kandahar and Ghazni provinces. Less than 2% of the IDPs are Pashtun from Jawzjan, Faryab, Badghis, Hirat, and Sar-e-pul who are not able to return because of fear of persecution. In addition, there are some Kuchis in Spin Boldak who have lost their livestock.

Zhare Dasht: There are twelve settlements in this camp holding an estimated 8,236 IDP families (39,854 individuals). The majority of the camp residents are Pashtun from the west and northwest north and north-west. For the first time, 24 families (131 individuals) from Zhari Dasht along with 12 families (50 individuals) from Kandahar (animal market area) were helped to return to their places of origin on 8 Oct 2003. UNHCR and MoRR facilitated their return. These IDPs returned to Ghormash and Morghab districts in Badghis province.

Panjwayee: There are three sub-camps holding 8,914 IDP families (44,570 individuals). 99% of the IDPs in these camps are Baluch Kuchis of Rigistan district located between Kandahar and Nimroz. About 1% of them are from Badghis displaced mainly due to discrimination and fear of persecution, while others have drought-related cases.

Maiwand: There are 1,208 IDP families (6,040 individuals) in this camp who are all Baluch Kuchis of Rigistan, and were reduced to IDPs situation due to complete lost of their livestock.

Mukhtar (Helmand): There are 6,513 IDP families (32,146 individuals) displaced due to both persecution and drought. They are mainly from Faryab, Badghis, Helmand, Herat, Jowzjan, Ghor, Urozgan and Ghazni provinces. Of 125 families returned to their places of origin in Herat and Ghor provinces on 28 August 2003, receiving assistance packages and cash assistance for transportation." (UNHCR 15 October 2003, p. 10)

Western region overview (October 2003)

- As of October 2003, there were in total 4,638 IDP families (23,721 individuals) living in spontaneous settlements and camps in the western region, most of them in Maslakh camp (18,000).
- The 3 camps of Maslakh, Shaidayee and Minaret will be consolidated into one. In this case only Maslakh camp will remain open to serve IDPs. IDPs from the other two camps can be transferred on voluntary basis.
- About 50% of the remaining IDP caseload are from Faryab where the situation is not conducive for return.

"Many people fled their provinces of origin as a result of conflict, drought and persecution between 1996 and 2001. These people either reached Herat where they were accommodated in seven camps, opted to live in spontaneous settlements other than their places of origin (as in Badghis and Farah), or went to Kandahar into exile.

Herat has attracted many displaced people due to the presence of large number of aid agencies and the availability of jobs.

In early 2002, there were 117,398 IDPs living in Maslakh camp; 27,604 in Shaidayee; 7,779 in Minaret; 4,797 in Rawzabagh; 2,500 in Rawashan; and 333 families in CTC camp. In addition, 1,743 IDP families were living in 11 districts of Farah province, and 860 other families (mainly from Faryab, Ghor, Farah, Badghis, Herat, Kbaul, Hilmand and Bamyan provinces), were living in spontaneous settlements in Badghis and Farah provinces.

(...)

IDP population in the Camps and Spontaneous Settlements (September 2003): There are 3,182 families in Maslakh camp, 400 families in spontaneous settlements (Minaret and Shaidayee locations), 231 families living in scattered spontaneous settlements in Farah City, and Purchaman and Gulistan districts of Farah province. In addition, 516 families in Murghab district, 250 families in Ghurmach district, and 60 families in Jawand district of Badghis province live in spontaneous settlements. In total, there are 4,638 IDP families (23,721 individuals) living in spontaneous settlements and camps in the region.

Future of the camps: Based on the durable solutions strategy and long-term solution, it is decided to consolidate the 3 camps of Maslakh, Shaidayee and Minaret into one. In this case only Maslakh camp will remain open to serve IDPs. IDPs from the other two camps can be transferred on voluntary basis. DoRR and UNHCR have so far moved 186 families (1,005 individuals), who are not able to return home at present, to Maslakh camp.

About 50% of the remaining IDP caseload are from Faryab where the situation is not conducive for return. The rest are from Herat, Badghis and other provinces. Two groups of IDPs, those Kuchi who are without livestock and those who are without land, will remain in the camp." (UNHCR 15 October 2003, pp. 12-14)

See also:

"Afghan IDP Camps: A Look at structure", by John Dwyer, (former manager of Maslakh IDP camp in Herat), 14 June 2004

Northern region overview (October 2003)

- Number of IDPs in the northern region is 15,250 IDPs as of October 2003, most of them living in villages.
- Thousands have been displaced from the north since the end of 2001 (mainly Faryab, Jawzjan and Sar-i-Pul provinces) due to persecution, harassment and other security problems.
- Return Commission of the North, established in June 2002, has visited 5 provinces, over 23 districts, and over 200 villages in their assessment of causes and obstacles to return.

"At present there are 15,250 IDPs in the northern region. Most of them are living in villages and not camps. There is one IDP camp in Kunduz province where 1,159 Gujar families live.

Return of IDPs: 8,000 IDPs have returned to their places of origin (mostly to northern Bamyan, Dara-i-Suf, Parwan and Kabul provinces) since 2002. It is expected that 300 to 500 IDPs will return to their places of origin in 2003. At present, others will remain due to security problems, fighting, looting, illegal taxation, and other forms of insecurity in their places of origin. In Faryab province where many of the IDPs have already integrated into the local communities, UNHCR is working to find durable solutions to their problems.

There are thousands of families (mostly Pashtoons and Kuchis) displaced from the north and other parts of the country with majority of them originally from Faryab, Jawzjan and Sar-i-Pul provinces. They have been displaced by persecution, harassment, and other security problems.

IOM: IOM and the Department of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR) are cooperating with UNHCR in IDP repatriation process and providing returnees with assistance once they are identified and registered. UNHCR assists vulnerable IDPs according to their registration card, which is similar to those of returnees.

Return Commission: The Return Commission was established in June 2002 in the north-west that is chaired by the Minister of Refugees and Repatriation. Its members are General Abdul Rashid Doustom of Jumbesh, Ustad Atta Mohammad of Jamiyat, Sardar Saeedi of Wahdat, the Independent Human Rights Commission, UNAMA, and UNHCR Afghanistan.

The Return Commission Working Group have been conducting missions since October last year, visiting 5 provinces, over 23 districts, and over 200 villages in their assessment of causes and obstacles to return. They recently conducted a mission from 27 July to 10 August 2003 to the southern and western provinces to meet with the representatives of northern IDPs with view to facilitate their return with safety and dignity. So far the Commission has conducted meetings with representatives of the IDPs in Zhare Dasht camp in Kandahar, Mukhtar camp in Helmand, and Maslakh and Shaidae camps in Herat and Badghis to inform IDPs about the security and social situation in their places of origin. The Return Commission Working Group briefed the President Karzai, the Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, UNHCR Chief of Mission, and the National Security Commission on the result of their mission and IDP situation in the related areas.

Further consultations will be held between the Central Government and displaced persons from the north-west in Kabul in the next month, specifically related to trying to find solutions to the causes of their displacement." (UNHCR 15 October 2003, pp. 9-10)

Southeastern region overview (October 2003)

- Some 22,000 IDPs are estimated to be located in the southeastern region, most of them (13,000) in Ghazni province.
- Some 4,000 are in Khost province, over a 1,000 IDPs are in Paktia province and some 3,500 in Paktika province.

"Khost Province: A total of 480 IDP families (4,035 individuals) from different provinces are living behind the Custom House, 2km to the west of Khost. Of these IDPs, 336 families (2,897 individuals) are from Musa Khel, Dewamando, Nadershakot, Matoon, Alishir, Spera, Qalandara, Baak Sobari, Tani and Jajimaidan districts in Khost, and 125 families (1008 Individuals) are from Paktia. The rest of them originate in Paktika, Logar, Baghlan, Zabul, Kabul, Wardak, and Badakhshan provinces.

Return of the IDPs: So far, 160 families (908 Individuals) have returned from Khost to their villages of origin in Logar (Charkh, Barakibarak and Pul-e-Alam), Kabul, Laghman, Paktia, Kapisa, Wardak, Takhar and Kunduz provinces. At present 48 IDP families are willing to return with food and non-food items, transportation assistance and shelter in their villages. The rest are not willing to return due to drought, lack of job opportunity, shelter, and land problems in their villages.

Paktia Province: The total number of IDPs in this province is 204 IDP families (1326 individuals) living in Baghe-Peer, Baghaka, Khataba, Askari Families (a housing complex), Hada-e-Chob, Comisari, Arzaaq, Sharwali, and Ahingaran areas. They have fled their villages in Parwan (Ghorband District), Paktia (Said Karam, Laja Mangal, Jaji Aryub and Jaji Ahmadkhil), Nangrahar (Reg-e-Shammard Khan), Lagman, Kabul (Char Qala, Charasyab, Shewaki and Kabul city), Logar (Barakibarak) and Mazar-e-sharif provinces because of insecurity and economic hardships.

Repatriation: So far, 25 families (156 individuals) have left Gardez for their homes in Kabul City, Ghorband district of Parwan, Nangrahar (Behsoon district) and Baghlan provinces. None of the IDP families wants to return in the near future due to lack of job opportunity and shelter, poor economic situation, drought, and land problems in their areas.

Ghazni Province: The total number of IDPs in Ghazni province is estimated to be about 2,247 families (13,407 individuals) living in Ghazni centre, Maqur, Giro, Qarabagh, Gaghori, Ajirastan, Jaghato, Khowaja Omari, Ander, Rashidan, Zanakhan, Nawur, Malestan, Nawa, Waghaz, Dehyak, Aaband, and Gailan. They are mainly from Kandahar, Bamyan, Kabul, Zabul, Paktia and Paktika provinces. Most of them are believed to be economic migrants and not of concern to UNHCR

Paktika Province: There are 600 IDP families from Ghazni living mostly in Sharana Centre in Paktika province. About 18 families of them want to return to their home villages in 2004 with the assistance of UNHCR." (UNHCR 15 October 2003, p. 11)

Eastern region overview (October 2003)

- Number of IDPs in the Eastern provinces is estimated at 5,230. The only IDP camp is Hisar Shahi in Nangrahar province and hosts 1,320 individuals (ethnic Gujurs).
- UNHCR assisted the return of 2,888 families from Hisar Shahi camp to Kabul, Kapisa, Wardak, and Baghlan provinces in 2002
- UNHCR is currently seeking solutions for the protection related IDP caseloads, estimated at around 6,000

"Eastern Region:

There are 5,230 individuals are the active cases in the Eastern Provinces.

Hisar Shahi, located in Rodat district of Nangrahar is the only IDP camp in the region where 264 Gujur families (1,320 individuals) from Takhar and Baghlan provinces live. These IDPs have benefited from health education, health care, water and food for work projects: They also receive WFP food package.

In Laghman province 60 IDP families (420 individuals) from Karanji village of Alingar district live in Mihtarlam; 30 families (150 individuals) live in Dawlat Shah; and about 120 families (840 individuals) live in Alingar.

A total of 200 families (1,000 individuals) from Nooristan are living in Ghazi Abad, Nagrahar IDP location, while another 150 families (750 individuals) are displaced in Nooristan (Waigal) itself.

Recently, Nangar Department of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR) distributed 29 tons of wheat (donated by the Russian government) to 580 IDP families scattered all over the province. Each family received 50kg of wheat. Laghman DoRR also distributed wheat (50kg per family) to 400 IDP families in the province.

Return of IDPs:

UNHCR assisted the return of 2,888 families from Hisar Shahi camp to Kabul, Kapisa, Wardak, and Baghlan provinces in 2002. In addition, 374 families from Kama and Bihsood districts and 78 families from Jalalabad City have also been returned to their places of origin. UNHCR in collaboration with other partners (UNAMA, the Government) is currently seeking solutions for the following four main protection related IDP caseloads:

About 500 IDPs families from Kamdish (Nuristan), mainly in Barg-e-matal area

About 264 Gujur IDP families from the North living in Hisar Shahi

About 200 IDP families from Keranj of Alingar district (Laghman) currently displaced in Mihtarlam and Alishang districts of the same province

IDPs from Farashghan village (Dawlat Shah District in Laghman) currently displaced in Mora village of the same district

In its attempt to find solutions to the IDPs problems, UNHCR recently organized visit to the North for seven Gujur representatives from Hisar Shahi Camp. The efforts may lead to the return of 60 Gujur families to their homes." (UNHCR 15 October 2003, pp. 11-12)

Central region overview (October 2003)

- As of October 2003, total number of IDPs in central region is 2,821 persons scattered around the region (no IDP camp or settlement)
- Returning IDPs are provided with food and non-food assistance by UNHCR, transportation by IOM and medical assistance by IMC.
- A joint survey carried out by IOM and UNHCR registered some 27,000 IDP families in various part of Kabul city

"Background: People became displaced to and from central region because of factional fighting, drought, poverty, insecurity, and lack of job opportunities. Initially (in 1992) the movement of IDPs was mainly to the north; later, it spread to other regions and outside the country. At present, the total number of IDPs in the Central Provinces (Kabul, Kapisa, Logar, Parwan, and Wardak) is 2,821 persons. There is no IDP camp or settlement in the central region. The relatively small of IDPs are scattered around the region.

Return of IDPs: IDPs returning to their villages of origin are provided with food and non-food assistance by UNHCR, and transportation by IOM. IDPs are receiving the same assistance package as returnees from neighbouring countries. IMC (International Medical Corp) provides medical check ups for the IDP families while they are being relocated.

IOM (International Organization for Migration): IOM, in close collaboration with UNHCR, started the relocation of IDPs from the central region in December 2001. Initially, 2,169 IDP families (8,162 individuals) were returned from Panjshir to their home villages in the Shomali Plain. These IDPs had fled their home villages due to factional fighting and insecurity in their areas.

IOM and UNHCR carried out a joint survey in various parts of Kabul City where they registered almost 27,000 IDP families. Almost 80% of them were from Shomali. 1,809 families (9,046 individuals) were returned from Kabul to Shomali, Kapisa, Bamyan and to those parts of the central region where the IDP families preferred to be relocated.

(...)

Recently (2 September 2003), 27 families (78 individuals) were returned from Ghazni to their places of origin in Dara-e-Suf district of Balkh province. IOM's recent attempt to help return IDPs to their places of origin shows very small number of IDPs registering for the exercise. One major indication of displacement in Kabul City is the small number of returnees and IDPs who reside in ruined public buildings. Most of these people are neither able to return to their destroyed houses and repair them, nor can they rent houses. The government and aid agencies are planning to assist some of them with the rebuilding of their houses and to help them to return." (UNHCR 15 October 2003, pp. 8-9)

Vulnerable groups

Kuchis IDPs, the largest of Afghanistan's displaced population, need alternate solutions (June 2003)

- Kuchis represent some 80% of the current displaced population, most of them were displaced by drought and loss of livelihood..
- Return of the displaced Kuchis to the desert is very unlikely in the near future.
- Their nomadic lifestyle raises the question of where they have their "area of origin".
- Any return movements would first require rebuilding their herds.
- Drought has turned nomads or Kuchis into beggars and IDPs.

"The displaced pastoralists, and others displaced by drought and loss of livelihoods, are by far the largest of Afghanistan's displaced population, constituting about eighty percent of the current IDP population. There are two Kuchi groups who have been most affected. The first migrate in and around the Registan desert in the southern part of Kandahar and Helmand provinces while the second migrate between the mountainous areas of the interior during the summer and the lower valleys during the winter. The first group are the largest and most vulnerable group as their potential return to the desert is, for the majority, unlikely in the foreseeable future. In addition, they are not regarded by either the local authorities or local populations as part of the communities among which they are currently displaced. Indeed, some authorities claim that many of the Registan Kuchi have closer ties to Pakistan and thus should seek assistance on the other side of the border. Such claims highlight the question of where do nomadic pastoralists have their 'areas of origin'.

Given that the greater majority of the displaced Kuchi have lost all their livestock, and that their traditional livelihoods were wholly dependent upon these animals, any return movements would first require rebuilding their herds. While return to normal rainfall conditions, the replenishment of water tables and the rehabilitation of wells will be important precondition for a return to pastoral livelihoods in the south, any major re-stocking programme would be a very expensive undertaking. It might also be a technical problem as some experts suggest that there would not be enough healthy female animals in the region. Thus, unless

support and services can be provided to rebuild their traditional livelihoods and return to a nomadic existence, alternate solutions will need to be found so that a large majority of Kuchi not remain 'internally stuck' at their present locations." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, p. 10)

[See also:

"Kuchi nomads: Displaced and destitute in Afghanistan", RI, 15 July 2004 / "Forgotten People: The Kuchis of Afghanistan", RI 17 December 2003]

Displaced women are extremely vulnerable (June 2003)

- Unaccompanied women and female-headed households have found it particularly hard to eke out a living upon their return
- Close male relative offer protection to displaced women by marrying them.
- Displaced women tend to form groups to survive but traditional Afghan society views unattached women, especially those living together, as sinful.

"Unaccompanied women and female-headed households have found it particularly hard to eke out a living upon their return. Farah returned to Mazar-i-Sharif in February 2003 along with her four children. Her husband was dead, and she was finding it very hard to support her children with the little money she got from doing odd jobs such as sewing. A group of Hazara women living as IDPs on the outskirts of Mazar-i-Sharif stated that their husbands had very insecure access to wage labour in the city, as a consequence of which they were unsure whether they would have enough money to buy food for the family from one day to the next. Situations of vulnerability are heightened when, as is the case with several families in contemporary Afghanistan, one man is the sole supporter of up to five female-headed households. These are usually female relatives whose husbands have either died or gone missing (most of the latter have lost contact with their families after having gone in search of employment). The access of one man to employment, therefore, in many cases has a direct bearing on the security and well being of several women and their children." (AI 23 June 2003, pp. 24-25)

"In an effort to help themselves, women gather informally in groups, or cooperatives. These groups are modeled on the traditional living arrangements in Afghan society, where women live much of their lives apart from men in groups related by birth or marriage. In the traditional household compounds, sisters, sisters-in-law, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, and, in some cases, multiple wives form tight bonds and develop informal networks outside the home.

Displaced women in desperate situations form similar bonds. In these groups of unrelated women, food and other resources are shared and labour is divided: some women look after children while other women search, or beg, for food. Since women beyond their childbearing years are somewhat freer to move around in public, they represent the group in society. Some groups number only a few women; others can include more than two dozen people, including children.

These groupings can, however, be the source of new problems: traditional Afghan society views unattached women, especially those living together, as sinful. They are assumed to be prostitutes. Why else, the traditional thinking goes, would they have no men with them? While there have been reports of prostitution among displaced women, evidence suggests that it is a rare occurrence." (Farr, G. 1 September 2001 pp. 132-135)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

IDPs often move back and forth between the categories of returnee, IDP, labour migrant and refugee (August 2004)

- Individuals and households tend to shift between different official categories at different times (IDPs, refugees, labour migrants)..
- Strategies used by IDP households are dependent on their positions within the extended family, their personal preferences, gender and age
- The notion of 'home' is defined differently at different times. Central in much of the decision making is the presence of family in the potential next destination.

"Masoud's elaborate displacement history has been shaped by Afghanistan's period of conflict. After marriage, he continued moving between Maymana and elsewhere for mostly economic but also security reasons (including a spell in Iran) and, when the Taliban collapsed, travelled with his family to Herat. His movements and reasons for movement illustrate how IDPs move back and forth between the categories of returnee, IDP, labour migrant/refugee. Some Uzbek IDPs stayed throughout the years of conflict within Afghanistan, while others went temporarily to Pakistan or Iran. Sometimes they returned to Maymana to explore options in their place of origin but lack of employment prospects or renewed insecurity meant they could not afford to stay. Herat was chosen because of its economic opportunities, because many men from Maymana were imprisoned there by the Taliban and because of its function as a transit point to Iran.

(...)

Decisions to move on or stay put are interrelated with those made by others who share a compound. If they leave, the rent increases for families with whom they live and immediate emotional and economic support networks are diminished. Like Masoud and his family, some prefer to linger in this economically more disadvantageous situation to save more money before returning to Maymana. One Uzbek woman clearly establishes the linkage between economic opportunities and home: 'Wherever I can earn money and get food, there is my home.' However, when she continues with her story, it becomes clear that other reasons are at least as important; with her family around her in Maymana, her position vis-à-vis her disliked co-wife (who is not from Maymana) would be greatly strengthened.

(...)

Strategies used by IDP households are dependent on their positions within the extended family, their personal preferences, gender and age. While women talk about their personal wishes and the need for support from their own family, men emphasise their role as family protectors and providers. Ultimately the reasons for displacement, return and onward movement are often complex and sometimes contradictory in nature.

Conclusion

Transnational and national networks can facilitate sustainable return but, at the same time, promote further displacement for economic reasons. While some IDP families will return to their place of origin, temporarily building on the resources and capacity of already present relatives, others will remain where they are or plan to move across the border to join their relatives. Thus, individuals and households shift between different official categories at different times (IDPs, refugees, labour migrants).

Uzbek IDPs, like others, are continuously reassessing their options on the basis of different scenarios. The trigger to start moving again – and how, where to and for how long – can be influenced by violence and

harassment, a lack of economic opportunities and gender and age-linked roles and responsibilities. They show a wealth of livelihoods strategies throughout their displacement history.

(...)

Further, intra-household dynamics play a key role in the decision making – in particular when different places are home to different people within a household. Uzbek women definitely have a say in this, and sometimes determine the decisions ultimately made.

Various discourses are used in Afghanistan with regard to refugee and IDP return, labour migration and reintegration. While acknowledging that different actors in Afghanistan are aware of the interrelationship between displacement (including labour migration), transnational networks and reintegration, there remains much to be done to make policies and practice more grounded in the daily realities of Afghans." (AREU Augus 2004, pp. 1-3)

Pashtuns fleeing the ethnic tensions in the north and Kuchis fleeing the drought end up as displaced in the south (2003)

- Half of the 60,000 IDPs living around the town of Chaman fled the drought and the warfare in the south, most of them are Kuchis, while the other half fled ethnic tensions in their north and are Pashtuns.
- Some 25,000 could not cross the border and were stuck in a no man's land, on the border but on the Pakistani side.
- Another 35,000 are dispersed over 5 camps around Spin Boldak and are IDPs.

Pastoralist Kuchis displaced by drought in the south and Pashtuns displaced from the north are the two main IDP group

"While the majority of drought-affected IDPs in the north and west were able to return when adequate rainfall was experienced last year and excellent rains occurred this year, in the south and southeast drought conditions continue to prevail and drought-affected IDPs, consisting predominantly of the nomadic pastoralist Kuchi, currently constitute the single largest IDP group. The largest displaced Kuchi population is currently located in the southern Pashtun areas of Kandahar and Helmand provinces. A sizable number of Kuchi are also displaced from the north and northwest and are in the Hirat camps, however, they were not displaced by drought but due to human rights violations. The remaining non-Kuchi IDPs are all protection cases, most but not all being Pashtun, who are unwilling to return to their homes in the north and northwest for fear of retribution for alleged Taliban association and/or due to human rights violations because of their ethnicity. There have been significant IDP returns in the northeast but protection problems remain in the Kunduz area.

The displaced population residing in urban areas has been difficult to define and to address their protection and assistance needs. In the greater Kabul area it is estimated there are around 50,000 persons that can be considered as IDPs. However, a considerable number have returned to Hazarjat and the Shomali plains and UNHCR's current 'active' caseload is estimated at around 15,000. It is difficult to distinguish IDPs from urban poor, economic migrants and refugee returnees who have settled in Kabul and other large towns in search of employment. In order to better understand this phenomenon an analysis of the different waves of displacement into and out of Kabul over the past two and a half decades of conflict would be helpful. While a significant number of IDPs have found at least minimal livelihoods outside of camp-like situations and survive at levels similar to the rest of the urban poor, it should be emphasized that this recent spontaneous local integration remains fragile and many urban IDPs remain vulnerable to further displacement from loss of livelihoods." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, p. 2)

"Since October 2001, over 60,000 Afghans have been living around the town of Chaman on the southern Pakistan-Afghan border. Half of them fled because of the drought and the warfare in the south. Many of these are Kutchis. The other half comes from the north. These are Pashtuns, trying to escape the ethnic tensions that erupted shortly after the war against terrorism began. Uzbeks and Tajiks took revenge on the local Pashtuns because they suspected them of supporting the Taliban. The Pashtuns fled towards the south, where their tribe is in the majority, and ended up in the border area along with the Kutchis; looking for help and protection.

The first group, a few ten thousand, were lucky. Though Pakistan had officially closed the border it was still allowing a lot of Afghans through. These were taken to various official refugee camps on the Pakistani side of the border, where they received the help they were entitled to. MSF runs health programs in two of these camps: Rhogani and Lande Karez.

Another group of around 25,000 Afghans were less fortunate when they attempted to cross the border at Chaman in February 2002. They were stopped and since then have been stuck in a piece of no man's land, practically on the border but just on the Pakistani side. They have been living in a chaotic camp where it took a long time to organize assistance. MSF was present there from the very start to provide the people with medical support (vaccinations, basic healthcare) and to tackle malnutrition among the children.

Then, there is a third group of some 35,000 Afghans on the Afghan side of the border, dispersed over five camps around Spin Boldak, near Chaman. As they are still inside Afghanistan, they are not official refugees but internally displaced persons. MSF runs a health clinic in Spin Boldak." (MSF 7 October 2002)

See also:

"AFGHANISTAN: IDPs continue arriving in the south", IRIN, 15 April 2003

"AFGHANISTAN: Special report on displaced people in the south", IRIN, 19 February 2003

Human rights abuses and lack of food distribution force people to flee in the west to Herat (April 2002)

- Since January 2002 a large influx of long-term IDPs have fled to the Herat province in Western Afghanistan from Ghor, Baghdis, Faryab, Farah, and Balkh provinces.
- Most recent IDPs have fled their home villages due to lack of food distribution and the need for emergency assistance, while others -especially Pashtuns- have fled abuses and persecution.

"Despite measures to protect civilian populations, over the last three months a large influx of long-term internally displaced persons (IDPs) have fled to the Herat province in Western Afghanistan from Ghor, Baghdis, Faryab, Farah, and Balkh provinces, and have settled in Shaidayee IDP camp on the outskirts of Herat city. According to UNHCR, many of the IDPs reported that they fled their home villages due to lack of food distribution and the need for emergency assistance. Others, especially Pashtuns, also reported that abuses had occurred in Pashtun villages in many Provinces in the Western Region." (PHR April 2002)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

General

Human rights situation still fragile (August 2004)

- In the north, north-east and west local authorities are seen as involved in repressive actions against civilians, including intimidation, extortion, arbitrary arrest, illegal detentions and forced occupations.
- Child kidnapping for sexual and forced labour purposes is reported on the increase in the south.
- Forced evictions and the illegal occupations of land continue to be pervasive throughout the country. Perpetrators are not punished thanks to their connections with local and judiciary authorities.

"47. The human rights situation in Afghanistan is a continuing source of serious concern. In the north, north-east and west, commanders act with impunity and are seen by many as being responsible for a wide range of repressive activities. The role of local authorities in carrying out violations is particularly worrisome as their involvement in acts of intimidation, extortion, arbitrary arrest, illegal detentions and forced occupation strengthens perceptions of impunity and tarnishes people's views of the central Government. The reappointment of confirmed human rights violators to government posts compounds this problem.

(...)

51. Child kidnappings also continue to increase. Some families in the provinces of Helmand and Kandahar and elsewhere have become reluctant to send their children to school because of fears they will be abducted. Evidence suggests that the kidnapped children are being trafficked for sexual purposes and forced labour. The Government, in cooperation with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, is focusing on the problem and has recently formulated a national plan of action to combat trafficking in children.

52. Complaints about forced eviction and the illegal occupation of land continue to be pervasive throughout the country. Efforts by the courts to address these issues have generally failed because many of the perpetrators are connected to powerful figures within the Government. President Hamid Karzai has appointed a commission, chaired by Vice-President Karim Khalili, to investigate the matter. The commission has, however, acknowledged that the level of corruption in the municipalities has prevented it from being effective. United Nations bodies, including UNHCR and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), as well as other international agencies, are attempting to assist the Government in its efforts to address the matter." (UN Secretary-General, 12 August 2004, pp. 13-14)

Protection is largely dependent on social networks (March 2003)

- Fundamental protection is dependent on personal and social networks.
- Generally speaking, it is necessary for Afghans to have relatives in the area where they wish to settle.
- Women are unable to move without having male relatives, also they have no protection
- Irrespective of their ethnicity, if a person lacks personal or social networks, he/she is at risk of being assaulted or harassed

- IDPs to rely on hiding or fleeing or seeking protection with resistance commanders.

"UNHCR, Kabul said that fundamental protection is dependent on personal and social networks.

The source advised that the availability of networks in the form of relatives is vital for a person's ability to live in a given area. The source said that Pashtuns from northern Afghanistan had tried to settle in Pashtun villages in other areas of the country, but that they had not been accepted by the local population. The villages are closed units, and no outsiders can settle in the rural areas, whereas the situation in the town is different. In larger cities the need for relatives in the area where people wish to live is not quite as strong. But the source stressed that generally speaking, it is necessary for Afghans to have relatives in the area where they wish to settle. This is even more so for women. Women are unable to move without having male relatives. Even the UNHCR cannot move locally employed women from other areas to better positions in Kabul, unless they have male relatives in Kabul with whom they can live.

The source believed that it might be possible for large families with a number of males to move to places, where they do not already have relatives or clan members. For families, where the head of the family is female, this option does not exist.

An international source said that the old patterns, enabling families to protect each other, have been upset, because so many people have been displaced and because of the economic situation, which makes it impossible for them to provide protection due to poverty. This means that the families with a female sole provider - widows - or children living alone, now have no protection.

In the towns a network in the neighbourhood is necessary in order to get protection. As regards personal networks in the town, many of the people who have returned - and who do not have a network - are especially at risk of being raped and assaulted. But it is even worse in the rural areas - particularly for women. The source mentioned that there are particularly vulnerable groups who are the subject of injustices irrespective of their ethnicity, but where the actual reason appears to be the person's lack of network. In this connection the source pointed out that it is a misconception that there has been a change in this situation just because the Taliban has been defeated.

Concerning the importance of networks, DACAAR said that persons/families without networks are extremely vulnerable and exposed. There is no judicial or police protection in the country, only personal networks. Even though many people have fled Afghanistan, there are still networks. Even a network spread over several countries - where a person has male relatives in other countries - may be effective and provide protection against e.g. harassment and arranged marriages, if it is known that there are male family members who, although living abroad, are able to exert influence in such situations." (DIS March 2003, pp. 39-40)

"In the last 25 years of fighting, over two million people have been killed in Afghanistan, most of them civilians. There are few sources of protection for displaced persons. There is no responsible government to which the displaced can appeal and the presence of international agencies is limited. Those agencies that have been able to operate in Kabul have called upon the Taliban government to protect internally displaced persons, but those calls have, in general, been poorly received. The Taliban are not the only threat to security, however. Guerrilla groups have also been involved in killing and harassing Afghan citizens.

Since the displaced are largely unarmed civilians, they must either rely on hiding or fleeing, or seek protection with sympathetic resistance commanders. By agreeing to side with either the Taliban government or one of the various resistance groups, the displaced can win some measure of protection. To some degree, a displaced person's choice of protective political group depends on his ethnic background. The Pushtun have generally sided with the Taliban, and the non-Pushtun groups--the Tajik, Uzbeks, and Hazara--have sided with groups hostile to the Taliban. Many non-Pushtun groups have also joined the

Taliban, but it is unclear whether this choice was made freely or not." (Farr, G. 1 September 2001 pp. 131-132)

U.S. "warlord strategy" shows protection of human rights is not a priority (December 2002)

- Continuing power of warlords put human rights at risk
- US has implemented a "warlord strategy" to relieve it from its security and human rights responsibilities.
- Beyond Kabul poor security, generalized criminality, and limited regard for basic human rights have marked the year since the signing of the Bonn Agreement.
- Vulnerable women and minorities, displaced persons, Afghans who stand up to abusive warlords have virtually no one to turn to.
- US blocked proposals by Afghan leaders, including President Hamid Karzai, and the United Nations, for an expanded ISAF to patrol the countryside

"In the area of human rights (as in many other areas), the primary problem is the continuing power of Afghanistan's warlords. When the U.S. confirmed its commitment to the future of Afghanistan, it spoke about the primacy of democratization and human rights. Yet its actions have shown this commitment to be shallow. After the overthrow of the Taliban, it employed a "warlord strategy" in order to relieve it of its security and human rights responsibilities.

Although the Taliban had effectively unified the military command of most of the country, and thereby undermined the country's endemic military feudalism, the United States and others helped to reestablish this system as part of their strategy for removing the Taliban from power, while Afghanistan's neighbors, particularly Iran, strengthened their local proxies. These regional and local military commanders, many of whom still receive arms, money, and political support from the United States and some of Afghanistan's neighbors, filled the vacuum created by the overthrow of the Taliban. In the past year, most of these warlords have become more, not less, entrenched in power.

Warlords now represent the primary threat to peace and stability in the country. As Human Rights Watch and other groups have documented throughout the year since the signing of the Bonn Agreement, local and regional military commanders and their troops regularly abuse the human rights of those Afghans living in areas under their control. This is no surprise, since many are the same men who helped perpetuate war in Afghanistan for more than twenty years, systematically violating the human rights of millions of Afghans in the process.

In Kabul, the security and human rights situation has improved markedly, largely because of the introduction of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the heavy international presence in the capital. But beyond Kabul poor security, generalized criminality, and limited regard for basic human rights have marked the year since the signing of the Bonn Agreement. Each of these factors has in turn negatively affected reconstruction efforts and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Travel on many roads remains unsafe from extortion by local soldiers or criminals (often one and the same). Outside Kabul, U.N. officials often have little ability to protect persons at risk of human rights abuses. Vulnerable women and minorities, displaced persons, Afghans who stand up to abusive warlords, and even Afghan government officials have virtually no one to turn to when their lives or safety are threatened.

The power of the warlords has made it impossible for the Afghan Transitional Administration to establish its authority much beyond Kabul. It has also hindered any discernible progress in making the transition

from a militarized to a genuinely civilian government. In this environment, even U.N. officials monitoring human rights violations, compliance with the Bonn Agreement, and disarmament of local military forces, have had serious difficulties carrying out their duties.

Nations that promised to assist in strengthening stability and security in Afghanistan—chief among them the United States, but including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Turkey, Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy—have not adequately addressed the security and human rights problems caused by the continued dominance of Afghanistan's warlords. The United States blocked proposals by Afghan leaders, including President Hamid Karzai, and the United Nations, for an expanded ISAF to patrol the countryside and act as a deterrent to renewed fighting and human rights abuses by warlords and their subordinates. The solution offered by the U.S., to have warlords provide security outside of Kabul while the international community trains a future Afghan army, has proven to be a failure.

The protection of human rights and the creation of a secure environment for Afghans should be part of a mutually reinforcing effort to rebuild Afghanistan. Yet some have conflated security with political stability, and framed political stability and human rights as competing goals—a zero sum game. This is wrong. While there are occasional short-term tradeoffs, experience and lessons learned elsewhere have made it clear that sustainable improvements in security and human rights are mutually reinforcing.

Confronting the warlords is a major challenge. It requires a strong international commitment and a variety of sophisticated strategies. Efforts need to be made to sever the patron-client relationships that create loyalty to local—instead of national—leaders and institutions. For example, Afghan leaders and donors need to devise training and job programs (which could be part of the national reconstruction effort) that will be more attractive to young men than life as a soldier in the army of a warlord.

Yet there is little apparent commitment within the international community to engage in these efforts. The Afghan Transitional Administration is not powerful enough to confront the warlords on its own. It needs the sustained and genuine commitment of the United States and others to do take on the warlords. This will require a substantial, if necessarily phased, expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), many more U.N. human rights monitors, and the assistance of U.S. and other external armed forces inside Afghanistan." (HRW 5 December 2002, pp. 1-3)

Physical security

100 victims of landmines each month in Afghanistan (August 2004)

- There are currently an average of 100 mine victims each month
- Afghanistan signed the mine Ban Treaty in July 2002.
- Afghanistan is still believed to be one of the most severely mine- and UXO-affected countries in the world.
- The known mine/UXO contaminated area is estimated to total approximately 737 million square meters of land in 206 districts of 28 provinces

"63. Mines and unexploded ordnance contamination continues to be a major concern. Currently there are approximately 100 victims per month; more than 30 per cent of the victims are under the age of 18 and as many as 10 per cent are women and girls. There are approximately 1.3 billion square metres of contaminated land in Afghanistan, or 50 square metres for every Afghan man, woman and

child. To date, the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan has cleared more than 300 square kilometres of high-priority minefield and 522 square kilometres of former battle area, provided approximately 10.6 million Afghans with mine risk education training and trained and provided more than 25,000 school teachers with mine risk education teaching materials." (UNSC 12 August 2004, p. 16)

"Mine action operations were virtually brought to a halt following 11 September 2001. The mine action infrastructure suffered greatly during the subsequent military conflict, as some warring factions looted offices, seized vehicles and equipment, and assaulted local staff. Four deminers and two mine detection dogs were killed in errant U.S. air strikes. Military operations created additional threats to the population, especially unexploded U.S. cluster bomblets and ammunition scattered from storage depots hit by air strikes, as well as newly laid mines and booby-traps by Northern Alliance, Taliban, and Al-Qaeda fighters. (...)

The known mine/UXO contaminated area is estimated to total approximately 737 million square meters of land in 206 districts of 28 provinces. Of this, some 360 million square meters are classified as high priority land for clearance. The areas affected include vitally important agricultural land, irrigations systems, residential areas, grazing land, and roads. Priority areas include those where there is a high risk of accident, high repatriation, and the area is vital to meet the basic needs of villagers." (ICBL August 2002)

The following map shows Landmines & UXO in Afghanistan as of 1 May 2002:

Source: AIMS, 1 May 2002, (GIF 50 kb)

See also: "Returning Afghans fear mine menace", IWPR, 31 January 2003

"Afghanistan Mine Action Update", Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan, 22 April 2002

Returning IDPs face precarious security conditions and human rights abuses (June 2003)

- Instability and deteriorating security situation has made returns of refugees and IDPs unsustainable and forced some into renewed displacement.
- Returnees are subject to illegal taxation by local commanders in their village of origin.
- Forced recruitment in the north and protection concerns is causing new displacement.
- Some IDP families were forced to sell their daughters into marriage or sell their kid to survive.

"Most returnees and IDPs interviewed by Amnesty International had been negatively affected by the deteriorating security situation, which has drastically reduced the sustainability of return, and in some cases has caused renewed displacement. As the fighting continues and escalates, more people are leaving their homes in search of security, either within Afghanistan or to neighbouring countries. In Archi district in Kunduz, 12 returnee families had returned to Pakistan in February 2003, complaining about the policies of exploitation of local commanders.

Returnees are also subject to illegal taxation by local commanders upon their return to their villages of origin. This is now rife in many areas of the north, where such taxation often takes the form of a proportion of the UNHCR reintegration package.

The precarious security situation had a far reaching impact on the protection concerns of returnees, furthering affecting the sustainability of return. In the north of the country, local commanders are forcibly recruiting men and boys to participate in the internecine fighting. The local representative of the Ministry

of Refugees and Repatriation in Jawzjan province alleged that as many as 2000 families had left Afghanistan in recent months following attempts by the rival *Jamiat-e Islami* and *Jonbesh-e Melli Islami* factions to forcibly recruit men and boys. Other families had been compelled to send their sons away, most often to Iran and Pakistan, to escape forced recruitment. Still others have been forced to sell their houses in order to pay the local commander not to recruit their sons.

Another protection concern is the prevalence of forced and premature marriages of girls in order to receive dowry. In Badakshaukat IDP camp outside Kunduz city, Amnesty International was told of two families that were forced to sell their daughters, aged 4 and 7 years, into marriage. One returnee in Kabul also told Amnesty International of having to sell one child in the last months of 2002 in order for the rest of the family to survive through the winter." (AI 23 June 2003, p. 23)

"At the end of 2002 the monitoring system of UNHCR covered 27 provinces, only excluding Uruzgan, Paktia, Paktika, Khost and Nuristan. However, not all the districts of the 27 provinces were covered. The gaps were mainly related to security concerns on the ground.

Problems related to the unstable security situation were highlighted as the main concern for returnees and IDPs. The insecurity – primarily arising from the presence of irregular armed groups in the provinces – does not only affect the returnees and IDPs, but being in transitional phase the latter become extra vulnerable and often have a limited network to cope with the situation. Among the violations identified was extortion of money, excess taxation, rape, kidnapping and forced recruitment by the armed groups (especially in the North-Western area and the Central Highlands).

In addition disputes over land ownership, water rights and housing were emphasised as a key concern.

The problems are enhanced by the limited availability and functioning of dispute settlement mechanisms. The formal judicial system outside Kabul has all but disappeared and the strength of informal systems – to counter the influence of the warlords – varies greatly across the country. The involvement of local shuras/jirgas has in some instances provided an alternative, however, this to some extent presents a dilemma given that many shuras/jirgas base their decisions on traditional customary law, which tends to be interpreted in a conservative manner. An option would be to invest more in training and supervision of the shuras to enhance their skills. These issues should be discussed with the Judicial Commission and the CG on Rule of Law.

UNHCR highlighted three mechanisms, which had proven rather successful in addressing the concerns of returnees and especially IDPs:

- 1) The Return Commission for the North West which consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (chair), the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, UNAMA, UNHCR and the three main faction in the Northern part of Afghanistan (Jumbish, Jamiat and Wahdat). The objective of the commission is to identify obstacles to the return for the population, who has fled the North and the adoption of appropriate actions to remove these obstacles. The commission should furthermore establish a dialogue with the IDPs and refugees in their areas of displacement. The work of the commission and the corresponding working group has been progressing in a promising manner (the working group has conducted assessment missions in Jawzjan, Faryab, Sar-I-Pul Balkh and Samangan) and the latest report on the situation in Faryab province contains some very blunt observations. It remained to be seen to which degree the full commission will take action based on these reports.

- 2) A Return Shura has been established in Bamyan with a mandate to follow up on problems related to the return of especially Tadjik IDPs. This has according to UNHCR had a positive effect on the assessment made by the Tadjik IDPs who are now returning in greater numbers.

3) A number of Human Rights and Protection working groups had been established in the provinces. The working groups included representatives from UNAMA, UN agencies, AIHRC and NGOs being active in the field. This had proven to be a good mechanism to secure better information sharing and more consolidated interventions. The work in Mazar, Herat and Kabul was highlighted in this respect. UNAMA is preparing a strategy on this issue, which can be shared with members of HRAG, once it has been discussed internally." (HRAG 12 June 2003)

See also: [UNHCR Returnee Monitoring Report, Afghanistan Repatriation, January 2003-March 2003](#), 5 July 2003

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

General

Health situation remains dramatic despite some progresses (March 2004)

- Despite progresses, health situation remains dramatic
- Most Afghans do not have access to basic nutrition and health services
- 40% of existing health facilities do not have female staff, which means that women are very unlikely to access those facilities.
- More than 80 per cent of the services that do exist are provided by NGOs.
- Average life expectancy in Afghanistan is just over 42 years.

"Over the past two years, significant achievements have been made in the health sector. The Ministry of Public Health, together with other ministries and international agencies, has made considerable progress in policy and institutional reform, as well as in service delivery. Through successful mass vaccinations, the number of confirmed polio cases was reduced to 7 in 2003. A measles vaccination campaign reached more than 90% of children between 6 months and 12 years old, resulting in an estimated 30,000 lives saved. In the area of nutrition, the first large-scale iodised salt production plant has been established to tackle iodine deficiency, and 300,000 malnourished women and children have received support. Within the Ministry, a Grants Management Unit has been established to manage the Health budget and coordinate with donors.

Despite these achievements, the health situation in Afghanistan remains dramatic. Most Afghans do not have access to basic nutrition and health services that impact on health and well-being. Forty percent of existing health facilities do not have female staff, which means that women are very unlikely to access those facilities. More than 80 per cent of the services that do exist are provided by NGOs. The average maternal mortality rate is 1,600 per 100,000, while in the north eastern province Badakhshan, the rate is 6,500 per 100,000—the highest ever reported globally. The infant mortality rate is 165 per 1000, the highest in Asia, while the under-five mortality rate is 257 per 1000. The average life expectancy in Afghanistan is just over 42 years.

Notwithstanding the success of recent campaigns, routine immunization coverage (DPT3) is estimated at only 30 per cent country-wide. The rate of chronic malnutrition (moderate and severe stunting) remains around 50% reflecting a combination of livelihood factors, such as poor caring practises, micronutrient deficiency, and chronic food insecurity. The country also has the highest rate of iodine deficiency in the world.

Among children, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections, and vaccine preventable illnesses likely account for 60% of deaths. Among adults, tuberculosis accounts for an estimated 15,000 deaths per year with 70% of detected cases being among women.

Currently, the most significant constraint to improving public health and nutrition is the lack of basic health services. Even simple and effective interventions, such as routine immunization, are only slowly becoming available. Major challenges to improving service delivery include: (i) the shortage of skilled health staff in rural areas, particularly of female staff; (ii) the lack of managerial capacity, especially at provincial level; and, (iii) the existence of managerial and organizational structures that do not provide incentives or accountability for results.

Preventive health practices are weak, due in part to lack of information and to inadequate practices in hygiene, nutrition, water-related health behaviour, and simple disease prevention (mosquito nets). Weak prevention underscores the fundamental importance of education as a factor in improving public health, particularly the education of women as primary care givers in the home. It also raises the need for better informed, better trained primary health staff within the national system.

There are also several cross-cutting issues that impede improvements in health status, inter alia the lack of physical security and accompanying human rights violations, the low social status afforded to women, and the extremely low availability of basic infrastructure in rural roads, electricity, safe water, and sanitation systems. Poor education, particularly female education, and the increasing problem of narcotics addiction also have an adverse impact. The absence of a secure, long-term expenditure framework is yet another constraint." (TISA, ADB, UNAMA, UNDP, WB, 17 March 2004, pp. 25-26)

The following maps shows health vulnerability in Afghanistan as of 1 May 2002:

Source: AIMS, 1 May 2002, (GIF 50 kb)

Food

Steady decrease in malnutrition in Kabul in the past years (January 2004)

- Nutrition situation in Kabul has markedly improved since 2002, although absolute figures remain high due to population density.
- At the end of 2003, worrying levels of malnutrition were recorded in southern Kapisa and the northern Shamali-southern Pansheer

"The latest nutritional survey carried out by ACF in November 2003 confirmed a consistent decrease in malnutrition levels over the past years, as evidenced in the table here below.

Table 3 - Results of the anthropometric surveys/assessments in Kabul [1995 - 2003]

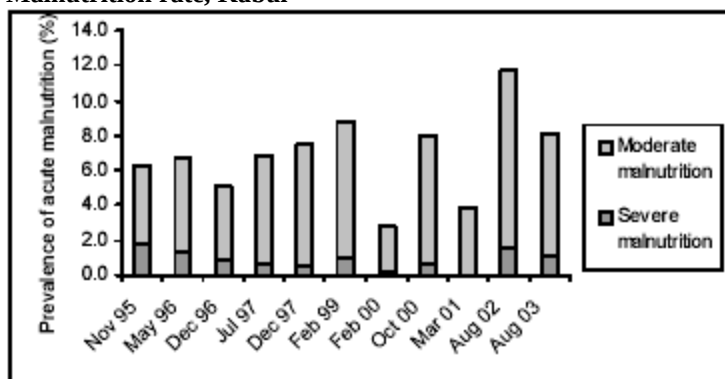
Survey / assessment	n	Acute malnutrition % w-h in Z-score (95% CI)		Chronic malnutrition % h-a in Z-score (95% CI)	
		Global	Severe	Global	Severe
Kabul November 1995	213	6.2 (4.2 - 9.1)	1.8 (0.8 - 3.7)	-	-
Kabul May 1996	900	6.7 (4.6 - 9.5)	1.4 (0.6 - 3.2)	-	-
Kabul December 1996	882	5.1 (3.3 - 7.8)	0.8 (0.2 - 2.3)	55.2 (50.3 - 59.8)	27.2 (23.2 - 31.7)
Kabul June 1997	943	6.8 (4.7 - 9.7)	0.6 (0.1 - 2)	52.1 (47.4 - 56.7)	29.0 (24.9 - 33.3)
Kabul December 1997	928	7.5 (5.3 - 10.5)	0.5 (0.1 - 1.9)	63.0 (58.3 - 67.3)	35.7 (31.2 - 40.1)
Kabul February 1999	922	8.7 (6.9 - 10.8)	1.0 (0.3 - 2.6)	61.3 (56.6 - 65.7)	32.2 (27.9 - 36.7)
Kabul February 2000	937	2.8 (1.5 - 4.9)	0.2 (0.0 - 1.4)	53.7 (49.0 - 58.2)	27.3 (23.3 - 31.6)
Kabul October 2000	929	8.0 (5.7 - 11)	0.6 (0.1 - 2.1)	57.5 (52.8 - 62.0)	26.8 (22.8 - 31.1)
Kabul March 2001	933	3.8 (2.2 - 5.9)	0.0 (0.0 - 0.0)	62.6 (58.0 - 67.0)	27.7 (23.7 - 32.1)
Kabul August 2002	954	11.7 (9.9 - 15.1)	1.6 (0.7 - 3.3)	47.9 (43.3 - 52.5)	22.3 (18.7 - 26.3)
Kabul August 2003	900	8.1 (5.8 - 11.2)	1.1 (0.4 - 2.7)	34.4 (30.1 - 38.8)	13.0 (9.9 - 16.1)
Kabul November 2003	959	4.2% (2.6 - 6.5)	0.5% (0.1 - 1.8)	44.1% (39.5 - 48.5)	17.8% (14.5 - 21.5)

These results point to an improvement in the nutrition situation of the population of Kabul in recent years with a marked improvement since 2002, even though absolute figures remain high due to population density. Nutrition survey results also highlight an annual peak of malnutrition during summer, which is most probably correlated to the increase of diarrhoeal diseases at this time of year. Figures on diarrhoea cases in 2002 and 2003 compared to the number of admissions in ACF's supplementary feeding centres underlines this parallel between diarrhoea cases and malnutrition, with a peak for both in summer: the increase and decrease of the diarrhoea being slightly earlier than that of malnutrition. For 2003, it seems that the number of both diarrhoea and malnutrition cases is lower than in 2002." (ACF January 2004, p. 19)

"Nutritional status

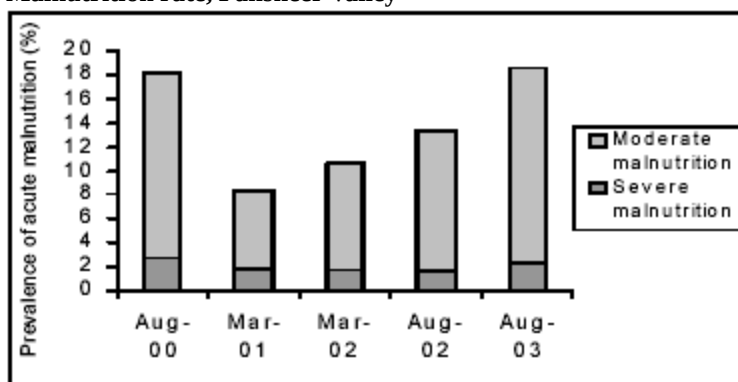
Several random-sampled surveys were carried out during the summer. The results showed average to worrying nutritional status (see table). In Kabul city, the nutrition situation has remained average since last year (see figure).

Malnutrition rate, Kabul



In southern Kapisa and the northern Shamali-southern Pansheer, worrying levels of malnutrition have been recorded; in Pansheer valley, the nutrition status has deteriorated when compared to last year at the same period (see figure). RNIS does not have, however, sufficient information to be able to give an explanation about this high prevalence of malnutrition. Mortality was under-control (see table)." (RNIS 43, November 2003, p. 28)

Malnutrition rate, Pansheer valley



Source for both tables: RNIS 43, November 2003

Results of nutrition surveys, Afghanistan, 2003 (ACF, 08/03)

Survey Area	Date	% Acute Malnutrition (95% CI)	% Severe Acute Malnutrition (95% CI)	Crude Mortality (/10,000/day)	Under 5 Mortality (/10,000/day)	Measles immuni- sation coverage (%)
Northern Shamali-southern Pansheer	08-03	18.5 (16.1-21.2)	2.3 (1.2-4.2)	0.24	0.74	80.7
Southern Kapissa	08-03	14.5 (11.5-18.1)	1.0 (0.4-2.6)	-	-	83.8
Kabul city	08-03	8.1 (5.8-11.2)	1.1 (0.4-2.7)	0.47	0.59	90.1

Source: ACF, 3 August 2003, in RNIS 43, November

Ending of food distribution in camps put the most vulnerable at risk (June 2003)

- Shaidayee camp near Herat is set to close in a few months. Those who cannot return home are being evacuated to Maslakh camp.
- Many who have returned have done so because the food distribution was stopped in Shaidayee camp as part of an exit strategy aimed at emptying the camp which is located on land owned by the provincial government.
- Food distribution were stopped in both Shaidayee and Maslakh camp in April forcing many to leave the camp in order to survive.
- AI is concerned that the use of food to force people to return violates the basic right to adequate food and is leading to forcible return to areas where return is not sustainable.
- Food rations to IDPs in both camps were stopped before an accurate vulnerability assessment could identify those individuals, such as female headed households, unaccompanied minors, the elderly and the ill, that were unable to fend for themselves.

"**Shaidayee IDP camp** outside Herat city will close in the next few months, and the government and international agencies are organizing the evacuation of the camp. Residents of that camp who continue to be in need of protection and cannot return to their places of origin have been "encouraged" to move to **Maslakh IDP camp** some kilometers further away. At the time of Amnesty International's visit, residents of Shaidayee that had "decided" to return to their home villages stated that the main reason for this decision was the fact that the distribution of food rations in the camps had been halted. This withdrawal of food assistance was part of an "exit strategy" being developed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR in collaboration with the local Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation. The land on which Shaidayee camp was built is allegedly owned by the provincial government, which wants the land back. As part of the exit strategy, IDPs in both camps were told that the food rations would be stopped by the end of March 2003, and IDPs in Shaidayee were told that they would have to leave the camp a month later. Food rations in both Shaidayee and Maslakh were halted as of 1 April 2003, although WFP carried out one further distribution of only half the standard ration in mid-April. Abdur Raouf, who used to be a sharecropper in Faryab province, stated that his family had no other choice but to go back to try to find work. He claimed that if he stayed in Shaidayee for even another ten days his five children would die of starvation.

Amnesty International has serious concerns about the way in which this exit strategy has been put into operation and, more fundamentally, about the lack of sufficient attention to the human rights of the individuals affected by such a strategy. There is a dubious morality, not to mention legality, involved in using food as the means to "induce" people to return to their places of origin. By violating the basic right to adequate food, the international agencies, including WFP and UNHCR, involved in this exit strategy effectively become responsible for causing the forcible return of IDPs from Shaidayee and Maslakh camps.

In addition, the blanket withdrawal of food assistance constitutes a blunt instrument, which disproportionately affects vulnerable individuals. Amnesty International has learned that food rations to IDPs in both camps were stopped before an accurate vulnerability assessment could identify those individuals, such as female headed households, unaccompanied minors, the elderly and the ill, that were unable to fend for themselves. Abrushan, a widow living in Shaidayee camp, told Amnesty International that she couldn't go back to her village in Herat province because she had no house there. Yet, she said, she was "so hungry; they have stopped our food and I don't know how to find a job."

Maslakh camp still shelters large numbers of Pashtuns from Faryab province as well as IDPs from provinces such as Uruzgan that are unable to return to their home villages for protection reasons. Other vulnerable populations in the camp, such as unaccompanied women, the disabled and the elderly will also not in the foreseeable future be able to return to their homes in conditions of safety and dignity. There is, in addition, no durable solution in sight for most of the camps' large Kutchi populations, many of whom have lost their livestock and ability to their regain their former nomadic lifestyle. While some inhabitants of Maslakh camp are able to earn a living in Herat city, Amnesty International urges the authors of an exit strategy for both Maslakh and Shaidayee to be mindful of the continuing protection and assistance needs of sections of the camp population. For instance, the camp is located an hour's drive away from the city, and IDPs are often unable to pay truck operators to transport them. This is compounded by the fact that much of the "work" found by IDPs in Herat is confined to begging on the streets, the income from which is extremely unpredictable.

An exit strategy is only acceptable if it is primarily aimed at achieving the sustainable and rights respecting return of the camp population to their home or preferred destination. Forcing the movement of persons, whether to their home provinces, urban centers or to another IDP camp for reasons of political expedience, to free the land for commercial use or due to donor pressure will ensure that returns are unsustainable, and is in contravention of international human rights standards." (AI 23 June 2003, pp. 15-16)

Health

Nutrition and mortality situation under control in Kabul and IDP camps in Herat (February 2004)

- A nutrition survey conducted by ACF in November 2003 among residents including returnees and IDPs revealed that the nutrition situation, as well as the mortality rate, were under-control.
- The nutrition survey was carried out in winter, when the prevalence of malnutrition is seasonally the lowest.
- Nutrition surveys undertaken in IDP camps near Herat in December 2003/January 2004 revealed acceptable mortality rates.
- Most of the households who remained in the camps could manage to get food by their own means

"Kabul city

A random sampled nutrition survey was conducted in Kabul in November 2003 (ACF-F, 11/03). Around 20% of the families interviewed were returnees and about 8% were displaced (arrived in Kabul over the last two years). The nutrition situation, as well as the mortality rate, were under-control (category IV) (see table 13). About 8% of the mothers were considered as malnourished (MUAC < 210 mm). The number of admissions to therapeutic feeding centres and to supplementary feeding centres was lower in 2003 than in 2002 and 2001. The nutrition survey was carried out in winter, when the prevalence of malnutrition is seasonally the lowest. The overall situation seems also to have improved in Kabul over the past months owing to favourable factors such as the country's recovery from drought, the limited number of returnees in

2003 compared to 2002 and the improvement in access to health care and in potable water. The percentage of returnees in ACF's feeding centres decreased from 18% between June and November 2002 to 2% during the same period in 2003. This can be explained by a decrease in the proportion of returnees in Kabul, by an improvement of the nutritional status of the returned children, or by both.

Displaced camps, Herat Province

Humanitarian aid and especially food assistance was cut in Shadayee and Maslakh IDP camps in June 2003 (see RNIS 42). People living in Shadayee camp were encouraged to relocate to Maslakh camp, however some families have stayed on the Shadayee site. Nutrition surveys were undertaken in these camps in December 2003/January 2004 (MSF-H, 12/03; MSF-H, 01/04). The population of the camps dropped in 2003. At the time of the surveys it was estimated that about 13,300 people were settled in Maslakh; the exhaustive survey conducted in Shadayee camp found 3,550 people living there.

The nutrition situation in the camps could be considered acceptable (category IV); mortality rates were below the alert thresholds (see table 13). The major source of food during winter in both camps was labour (72% in Shadayee and 64% in Maslakh), followed by business in Maslakh (27%) and by wool spinning in Shadayee (14%).

It seemed that most of the households who remained in the camps could manage to get food by their own means. Their general living conditions are however unknown.

Table 13 Results of nutrition surveys in Kabul and in IDP camps, Herat province, Afghanistan, November 2003-January 2004 (ACF, 11/03; MSF-H, 12/03; MSF-H, 01/04)

% Acute Malnutrition (95% CI)	% Severe Acute Malnutrition (95% CI)	Crude Mortality (/10,000/day)	Under 5 Mortality (/10,000/day)	Measles immunisation coverage (%)*
Kabul				
4.2 (2.6-6.5)	0.5 (0.1-1.8)	0.49	0.63	84.6
Shadayee camp				
4.0	0.4	0.3	0.9	69.5
Maslakh camp				
2.8 (1.4-4.3)	0.5 (0.0-1.1)	0.3	0.8	90.1

Overall

It seems that the nutrition situation in Kabul City and in IDP camps in Herat province has improved and is under control. This may be due to the better rainfall patterns in 2003 and to the gradual resettlement of IDPs and returnees. However, these nutrition surveys have been done during winter, when malnutrition is seasonally the lowest. Follow-up of these populations is needed." (UN SSCN February 2004)

Diphtheria outbreaks in Zhare Dasht IDP camp near Kandahar (August 2003)

- IDPs in Zahre Dasht camp are facing an outbreak of diphtheria causing the death of three persons.
- MSF has started treatment of the patients and has embarked on a vaccination campaign to prevent further spread of the disease.
- The cramped conditions of a camp, with many family members living under the same roof, are ideal for the transmission of an infectious disease such as diphtheria.

"The residents of Zhare Dasht camp in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan are facing a rare outbreak of diphtheria - an infectious disease that has been all but eradicated in the western world. MSF started treatment of the patients and has embarked on a mass vaccination campaign to prevent further spread of the disease.

Information on the first cases in Zhare Dasht emerged on July 14, one death had already occurred, with a further two in the days that immediately followed. All the affected patients are under the age of 18, none of whom have been previously immunised.

The most effective way to protect the population of Zhare Dasht camp is vaccination - and MSF has embarked on a mass vaccination campaign targeting the entire population of the camp, which stands at close to 40,000 people.

Up to three vaccinations per person are required to ensure effective immunisation. The first round of the vaccination campaign will end this week, and it is expected that the entire process will be completed in the coming months. In addition, MSF has extended immunisation for children under five in four IDP camps (Internally Displaced Person) in Spin Boldak, further south on the Pakistani border, in order to prevent the spread of the disease.

(...)

Until now, cases of diphtheria have been clinically diagnosed. Patients are initially isolated in MSF's basic health care unit in Zhare Dasht. They are then transferred to the Infectious Diseases Ward in Kandahar city hospital, where MSF is working in support of the Ministry of Health. In the Infectious Diseases Ward, patients can be more effectively isolated and treated.

Meanwhile in Zhare Dasht camp, MSF, along with other NGO partners working in the camp, are disseminating health education messages and administering prophylaxis to close contacts of diphtheria patients in an attempt to try and further prevent spread of the disease - which is transmitted through person-to-person contact. The cramped conditions of a camp, with many family members living under the same roof, are ideal for the transmission of an infectious disease such as diphtheria.

(...)

The population of Zhare Dasht (literally meaning yellow desert) and the Spin Boldak camps is mainly made up of displaced Kutchi nomads from the south of Afghanistan and Pashtuns from the north of the country. The ongoing drought in the south of the country has forced the Kutchis to abandon their traditional nomadic way of life and has decimated their herds. The Pashtuns have fled from the north due to harassment and discrimination at the hands of other ethnic groups.

MSF has been working in the IDP camps in Kandahar province since their inception in early 2002, providing basic health care, mother and child health, reproductive health, immunizations, nutrition activities and treatment for tuberculosis." (MSF August 2003)

MSF concerned about the relocation of 12,000 IDPs from Shaidayee to Maslakh camp (June 2003)

- There is concern that the phasing out of food distribution is happening without a comprehensive understanding of the IDPs' coping mechanisms.
- 16,000 IDPs in Shaidayee camp and 29,000 IDPs in Maslakh camp.
- Govt plans to close Shaidayee camp in the coming months.
- MSF is worried that the relocation of 12,000 IDPs from Shaidayee to Malsakh camp will disrupt their lives and employment.
- MSF thinks closure of the camp will result in mental and physical damage for the Shaidayee camp IDPs.

"In Hirat, IDP protection in the camps has improved over the situation a year ago. Currently, however, IDPs are facing possible forced relocation from Shaydayee camp to Maslakh camp because the governor is 'restituting' most of the camp lands to the military. Because Maslakh is much further from Hirat town, such relocation runs contrary to the expressed goal of achieving durable solutions as relocated IDPs risk

loosing their already limited livelihood options and access to urban employment. At the same time food distribution is being phased out and the mission noted that there is much concern among many of the international community that this is occurring without a comprehensive vulnerability analysis being completed and a fuller understanding of the existing coping mechanisms of IDPs being reached. Thus, WFP is encouraged to revisit its plans for targeting assistance to the residual IDPs pending the completion of a planned vulnerability assessment later this summer." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, p. 8)

"We estimate there are 16,000 internally displaced persons in Shaidayee. Mashlak is much bigger, with around 29,000 people living there. This is likely to change dramatically in the coming weeks when the U.N. agencies and Afghan government relocate the population of Shaidayee to Mashlak. The government's plan is to completely close Shaidayee in the coming months. Around 12,000 internally displaced persons are being relocated. We are worried about this because of Mashlak's capacity to receive such a large number. The move could potentially disrupt the lives and employment developed by people living near Shaidayee. Once the camp closes their income will disappear.

(...)

There is an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety among the population. Most of them have already been through two decades of wars and three or four years of the worst drought Central Asia has seen for 30 years. Now they are being told they cannot go home because of warfare, lack of employment and an absence of shelter. They hear that the international community will not provide for them anymore and on top of that they will soon lose whatever kind of life they have built in Shaidayee camp. The closure will only worsen the precarious level of mental and physical health found in many of our patients." (AlertNet 28 May 2003)

Psychological health of displaced persons should be considered as urgent as physical health problems (May 2003)

- Shift from posttraumatic stress to more chronic mental health problems among IDPs in Shaidayee camp
- WHO reports that 30% of the refugees in Pakistan who seek medical assistance may suffer from psychological problems.
- Psychosocial health should be considered as urgent as physical health problems.
- Humanitarian relief agencies are slowly integrating psychological support into operations that provide food, water, shelter, and physical care.
- Killing, executions, massive persecution, forced internal displacement, fear associated with living in mined areas, and the latest escalation of violence have left an indelible mark on the population.

"Shelter, water and sanitation [in Shaidayee camp] are covered, and basic services such as the distribution of food and non-food aid and health services also function well. But what is often neglected are the psychological effects. Try to picture living in a camp. Shelter is very basic, with no furniture. There is only one blanket for every five people in a country where temperatures regularly drop below freezing at nights. You are dependent on strangers for your basic needs, for food, for soap. Imagine being a war widow with your children running around shoeless and unable to attend school. Nobody would accept living like that if they had a choice. We have found that there has been a shift from posttraumatic stress to more chronic mental health issues. A large amount of people still complain about acute back pains and headaches for example. We think that, for many of them, the symptoms are connected to stress, anxiety and despair." (AlertNet 28 May 2003)

"(...) In Afghanistan alone, it has been suggested that some five million people may be affected by psychosocial distress. A WHO fact-finding mission to Pakistan recently found that 30% of the Afghan refugees who seek medical assistance at local health care facilities are presenting psychosomatic

complaints resulting from psychological problems. Traumatic experiences such as killings, material losses, torture and sexual violence, harsh detention and uprooting, all affect people's behavior for generations. 'The international community must consider psychosocial health as urgent as physical health problems,' says Mary Petevi, a psychosocial specialist at WHO's Emergency and Humanitarian Action Department.

Nonetheless, raising the topic of mental health concerns often poses an important question: should we provide psychological support where life itself is at risk? Or as Mary Petevi asks, 'What good is psychotherapy to a mother who has nothing to feed her ten children?'

These unanswerable questions as well as concerns about the lack of funding have historically prevented psychological support from being considered as anything other than complementary aid. But humanitarian relief agencies are slowly integrating psychological support into operations that provide food, water, shelter, and physical care. 'Psychological support aims at helping people to help themselves. A society needs active survivors, not passive victims!' says Lise Simonsen, the psychological support officer at the International Federation of the Red Cross.

The need for psychological support is clearly indicated by recent reports on Afghanistan and surrounding countries. Life in overcrowded camps, killing and violence, deprivations and material losses, uncertainty over the future, disruption of community and social support are well-recognized. In a November 2001 WHO special report, Dr. Leena Kaartinen of the NGO Healthnet International, said that she first started treating patients in this isolated region in 1985. She reports that the greatest health problem facing the people she works with is psychosocial distress.

She explains that 'twenty-three years of war have ravaged the mental health and psychosocial functioning of the people of Afghanistan. Killing, executions, massive persecution, forced internal displacement, fear associated with living in mined areas, and the latest escalation of violence have left an indelible mark on the population. In addition, the psychological impact of living in uncertainty affects at least three million Afghan refugees.'

A recent Agence France Presse report cited that 'refugees, often in tears, recount how they have found sons shot dead by the Taliban and had sons and husbands forcibly conscripted to fight a war they do not want to fight. Scores more tell of homes destroyed by U.S. bombs, children, husbands, wives, mothers and fathers killed during the campaign.' Refugees' reactions are normal reactions to abnormal situations, but the cognitive, emotional and socio-economic burden imposed on individuals, the family, and the community, are enormous." (RI 8 January 2002)

Water and sanitation

Access to safe water and other urban services in the main cities is limited (March 2004)

- Kabul and many other cities in Afghanistan has witnessed a sharp increase in population with the return of IDPs and refugees.
- Urban services are lacking or are inadequate.
- Access to safe water in Kabul is only about 30 per cent, compared to 13 per cent in 2000.

"Urban services are critical for well-functioning cities and towns, which in turn support sustained economic growth. Conflict, drought, and returning refugees have contributed to massive urbanization in Afghanistan. Kabul's population has increased from some 400,000 in the 1970s to an estimated 1.7 million in 2000 and 2.8 million in 2003. Other cities have seen similar proportional growth in population. Total urban

population is likely to nearly double by 2015, at a growth rate twice that of Afghanistan's population as a whole. Ironically, the very urban services that draw refugees and migrants to the cities are inadequate if not lacking. Over 60 per cent of Kabul's urban roads have been destroyed, as well as much of its housing; no more than 60 per cent of solid waste is collected, and access to safe water in the city is only about 30 per cent. In 2000, Afghanistan was at the bottom in access to safe water (13 per cent) and sanitation (12 per cent) among comparable countries (Table 3.1). Waste-water collection by sewerage systems is limited to a few large cities and is only partially treated. Intermittent piped water service, inadequate water treatment, and contamination of groundwater have resulted in a precarious sanitary situation. Summary information on urban service delivery in Afghanistan's main cities is shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Urban Service Delivery Indicators For Selected Cities		
City/town	Access to Safe Water (%)	Destroyed Roads (%)
Kabul	29	60
Kandahar	20	25
Mazar-I-Sherif	40	13
Jalalabad	50	50
Herat	85	46
Kunduz	0	23

Source: See Water and Sanitation Technical Annex (www.af/)

Key issues: The urban challenges facing Afghanistan include rapid urban growth, massive service delivery backlogs, property rights disputes, and weak urban management. Developable urban land (in terms of legality and availability of services) is in extremely short supply. Most new urban residents - including substantial unprecedented new categories such as unsupported widows - have to settle in unplanned and therefore un-serviced areas of the cities. Land property rights remain somewhat precarious; almost half of the residents of Kabul are under the threat of eviction or relocation. This insecurity of property tenure militates against development of an efficient land market, equity in access, and preservation of the environment. Major urban management challenges include institutional fragmentation and unclear functional responsibilities and roles between the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH) and municipalities, poor governance, and the weak capacity of municipalities to generate revenue to fund the provision of local public services.

A number of issues must be urgently addressed in order to ensure the sustainability of investments in Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS). MUDH needs to be strengthened particularly in sector policymaking, oversight, and coordination and monitoring. The legal status of the main sector institution, the Central Authority for Water Supply and Sewerage (CAWSS) needs to be clarified. CAWSS operations have historically been centralised in Kabul, with little operational autonomy in the provinces. At present, no institution monitors or regulates the allocation of water resources across sectors, so disputes among users may arise. While financing for reconstruction and extension needs to be provided by donors, improved cost recovery will be required to finance an increasing share of operations and maintenance. Cost recovery will also be essential for improved demand management thereby addressing general water scarcity issues." (TISA, ADB, UNAMA, UNDP, WB, 17 March 2004, p.56)

For more information on the situation in Kabul, see:

[Kabul Vulnerability Mapping](#), Action contre la Faim, January 2004

More than a quarter of Kabul's population spends at least 30 minutes to fetch drinking water (January 2004)

- Like housing availability and access to health care, water supply is geographically determined.
- 60% to 70% of the Kabul population relies on shallow-dug wells or public hand pumps.
- 26% of the families interviewed declared spending at least 30mn each time they fetched water.

"In Kabul the water supply situation is far from uniform. Like housing availability and access to health care vulnerability is geographically determined. Due to the lack of coverage of municipal tap networks, 60% to 70% of the Kabul population relies on alternative water sources, such as shallow-dug wells or public hand pumps. Owing to the drought that affected the region of Kabul between 1999 and 2002, most private shallow wells are still dry at the end of the year 2003. Regarding the more than 3000 public hand pumps present, it is estimated that 20% of them do not provide water because of a low water table.

Even though a large part of the population has access to open wells for washing and household needs, the existing water services fall short of meeting the drinking water needs of the growing urban population. While some better off areas enjoy daily tap water, other wealthier places only have tap water every few days. Worse off areas are characterized by a lack of drinking water, long distances to drinking water sources and long waits at hand pumps or tap stands: 26% of the families declared spending at least 30mn each time they fetched water.

Access to drinking water remains a serious concern in Kabul today. Taps and hand pumps are the safest source for drinking water but the tap networks cover only 5 of the 13 Districts, a small fraction of the population. In at least 5 of the gozars surveyed water availability was critical." (ACF January 2004, p. 20)

Increase in population in Kabul has had a negative impact on the sanitation situation in Kabul (January 2004)

- Arrival of so many refugees, IDPs and urban migrants in Kabul has had a very negative impact on an already fragile sanitation situation.
- Current sanitation situation has a real potential to deteriorate rapidly as little is currently being done to tackle the issue

"The sanitation situation in Kabul is cause for great concern. Human waste from overflowing latrines is a common site in narrow allies even in the centre of the city. The arrival of such a large population had a direct and negative impact on an already fragile sanitation situation. In fact, the soaring number of inhabitants translated into a multiplication of garbage and excreta throughout the city.

Night soil collection

Due to the great increase in the urban population during the last two decades the traditional night soil collection system has broken down. The farmers or night-soil collectors who used to regularly empty the private latrines in Kabul are too few to keep up with expanding population. In addition to the greater availability of chemical fertilizer, the recent drought and the decreasing arable land have meant a further decrease in overall demand for fertilizer. As a result, many latrines are emptied far too infrequently, especially within overcrowded residential areas like District 1. Excreta overflow from many latrines generating obvious public health hazards: faecal contamination of surface waters, direct oral-faecal transmission, vector breeding...

The current sanitation situation has a real potential to deteriorate rapidly as little is currently being done to tackle the issue. Comprehensive efforts need to be dedicated to the implementation of a sewage network throughout the city. Though necessary, such a network will not be operational before several years however, thus calling for alternative solutions in the meanwhile."(ACF January 2004, pp. 21-22)

All IDP camps have been provided with safe drinking water facilities (December 2003)

- MRRD, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNHCR has provided safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in all IDP camps.
- Low funding response from donors and shortage of implementing partners are major constraints to the health sector.

"58. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in collaboration with UNICEF, UNHCR and several non-governmental organizations has been providing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to schools, vulnerable villages affected by drought, communities experiencing high numbers of refugee returns and camps for internally displaced persons. In addition, UNICEF, WHO and the World Food Programme (WFP) are working with the Ministry of Health to reduce the steep rise in the incidence of diarrhoeal diseases, especially in major cities, through public awareness campaigns and the chlorination of drinking water. This year, all camps for internally displaced persons have been provided with these facilities, but only a third of the 3,500 schools and less than 5 per cent of the vulnerable villages targeted have received these services. The main constraints of the sector are the low funding response from donors, the shortage of sufficient implementing partners and appropriate drilling equipment, and insufficient capacities to plan and manage the sector." (UNGA 3 December 2003)

Only 20 percent of Afghans have access to safe drinking water (June 2003)

- According to UNEP a major part of Afghanistan is experiencing water scarcity, in urban as well as in rural areas.
- Government says only 20 percent of Afghans nationwide had access to safe drinking water in both cities and rural areas.
- Water is often a source a conflict

"As the world marks Environment and Water Day on Thursday, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Afghanistan has announced that a major part of the country is experiencing water scarcity.

'Water is a major problem in rural and urban areas due to water scarcity, mismanagement and damaged water systems,' Pekka Haavisto, the chairman of the UNEP Afghanistan Task Force, told IRIN in the capital, Kabul.

According to the UNEP Post-Conflict Environment Assessment report on Afghanistan, whereas the country as a whole uses less than one-third of its potential 75,000 million cubic metres of water resources, regional differences in supply, inefficient use and wastage mean that a major part of the country experiences scarcity.

'Water quality, quantity, and its guaranteed availability to all people regardless of income or social status is one of the most pressing challenges facing not only Afghanistan but also the world community today,' Haavisto remarked. He described it as a major issue requiring the attention of all.

Government officials have also expressed concern. 'The water issue is becoming a serious problem, and the last four years of drought added to an already big issue,' Yusuf Nuristani, the Afghan minister of irrigation, water resources and environment, told IRIN at the World Environment and Water Day ceremony in Kabul.

He stated that only 20 percent of Afghans nationwide had access to safe drinking water in both cities and rural areas. The minister said water mismanagement was widely practised in the country, and that as a result of prolonged conflict most water channels and other systems had suffered greatly.

'Restoration of water resources is one of the priorities of the government,' said Nuristani, noting that his ministry was now working out a strategy to bring about the improved management of water resources.

UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi said the water issue was more than an environmental problem in the country.

'Water is, perhaps, the most precious resource in Afghanistan, and so it can be a source of conflict,' Brahimi told IRIN, observing that much of the conflict in the country was the result of land disputes. 'Land rights do not mean much without water rights,' he said, stressing that one of the most important tasks facing the country was to impose order and the rule of law over land and water rights." (IRIN 5 June 2003)

Access to water for irrigation sometimes determined by political allegiance (May 2002)

- The connections among food security, ethnicity and political allegiance are important, especially at local levels.
- While connections to local level commanders and authorities bring benefits linked to increased food security, lack of influence over these same actors increases vulnerability and heightens risk.
- The landowner's political connections to those in power may increase his food security, while members of the displaced communities lack the political allegiances or power needed to ensure protection and maintain access to the services provided in the IDP camp

"The connections among food security, ethnicity and political allegiance are important, especially at local levels. The collapse of the Taliban regime brought a sudden shift in power relations, increasing stability in some areas while contributing to upheaval in others. The populations once favored politically under the Taliban, such as the Koochi pastoralists and other Pashtun communities in the north, are facing renewed threats that have direct implications for food security. One example is access to water for irrigation, which is determined not only by wealth and geography but also by political allegiance. In contrast, those who were persecuted under the Taliban regime, such as Tajik and Uzbek supporters of the Northern Alliance, are once again receiving benefits due to ethnic and/or affiliations with local and national power structures.

Last year's political transition brought a rapid change in land tenure and access to water in many areas, as communities abandoned or reclaimed areas from which they had been forcibly uprooted during earlier conflicts. In irrigated areas in the north, for instance, Tajik and Uzbek groups have recently returned to land lost under the Taliban, and have since denied downstream communities access to irrigation water, saying 'This was done to the us in the past, so why shouldn't we the same to others now?' While connections to local level commanders and authorities bring benefits linked to increased food security, lack of influence over these same actors increases vulnerability and heightens risk. For example, one landowner in Sar-e-Pul has used his political connections to lobby the local authorities for access to his fields where and IDP camp has been established. As a result, the governor and local commanders have been adamant in 'encouraging' the IDPs to return to their home areas, many of which have no source of drinking water. The landowner's political connections to those in power may increase his food security, while members of the displaced communities lack the political allegiances or power needed to ensure protection and maintain access to the services provided in the IDP camp." (Feinstein International Famine Center May 2002, pp. 25-26)

Shelter and non-food items

Influx of returnees and IDPs in Kabul has created a housing crisis (January 2004)

- Increase in population in Kabul has created a housing crisis with increases of 280% in rental costs between 2001 and 2003.
- Many families squatting houses have also been evicted by returning owners.
- It is estimated that 63,000 housing units have been severely damaged or destroyed in Kabul with approximately 50% of all Kabulis living in informal settlements with no security of tenure.
- 34% of the households interviewed live in a single room of 4.65m by 3.33m on average: this represents 5.9 persons sharing 15.5m²
- In 2002, it was estimated that 20% of the 500,000 refugees who have returned to Kabul were living in abandoned or destroyed buildings or in open space.

"Besides putting pressure on strapped water and sanitation networks, the recent population influx has created a housing crisis. A survey among ACF staff for instance, revealed a 280% increase in rental costs between 2001 and 2003. In addition to this, returning owners evicted families who had been squatting their abandoned houses.

Each of the interviewed households had to mention the first time that they had arrived in Kabul as well as when they returned in case of temporary departure: the following graph evidences this influx over the past 10 years. The soaring number of families coming to Kabul, whether for the first time or not, had a direct impact on the housing situation in throughout the city as newcomers and returnees alike needed a place to stay. In fact, many families returned to destroyed or squatted houses.

Graph 5-Influx of families arriving for the first time or returning to Kabul over the past 10 years [Muslim calendar] –

It is estimated that 63,000 housing units have been severely damaged or destroyed in Kabul with approximately 50% of all Kabulis living in informal settlements with no security of tenure (Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, 2002 in Rodey 2003). With the increase in rents as well as the high number of people returning and reclaiming their original houses many have been forced to share accommodations, either with relatives or unrelated families. It is very common to find many families sharing one house. Throughout the city the average number of families per house is 2.2 but in areas like Bagh Ali Mardan where crowding is obvious, an average of 3.8 families share one house. House owners were also found to be renting out rooms to strangers to augment their income. This was also mentioned in focus groups as a mechanism used to cope in times of financial need.

Beside the number of families sharing a single house, the number of persons living in a single room reflects the high population density in specific parts of the city. As mentioned above, averages for the entire city tend to blur striking differences between neighbourhoods. One third of the households (34%) interviewed live in a single room of 4.65m by 3.33m on average: this represents 5.9 persons sharing 15.5m². In Cement Khana however [Zone D] up to 51% of the families live in a single room, while in better off areas such as Khair Khana, only 3% of the households live in only one room." (ACF January 2004, p. 23)

"The UN reports that over 500,000 refugees have returned to Kabul. It notes that, while most of the returning population have been able to find accommodation with relatives or other residents or have returned to their areas of origin, an estimated 20% are living in abandoned or destroyed buildings or in open space without protection from the elements and with limited access to water and with poor hygiene. A survey of destitute people carried out by the municipality, in conjunction with UN HABITAT, found that around 20,500 families (approximately 143,500 people) would need major assistance with shelter and relief

packages to help them over the winter. It was noted that this number might eventually increase when more information on the conditions of the housing of the poorest resident population had been collected and analysed. Account would thus be taken of the fact that those who have found accommodation with others would place strains on the already limited income of their hosts. Account would also be taken of threats to health arising from overcrowding and heavy pressure on water supplies." (BAAG 31 August 2002)

See also:

United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR), 4 March 2004, [Adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Mission to Afghanistan \(31 August -13 September 2003\)](#)

IDPs cite shelter and water as the main assistance needs for return to the north-west (November 2003)

- Participants to the seminar of the Displaced Persons Council (DPC) stressed that water and shelter were the two primary reintegration needs.
- Also, the participants called for the issuing of a governmental policy for the allocation of land for landless persons .

"Although the participants focused their discussions on the security-related obstacles to return, each presentation noted the great need for reintegration support if they would be able to return to the northwest in the near future. Water (both potable and for irrigation) and shelter were noted to be the two primary reintegration needs – not least because participants noted that many of their houses had been destroyed during the looting after the fall of the Taliban. The participants also called for further consideration of a governmental policy for the allocation of land to landless persons, although again did not enter into details of how such a policy could be implemented." (UNHCR 15 November 2003, p. 4)

Return of displaced Afghans highlights the fundamental and urgent need to address housing and land issues (September 2003)

- Lack of housing and land rights is feeding instability and insecurity in both rural and urban parts of the country.
- Absence of an existing sound housing and land rights situation combined with the return of refugees and IDPs has created an additional strain on the country.
- Housing situation is the worst in Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar, but the non-respect of the right to adequate housing and security of tenure for the poor exists all over the country.
- Many IDPs are willing to return home but security issues and concerns related to housing, land and livelihood prevent them from going home.
- Female-headed households seem to be most vulnerable. Many women face difficulties to claim their inheritance rights and to access the judiciary and established institutions.

"Lack of adequate housing is becoming critical in both rural and urban parts of Afghanistan. Two decades of conflict have left hundreds of thousands of Afghans homeless with an equal number living in temporary or sub-standard accommodation. In an interview with IRIN, Miloon Kothari, a Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing for the United Nations Commission of Human Rights said that lack of housing and land rights is feeding instability and insecurity in some parts of the country. Kothari has been invited by the Afghan government to look at housing, land rights and displacement in the country.

(...)

Q: Are returning refugees and IDPs making the housing shortage worse right now?

A: The influx of returnees, in combination with existing internally displaced, has created an additional strain on the country. However, one of the reasons this burden is so overwhelming is the absence of an existing sound housing and land rights situation to start with. Even without the return of refugees from Pakistan and elsewhere, the situation would have been serious.

During decades of war, the country has experienced destruction of houses and land, and deterioration of the limited infrastructure for essential services, including water, a problem made even more acute by the last five years' of drought in many parts of the country. Even among those Afghans who never left the country the needs are enormous.

What the return of large number of Afghans to their country has done is to highlight the fundamental and urgent need to address housing and land issues as a matter of priority and with a long-term development, not only humanitarian, perspective.

Q: Where is the housing situation worst?

A: From my first hand observations in and around Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar and from information received from other provinces, I believe that it is safe to say that the non-respect of the right to adequate housing and security of tenure for the poor exists all over the country. The nature and the symptoms of the problem can naturally differ from region to region and from urban to rural areas.

(...)

Q: What are the issues of concern in terms of resettlement of IDPs to the areas of their origin?

A: The issue is highly complex and there are as you know many different forms of internally displaced persons - from those fleeing persecution and insecurity in their place of origin due to ethnic and land conflict fostered by commanders and warlords; those driven away by drought, and; former refugees whose houses and lands are now destroyed or have been occupied by someone else. This should also be seen in the context of the tendency of increased urbanisation of the country as a whole.

During my interviews with people in and around Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad, most of the displaced persons I talked to indicated that given the possibility they would like to return to their places of origin. The issue of security was their main concern, closely followed by concerns related to housing, land and livelihood. Whereas many owned houses, they did not own land and therefore feared that they would never be able to survive if they returned to the areas of their origin.

(...)

Q: You have focused a lot on women and their right to adequate housing, land and property during your visit in Afghanistan. How do you view the situation of women in the country?

A: From a broad human rights perspective, the situation is serious, whether we talk about the right to participate in public life, freedom of opinion and expression or the right to education. In respect of housing and land, I am most of all concerned about the existing discrimination of women at all levels of society, from the governmental level to the private sphere. Even the international community has failed to adopt a comprehensive approach to address the special needs and rights of women to housing, land and property.

I have had the opportunity to discuss with many women, including a women's shura in Kandahar, during my visit and their testimonies reveal a disturbing pattern of exploitation leading to increased vulnerability. I am particularly concerned about women's difficulties to claim their inheritance rights and to access the judiciary and established institutions. Female-headed households seem to be most vulnerable, whether we talk about widows, women abandoned by their husbands or women having the main responsibility as the family's bread-winner. The widespread domestic violence is another concern linked to the right to a secure place to live." (IRIN 12 September 2003)

Projected need of 100,000 shelter during 2003 (April 2003)

- Conflict and displacement has caused the destruction and deterioration of housing throughout the country.
- No systematic and comprehensive assessment undertaken to determine the number and level of housing destruction in the country.
- Over 500,000 homes are estimated to have been either partially or totally destroyed.
- 60,000 of the most vulnerable families throughout the country received shelter assistance during 2002.
- Projected target for 2003 is 100,000 shelters

"One of the main effects of conflict and displacement has been the destruction and deterioration of housing through out the country. There is no systematic and comprehensive assessment undertaken to determine the number and level of housing destruction in the country. However, some indicators (previous returnee monitoring, analysis of displacement statistics, cursory visits by donor community, some interviews, some result of district profile, etc.) provides an estimate of over 500,000 homes having been either partially or totally destroyed. This could be a ground base for continuing intervention in the shelter sector but does not imply that all 500,000 families require assistance.

1381/2002 Status

During 2002, approximately 380,000 families have returned to their areas of origin (IDPs and Refugees). This year, with support from the international community, approximately 60,000 of the most vulnerable families throughout the country received shelter assistance (approx. 40,000 of which from UNHCR and the rest a combined contribution from other agencies). The initial target for this year was 100,000 shelters.

1382/2003 projected needs

For 2003, using the present planning figure of 1.5 million returns (estimated 267,000 families), it is foreseen that approximately 160,000 families will return to rural areas. The projected target (not based on overall needs assessment) including the required balance from 2002 is 100,000 shelters. Against this number an initial commitment for 60,000 shelters has been planned by UNHCR for 2003. It is not yet known how many shelters will be covered by other agencies." (TISA

Returnees in Mazar-i-Sharif are in dire need of accomodation (March 2003)

- Returnees in Mazar-i-Sharif need accomodation as many have found their houses demolished.
- Impossibility of settling in their villages of origin means that many of the 45,000 IDPs returning are heading for the cities, living in difficult conditions.
- 500,000 people in the region have no food, water or accommodation, and they are heading for the cities.
- Total requirement for new accommodation in Mazar-i-Sharif is 100,000.
- Families without males are unable to have their homes built without the assistance of family members or the local community.

"The Chief of the Department for Repatriation in Mazar-i-Sharif said that there is a serious need for accommodation for the many people, who have returned. Also, there are no jobs for the large number of people, arriving in the town. Many have returned and found that their houses have been demolished. The 45,000 internally displaced persons, who have recently returned, will be suffering this winter. Some people have received two bags of grain from UNHCR, but that is not enough.

The 45,000 internally displaced people are unable to settle in their villages of origin, and are therefore arriving in the cities. They are living in ruins and on building sites, and children are dying from diarrhoea, dysentery and viral diseases. In the rural districts, people are also suffering from the drought.

The Head of the UNHCR office in Mazar-i-Sharif said that there was a serious shortage of basic resources: housing, water and food. There are 500,000 people in the region who have no food, water or accommodation, and they are heading for the cities. This in turn means that they will be unable to settle down before the winter sets in. UNHCR expects to have completed 8,000 homes by the end of November 2002. That is a small number compared to the estimated total requirement for new accommodation, which is 100,000 in Mazar-i-Sharif. The source further said that UNHCR is unable to provide accommodation and water for everybody, but is trying to assist the most vulnerable groups, typically the internally displaced who were unable to flee the country and instead were driven away to the "neighbouring village". Accordingly, UNHCR tries to make women their first priority. Most of the people are returning as "extended families" - i.e. 2-3 families together, although there are also tribes and small families.

Accommodation, water, land - and in the towns jobs - are the vital survival requirements, which must be met. There are also a large number of families with a female breadwinner. They are at the top of the UNHCR list of priorities. However, these families without males are unable to have their homes built without the assistance of family members or the local community.

The source feared that many repatriated people would resort to robbery and crime against the civilian population unless jobs are created by means of reconstruction projects.

The source said that UNHCR is cooperating with the Ministry for repatriation and the Ministry for reconstruction of the rural districts, but according to recent experiences, the administration is only just functioning, and certainly not at a level where the administration takes on sole responsibility for part of the work, and there is no coordination of activities by the administration." (DIS March 2003, pp. 41-42)

IDPs in camps in Kabul need housing, clothing and heating facilities (January 2003)

- Among the returnees, some 4,000 IDPs face difficult conditions in Kabul, with many lacking food and shelter.
- In Chaman Huzuri, one of the 10 IDP camps established in the city in the last 8 months, housing has become a critical issue. Other problems include lack of winter clothing, fuel, drinking water and access to health care.
- Assistance has not been regular as UNHCR's strategy is to focus on rural areas in order to prevent too many people from heading to the cities in search of assistance.

"As winter temperatures drop, conditions for some 4,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) within the Afghan capital, Kabul, remain bleak. The city has seen a major influx of returnees, many of whom lack adequate shelter and food.

[...]

Chaman Huzuri, is one 10 IDP camps established in the city over the past eight months and, according to Mohammad Halim, an inhabitant of the camp, the number of displaced families arriving there has been rising; housing has become a critical issue for most Kabul residents.

[...]

Asked what their main problem areas were within the camps, most families interviewed by IRIN pointed to a severe lack of winter clothing, fuel, drinking water and access to health care.

'There has been very little assistance from aid agencies,' Halim said, noting that whatever help had arrived had been very irregular. "We have not received any regular assistance so far."

Like many residents, Halim complained that the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had neglected them, an accusation the agency denied to IRIN on 23 January.

While recognising that conditions within the camp were adverse and unsuited to coping with winter conditions, a UNHCR spokeswoman, Maki Shinohara, told IRIN that UNHCR was working with a number of agencies in the provision of assistance to help affected families get through the winter.

She emphasised, however, that UNHCR wanted these people to return to their places of origin. 'Once we start giving out a lot of aid, it will undermine the whole purpose,' she said, adding that some people in the camps were trying to seem more visible to attract attention for assistance. She reaffirmed that UNHCR's strategy was to try and focus assistance on rural communities where possible, with a view to curbing the flow of IDPs into the city.

Shinohara noted that over the past year Kabul Province alone had seen an influx of some 650,000 returnees - the vast majority from neighbouring Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Zubair Omari, a programme officer for the UK-based NGO, Islamic Relief-UK (IRUK), told IRIN the 4,000 or so people inhabiting the 10 camps in Kabul were in urgent need of non-food related items such as clothing and heating facilities. 'Their condition is worsening as the weather gets colder,' Omari asserted, adding that IRUK had begun distributing winter clothing to the families last week." (IRIN 27 January 2003)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Despite significant progresses, many challenges remain (March 2004)

- Despite significant achievements in terms of student enrolment and female participation, many challenges remain.
- Quality of education needs to be raised as well as the infrastructure, equipment and services.
- Gender disparities are prevalent across both regions and levels of education. In many provinces, the rate of school age girls attending primary school is well below 15%

"The first two years of reconstruction in Afghanistan have witnessed a significant leap in student enrolment; especially in Grades 1-2 (see Figure 2.2 below). According to the Ministry of Education, 4.3 million students have enrolled in Grades 1-12 in 2003, of which 3.9 million are in primary schools. This figure is by far the largest in the history of Afghanistan. Female participation in primary schools exceeded the pre-Taliban period, though it still remains nearly half that of boys (see Figure 2.3 below). In 2003, 54% of school-aged children (40% girls) were enrolled in primary schools. Enrolment targets are set for 70% (60% girls) by 2006, and 85% (75% girls) by 2010, with the overall aim of approaching as closely as possible the MDG target of universal primary enrolment by 2015. Higher Education has also seen a substantial increase in the number of students, which jumped from 4,000 students in 2001 to 31,000 in the fall of 2003. Currently, all 17 higher education institutions in the country are operating. As in primary education, a large majority of students (69%) are attending first and second years.

Despite these achievements, fundamental challenges remain. First, available indicators show that the content and quality of education must be raised substantially. This will require substantial investments to improve teacher qualifications, strengthen curricula and the quality of textbooks, and enhance the quality of learning spaces. Second, infrastructure, equipment and services are not sufficient to meet current and future demand. Emergency measures to date, such as renting buildings or using tents, employing partially qualified teachers, and instituting multiple shifts, have been useful. These must be replaced by substantial longer-term investments which, in turn, will need to be sequenced so as to satisfy evolving demand over time. Medium term investments will also need to address acute regional and urban/rural disparities in the supply of education infrastructure and services.

Gender disparities are prevalent across both regions and levels of education. In Kabul, 81 % of school age girls attend primary school. In many provinces, however, the rate is well below 15%. Likewise, female attendance in schools and higher learning facilities drops dramatically as girls progress towards higher grades. Closing the gender gap in education will require concerted efforts to strengthen "cultural" demand for girls' education in the provinces and at advanced levels, while ensuring that opportunities to attend (supply of learning spaces, female teachers) are well in place." (TISA, ADB, UNAMA, UNDP; WB, 17 March 2004, pp. 21-22)

Many returning IDP children cannot afford to attend school as they have to provide for their family (June 2003)

- Education is often not available for IDP in informal settlements.

- Children are often denied access to education because they are required to supplement the meager income of their family through employment.
- Insecurity also limits education

"Lack of access to education constitutes a serious obstacle to sustainable return. Several of the returnee children interviewed by Amnesty International had only limited access to education. While some informally settled families have been able to secure educational opportunities for their children, not one child in an informal tented settlement in Kabul comprised of 75 families was receiving formal education. Children are often denied access to education because they are required to supplement the meager income of their family through employment. Mirza Ahmed's eight children, who live with him in Kabul city following their return from Quetta, do not go to school. Instead they wash cars, sell plastic bags and trinkets in the street or work as manual labourers to earn money for their family.

Secondary schools for girls are limited, especially in rural areas. Girls living with their families in a ruined building in western Kabul were unable to continue the education they had started to receive while in exile . Saida's two teenage daughters, living in their newly rebuilt house in the Shomali valley after their return from Iran, told us that they could not go to school, as their father believed that it was unsafe for them to walk to the nearest secondary school some kilometers away.

Ironically, the desire to ensure an education for their children is cited as one of the main reasons for many refugees to return to Afghanistan from Iran." (AI 23 June 2003, p. 27)

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Self reliance

Uzbek IDPs in Herat with depleted assets have precarious livelihoods (August 2004)

- Example of Uzbek IDPs in Herat city show that they occupy the lower social echelons of their neighbourhood. Displacement has depleted their assets.
- To survive, male IDPs do a variety of unskilled jobs and their income is generally irregular.
- The Uzbek IDPs feel they are strangers in a foreign and often hostile urban environment but they can rely on family networks when in need.

"Research undertaken in 2004 (as part of a larger project on transnational networks, refugee return and labour migration) focuses on two nearby compounds in an urban neighbourhood of the western Afghanistan city of Herat. The small sample of Uzbek IDPs who were researched are surrounded by indigenous Herati families and households from elsewhere in Afghanistan. All the Uzbeks are from Faryab province, 350 kilometres away in north-eastern Afghanistan, the majority from its main city, Maymana. Contacts with relatives are maintained via elaborate social networks. Relatives and neighbours from Maymana pass through Herat on their way to Iran, exchanging news and letters. The brother of one IDP works as a driver between Herat and Maymana and conveys remittances, relatives and goods.

The IDPs occupy the lower echelons of this Herati neighbourhood. Herat's economy is booming due to its position at the crossroads of trading routes with Iran and Turkmenistan. IDPs feel the consequences as the return of Afghan refugees from Iran pushes up the cost of renting property. One informant, Malikaii, reported that in March 2004 her household's rent almost doubled to \$US60 a month. IDP families note that displacement invariably has depleted their assets, giving them less flexibility in terms of expenditure and fewer resources to fall back on.

Male IDPs do a variety of unskilled jobs. They may earn two or three dollars a day but income is irregular. Masoud, Malika's husband, used to work in construction in Mazar-i-Sharif and in a brick-kiln factory in Iran. In Herat he bought a cart to push goods in the bazaar but fell ill after five years and started selling potato pancakes made by his wife. It is a precarious livelihood. IDPs are harassed by the police and constantly risk fines, confiscation of goods and overnight imprisonment as a consequence of city directives restricting pancake sellers and other street vendors.

The Uzbek IDPs feel they are strangers in a foreign and often hostile urban environment. If in need, the families turn to each other, Uzbeks living elsewhere in Herat or those entrepreneurs in the bazaar that provide them with work or credit. They do not know the traditional neighbourhood representative (wakil). Women's contact with people beyond their compounds is limited as they are often busy with their household chores and home-based work to enhance their families' income. One Uzbek compound maintains good relations with two Herati neighbours –characterised by frequent visits and an exchange of small favours. Though only fifty metres apart the two Uzbek compounds have little contact with each other." (AREU August 2004, p. 1)

Most Afghans live in poverty and deprivation (March 2004)

- Overall rural poverty in Afghanistan is estimated at nearly 53 percent.
- Households asset have been eroded by years war, destruction, drought and displacement.
- To secure a cash income and in the absence of licit non-farm income opportunities, many farmers have been forced into narco-agricultural production.
- To address the wide range of needs, the government has initiated a strategic shift beyond humanitarian relief to a more integrated and programmatic approach

"As a result of decades of conflict and political instability a significant proportion of Afghans live in extreme poverty, risk, and deprivation. According to preliminary estimates, overall rural poverty is nearly 53 percent. (Box 2.1) The cumulative effects of war, destruction, drought and displacement, have contributed to the successive erosion of households' asset base, greatly affecting their ability to manage risks and frequently leaving families in deteriorating circumstances without adequate support. Due to the prolonged conflict in Afghanistan, legal, social, physical and financial infrastructure has been negatively affected, generating a fertile environment in rural areas for an explosion in illicit opium poppy cultivation. The absence of licit non-farm income opportunities has forced many Afghans, a large proportion of whom are landless, into a narco-agricultural production which has increasingly been counted on to provide a relatively secure cash income.

The Government has sought to initiate a strategic shift beyond purely humanitarian relief to a more integrated and efficient programmatic approach, providing sustained support to poor people so that they are better able to protect their assets and rebuild their livelihoods. Through the provision of immediate and tangible assistance across Afghanistan, the Livelihoods and Social Protection Public Investment Programme (LSP PIP) has performed a crucial legitimising function for the Government. Significant achievements of 1382 are highlighted in Table 2.7 below.

Significant Achievements in 1382

National Emergency Employment Programme (NEEP): The NEEP generated 8 million labours day through the establishment of a nationwide employment based safety net for the construction of rural infrastructure (including 5000 km of rural roads) using mainly cash payments.

National Solidarity Programme (NSP): The launch of the Afghanistan's flagship programme to provide resources through block grants for community managed small-scale reconstruction and development in rural areas, and to promote more participatory and inclusive decision making and governance at the village level. The target is to cover the country's approximately 20,000 villages over a four year period. Implementation is currently in progress in 1,450 villages.

Comprehensive Disabled Afghan's Programme (CDAP): The delivery of services to 30,000 disabled people in Herat, Farah, Kandahar, Ghazni, Mazar and Takhar. Stipend paid to around 300,000 disabled and martyred persons.

Community Based Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (CBRWSS): The construction of over 12,000 water points across the country with prioritisation given to areas where pressure on host communities resulting from returning refugees and IDPs has resulted in particularly acute needs for safe water and sanitation facilities.

National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA): The design and implementation of the first nation-wide NRVA building on the WFP

Countrywide assessment in 1381 to ensure the inclusion of women at all levels of data enquiry from community Shuras, wealth groups and households and expanded coverage to address the situation including short and long-range migratory Kuchis.

National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP): The formulation and implementation of immediate recovery and development projects in areas where the local economy has been particularly damaged, based on local resources and existing / historical skills and productive enterprises.

Micro-Finance Support Facility in Afghanistan (MISFA): The establishment of MISFA following a National Micro-Finance Workshop in February to provides funds for the competitive contracting of specialist professional agencies to sustainably deliver financial services to poor Afghans." (TISA, ADB, UNAMA, UNDP, WB, 17 March 2004, pp. 29-30)

Many returning refugees and IDPs disappointed by living conditions in Kabul (February 2004)

- Majority of the 2 million refugees who returned to Afghanistan in recent years have settled in the country urban centres.
- Rapid urbanization cannot meet the water and electricity requirements and high density settlements are creating health and hygien problems.
- Kabul is perceived by many Afghans as the city of opportunity, where jobs can be found and where many educational and health facilities are located.
- Lack of suitable jobs in Kabul came as a shock to those interviewed, especially to returned refugees.
- Many were questioning why they had returned to Afghanistan and felt disappointed in what they discovered upon returning.

"In recent years, more than two million refugees have returned to Afghanistan, with the majority settling in the country's urban centres and primarily in the capital, Kabul. Kabul is a powerful magnet for Afghans looking for security and a better life after decades of civil war, particularly for returned refugees from both Pakistan and Iran, and many IDPs from throughout the country. Today, the city has a population of approximately 3 million, with impoverished residents filling war-devastated sections of the city and constructing new dwellings higher and higher on the surrounding hillsides. Rapid urbanization that cannot meet the water and electricity requirements of large portions of the population, while problems of health and hygiene associated with high-density settlements are common.

In spite of these numerous drawbacks, Kabul continues to be perceived by many Afghans as the city of opportunity, where jobs can be found and where many educational and health facilities are located. As one elderly respondent related, "It's (Kabul) the centre of everything- and the air is also very good here." The dynamic urban scene of present-day Kabul includes a vibrant cash economy dominated by the informal sector with more job opportunities, especially in construction, than in other Afghan cities. Petty trades and small businesses are also common throughout the city. Waged income, however, is often unstable and there is intense competition for resources.

(...)

In the highly competitive cash economy of Kabul, access to employment was a primary concern for all the poor household members included in our study [which included IDPs]. In conversation with both male and female household members, their desperation was clearly apparent as they noted the lack of secure employment in Kabul. The commodity based nature of city life means for poor households that "labour is their most important asset, " providing income directly through waged employment or indirectly through self-employment in the informal sector. Adult males interviewed were involved in day labour (working in

gilkori [masonry] or as porters in the vegetable market), which usually entails the uncertain prospect of standing on street corners waiting to be chosen for work each morning. They often combine intermittent day labour with petty trades such as selling coloured boiled eggs or baked corn in the bazaar, neither of which are big money-makers. Only one adult male in all of the households contacted had a regular salaried job: he worked as a money collector on a public bus six days a week earning 100 Afghanis per day (approximately US\$2).

The lack of suitable jobs in Kabul came as a shock to those interviewed, especially to returned refugees, who had heard that there would be many opportunities in the process of rebuilding Afghanistan. As one young head-of-household, who had returned from many years residing in Taxila, Pakistan, noted:

“We came back with high hopes and had heard that things would be fine here. There was word from the government that ‘we will do this for you-we will do that for you.’ But look at our lives now. I want to go back to Pakistan, and my former employer in Taxila has recently sent word that he wants me back.”

Similar to the findings of Tutron and Mardsen, both men and women in this small sample were questioning why they had returned to Afghanistan and felt disappointed in what they discovered upon returning, particularly with the lack of employment, affordable shelter and basic services in Kabul." (AREU February 2004, pp. 4-7)

Returnees and IDPs put pressure on the overstretched resources of Kabul (January 2004)

- In 2003, around 400,000 IDPs and refugees arrived in Kabul increasing the strain on the already limited infrastructures and services.
- Kabul remains heavily affected by years of war within the country and suffers from an economy that lies in ruins.
- Security in the city and its surrounding area has been tense, with reports of various attacks on the city itself.
- The enormous number of displaced and returnees are also serving to put additional pressure on the city's already over stretched resources. In particular, the issue of water has been highlighted as being especially important, with much of the city suffering from vastly inadequate access to potable water.

"The past twenty-three years of unrest have greatly impacted the city of Kabul, with up to 60% of the housing destroyed and a decimation of infrastructures. Since the fall of the Taleban regime, Afghanistan has seen a massive return of refugees, mainly coming back from Pakistan and Iran. In 2002, a total of 393,582 refugees and IDPs (Grace 2003) arrived in the city in a matter of only ten months. Many were drawn to the city by the expectation of better job opportunities and assistance than available in the drought stricken countryside. The Central Statistical Office estimates the current population at about 2 799 300 persons.

By and large, the city managed to absorb the bulk of the returnee population and the considerable number of rural families drawn to the urban centre. Although newcomers contributed directly to the economic dynamism of the

city, the assimilation of such a massive population influx has come at a high cost, increasing the strain on the already limited infrastructures and services available. Kabul had to cope with one of the largest and most rapid assisted return movements since 1972 (Turton and Marsden, 2002). It now has to cope with the fact that this population is here to stay, as confirmed during this study. The extent to which services, jobs and resources can be shared on the long run by residents and newcomers without jeopardising future development is at question." (ACF January 2004, p. 10)

"Since the ousting of the Taliban regime, Kabul has been the hub of humanitarian activities within Afghanistan. However, it remains heavily affected by years of war within the country and suffers from an economy that lies in ruins. The southern and western quarters of the city have been particularly affected and lie largely in ruins. The establishment of the new Afghan government is an encouraging step in the rebuilding of both the city and the country at large. Security in the city and its surrounding area has been tense, with reports of various attacks on the city itself, possibly by parties attempting to destabilise the fledgling administration and government. One of the greatest challenges ahead is the regeneration of the economy, which has been reduced to small traders and scattered market stalls. Industry is non-existent and much of the population remains unemployed. The enormous number of displaced and returnees are also serving to put additional pressure on the city's already over stretched resources. In particular, the issue of water has been highlighted as being especially important, with much of the city suffering from vastly inadequate access to potable water. This is particularly concerning as past data has clearly demonstrated a clear correlation between diarrhoea, particularly during the summer months, and an increase in malnutrition (ACF 30/04/02). The RNIS does not have any recent nutrition surveys from the city but the situation is assumed to be poor and a rise in malnutrition over the summer period can be expected." (RNIS No. 38 July 2002, pp. 43-44)

Overcrowded job market and lack of cultivated land make return unsustainable (June 2003)

- Lack of access to employment opportunities due to an overcrowded job market is making returns unsustainable.
- Lack of land to work on in rural areas means that many returnees end up in IDP camps or in urban areas

"Another very common obstacle to sustainable return is the lack of access to employment for the vast majority of returnees. Most of the returnees interviewed by Amnesty International asserted that they had been unable to find jobs in an overcrowded job market. Akim, crippled in his right arm, explained that he had been unable to find a job since returning from Pakistan in the summer of 2002. Others spoke of having been forced to take jobs that were not commensurate with their skills level. Abdul Maram, who was employed as a driver in Pakistan, is engaged in manual labour as this is the only job he can find to feed his family in Kabul.

Sharecroppers returning to the land on which they had worked previously have found that the landlord had employed other labourers in their absence. Due to the fact that there is less land being cultivated in Afghanistan at the moment, on account of the drought as well as persistent insecurity, returnee sharecroppers have in many cases been forced to move to IDP camps or to urban centres in search of alternative employment." (AI 23 June 2003, p. 24)

Drought, war and economic collapse have caused widespread vulnerability among the population (May 2002)

- The drought has resulted in the following paradox: more people need to access markets to achieve food security than ever before yet fewer people have the cash resources necessary to buy goods on the market.
- The drought and recent change of administration have introduced new forms of economic risk and related vulnerabilities in addition to those generated by more than two decades of conflict

- Over the past two years, the numbers of respondents who can be classified as secure with respect to diet, debt, asset bases and water have fallen between 65% and 85%

"Afghanistan is currently experiencing a third or, in some places, a fourth year of severe drought. Drought-related losses of income have accelerated war-related vulnerabilities to poverty while also increasing the demand for cash at the household level. The result is a paradox of purchasing power: ***more people need to access markets to achieve food security than ever before yet fewer people have the cash resources necessary to buy goods on the market.***

Since the fall of the Taliban, the national currency, the Afghani, has strengthened markedly. While the appreciation of the Afghani has been matched by equal declines in the nominal price of food items on markets throughout Afghanistan, falling food prices have not adequately off-set deeper economic vulnerabilities. The institutions of credit are stressed and failing. Instability in the currency markets has led to widespread decapitalization, particularly among the trading classes, and a deepening of household debt burdens. The combination of bad debts and currency-related capital losses has created an unusual class of vulnerable citizens: shopkeepers. Protracted conflict has further weakened Afghanistan's marketing infrastructure (transportation, communication, finance, actors, physical markets, etc.) Exploited men, women and children in the work force have few viable labor alternatives because of high prevailing rates of under- and unemployment and their own fairly desperate needs for wage income.

Vulnerability to food insecurity is directly linked to Afghanistan's various subeconomies. Historical legacy has defined three distinct economies:

- 1) An economy of violent war and illegitimate trade of narcotics, weapons and legitimate commodities;
- 2) An artificial economy of external assistance that is highly variable and unpredictable;
- 3) A struggling economy of legitimate (if often exploitative) enterprises that includes agriculture, livestock production, and small-scale enterprise (such as carpet weaving).

The parameters of these often competing economies define the options of supply and demand available to households. These economies also govern the ability of households to use institutions that help manage risk over time (especially credit), and to build resilience against shocks (such as drought, attacks or unemployment) through the accumulation of wealth or surpluses.

Throughout Afghanistan, there are crises of purchasing power, production and credit that continue to directly threaten household food security. Drought-induced agriculture and livestock production losses are responsible for sharp declines in farm income. The resulting "cash famine" coincides with increasing reliance by both rural and urban households on the market for food products, water and fuel. In pre-drought years, these commodities were supplied through self-sufficient production from farms, livestock, orchards and kitchen gardens.

The drought and recent change of administration have introduced new forms of economic risk and related vulnerabilities in addition to those generated by more than two decades of conflict. Those who were previously self-sufficient, such as farmers and pastoralist Koochi herders, have been particularly hard hit by the shift from production to exchange entitlements. Likewise, Afghan traders are unable to export used household goods because of the closure of the Turkham border in Pakistan. This has depressed prices, lowering the returns to families engaging in distress sales of household assets. Other small industries and enterprises that have been negatively affected by the drought, war and a historical lack of development investment include textiles and carpet weaving, mulberry, cotton, silk and cinnamon oil production, as well as coal mining, livestock herding, and horticulture.

As in all protracted complex emergencies, there are those that have retained or increased their wealth while others have fallen deeply into poverty. Again, as is typical, the losers (i.e., those not secure) currently outnumber the winners in Afghanistan by more than 6:1, according to the survey results. In the analysis of

the survey results, a minority of respondents (ranging from 9% - 15%) can be classified currently as secure with respect to debt, diet, assets and/or agriculture water availability. This should be compared to the 41% - 59% of the survey population that was secure two years ago, in the first year of the drought. Over the past two years, the numbers of respondents who can be classified as secure with respect to diet, debt, asset bases and water have fallen between 65% and 85%, as Table I indicates. The sharpest rates of decline in household security occurred after the first year of the drought. The current relief efforts commenced well after the majority of respondents had been forced by circumstance to tap into their survival strategies, reducing food intake, selling of key assets and going deeply into debt." (Feinstein International Famine Center May 2002, pp. 9-11)

Few job opportunities and increasing number of job seekers limit wages and purchasing power (May 2002)

- Purchasing power is falling in some areas in part because wages are falling faster than prices. Wages are falling because of the increasing number of job seekers, including returnees who seek jobs in urban areas rather than traveling home in rural areas.

"Purchasing power is falling in the areas under review in part because wages are falling faster than prices. Wages are falling because of the increased numbers of job seekers, including farmers who have realized that their winter crops would fail, women who are returning to the workplace after restrictions imposed by the Taliban were lifted, and children who are increasingly being relied upon to contribute – at times substantially – to household income. In addition, many refugees returning from neighboring countries are seeking jobs in urban areas rather than traveling directly to homes in rural areas.

Wages also are falling because of the loss of jobs due to the continued effects of the drought and because of some losses of wealth associated with the change of administration. Under the Taliban, for example, there were limited opportunities in the construction and transportation sectors because the Taliban demanded these types of services and had the means to pay for it. The departure of a wealthy class of largely Arab nationals has dampened these sectors (as well as weakened the financial underpinnings of systems of Islamic charity, such as *zakat*) while new investment in construction due to the combined demands of the humanitarian, development, business and media communities still lags behind expectations.

De-capitalization among the trading classes as well as bankruptcy has been a problem over the past several months. For example, of sixty domestic grain traders operating in Qandahar last summer, only four have survived the economic changes associated with the change of administration. In Shirbirghan, Jowzjan Province more than two-thirds of stalls in the market have closed since last fall. Traders blame a collapse of prices due to food aid. In addition, the bankruptcies were likely due to the combined result of ethnic tensions (many of the merchants who left were Pashtun), currency losses and debt burdens.

Many civil servants lost their jobs under the Taliban (e.g. women, university professors, skilled technicians, members of the militias). Those that retained employment were not often regularly paid. The interim government has been unable to pay civil servant salaries, and this has contributed to food insecurity among Afghanistan's traditional middle classes. As of late April, civil servants in most of the provinces visited had yet to be paid, despite expectations raised by the international community's pledges of support to the United Nations. Like many others, civil servants are trying to augment their income with wage labor and have increased reliance on their children to provide income and food for the household." (Feinstein International Famine Center May 2002, p. 18)

IDPs find it difficult to borrow money or to purchase goods on credit (May 2002)

- Drought, war and political changes have increased risks over time, with predictable but damaging implications for both the availability and cost of credit.
- Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) and Pashtun pastoralist (Koochi) populations are charged higher interest rates than settled populations as a result of both the particular risk to lenders and outright discrimination.

"Drought, war and political changes have increased risks over time, with predictable but damaging implications for both the availability and cost of credit. Mounting debt burdens at the household and shopkeeper level not only limit access to new credit but also serve as a crippling source of shame. In many interviews, men reported being unable to leave their household compounds for fear of encountering their moneylenders. In one focus group interview in Qandahar, a military man said, 'I have more debt than hairs on my head. Anyone I see, I think that is someone to whom I owe money. I can't face anyone anymore.' Others, especially widows, Internally Displaced Persons, ethnic minorities living among other ethnic majorities and deeply impoverished families complained that no one would lend them money any more.

[...]

The availability of credit has decreased and interest rates (at times quite high) are being applied with increasing frequency. For the households in the surveys who were unable to obtain credit, the primary cause was a lack of money available for lending within extended family or neighborhood networks. Shopkeepers in the north and central regions of Afghanistan, for example, routinely charge 100% interest on goods bought on credit. Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) and Pashtun pastoralist (Koochi) populations are charged higher interest rates than settled populations as a result of both the particular risk to lenders and outright discrimination." (Feinstein International Famine Center May 2002, pp. 13-14)

The following map shows debt insecurity in Afghanistan 2001-2002 (click to expand):

"As Chart I indicates, the percentage of debt secure households in the survey dramatically decreased between the first and second years of the drought while households vulnerable to both insecurity and extreme insecurity increased. Approximately 80% of the households in the survey are facing serious levels of debt insecurity, including over 60% of the households that are classified as extremely insecure."(Feinstein International Famine Center May 2002, p. 15)

Source for both map and graph: Feinstein International Famine Center, May 2002

Access to land

Access to land is one of the main problems faced by displaced Kuchis (February 2004)

- A mission conducted by MRRD and UNHCR to Kandahar in early 2004 showed that the Kuchis had lost everything in the drought and that conditions in Registan were not good enough for their return. A survey conducted among IDPs in the south should say more about the Kuchis intention to return.

- The main problem faced by Kuchi IDPs is access to land.

"A recent joint mission by MRRD and UNHCR to Kandahar revealed that situation in the south is complex. Kuchis from Registan have lost everything in their places of origin. Registan is still affected by drought. There has been some rain this year but not enough for many Kuchis to return. A comprehensive assessment of Registan is currently underway and within five months we will be able to find out how many Kuchi families could return. Profiling will be carried out in all of the camps in the south to find out how many will return. We have to be realistic about the situation the Kuchis are in and the support they need, Mr. Pete told participants. One of the main problems the Kuchis presently face is the issue of land.

Mr. Pete also insisted that it is crucial to take action now before finding solutions for IDPs are further delayed. Sustainable returns are not only linked to political/social changes but also to when seeds grow and the availability of pastures for animals." (CG1 22 February 2004, p. 3)

IDP Operation plan for the South envisages the creation of a Land Access Working Group for the residual IDP caseload (October 2003)

- The regional operation plan for the south envisages to find alternative solutions for IDPs unable or unwilling to return, for example by providing them with access to land in Kandahar province. Initiation of negotiations with relevant actors on the temporary allocation of land is the role and responsibility of the provincial government.
- Given the current inequity in land relations and the high degree of rural landlessness, it is further envisaged that a special Land Access Working Group be created to research and analyze the various possibilities, eligibility criteria as well as the legal and socio-economic implications.

"Despite the priority focus on return to areas of origin or nomadic livelihood, the Government shall address the issue of families not willing to return if conditions in their areas of origin are not improved. These might include persons from all categories, notably landless families from all regions and pastoralists unable or unwilling to return to the pastoralist livelihood. These people will constitute a residual caseload, for which alternative solutions need to be found. Access to land is a central element in determining mechanisms to rebuild an alternative livelihood.

4.1 Provincial Government

Presently, the Governor of Kandahar has indicated that assurance will be provided in relation to temporary use of land in IDP settlements. The Provincial authorities will not make any commitments related to allocation of land until a position from the National Government on this issue is taken.

4.2 National government

The Government shall ensure the right to stay for those IDPs that are not or not yet willing to return. It is the role and responsibility of the provincial government to initiate negotiations with the relevant actors and issue a formal commitment for temporary use of right of land currently occupied by IDPs. In case of private ownership of the land, the rights and needs of the land owner shall be taken into consideration. Land that is qualified as tribal land, over which tribes have a certain level of influence, shall be negotiated by the provincial government with the tribal leaders.

When looking at longer-term solutions, the National Government shall take an objective viewpoint, and look at the issue of land allocation and rights of IDPs from a national perspective. Governmental discussions regarding land concessions need to be held at inter-province level, to ensure a fair sharing of the responsibility and emphasise national unity.

The Regional Operation Plan has an initial focus on increasing the rate of return and sustaining reintegration to reduce the size of the residual caseload, and thereby reduce the scale of the people in need of alternative solutions. The key elements of the approach to achieve this are:

- facilitated return programmes to promote sustainable return
- increased support in areas of origin
- integration of returned IDPs in National Programmes

Durable solutions for the residual caseload will come through providing access to land either on a permanent legal basis or in the form of long-term concessions or right of use. The high degree of rural landlessness in Afghanistan, and the current inequity in land relations are a complex socio-economic problem, which needs to be addressed with care. A special Land Access Working Group shall be created to research and analyze the various possibilities, eligibility criteria and their legal and socio-economic implications, thereby drawing from international experience.

In the context of the intended increased self-reliance of the IDPs and the associated re-evaluation of levels of assistance, which is described in the next chapter, an Economic Integration Assessment shall be conducted. The outcome of the Economic Integration Assessment will provide valuable input to the Land Access Working Group.

It is important that the potential beneficiaries are being informed about the possible options for local settlement, and that transparency is maintained. The perceived opportunities of obtaining agricultural land can, and has in the past, acted as a pull-factor to the IDP camps, which needs to be avoided.

The opening up of new agricultural land through large scale irrigation programs shall be encouraged. The current legislation which describes eligibility criteria for (re-)distribution of land shall be reviewed in the current context. Another relevant aspect related to access to land is the creation of conditions that allow the return of Kuchi to areas in the Central Highlands, particularly to Ghazni, Wardak and Bamyan provinces. This is an issue that requires high level discussion at the Central level, in particular through the Inter-ministerial Commission on Kuchi, supported by the Kuchi Vulnerability Committee." (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, pp. 4-5)

Drought and growth of families in displacement makes land a limited source of income upon return (September 2003)

- Given the growth of families in exile, the available land is often no longer sufficient to cover the needs of its returning owners and many returning IDPs or refugees had to find alternative sources of livelihood.
- Those who has to sell their land prior to their displacement are now obliged to work as laborers on the land of others to support their family.
- The cultivation of poppy constitutes the main source of income for many agricultural landowners in many parts of the region.

"Given the growth of families in exile, the available land is no longer sufficient to cover the needs of its owners. In Dara I Suf, Hazara interviewees told UNHCR that the original 2 families that had fled Afghanistan have multiplied into four in exile. As such, the land which was adequate for farming for two family members thirty years ago is insufficient to cover the needs of additional members who have returned as the land is too small to yield enough harvest for all. This is a general trend throughout the country, and has been exacerbated by the severe drought that has persisted for the last four years.

As such, even those returnees who have had no problems in recovering their property, have been forced to selling it in order to support their families. This has been the case of the returnees in Balkh. Many had to

resell their land prior to displacement, and are now working as laborers on the land of others to support their family. This was particularly the case in Bamyan Province, where many Hazara families sold their lands to pay the Taliban authorities the sum of money required as a substitute for the military recruitment of their family members. Other villages have resorted to sending their heads of families to the urban centers, and neighboring countries to work. In Shinkay village of Gilan district, Ghazni province, the villages rely entirely on the remittances that the men bring home.

These combined factors have partially been responsible for the continued cultivation of poppy, which continues to constitute the main source of income for agricultural landowners in many parts of the region, as well as generating employment opportunities for the landless." (UNHCR 1 September 2003, p. 3)

IDPs resettling in Mazar-i-Sharif cannot do so unless they originate from the area (March 2003)

- IDPs wishing to settle in Mazar-i-Sharif cannot obtain permission to establish a home unless they can prove ownership of the land or if they originate from the area.
- As a consequence, there are no returnees from other regions choosing to settle in Mazar-i-Sharif.
- Most people returning continue to live on their return package from UNHCR.

"In terms of access to land, the source [Head of UNHCR in Mazar-i-Sharif] mentioned that in order to obtain permission to establish a home, a person needs a guarantee from the village council to prove ownership of or permission to use the land. Only repatriated persons whose place of origin is Mazar-i-Sharif, will be able to obtain such permission; new arrivals who do not originally come from the area cannot get permission. Many repatriated people never get beyond Kabul. There are no repatriated people from other regions choosing to settle in Mazar-i-Sharif rather than in their area of origin.

According to the source, there are signs of destabilisation due to the high number of repatriated people. However, the majority of the people, who have returned, continue to live on their "returnpackage" from UNHCR, and at the same time there are many internally displaced people, who are unable to return to their homes, because they have been occupied by others. The situation may therefore change with the onset of winter, and when the assistance packages have been used up." (DIS March 2003, p. 42)

Public participation

IDPs in camps and those integrated with communities are allowed to participate in the elections (July 2003)

- IDPs in camps as well as IDPs who have integrated with communities will be registered to take part in the elections.

"The IDPs can be categorized into two groups, the first living in the camps and the second being integrated within the communities. The latter group will be registered along with the community with whom they are living, excepting those who state that they intend to move to their 'home' in another location before the election. Their registration will be dealt with as in the case of the returnees at the encashment centre with the "tick" mark indicating their IDP status. The IDPs in the camps will also be registered in a similar manner as the returnees at the encashment centre, with IDP entry "tick" marked in the form. However, if the IDPs prefer to remain in the camps during the time of elections, they will be registered in the normal

manner with the name of the camp as the name of the village, and there will be no code for the camps."
(UNAMA 31 July 2003, p. 28)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Disputes over land and property ownership proliferate affecting many returnees (July 2004)

- Media reported in 2004 an increase in the number of land disputes in the north with land being taken by force by local commanders and refugees and IDPs finding their homes occupied by others.
- NRC in mazar-i-sharif reports some 8,000 cases of refugees whose properties have been taken by local commanders
- Disputes over land and property ownership proliferate in Afghanistan today, and returnees tend disproportionately to be affected.
- Process of resolving land and housing disputes is skeletal at best and those without ties to the community are left powerless.
- Unaccompanied women, in particular, often find themselves unable to access their land upon their return.
- Women are often denied access to traditional leaders, or even formal justice mechanisms

"Afghanistan is being hit by a growing number of disputes over land ownership, caused by years of upheaval and war, the return of refugees and continuing land seizures by local militia commanders.

In the north, hundreds say their property has been taken by force by local commanders. One man was killed in a gunfight over land.

The transitional government has sent an official delegation to the regional capital, Mazar-e-Sharif, to investigate the problem and has set up a special court in Kabul to deal with land disputes.

But the central government remains too weak to act against local commanders or the regional warlords who serve as their sponsors and protectors.

(...)

After years in exile, refugees are now returning to find the land they thought was theirs occupied and claimed by others.

In many cases, refugees' land was distributed by the local commanders who continue to seize private property by force. A law unto themselves, these local commanders have also appropriated government and other public property.

"So far more than 8,000 refugees whose properties have been usurped mostly by local commanders have come to us for help," said Mohammad Arif Rizai, head of the Norwegian Refugee Council in Mazar-e-Sharif.

"But when cases involving gunmen are taken to court, the legal judgements do not have proper results," he said.

(...)

“These commissions don’t solve the problems, but create more problems,” said Abdul Manan Mawlawizada, the head of the courts in Balkh province.

Mawlawizada admitted that the justice system was failing to overcome the problem of “corrupt people in government offices and courts”. That failure, he said, was leading to clashes and bloodshed.

He also blamed the widespread availability of guns in Afghan society as one of the main problems in attempting to administer a proper justice system governing land rights." (IWPR 5 July 2004)

"Lack of access to adequate housing is a serious obstacle to sustainable return. Disputes over land and property ownership proliferate in Afghanistan today, and returnees tend disproportionately to be affected. Many returnees Amnesty International spoke to have arrived back at their places of origin to find their land and/or houses occupied by other families, often with the backing of powerful local commanders. Others have been unable to raise the capital required in order to rebuild houses on their land.

While some returnees Amnesty International spoke with have taken their disputes to the courts, it is also apparent that the process of resolving such disputes is skeletal at best. The rule of law remains elusive, and dispute settlement mechanisms are cumbersome and slow, leaving returnees in a position of heightened vulnerability, as in many cases their ties to the local community have weakened as a result of their absence.

Unaccompanied women, in particular, often find themselves unable to access their land upon their return. UNHCR has documented at least one case of a widow returning to Afghanistan and, despite being in possession of documents of ownership, being denied access to her land by the traditional leadership of her village. Women are often denied access to traditional leaders, or even formal justice mechanisms, and can be severely disadvantaged in the absence of a male family member who is willing to plead the case on behalf of the female relative.

Access to adequate shelter is often a key element in sustainable return. Amnesty International was told by some returnees that the main reason they had returned was to ensure they did not miss out on shelter rebuilding projects. Kokogul and her husband Rahim Khan returned from Karachi to the Shomali Valley in August 2002 when they heard that an international NGO would help them rebuild a house on their land. Similarly, Mohammed Azim came back from Pakistan to Jawzjan province when he heard that UNHCR would help him rebuild his house. However, even these “success stories” demonstrate the interdependence of the rights which are all essential to sustainable return. Kokogul’s husband is unemployed and the family is finding it very difficult to survive economically. There is only one hospital in the valley, and most people have only sporadic access to healthcare. In Jawzjan, Mohammed Azim’s relatives had had to send their son back to Pakistan to protect him from forced recruitment." (AI 23 June 2003, pp. 25-26)

The underlying causes of land and property disputes (June 2004)

- Land disputes remain a main cause of instability and obstacle to sustainable return.
- The causes of land disputes are multiple and include among other: conflict, regime changes, unclear ownership, land shortage, landlessness, tribal disputes and the lack of rule of law.
- The land disputes cannot simply be solved by creating new laws and institutions.
- Peace, stability and a strengthening of the rule of law are pre-requisites for addressing the issue of land disputes

"Land disputes remain a major cause of tension and instability in eastern Afghanistan and pose a significant threat to peace, security and the rule of law. It is widely recognized that this continued instability is an obstacle to sustainable return.

(...)

The main causes of land disputes in Afghanistan can be summarized under the following headings:

Conflict. Since the invasion by the Soviet Union in 1979 Afghanistan has experienced 25 years of almost continual conflict that has caused millions of people to flee from their homes. During their absence, these people's land and property was often occupied, or bought and sold and now, as they return home, they are demanding its restitution.

Regime changes. Successive governments have violently replaced one another over the last 30 years and different regimes have pursued different land policies, often based on rewarding their own supporters through favorable land allocations.

Unclear ownership. The unorganized land registration system, the large number of missing title deeds, and the fact that disputed land has often been sold many times over, makes it very difficult to determine who owns what.

Reliance on customary documents and mechanisms. Many land and property transactions take place without being officially approved by the courts, using customary documents or traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, such as Shuras and Jirgas.

Land shortage. Only 12 per cent of the land area of Afghanistan is suitable for arable farming. A further 45 per cent is currently being used as pastureland by both settled and nomadic farmers, but tenure arrangements over pastureland are often unclear and disputes are frequent. Land pressure is exacerbated by Afghanistan's high birth rate and the rapid return of so many refugees in 2002.

Landlessness. A large number of people in Afghanistan have no land and when they return back from exile they sometimes occupy other people's land, or government-owned land because they have nowhere else to go.

Tribal and ethnic disputes. Competition for scarce resources, such as land and water, is often linked to ethnic or tribal tensions or to other political conflicts.

Corruption. There are numerous reliable reports that members of the judiciary and executive organs are abusing their positions for personal or political interests, or due to pressure exercised by other powerful members of society.

Lack of a rule of law. Even where the courts, public authorities or customary dispute resolution mechanisms issue fair decisions there is no guarantee that these can be enforced. A large number of powerful commanders, and their supporters, consider themselves to be 'above the law' and the lack of an effectively functioning legal system means that many people rely on the use of force to settle disputes.

As the above list indicates, the problem of land disputes cannot be dealt with in isolation from tackling Afghanistan's other problems. Clearly there are also no 'quick fixes' to the problems described below. Indeed attempts to impose solutions from above may actually be counter-productive, as the creation of new laws, commissions and other institutions may only add to the existing confusion and make it harder to strengthen and reform the mechanisms that already exist. Where the international community can perform a valuable role is in monitoring these institutions and measuring their claims against their practical performance.

Peace and stability are obvious pre-requisites for tackling the problem of land disputes. A strengthening of the rule of law, building the capacity of existing institutions and tackling corruption are also vital. Land

reform is a controversial subject in Afghanistan today, but the problem of land disputes is clearly linked to the inequitable system of land ownership and the huge, and growing, number of landless people. Without a coherent policy of land reform it is difficult to see how many of the grievances which continue to promote tribal, ethnic and political conflicts will ever be successfully addressed. " NRC June 2004, pp.1-3)

Occupation of houses and property by commanders affects groups and individuals country wide (September 2003)

- Occupation of houses and property by commanders or ethnic groups closely affiliated to them is one of the most widespread features country wide.
- Occupation is sometimes accompanied by acts of looting.
- Weaker members of the society, such as female heads of households are particularly vulnerable to abuse illegal confiscation of their property.
- In some cases, disputes also extend to the harvest of the land, rather than the land itself.

"The occupation of houses and property by commanders is one of the most widespread features country wide, affecting groups and individuals alike. Plenty of examples exist in this regard. In Nawabad Kohistan village, Kohistan district of Kabul province, it was reported that 130 houses and 1200 jeribs of land owned by exiled and displaced Pashtun families were still occupied by armed Pashayi groups.

Close affiliation with commanders has often been taken as a pretext by some ethnic groups to occupy the property of others. In Khan Afghanistan village of Almar village of Faryab district, the farming land in the desert is forcibly occupied by an Uzbek from Kaftar Khan Uzbekia village, who is allegedly linked to the local commander. The occupation of property has also often been accompanied by acts of looting. In other instances, the property was not directly occupied, but its owners were forced by the particular commanders to lease their land to the ethnic group affiliated with them. In the Central region, the returnees complained that they were forced to lease their fruit crop to powerful Tajik neighbours at a minimal price compared to the other offers. Commanders have used their occupation of the land of returnees as a tool to pressurise their victim in order to reach a political end. Weaker members of the society, such as female heads of households are particularly vulnerable to abuse illegal confiscation of their property. In the Istilaf district of Kabul province, the house of a Pashtoon widow was unlawfully occupied by a Tajik commander from another village.

This is not to say that vulnerable individuals always lose out to the powerful. In some cases though few, the vulnerables' right to property was effectively protected. In Deh Yak district of Ghazni province; a returnee widow faced difficulties upon return to access her land. The local court investigated the merits and ruled in the widow's favour. The caretaker of her land accepted the decision, signed it in the presence of the villagers and the head of the village.

[Returnees and IDPs also returned home to find their homes and land occupied by other landless or displaced persons]

E. Occupation of Property while in Exile

Take the example of Gorteepa, a Pashtoon village in Dasti Archi district of Kunduz province, with a small Uzbek minority. Around 5 years ago, the entire population of the village was displaced due to fighting in the district, and many spent several years in Baghi Shirkhat IDP camp. While they were displaced, Uzbeks from the neighboring villages who did not have land moved in and started to cultivate the vacant farmland. When an average number of 60-70 families returned last year to the village, and were only able to get some of the harvest but the bulk of the dispute is still ongoing.

(...)

In some cases, these disputes also extend to the harvest of the land, rather than the land itself. For example, in Dasti Archi district of Kunduz province, the entire population of one Pashtun village was displaced to Bagh Shirkat IDP camp in 1997, due to the heavy fighting in the area. Consequently, Uzbeks from neighboring villages moved in and cultivated the farming land that was left vacant. When the Pashtun refugees returned in early 2002, the Uzbeks had already farmed the land, and kept the harvest. Though the Uzbeks eventually gave the Pashtuns a portion of the harvest, the dispute is still ongoing.

Conflict over harvest is not limited to group disputes, but features also quite prominently among individuals. Many absentee families had given permission to other families to use their land while they were in exile. Upon return, the rightful owners of the land have experienced problems in recovering it. This was the case in Shirin Tagab district, Faryab province, where Pashtun families claim to have granted local Uzbeks and Aran farmers the permission to use their land and were unable to reclaim a share in the harvest.

Exceptions to the rule have occasionally known to exist. In Khoshi district of Logar province and in Bagrami district of Kabul formal written tenant arrangements had been recorded between owners who were still in exile, and the returnees or resident populations." (UNHCR 1 September 2003, pp. 4-6)

Property restitution is a key problem facing returning IDPs, refugees and the local population (September 2003)

- Process of recovery has been complicated by the fact that the illegal occupants have often sold the property that they had occupied to others.
- Many groups who perceive themselves today to be victims of an unlawful act were given land by previous regimes, without possibly much consideration for legality, which raises further complications.
- Many returnees had to pay bribes in order to secure their rights. The single determinant factor tipping the balance in these issues is sheer political and military power
- Near complete breakdown of the land registration system, together with multiple layers of alleged ownership for many plots of land make the issue of property restitution a key problem for returning IDPs, refugees and the local population.
- Lack of access to land remains a formidable obstacle to refugees returning to the country.
- UN Habitat estimates fifty percent of Kabul's population is living in informal settlements or has no supporting documentation and rights of tenure.

"The process of recovery has been complicated by the fact that the illegal occupants have often sold the property that they had occupied to others. (...)

There are also more complicated cases of members of ethnic and religious minorities who forcibly sold their lands/property during the Mujahideen or Taliban regimes, and who now wish to recover their properties. Their only legal claim is that they had been coerced to sell their land at the time, which would be difficult to prove.(...)

Other complications concern the questionable way in which those who currently perceive themselves to be the victims of an unlawful act acquired this land in the first place. Many of these groups were given land by previous regimes, without possibly much consideration for legality. In Sayadabad district of Mazar province for example, the land of a group of IDPs currently in Shibergan district is currently occupied by a group of powerful Arab commanders. Though a local ad hoc property commission was established by the authorities, the resolution of the conflict is made more difficult by the fact that these IDPs had been granted the land illegally during the times of Nadir Shah.

Though exceptional, there have been cases where returnees have been able to recover their property without problems. Generally, this has been the case in those areas where returnees belong to the same ethnic or tribal group as the majority of the residents, or are supporters of the same political party or commander.(...)

That is not to say however that no such disputes were found among members of the same tribe or ethnic group. In September 2002, UNAMA and UNHCR Jalalabad received reports that around 600 houses had been burnt during an inter-tribal conflict that had erupted in the village of Girdi Gaus in Mohamendara district between the Utmanzai and the Sarghani tribes. The conflict concerned an area that lies South of the main road. Both sides accused the other side of encroaching upon this land unfairly.

In other cases, returnees had to pay bribes in order to secure their rights. This has been the case of Nawabad village of Kapisa province, where UNHCR was informed that around 15 returnee families regained control of their land after paying 10,000 afs. (around 250 dollars) to the occupying pashayee commanders.

It is worth mentioning in this regard that military and political figures have sometimes assisted returnee groups to regain their land that had been unlawfully taken from them, which once again highlights the fact that the single determinant factor tipping the balance in these issues is sheer political and military power.(...)." (UNHCR 1 September 2003, pp. 7-9).

"Authorities in Kabul, as in most other larger towns, object to the large rural to urban migration in search of livelihoods and in some instances have evicted squatters from abandoned and derelict buildings. A key problem facing IDPs returning to urban areas of origin, as well as returning refugees and the local population, is that of property restitution. The near complete breakdown of the land registration system, together with multiple layers of alleged ownership for many plots of land, will require difficult negotiations and substantial resources to redress.

[...]

As in any post-conflict setting, access to land and property restitution are extremely important yet complex areas for the Government to address. A sizable proportion of the Afghan population is landless, not just the displaced. Indeed, lack of access to land remains a formidable obstacle to refugees returning to the country. While access to land and property restitution issues cannot be comprehensively addressed in the short-term, the Government should consider stopgap measures in the interim that would allow IDPs and other landless access to land. UN Habitat estimates fifty percent of Kabul's population is living in informal settlements or has no supporting documentation and rights of tenure. Similarly, many displaced persons are ineligible for basic livelihood-supporting assistance due to their lack of access to land. Thus, resolution to the land and property rights issue is a crucial step towards durable solutions for the displaced." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, p. 2)

Institutions

Shuras and Jirgas are customary mechanisms often used to settle land and property disputes (June 2004)

- Provision of free legal aid is one way of establishing the legitimate owners of land and property.
- Customary mechanisms such as Shura and Jirga are seen both problematic and useful to settle disputes.
- Shura and Jirga are heavily influenced by tribal traditions.
- These mechanisms usually settle disputes by compromise and are therefore useful for conflict resolution. However, women are often excluded from access to these mechanisms

- They are also subject to manipulation by imprudent persons in the community.
- Decisions are reached much faster than official courts are nearly cost-free.

"Establishing who are the legitimate owners of land and property in a country such as Afghanistan is, obviously, a huge task, but the provision of free legal aid provides one mechanism for doing this. Although land rights in Afghanistan are governed by a number of difference regimes – customary law, civil law, religious law, State law and constitutional law – these do share some common principles when it comes to assessing competing claims.

The reliance on customary documents and mechanisms – such as Shura and Jirga – also poses a challenge, but, given the current lack of capacity and widespread corruption that exists within the official system, these bodies are potentially extremely useful mechanisms for settling disputes.

Shura and Jirga are products of Afghanistan's patriarchal tribal society, which lays a strong emphasis on solving conflicts 'privately', within the family, village or clan. A Jirga is a decision-making forum at which, theoretically, all adult males can participate. A Shura is restricted to the elders of a particular community. While Shura and Jirga claim to base their decisions on principles of Islamic law, their perceptions of what is law is influenced heavily by Afghan tribal traditions.

Since Shura and Jirga reach decisions by consensus, they tend to try to settle disputes through compromise. This makes them an effective mechanism for conflict resolution. However, they do not always offer the best method of upholding individual rights. Women rarely have any say in their deliberations, and may find their own rights being violated by the settlement reached. Traditionally, it was common to offer a girl from one family to another as part of a settlement as this was seen as a means of uniting two families and also providing the injured party with a potentially valuable source of dowry income.

The informal nature of the proceedings at Shuras and Jirgas also mean that they are open to manipulation. 'Dispute is a fruitful tree' according to an Afghan proverb and people sometimes exaggerate their claims before going to a Shura or Jirga in the expectation that they will be expected to bargain down from this position to reach a final settlement. There is also some evidence that powerful commanders have used these mechanisms to legitimize their own actions and to increase their influence in a particular area.

Nevertheless, Shura and Jirga derive their legitimacy from their perceived ability to settle disputes and both have a long history of resolving land disputes throughout Afghanistan. At their best, they are the closest thing to democratic institutions in the country today. They can reach decisions much faster than the official courts, are virtually cost-free, are less susceptible to bribery and are accessible to illiterate Afghans.

Afghanistan's legal system is based upon principles of Islamic law and both the courts, on the one hand, and Shura and Jirga, on the other, formally base their decisions on Shari'a law. Although Shura and Jirga are not officially recognized within the Afghan legal system, judges often instruct two parties to a dispute to first try resolve their differences through this mechanism. If either side is not satisfied with the decision reached by one of these bodies, that person may still pursue their case through the official court system. NRC's counselors, and most Afghan lawyers, therefore, usually attempt to exhaust mediation in this way before bringing a case to court. Given the current lack of a rule of law this is as much due to necessity as choice." (NRC June 2004, p. 3)

Property dispute resolution mechanisms are generally weak and subject to influence (September 2003)

- Role of provincial and district authorities in settling land-related disputes has been mixed and sometimes subject to influence.

- Returnees and other Afghans seldom resort to the local courts to settle land disputes because of a lack of faith in its effectiveness.
- A large number of cases registered in the district and the provincial courts have been pending for a long time and judges subjected to pressure by powerful interested parties.
- A property court has been recently established in Kabul and mandated to examine all property issues nation-wide, but apparently the court has little impact on the way disputes were addressed at the provincial level.
- Given the lack of faith in the legal channel, the parties continue to largely rely on the informal and tribal dispute resolution mechanisms even though they are affected by the power structure in the village or district

"The role of the provincial and district authorities in settling land-related disputes has been mixed. It would seem that where the cases have involved average returnees or local inhabitants, the authorities were more keen to use their leverage and to push for a solution of the dispute.

(...)

This was generally not the case, once it became evident that one of the parties is influential or can exercise political leverage.

(...)

There is a strong and evident lack of faith in the effectiveness of the existing judicial system. As such, returnees, similar to other Afghans, hardly resort to the local courts when exploring solutions to land disputes.

(...)

In the few cases where returnees have accessed the legal channel, they have had to wait for many years before their cases were processed. In Kandahar province, UNHCR was informed that a large number of cases relating to land ownership/occupation registered in the district and the provincial courts have been pending for a long time. Interestingly enough, representatives of the justice system admitted to the various problems they were encountering in fulfilling their duties. In an interview with a member of a court in a province, he stated that the judges were receiving calls from the governor and from other commanders, urging them to take the "appropriate decision" on certain land cases. The pressure they were subjected to was real and substantial, forcing them to deviate or keep cases pending if it was too sensitive.

Even fewer returnees refer their cases to the recently established property court in Kabul. Though the property court is mandated to examine all property issues nation-wide, the president of the court indicated that the number of cases from the provinces was relatively low. Members of the justice department in the provinces confirmed this. For example, according to the administrator of the provincial courts in Maimana, despite the fact that the Supreme Court had sent a letter informing it of the role of the property court, the court did not have an impact on the way disputes were addressed at the provincial level.

Given the lack of faith in the legal channel, the parties continue to largely rely on the informal and tribal dispute resolution mechanisms. Most villages establish councils of representatives or elders, otherwise known as "shuras" in order to tackle various kinds of disputes that arise at the village level. The effectiveness of these informal mechanisms has been mixed, and is also affected by the power structure in the village or district. It has however managed to solve many disputes and conflicts among individuals in a peaceful manner that is acceptable to both parties." (UNHCR 1 September 2003, pp. 10-11)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

Policy

Operation plan for the protection-related IDPs in the South (October 2003)

- Protection IDPs in the south are composed by ethnic Pashtuns originating from the north and west and number approximately 40,000 individuals, living in Zhari Dasht and Mukhtar camps.
- Conditions for their return include change of local commanders in given areas, political participation, disarmament, presence of ANA, presence of other Human Rights organisations and guarantees from the Government that land and property will be returned to their owners. Some 16,000 are estimated to be willing to return.
- UNHCR has prepared a plan for the facilitated return of this group, and is currently carrying out the return registration. Return is dependent upon conditions in the area of return, and the return package consists of transportation costs, food assistance for a designated period, and basic Non-Food-Items.
- UNAMA holds the responsibility to assist the government address ongoing human rights violations, and to support initiatives aiming at strengthening the functioning of the justice system in the provinces.
- It is expected that a considerable number of families will not be willing or able to return.
- Provincial governor of Kandahar has given official confirmation on the right of people to stay in Kandahar province, as long as the conditions have not improved in the North.
- A major concern in the eventuality that Zhari Dasht will be converted into a local settlement is the availability of water.

"7.1 Description

This category is composed by ethnic Pashtuns originating from Faryab, Sar I Pul, Balkh, Jawzjan, Badghis and Herat provinces. Although a large majority left their places of origin at the end of 2001, some more recent arrivals have been reported. The most recent estimate indicates the figure at approximately 40,000 individuals (about 8,400 families).

These protection related IDPs are mostly settled in Zhari Dasht (relocated both from Chaman Waiting Area and from Kandahar Animal Market by UNHCR), and in Mukhtar in Helmand.

7.2 Willingness to return

UNHCR is currently undertaking a return registration of this group, which shall provide detailed information on numbers, willingness to return, and districts of return. It was observed that in general IDPs are willing to return if certain conditions are met. These conditions include change of local commanders in given areas, political participation, disarmament, presence of ANA, presence of other Human Rights organisations and guarantees from the Government that land and property will be returned to their owners. The reduced assistance in the West was expected to create a push factor to the South, which has not materialized to that extent; reportedly only a small number of individuals from the settlements in Herat have entered Zhari Dasht in recent weeks. Currently the estimated number of IDPs likely to return has been estimated at approximately 16,000.

7.3 Possible solutions

Process of facilitated return:

The return process to the North is under the leadership and responsibility of MoRR, UNHCR and the Return Commission [RC]. Concrete steps and actions need to be taken with regard to the findings of the RCWG to facilitate the return and promote sustainable reintegration in those areas that security and protection situation are conducive for return.

UNHCR has prepared a plan for the facilitated return of this group, and is currently carrying out the return registration. Return is dependent upon conditions in the area of return, and the return package consists of transportation costs, food assistance for a designated period, and basic Non-Food-Items.

The UNHCR/MoRR plan shall be adopted but the following recommendations are made:

- The Return Commission needs to assume a more pro-active role in identifying and implementing concrete measures to improve the security conditions in areas of potential return. The findings of the Return Commission Working Group should trigger direct mechanisms to improve the security – and human rights situation at local level.
- Further response from the Central and Local Government, supported by UNAMA, is needed to create security conditions conducive for return.
- MRRD should play a more active role in the work of the Return Commission to ensure advocacy for the implementation and monitoring of the recommendations and to facilitate its reintegration efforts in areas of potential return.
- Go-and-see visits from the IDPs to the areas of origin shall be encouraged, and shall be conducted with MRRD involvement.
- The modalities of participation of the MRRD in the Return Commission [RC] and the Return Commission Working Group [RCWG] need to be agreed upon with MRRD and the RC members. There is a natural role for the provincial MRRD directorates, where a balance needs to be found between close and direct cooperation between the Provincial directorates, the PMAs and the RCWG, and the distinction between the technical reintegration scope of the PMA and the political scope of the RCWG.
- Immediate and full information sharing between the RCWG and the provincial MRRD directorates is essential.
- UNHCR shall provide return assistance to the returned IDPs, in collaboration with provincial MRRD. UNHCR initial reintegration activities include cash-for-work activities, shelter and drinking water.

UNAMA holds the responsibility to assist the government address ongoing human rights violations, and to support initiatives aiming at strengthening the functioning of the justice system in the provinces. Authorities and perpetrators of criminal acts need to be held accountable, for human rights to be protected and return to proceed. Support to the Government to perform this task will entail using documented incidents to address perpetrators of security incidents, increasing professional policing activities, assisting in the establishment of civil-society group to work closely with MRRD, facilitation of traditional reconciliation mechanisms and a judicial process to hold perpetrators of crimes accountable, and supporting targeted human rights monitoring

Mechanisms for reintegration in areas of origin:

The findings from the Return Commission Working Group shall guide the reintegration activities, which shall be initiated in those areas where security and protection situation are conducive for return. The Reintegration task forces shall analyse, coordinate and monitor the reintegration efforts.

UNHCR, in collaboration with MRRD will provide initial reintegration assistance in the form of shelter, access to drinking water and Cash for Work projects in areas with high numbers of IDPs.

UNHCR will prepare matrices showing actual and expected return data based on RCWG findings and return registrations in the south and west, which can be used as a basis for reintegration. Area based Reintegration Plans shall be prepared by the provincial MRRD in collaboration with its partners in the Reintegration Task Force, as discussed in paragraph on Reintegration. The area shall be demarcated by the

provincial MRRD based upon clear criteria, which shall be closely related to the initial reasons for displacement.

Expected residual caseload:

Although the return to the areas of origin is the preferred solution, it is expected that a considerable number of families will not be willing or able to return. From the discussion in the settlements it was clear that many families are not willing to return if their property and land is not recovered, and in addition there are many landless.

The provincial governor of Kandahar has given official confirmation on the right of people to stay in Kandahar province according to their constitutional right, as long as the conditions have not improved in the North.

Most of the potential residual caseload are people currently located in Zhari Dasht, which was initially meant to become an area of local settlement, and the land has the potential to be irrigable. Expectations might be high among this group that agricultural land will be allocated. Information dissemination on the Central Government's position on this issue is required. A major concern is the water availability, and in the absence of an in-depth understanding of the environmental impact of using ground water for irrigation extreme caution is required.

Implications for Care and Maintenance

The changing and fluid security situation in the north implies that a return to these areas will be phased, and mostly guided by security situation and reintegration activities in these districts. During this period, a transition to increased self-reliance shall be encouraged, as discussed in paragraph on a re evaluation of levels of assistance.

Skills training can increase the opportunities for accessing labour, fortify the coping strategies in area of displacement and return, and thereby play an important role in reducing dependency. To increase access to labour opportunities, the following measures shall be taken:

- i. To provide skills training on construction, gardening, carpentry, electricity and mechanics in all IDP settlements and particularly in those with high numbers of sedentary IDPs.
- ii. To support IDPs (particularly in Zhari Dasht) with regular transportation from the camp to areas with labour opportunities (f.i. Kandahar city).
- iii. To ensure that MRRD employment programmes (NEEP and others (WFP) target IDPs in areas close to the IDPs.
- iv. Implement specific labour based projects in areas accessible to IDPs." (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, p.p. 9-11)

Operation Plan for the Registan Kuchis in the South (October 2003)

- The Registan Kuchis IDPs are pastoralists who use the Registan desert as a resource area and who have been displaced due to lack of drinking water and loss of livestock from 1999 onwards. Some remain permanently in the Registan, others are seasonal users.
- It is estimated that some 6,800 families are currently displaced, most of them in Panjway camp (6000) and Maiwand camp (800) near Kandahar
- Almost all permanent Kuchis have expressed a willingness to return while some of the seasonal Kuchis would prefer land allocation in Kandahar.
- VARA and Cordaid are in the process of developing a project proposal for a phased return of Kuchi to Registan over period of 3-5 years.

- Reintegration in the areas of origin will be carried out through initial reintegration activities, Area based Reintegration Plans and by mainstreaming into National Programmes.
- Current mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of Kuchi in National Programmes are relatively weak.
- For those unable to return, access to land should be provided or alternative employment and semi-urban settlement, which needs to be supported through skills training and asset transfers.

"8.1 Description

Registan Kuchis are described as pastoralists who use the Registan as (one of their) their key resource area (s). Registan is a desert area spread over the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz, from where people have been displaced due to lack of drinking water and loss of livestock from 1999 onwards. The Registan Kuchi can be subdivided into two subcategories; those that remain permanently in Reg and those that are seasonal users of Registan.

The first category consists mostly of Beluchi Kuchi, which is the largest category, estimated at 90%. The remaining 10%, in the second subcategory are mostly Pashtun. It has been claimed that a proportion of these Pashtun Kuchi own some land in surrounding districts, which they combine with their livestock rearing.

The various surveys carried out at different times by different agencies reveal large differences in IDP population figures and breakdowns over settlements and categories. A working figure of 6.800 families can be extrapolated from these surveys, of which 6000 are in Panjway and 800 in Maiwand camps. Other Kuchis from Registan are to be accounted for in Spin Boldak, Mukhtar and dispersed Kuchis in Central Helmand province.

8.2 Willingness to return

The willingness to return has been estimated at 100% for the permanent Kuchi by VARA officials for the camps of Panjway and Maiwand, this may not fully materialise even if conditions for return are suitable. A proportion of the seasonal Kuchi does express a preference for land allocation in Kandahar. These preferences will also be influenced by the perceived likelihood of obtaining land by the two sub-categories.

8.3 Possible solutions

Process of facilitated return:

According to the principle of facilitating voluntary return to the maximum, a return to the pastoralist life needs to be encouraged. A return to Registan will require substantial improvement of the local conditions, and additional support to allow a return to a sustainable livelihood. VARA and Cordaid are in the process of developing a project proposal for a phased return of Kuchi to Registan over period of 35 years, consisting of the following components:

- Rehabilitation of existing water sources, through the use of traditional well-diggers.
- Rebuilding livestock herds through zero-grazing, leading to a restocking mechanism.
- Community development and capacity building for Kuchi management
- [Income generating activities].

This is a promising approach which shall be adopted, and a lot of preparatory work has been done by VARA/Cordaid, with the assistance of an international consultant. However, some issues will require further discussion and consultation with the relevant actors, particularly related to the timeframe of the program, the number of livestock to be distributed, the lending modalities, the ownership of the livestock bank and the impact of the program on spontaneous return. (refer to the report of the Workshop held on 07-09-03 for more details). The timeframe of 3 years might be optimistic, particularly due to high dependency on external factors like rain, availability of livestock and the security situation, but is worth aiming for.

The advisory team recommends targeted distribution of livestock to the most vulnerable households with a limit to the number of families to be supported in the entire program. This shall hopefully reduce the cost, shorten the timeframe from three to five years, and shall not undermine spontaneous return since those families with livestock will not be entitled to receive any animals under this program. All those that return to Reg (supported and spontaneously) will obtain livestock feed in the winter months, in the case an independent commission (to be established for this purpose) asserts the insufficiency of vegetation in Reg.

WFP has initiated a program for water development in Registan under the Ogata Initiative, but in the past the co-ordination with other agencies has been limited due to different perceptions and timelines. WFP is relatively flexible in allocating food resources and is willing to join hands. Cordaid and VARA have done considerable work in socio-territorial mapping and community mobilisation, which has greatly increased our knowledge on possible solutions for return. A consolidated approach, in which the specific expertise and resources of agencies are combined is the only way forward and the agencies have committed to this, while at the same time care must be taken to keep the program manageable and flexible.

Mechanisms for reintegration in areas of origin

Reintegration of these people in the areas of origin will be carried out through initial reintegration activities, Area based Reintegration Plans and by mainstreaming of these people into National Programmes and reorientation of National Programmes to serve the needs and requirements of Registan.

Initial reintegration activities are a component of the Return Program design. These include water, shelter, cash/food for work activities, livestock and livestock feed.

Area based reintegration plans shall be developed to provide access to basic facilities according to the priorities of the community. In the special case of Registan, there are no host communities, with which the rehabilitation effort can be shared.

Mainstreaming into National Programmes shall take the following shape:

- NEEP shall include the data provided on returned IDPs for the resource allocation.
- NSP to be initiated among the Kuchi communities after facilitated return (which can include several sub-projects, like training of basic health workers, basic veterinary workers, vocational training / income generating activities including transfer of assets, and targeted restocking). This shall be done upon guidance of the lessons learnt of a pilot NSP for Kuchi.
- MRRD Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme shall include this area of return in their overall strategy of increasing access to safe water for rural populations.
- Links with Micro finance institutions need to be explored, and efforts shall be made to include these people in the next phase.
- Establish links with National Surveillance Systems, and with FAO for monitoring of returned families, and to develop an early warning system, with specific focus on lack of water and pasture, and animal disease.

The Ministry of Agriculture shall ensure coverage of the Registan with animal vaccination programmes and other related activities.

Links need to be established with Ministry of Education and Public Health, through the Kuchi Vulnerability Committee to ensure that education and health services in Registan are being developed.

It is recognized that the current mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of Kuchi in National Programmes are relatively weak. The Inter-ministerial Commission on Kuchi and the Kuchi Vulnerability Committee are essential for the promotion of this issue with the relevant ministries.

Expected residual caseload:

For those unable to return, the national government has to look into ways to secure a level of security in right of use to land, as described in the paragraph on Access to Land. Other options open to this group are the finding of alternative employment and semi-urban settlement, which needs to be supported through skills training and asset transfers. This option shall be presented to the community as an alternative to the return to a nomadic life, but the parameters must be communicated very clearly and transparency on the on-going discussions regarding land security rights. It must be recognized that the levels of skills required for being successfully incorporated into the labour market are generally not present in this group. Levels of education are low, as can be expected the absorptive capacity to learn new skills. The findings of the Land Access Working Group and the outcome of the Economic Integration Assessment shall guide the process for future local integration.

Implications for Care and Maintenance:

- The Registan Kuchi that are currently registered in all IDP settlements of the south and that express willingness to return shall be allowed to join the program. As soon as the process of registration of 'members of the program' has started on the basis of the current IDPs in the camps, the process of registration must be closed to avoid influx from other areas (like Helmand and Pakistan).
- Due to the process of phased return a considerable, but decreasing proportion of the Reg Kuchi will remain in the settlements for some time to come. The suggested changes to the approach will hopefully reduce this timespan from 5 years to a possible 3 years.
- Agreement needs to be reached with the provincial and district authorities, and some security of use of the land needs to be obtained from the government for the period the IDPs are expected to be there.
- Currently a part of the IDP settlements where these Reg Kuchi stay, are on privately owned land. Negotiations on obtaining security on use of private land need to be initiated by provincial government.
- An assessment shall be done on availability and seasonality of labour demand in the vicinity of Panjway and Maiwand settlement (Economic Integration Assessment).
- Additional labour based projects shall be initiated.
- All those that have received livestock under the Program, but in insufficient numbers to return to Registan shall be provided with livestock feed, until the agreed time for the return to Registan has arrived.
- Vocational skills training shall be encouraged, particularly those that can be combined with the pastoralist lifestyle in Reg." (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, pp. 12-15)

Operation Plan for the non-Registan Kuchis in the South (October 2003)

- This category of IDPs refers to pastoralists who used to migrate from the South towards the Central Highlands and who were displaced by drought and pasture rights' conflicts. Numbers are estimated at 9,000 families hosted in Spin Boldak, Zhari Dasht and Mukhtar camp.
- There seems to be willingness to return if agricultural land or livestock is provided. These will be supported to return to a pastoralist lifestyle, through a loan-based restocking mechanism.
- Initial reintegration activities are a component of the return program, and include livestock loans, veterinary training, and extension work.
- An Area based Reintegration Development plan will be developed and implemented through the National Area Based Development Program in order to uplift the area to which the pastoralists return, for both the resident and the nomadic communities.
- Those unwilling or unable to return will be prepared and equipped to access alternative livelihoods.

"9.1 Description

This category refers to pastoralists, who used to migrate from the provinces in the South towards the Central Highlands, in particular from Kandahar and Helmand to Zabul and Ghazni provinces. The drought caused severe loss of livestock, exacerbated by the lack of access to major grazing areas due to pasture rights' conflicts.

The exact number of 'other Kuchi' is not known, since information between drought affected Kuchi and non-Kuchi is not separated in the data collection. Using extrapolation a figure of 10.000 families for both drought affected Kuchi and non-Kuchi can be obtained, with at least 90% being Kuchi. The working figure for this category is estimated at 9.000 families.

The largest group of this category is currently in Spin Boldak, followed closely by Zhari Dasht and Mukhtar camp.

9.2 Willingness to return

No clear information of the willingness to return is available. Anecdotal information obtained by the recent mission shows that there is a willingness to return if livestock could be provided. Some elders in Zhari Dasht stated that 10 head of livestock would be sufficient for them to return. If given the choice to receive livestock or agricultural land, the preference seems to go towards agricultural land (in sufficient quantity and including means of irrigation). This preference seems to be highly influenced by the prevailing hope that land agricultural land will be allocated.

9.3 Possible solutions

Process of facilitated return:

Discussions need to be held with the community to assess the pre-requirements for return for this category. A process of Community Dialogue needs to be initiated, that discusses mechanisms and pre-conditions for return. On the basis of these discussions with the IDPs, and other relevant actors in the south and in the areas of return (particularly Ghazni and Zabul) a 'return program' can be designed, to restore the pastoralist livelihood.

An assessment of the potential of the resource base for pastoralism shall be conducted, which will provide an indicative figure of pastoralists which can be successfully rehabilitated. Sustained access to pasture lands is a requirement for a long-term sustainability of the pastoralist livelihood and needs to be addressed in the context of a return program.

Those willing to return, provided the natural resource base is able to sustain them, shall be supported to return to a pastoralist lifestyle, through a loan-based restocking mechanism. The pastoralist livelihood shall be strengthened through provision of skills in animal husbandry and livestock products processing, and other income generating activities that can be carried out alongside pastoralism and can strengthen it. It is essential to recognize that a return to the pastoralist livelihood does not necessarily imply a full return to the old ways.

This program shall be discussed and fine-tuned with the IDPs. There is urgent need to identify an actor (lead agency) with the commitment and expertise to take up the challenge and engage into dialogue to find solutions for this group.

Access to pasture lands shall be negotiated on the basis of a local agreement between the users of the specific area, and shall be supported by the National Government. The government shall lead this negotiation process, facilitated by the Lead agency.

Mechanisms for reintegration into pastoralist life

Initial reintegration activities are a component of the return program, and include livestock loans, veterinary training, and extension work.

After the return to the pastoralist livelihood, an Area based Reintegration Development plan shall be developed and implemented through the MRRD National Area Based Development Program. These Area based Reintegration Plans are meant to uplift the area to which the pastoralists return, for both the resident and the nomadic communities, in an effort to increase the viability of the newly established pastoralist livelihood, as well as promoting the co-existence between resident and seasonal users of the area. The residents will start to see the pastoralists as an asset, instead of as competition, which will contribute to the government's aim of promoting peaceful coexistence between population groups.

Mainstreaming into LSP - National Programmes:

- NSP: a pilot program for community led development programs shall be initiated, from which lessons can be drawn on methodology, project menu and modalities. This pilot shall follow the main principles of NSP, but adapted to the pastoralist characteristics.
- NEEP: Planning and Social Targeting guidelines are currently being developed, in which vulnerable pastoralists feature as group that requires specific focus. Mechanisms to ensure their inclusion shall be developed, and monitored.
- Mechanisms shall be developed to ensure the inclusion of Kuchi into the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation program, so that the overall objective of ensuring access to safe water for rural populations can be met.
- NABDP planning process shall include the Kuchi in the provincial planning processes.

Strong links need to be established with Ministry of Education, Agriculture and Public Health, to ensure that education, veterinary and health services are adopted to the pastoralist setting. The Inter-ministerial Commission on Kuchi and the Kuchi Vulnerability Committee are pivotal bodies for the promotion of these issues with the relevant ministries.

Expected residual caseload

An assessment of the potential of the resource base for pastoralism shall provide guidance on the number of people able to return to pastoralism. With this information, and through re-profiling of the caseload a distinction between those willing to return and those interested in local integration will arise.

These people shall be prepared and equipped to access alternative livelihoods, which can be supported through an inventory and feasibility study of potential livelihood strategies to be employed, skills training, asset transfers, and access to micro-finance programs. These options shall be presented to the community as an alternative to the return to a nomadic life, but the parameters must be communicated very clearly with transparency on the on-going discussions regarding land security rights. It must be recognized that the levels of skills required for being successfully incorporated into the labour market are generally not present in this group. Levels of education are low, as can be expected the absorptive capacity to learn new skills. A timeframe for a total phase out for those interested in local integration needs to be agreed up.

The findings of the Land Access Working Group and the outcome of the Economic Integration Assessment shall guide the process for future local integration.

Implications for Care and Maintenance

- An assessment shall be done on availability and seasonality of labour demand in the vicinity of the settlements (Economic Integration Assessment).
- Additional labour based projects shall be initiated.
- Vocational skills training shall be encouraged; particularly those that can be combined with the pastoralist lifestyle or that can be used for increasing access in Kandahar areas." (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, pp. 16-18)

Operation Plan for the drought-affected non-Kuchis IDPs in the South (October 2003)

- This category refers to some 1000 families, mainly rural inhabitants from Kandahar, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces, displaced by drought.
- Those drought-affected non-Kuchi IDPs still in the camps are mostly land less and vulnerable who used to work as labourer in the agricultural fields. Most are unwilling to return.
- More accurate information on the reasons for not returning as some of them are thought to be "opportunistic" IDPs. Assistance to this category of IDPs will be stopped and return facilitated with the standard UNHCR return package and assistance as well as targeted interventions in areas of return.
- An agency actor willing to support the reintegration process will need to be identified and IOM can be a potential agency.
- For those expected to be unwilling to return (a majority of them) , focus shall be on equipping them with the skills they require to enable them to blend into the area.

"10.1 Description

This category can be estimated at some 1000 families scattered in all camps and settlements, and is composed of mainly local rural inhabitants from Kandahar, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces.

10.2 Willingness to return

The majority of the drought-affected IDPs that own some agricultural land have already returned to their areas of origin. Anecdotal evidence suggests that those drought-affected non-Kuchi IDPs still in the camps are mostly land less and vulnerable. These people used to work as labourers in the agricultural fields to earn their livelihood and were often provided with houses from the land lords. When the agricultural system collapsed due to drought, these people migrated toward cities for the earning their livelihood. Most of these people have lost opportunity of employment in their areas of origin due to replacement by other sharecroppers. The majority is therefore not willing to go back to their area of origin.

10.3 Possible solutions

Process of facilitated return

This caseload is relatively small, and there is very little information available on the circumstances of displacement for the individual families. A re-profiling of this group is necessary, to single out those belonging to different categories, and to obtain more accurate information on the reasons for not returning. It is acknowledged that some people in this category opportunistically took advantage of perceived opportunities when the IDP camps were established. Specific targeted interventions in the areas of origin can be carried out, followed by facilitated return with the standard UNHCR return package and assistance to these families in the camps should be stopped.

The specific interventions could take place through activities of NGOs and agencies present on ground, and an information co-ordination system needs to be set up under the IDP reintegration external working group to ensure concerted effort. The tripartite team of MoRR, MFTA and MRRD shall be instrumental in ensuring the targeted interventions take place as agreed and facilitate negotiations for return with local authorities as required, supported by UNAMA. It is essential to recognize that additional resources might be required for the actors on ground to actually implement these recommendations.

Mechanisms for reintegration

Initial reintegration for this category take the shape of targeted interventions as described above. For this category, UNHCR may not be in a position to support with the shelter and reintegration support. An actor willing to support this process will need to be identified and IOM can be a potential agency.

Mainstreaming into national programmes shall be conducted through mechanisms described in paragraph 6.3 on mainstreaming into National Programmes.

Residual caseload

When specific assessments and targeted interventions in the areas of origin are being undertaken, a clearer picture will emerge regarding the expected residual caseload. It is expected that the majority of this group will not be able or willing to return to their areas of origin, due to lack of asset ownership.

This category has a relatively high potential for accessing existing labour opportunities and local integration since they are from the area. The focus shall be on equipping them with the skills they require to enable them to blend into the area. The experience gained by the local integration of this group can provide input to the Land Access Working Group.

The following actions shall be carried out:

- Equipment with the skills required to access existing labour opportunities through vocational training programs designed to match existing labour demand.

Implication for care and maintenance:

- The emphasis should be on either return, or local integration as explained above. Assistance shall phase out according to the return or vocational training program." (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, pp. 18-19)

Return and resettlement movements

Only 17,000 IDPs assisted to return from January to August 2004 (September 2004)

- IOM has assisted 15,181 IDPs to return home, while UNHCR has assisted with the return of 1,658 IDPs.
- Only 150 Pashtun families returned to their homes in the northwest.
- UNHCR hoped in early 2004 to return some 90,000 IDPs

"In 2003, UNHCR assisted over 60,000 IDPs to return to their homes in the North, Center and East. This year, UNHCR and IOM have assisted 16,839 IDPs to return home. The breakdown is 1,658 persons by UNHCR as of 15 August and 15,181 persons by IOM as of 30 August. Pashtuns from Faryab, Jawzjan and Sar-I-Pul remain protection IDPs in settlements in the South and West and are unable to return to their places of origin. Only about 150 Pashtun families returned this year to the Northwest.

Only about 17,000 IDPs were assisted to return this year, out of a planning figure of 90,000 IDPs. The obstacles include continuing drought, including water-shortages and crop-diseases (sun-pest in districts of Faryab) and continuing human rights abuses by commanders in some areas of origin, in particular land-issues such as illegal cultivation of pasture land and land confiscation, -occupation in parts of the NorthWest. However, other factors impacting on the wish to return to places of origin are access to sources of income and a level of self-reliance of IDPs, both in the West and the South, in particular work in customs and with the border-trade respectively." (UNHCR September 2004)

UNHCR relocates some 8,000 IDPs from Spin Boldak to Zarhe Dasht camp (September 2004)

- Following the government's decision in May 2004 to cease assistance to Spin Boldak camp, UNHCR undertook a survey of its 20,000 residents to determine if they would prefer relocation to another camp, return home or to stay in Spin Boldak camp and integrate locally.

- 8,000 IDPs opted for local integration, 4,400 IDPs decided to go back and 8,400 IDPs were relocated to Zahre Dasht.
- 12,000 IDPs remained in the Spin Boldak area

"The UN High Commissioner for Refugees together with its partners agencies completed the relocation of almost eight and a half thousand Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) from the camp of Spin Boldak, in Kandahar Province, last week. On 28th August, the last convoy of 72 families (432 people) arrived to their new place of residence in Zhare Dhast's camp.

In late May 2004 the governor of Kandahar, together with UNHCR and its partner agencies, announced that they would cease assistance inside Spin Boldak as of end of August as we have also done in Chaman across the border.

The Spin Boldak IDP camp, like the Zhare Dhast camp, was established in late 2001 to shelter Afghans fleeing the war between Taliban and US-led forces. After the decision to cease assistance was taken, internally displaced Afghans living at Spin Boldak were given the option to return to their place of origin, to relocate to Zhare Dhast, or to stay in the Spin Boldak area and integrate within the local community there. The registration deadline for relocation was 22nd July.

Of the 20,850 individuals (3,819 families) registered at Spin Boldak, almost 8,000 (1,597 families) have opted for local integration, 4,399 (633 families) have decided to go back to their places of origin and 8,466 (1,589 families) were relocated to Zhari Dasht, where they will continue to receive assistance until durable solutions are found for them. UNHCR also plans to start providing a reintegration package for those who have bought land in Spin Boldak and have decided to locally integrate. More than 12,000 IDPs are still in the Spin Boldak area. " (UNHCR 5 September 2004)

Over a thousand IDPs return home from Khost province (May 2004)

- In May 2004, IOM and UNHCR helped over 1,000 IDPs in south-eastern Khost province to return to their homes in the north.
- 9,500 IDPs remain displaced in the province

"More than 1,000 internally displaced Afghans have returned to their home areas from south-eastern Khost province in a series of convoys organised by the UN refugee agency and its partners in a nationwide effort to boost stability in Afghanistan.

Two separate convoys organised by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in recent weeks have helped many homeless Afghan families to go back to seven central and northern Afghan provinces.

Over the last 25 years, repeated waves of Afghans have passed through Khost province while escaping the fighting and drought that ravaged their homeland for the security of neighbouring Pakistan.

Two years ago, as people began to repatriate to post-Taliban Afghanistan, Khost again became one of the main crossing points for returning refugees. Due to fragile conditions in many parts of the country, many opted to stay in the area rather than go straight home. In the process, these internally displaced persons, or IDPs, created a new burden in the poor, remote border province.

(...)

Located behind Khost's customs house is a makeshift encampment that hosts more than 9,500 displaced Afghans. The camp is part of the cycle of poverty and urbanisation that complicates the post-war effort to help Afghans return to their communities of origin. Mostly occupied by people originating from other areas

of Khost province, they appear content to remain there for the time being so that they may access aid and occasional employment more easily." (UNHCR 3 May 2004)

82,000 IDPs returned during 2003 (December 2003)

- 82,000 IDPs have been assisted to return during 2003.
- Most return (over 50%) took place from and to the west region.
- Returns during first months of 2003 have been considerably lower than last year, 650,000 remain displaced inside Afghanistan.
- Low returns may indicate that many previous returns have not been sustainable due to the actual material and security conditions.
- Many returnees and IDPs have reportedly been displaced after being unable to return home

A total of 82,067 IDPs have been assisted to return by UNHCR and IOM during 2003. Most returns (more than 50%) took place from and to the western region as indicated by the table below.

UNHCR-IDP Assisted Return Movement Report, Province of Destination (TO), January to December 2003

Region	Nb. of Ind.	Ind. %
North	10,588	13%
South	300	0%
Southeast	97	0%
East	6,946	8%
West	46,247	56%
Central	17,889	22%
Total	82,067	100%

UNHCR-IDP Assisted Return Movement Report, Province of Displacement (FROM), January to December 2003

Region	Nb. of Ind.	Ind. %
North	8,723	11%
South	181	0%
Southeast	1,117	1%
East	17,574	21%
West	48,802	59%
Central	5,670	7%
Total	82,067	100%

Source for both tables: UNHCR, December 2003

See also the maps showing areas of return:

[Assisted IDP Movements FROM](#), UNHCR, December 2003, pdf 215 kb

[Assisted IDP Movements TO](#), UNHCR, December 2003, pdf 215 kb

"Due to the situation in contemporary Afghanistan, it has been difficult to obtain accurate numbers of returns to Afghanistan. What is clear, however, is that in stark contrast to the sizeable return from neighbouring states in 2002, the numbers of people returning to Afghanistan during spring 2003 were significantly lower, due in no small part to the conviction of many refugees that they would be unable to return in conditions of safety and dignity. (...) An estimated 650,000 IDPs remain displaced inside Afghanistan. Around 25,000 IDPs returned to their places of origin in the first five months of 2003. By the end of June 2002, in comparison, around 400,000 IDPs had returned to their places of origin.

While the fact of lower returns so far this year has placed less strain on Afghanistan's already overburdened infrastructure, it also indicates that the sustainability of the large-scale returns of last year continues to be seriously open to question. Amnesty International collected testimony from many returnees who repeatedly reported that while they had made a "voluntary" decision to return, had they been aware of the actual material and security conditions to which they were returning, their decision would have been different. As a UNHCR spokeswoman noted recently, 'Returning refugees say that more Afghan families will return if security is improved, especially in the southern provinces, and if there are more job prospects and reconstruction inside Afghanistan.' This is further underlined by Amnesty International's research and other reports, both in 2002 as well as this year, of scores of people who have either turned around and left Afghanistan again once confronted with an unsustainable return or, for similar reasons, ended up in situations of internal displacement. Reports of continued displacement of refugee returnees in 2003 emanated from Kabul city as well as rural areas in the rest of the country. IDPs, too, have been forced into a seemingly endless search for refuge, having been unable to return to their places of origin." (AI 23 June 2003, pp. 5-6)

Close to 93,000 IDPs have returned home from the western region between February 2002 and September 2003 (October 2003)

- Between February 2002 and September 2003, UNHCR and IOM have assisted 93,000 individuals return home from camps and spontaneous settlements in the western region.
- During 2003, 45,000 individuals were assisted returning home to the provinces of Badghis, Hirat, Hilmand, Farah, Takhar, Kunduz, Faryab, Ghor, Urozgan, Kandahar, Ghazni and Logar.

"Voluntary Repatriation: In February 2002, UNHCR and IOM began the voluntary return of IDPs from the Western region, and by September 2003, 24,846 families (92,429 individuals) had returned to their place of origin. Returning families received UNHCR and WFP assistance packages of food and non-food items (farming tools, tents, seeds, etc.).

(...)

Return of IDPs from the Camps and Spontaneous Settlements in 2003:

UNHCR and DoRR in co-operation with IOM and WFP have been facilitating the voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin not only from the camps, but also from spontaneous settlements.

In 2003, a total of 9,617 IDP families (45,702 individuals) have returned to their places of origin in the provinces of Badghis (Qala-e-Naw, Muqur, Qadis, Jawand, Sang-e-Atish, Dara-e-Boom, Ghurmach, and Murghab districts), Hirat (Farsi, Gulran, Rabat Sangi, Adresken, Kushk, Kush-e- Kohne, Kohsan, Ghoryan, Karukh, Obe, Chisht-e-Sharif, Pashton Zarghon, Zinda Jan, and Shindand districts), Hilmand (Gareshk and Lashkargah districts), Farah (Bala Buluk, Purchaman and Bakwa districts), Takhar (Dasht-e-Qala and Khaja Ghar districts), Kunduz (Talghan, Kunduz and Dasht-e-Archi districts), Faryab (Qaisar, Khaja Musa, Chehl Gazi, Dawlat Abad, Shirin Tagab, Maimana, Juma Bazar, Almar and Chehl districts), Ghor (Dolaina, Shahrak, Cheghchran, Taiwara, Lal Wa Sarjangle, Passaband and Tulak districts), Urozgan

(Khidir and Daykondi districts), Kabul (to 6 districts), Kandahar (Kandahar and Koshk-e-Nakhod districts), Ghazni (Khaja Mir district), and Logar (Mohammed Aqa district)." (UNHCR 15 October 2003, p. 13)

See also: "[Over 74,000 internally uprooted Afghans return home after easing of drought](#)", AFP, 20 July 2003

Afghanistan Western Area IDPs Returnee by district Based on IOM-UNHCR Consolidation (25 February - 06 October)
(Click to expand)

Source: AIMS, 8 October 2002

Return and resettlement programmes

IDP representatives visit northwest to assess conditions for return (February 2004)

- Go-and-see visits to Faryab province in the northwest have been organized in early 2004 to allow 16 IDP representatives from camps in the west and south to have a look at the conditions before deciding to return.
- More visits are planned in March to Jowzjan and Saripul provinces.

"Displaced Afghans began today a go-and-see visit to north-west Afghanistan's Faryab Province that will give them a first-hand look at conditions there and decide if returns are possible two years after thousands fled ethnic violence in the area.

Sixteen representatives of displaced Afghans residing in the south and west of the country and refugees from Pakistan started a tour organized by the UN refugee agency and the Afghan government to Faryab Province that will allow them to exchange views with provincial and local officials, commanders, recent returnees and minority communities.

(...)

Today's mission intends to help boost returns to the north-west. It includes IDP leaders and representatives from the Shadayee encampment near Herat and Bala Murgab and Gormach, also in Herat Province. Kandahar Province's IDP communities are represented by 10 persons from Zhare Dasht camp.

(...)

General Ahmed Rashid Dostum's commitment before last December's Constitutional *Loya Jirga* or Grand Council to facilitate the return of IDPs to the north is expected to give a big boost to the effort of the Afghan government, UNHCR and other agencies to help resolve the plight of displaced persons from the north.

Over the next week, the IDP leaders will break up into groups, with one visiting Qaisar District, others visiting Almar, Khujja Musa and Khwaja Sabz Posh districts, and a fifth visiting Shirin Tagab and Dawlatabad districts.

(...)

Over the next month, the authorities and UNHCR plan to organise a series of visits by displaced persons to Jowzjan and Saripul provinces in order to try to give IDPs an impression of life in their home regions. And

to allow regional leaders and local commanders a chance to hear the concerns of local residents who fled in early 2002.

The Badgis Return Task Force consisting of leaders from that province, recently visited Maslakh IDP camp to meet with some of the more than 11,000 people still encamped on the plains west of Herat." (UNHCR 12 February 2004)

Government foresees a gradual increase of operational focus from repatriation to reintegration during 2003 (November 2003)

- As of November 2003, the National Solidarity Programme has been initiated in all provinces with 24% of its budget resourced.
- National Emergency Employment Programme (NEEP) was officially launched on 28 Sep 2003. Its 1382 budget is over-resourced at 115%
- Gradual increase of operational focus from repatriation to reintegration during 2003 with linkages to MRRD development programmes.
- During 2003, greater integration and coordination of present and future efforts targeting returnees and IDPs will be sought so as to ensure a smooth transition from relief to reconstruction.
- Initial reintegration assistance will include: construction/repair of 100,000 rural houses and 60,000 houses in 6 main cities, provision of drinking water and related sanitation, provision of employment activities for returnees in both rural and urban areas, provision of technical advice and agricultural inputs to food production, ensure that returnees enjoy equal access to health and educational services as their host communities.

"Update on the main reintegration programmes by MRRD

The reform in MRRD is continuing, with priority on improvement of information management and coordination.

In terms of actual programmes, the following progress was noted:

a. National Solidarity Programme: has been initiated in all provinces, with 97 projects having been approved (at least one project in 30 provinces). 24% of the 1382 budget of USD 98 million has been resourced. NSP offices have been opened in Herat and Farah Provinces and more staff have been deployed to assist the respective NSP Oversight Consultants in Parwan, Bamyan, Wardak and Paktika.

b. National Emergency Employment Programme: The NEEP-Rural Access was officially launched on 28 Sep 2003. Its 1382 budget is over-resourced at 115%. The NEEP team is operational in MRRD. A set of draft guidelines and procedures for contracting, planning, social targeting and budget allocation has been developed. Furthermore, 70 projects have been approved for implementation in the provinces under NEEP 1, to be funded by the ARTF. Implementation of 13 other (large-scale) projects under Labour Intensive Public Works and Japanese Social Development Fund is ongoing.

c. National Area Based Development Programme: 66 projects are ongoing in Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kabul, Khost, Laghman, Nangahar, Paktya, Parwan, Samangan and Takhar. In addition, 79 projects have been designed to respond to needs identified via the Provincial Planning Exercise (including 6 in poppy eradicated areas). Finally, it has been concluded that Ogata Initiative funds will cover water needs in Nangahar, Balkh and Kandahar via NABDP channels.

d. Provincial Planning Exercise: The exercise has resulted in the design of 227 projects, most of which will be implemented through national programmes (64 by NEEP and 79 by NABDP)." (UNHCR 10 November 2003)

From repatriation to reintegration

"42. The 1382/2003 programme foresees a gradual increase of operational focus from repatriation to reintegration. As per the National Development Framework (NDF), one of the main components for national recovery and reconstruction is the sustainable reintegration of returnees.

43. As indicated under the Institutional Framework, further efforts will be required for the establishment of regular consultations with key constituencies (donors, international agencies, NGOs) to identify and agree upon key elements of strategy, programme design, and resourcing. Appropriate linkages with relevant MRRD programmes, such as the National Area-based Development Programme (NABDP) supported by UNDP, and the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) supported by the World Bank and the National Emergency Employment Programme (NEEP) supported by ILO and several donors.

44. The prime focus for the concerned Ministries of the TISA during 1382/2003 should be to encourage greater integration and coordination of present and future efforts targeting returnees and IDPs among implementing agencies, so as to make sure that the transition from relief to reconstruction is carried out smoothly.

45. Among the 2 million returnees who have come back to Afghanistan during 1381/2002 are a number of returnees classified as persons with special needs. After so many years of destruction, there are no public, social welfare support systems. A referral system established in the previous year will be further strengthened during 1382/2003.

46. During 1381/2002, the existing network for returnee monitoring will continue to be reinforced and expanded to provide accurate information on the conditions of return and the progress of reintegration including security and assistance needs. Close collaboration with mandated agencies (e.g. ICRC and OHCHR) and UNAMA will be essential in particular in the field of detention of returnees, family tracing, minority issues and the monitoring of the conditions of human rights, including women's rights, in areas of return. Links with the newly established Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission will be sought and consolidated.

Initial reintegration assistance

Shelter: House construction and repair for vulnerable returnees and IDPs. Nationwide a total of 100,000 rural houses are expected to be constructed or repair. MoRR is in charge of this component. In 6 main cities, 60,000 houses will be self-built under the Urban Reconstruction Plan. MUDH and Municipalities will coordinate.

Linkages: ECHO, UN-Habitat.

Water: To ensure that returnee areas have adequate sources of drinking water and alternative sources for domestic purposes. Related sanitation interventions (targeting both men and women) would be carried out under the MRRD National Water Supply Programme. In urban areas water supply will be incorporated into the Urban Reconstruction Plan. *Linkages*: GTZ, UNICEF, USAID, WB

Employment Creation and Income Generation: Providing off-farm labour-intensive, fast employment activities in returnee dense rural areas under the NEEP. Also, support for small business, micro-finance initiatives, and employment skills training. It is expected that at least 60% of the returnees will have access to employment opportunities both in urban and rural areas.

Linkages: ADB, ILO, UNDP, UNOPS, WB, NEEP.

Food security: Through technical advice, agricultural inputs (crops and livestock), market support and cash related inputs to food production would be encouraged in areas of high refugee and IDP return.

Linkages: FAO, UNDP, WB, WFP, USAID

Social support: In conjunction with line Ministries, to ensure that returnees enjoy at least equal access to health and educational services as their host communities, Support will be provided through major national programmes with focus on both urban and rural areas.

Linkages: JICA, UNICEF, UNODC, WB, WHO." (TISA March 2003, p. 9)

Assistance is being phased out in the west (October 2003)

- In response to a significant improvement in the agricultural and drought situation in some of the IDPs area of origin, a phasing out strategy for the western region was launched in October 2002 by the provincial Department of Repatriation and Refugee (DoRR), UNHCR, UNAMA and WFP.
- Those who have genuine protection reasons for not returning will remain in the camps where they will continue to receive assistance. However, since July 2003, free food distributions (FFD) have been replaced with Food for Training (FFT) and Food for Work (FFW).
- Since 2002, IDPs in Maslakh have been provided with information on conditions in areas of return to enable them to make an informed decision about their return.
- The possibility of local integration is explored for those IDPs that are unable or unwilling to return.

"IDP Durable Solutions Strategy: The provincial Department of Repatriation and Refugees (DoRR), UNHCR, UNAMA and WFP jointly launched a phasing out strategy in October 2002, which tasked each actor to help in solving the return problems of IDPs.

The solution strategy was formulated in response to a significant improvement in the agricultural and drought situation in some of the IDPs area of origin. The shift from emergency-based attention to focus their support for sustainable return in the IDPs places of origin, rather than in camps.

The overall objective of the strategy is to facilitate the return of IDPs to their places of origin and to reduce displacement in the western areas through the identification and implementation of alternative durable solutions.

Once IDPs return home, UNHCR and DoRR, as part of their sustainable return strategy, are tasked to continue monitoring the reintegration of returnees in their places of origin. Those who have genuine protection reasons for not returning will remain in the camps where they will continue to receive assistance. However, since July 2003, free food distribution (FFD) had been replaced with Food for Training (FFT) and Food for Work (FFW).

UNHCR has also undertaken the responsibility of providing IDPs in Maslakh camp with information since 2002 through its mass information campaign. This campaign is structured to give feed IDPs with the information on their places of origin: health, education, security, agriculture enable them to make an informed decision about their voluntary return. Go and See visits have been organized for IDPs so that they gain detail and accurate information in their places of origin.

(...)

Long term solution for the remaining caseloads: Return home remains the long-term solution for the remaining IDPs caseload. MoRR, MRRD and MoTA (Ministry of Tribal Affairs) are working on a global policy for the last two (Kuchi) groups of IDPs.

Two IDP return commissions are institutionalised to work on removing the obstacles to the return of IDPs, especially those who fear persecution.

Northern Regional Working Group is tasked to address the problems of IDPs from the northern region who are displaced inside Afghanistan or abroad.

Badghis Return Task Force is working to address the problems of IDPs, who are still displaced, from the western region.

MRRD and Ministry of Tribal Affairs are also exploring the possibility of local integration for those IDPs that are unable or unwilling to return."(UNHCR 15 October 2003, p.13)

Mainstreaming of IDPs into National Development Programmes is a strategic long-term objective (October 2003)

- For promoting return to the areas of origin, the Operation Plan envisages to shift the focus of assistance from the area of displacement to the area of return, provided that the conditions are conducive to return.
- Reintegration task forces shall be established in the provinces of return to assess conditions for return, to facilitate return and reintegration and to monitor the status of the returned IDPs.
- Currently there is a gap between initial reintegration activities and mainstreaming into national programmes as the latter do not have the flexibility to adjust their planning processes and implementation timeframe to movements of IDPs.
- Mainstreaming of IDPs into National Programmes therefore is a strategic long-term objective.
- The National Area based Development Program is thought to be the appropriate program to respond, through the development of Area Based Reintegration Plans in the districts of return. These will be developed in districts of IDP return, through a provincial taskforce that shall carry out participatory planning and specific technical assessments.

"For promoting return to the areas of origin, the focus of assistance needs to shift from the area of displacement to the area of return, provided that the conditions are conducive to return. In the North West, the findings of the Return Commission Working Group, actual and potential return figures and reintegration needs need to be analysed together. Benchmarks need to be established to ensure that the reintegration activities are initiated at the right time and place. Reintegration task forces shall be established in the provinces of return to assess conditions for return, to facilitate return and reintegration and to monitor the status of the returned IDPs.

Initial reintegration of returnees and IDPs as per the National Strategy for Return, Reintegration and Displacement, is a shared responsibility of MoRR, MRRD, MUDH, and UNHCR.

Currently there is a gap between initial reintegration activities and mainstreaming into national programmes. The National Programmes, like NSP, NEEP and others have their own planning mechanisms and do not have the flexibility to adjust their planning processes and implementation timeframe to movements of IDPs. Mainstreaming of IDPs into National Programmes therefore is a strategic long-term objective.

To fill this gap, a light and efficient mechanism is required, with the flexibility to react to return of minority groups as and when they take place. The National Area based Development Program is the appropriate program to respond, through the development of Area Based Reintegration Plans in the districts of return.

Mainstreaming of IDPs and pastoralists into National Programmes is a medium- to long term strategic objective, for which appropriate mechanisms need to be put in place.

6.1 Initial reintegration activities

Initial reintegration activities cover the initial assistance required to make the return feasible, and are therefore part of the return program, and shall be included in the design of the return program. The main actor responsible for the initial reintegration activities is the one tasked with the return program, which is described in the respective paragraphs.

6.2 Area Based Reintegration Plans

Area Based Development Programmes shall be developed in districts of IDP return, through a provincial taskforce that shall carry out participatory planning and specific technical assessments. The participatory planning process shall include the host communities of the area and aims at uplifting the entire area, which will reduce conflict, promote co-existence and will encourage the perception of IDPs as assets.

These Reintegration Area Based Development Plans need to be developed, and a price tag attached to it in all districts of return. The allocated budget for the Area Based Development Plans will be determined by the number of IDPs to be returned. Specific reintegration funds shall be channelled through NABDP for the reintegration of IDPs in their areas of origin. Programs focussing particularly on reintegration of IDPs and returnees, such as the Ogata Initiative shall be considered as natural actors. As much as possible and practical, return and reintegration programs and subsequent appeals for funding shall be integrated.

In the Northwest, these projects could also be used as an incentive for receiving communities to accept the return of minority groups. There will be a conditionality of investment on safe return, shared ownership of projects etc. The intention would be to move away from talking purely about protection issues, but rather to contribute to ‘neutralizing’ the protection concern through focusing on reintegration projects.

In the case of pastoralists, these Area based Reintegration Plans are meant to provide a stimulus to the area to which the pastoralists return, for both the resident and the nomadic communities, in an effort to increase the viability of the newly established pastoralist livelihood, as well as promoting the co-existence between resident and seasonal users of the area. The residents will start to see the pastoralists as an asset, instead of as competition, which will contribute to the government’s aim of promoting peaceful co-existence between population groups. Pasture improvement projects, water retention programs, water source development for sedentary and nomadic populations and labour-based rehabilitation projects are among the potential projects.

6.3 Mainstreaming into National Programmes

The objective of mainstreaming of returned IDPs into National Programmes is to ensure their inclusion in a proportionate manner. It must be recognized that these people are at risk of being excluded from these programmes, due to various factors relating to livelihood, ethnic and historical factors and others.

MRRD, through the National Area Based Development Program shall ensure that provincial planning procedures incorporate returned IDPs (both sedentary and nomadic) in the process of prioritization and selection of projects.

One of the criteria for the identification of districts to be prioritized for the National Solidarity Program [NSP] is the high degree of return. When detailed information is available on the villages of return, this data shall be included as one of the factors determining the village selection in these villages.

Planning guidelines for infrastructure development and Guidelines for social targeting (labour recruitment and employment) for the National Emergency Employment Program are currently being developed. The planning process takes into consideration vulnerability data, which influence resource allocation. IDP statistics are included. Pastoralists and returnees are mentioned specifically as vulnerable groups for that required attention with regard to Social Targeting to ensure they are included in a proportionate manner. Discussions are currently underway to determine the best modalities for implementation and monitoring of these guidelines (through quota, lottery systems, self-targeting etc.)

Mechanisms for mainstreaming into other National Programmes shall be identified and advocated for by the Kuchi Vulnerability Committee (for pastoralists) and by the MRRD Reintegration Unit." (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, pp. 7-9)

No immediate return solution for Kuchi IDPs (June 2003)

- Small minority of Kuchis that have retained a few animals might return to their traditional livelihoods if the wells can be identified and repaired.
- For those displaced from the north and northwest and whose pasturand has been confiscated by local commanders, return will be more problematic.
- Many Kuchis likely to opt for integration in the area of displacement.
- Inter-Agency mission believes that more expertise is needed among both the authorities and the international actors in order to plan any longer-term solutions for the Kuchi
- The Kuchis is the largest vulnerable population in Afghanistan, displaced mostly by drought but also conflict.
- Presently there is no return solution for them as the drought in the south continues and their livestock is decimated.
- Report produced by Cordaid consultant proposes a time-phased approach (1-3 years) to rehabilitate their herds to resume their nomadic lifestyle or to engage them in skill-training activities in view of integration into their area of displacement.
- A limited number of Kuchis will be able to migrate to the Reg desert again once the wells are repaired.

"The small minority of Kuchi that retain a few animals, and is able to acquire some income with which to rebuild their herds, will likely return to traditional livelihoods, but only if wells and pastures are rehabilitated. Moreover, the task of identifying wells to be rehabilitated is complicated by ownership issues that risk causing conflict between different Kuchi clans. With respect to the Kuchi displaced from the north and northwest much of their pastureland has been confiscated by local commanders that would clearly hinder their return even if they had animals to return with.

In the mission's numerous discussions with Kuchi, it was widely suggested that significant numbers of Kuchi, especially women, would opt for durable solutions in settled areas where access to education, healthcare, permanent shelter and income generating opportunities, particularly in agriculture, are perceived to exist. Having lived at their present locations for a number of years, many have been able to access at least minimal levels of employment and would now prefer to integrate among local communities. Others survive from remittances received from family members working in the larger Afghan towns, who are refugees, or who work as illegal migrants in Iran and Pakistan.

The challenge now facing the local authorities and the international community is one of how best to assist the Kuchi in finding appropriate durable solutions. The mission believes that more expertise is needed among both the authorities and the international actors in order to plan any longer-term solutions for the Kuchi. Moreover, there is still a widely held conviction among many in the local authorities that the only durable solution for the Kuchi is to return to pastoralism and that in the interim they not be provided with anything more than basic humanitarian assistance so as not to alter their 'nomadic-pastoralist way of life'. It is encouraging, therefore, that a special commission has been established within MRRD Kabul to address the Kuchi problem, albeit the commission should play a much more proactive role than hitherto. WFP's renewed deployment of a specialist on pastoralism to MRRD Kabul to assist it with developing a policy for the Kuchi is therefore welcome.

If the Kuchi remain in their present settlements in the south and the west, some will likely continue to be dependent upon at least some level of humanitarian assistance. However, were the authorities to provide them with longer-term guaranteed access to land, even if just for housing, either in the existing camps or in surrounding areas, local integration would become a feasible option. Once given the opportunity to settle, the Kuchi can pursue skills training, seek local employment opportunities or develop their own income generating activities. Investments in basic infrastructure can also be made for communities with settled Kuchi population.

A recent study of Kuchi IDPs by CordAid/VARA proposed several creative projects for skills development and income generation, as well as reintegration options and activities for those Kuchi who either wish to return to the Reg or be locally integrated. Constraints to the implementation of some of these proposals are the large number of potential beneficiaries that need to be addressed and the provision of the necessary access to land by the local authorities. Unfortunately, the extremely fragile security situation in the south continues to discourage much needed 'development' NGOs from establishing themselves in the region to help address this problem." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 11-12)

"This is the largest vulnerable population in Afghanistan. There are presently no "return" solutions for Kuchi and there will not be any return until the drought is over in the south, pasture returns, the wells in the Reg are repaired, and their limited livestock increase to a number that they can sustain themselves. All these elements must exist simultaneously or Kuchi return to the Reg will not be successful. The documents by the VARA/CordAid consultant (VC) should be used as the guide to develop projects for this vulnerable group. They describe a time-phased approach (1-3 years) to assist a limited number of Kuchi to rehabilitate their remaining small herds and to engage them in various skill-training activities, if they so choose, to provide opportunities for local integration and potentially the means to obtain additional income. The Kuchi could remain in their present camp-like situation where they are currently displaced or the authorities could allocate land where some infrastructure can be developed and where the IDPs can pursue these skill-training activities and limited re-stocking and animal husbandry activities as described by the VC (some of these skill training activities have already begun in the present settlement locations, however projects for animal husbandry and agricultural training would require land more suitable for these projects to begin). Also described by the VC, there will be a limited number of Kuchi that have enough animals to begin migrating to the Reg area once their wells are repaired. Every effort to develop projects to repair wells with the close cooperation of these Kuchi families with animals needs to be taken. However, this will be a very limited number with the difficult task of assisting them in the Reg (now summer approaching) and identifying the limited number of wells to be rehabilitated without causing conflict between the different and desperate Kuchi clans, and between the Pashtun and Baluch." (UNAMA 7 April 2003, p. 2)

See also:

"Forgotten People: The Kuchis of Afghanistan", RI, 17 December 2003

Return of Kuchis to Registan: A Phased Approach, RDP International, April 2003

Obstacles to return and resettlement

Weak national authority in the northwest and abusive commanders discourage return of displaced Pashtun (September 2004)

- Although Pashtun are reportedly no longer targeted for their ethnicity in the northwest and local power-holders have made statements encouraging return, the displaced Pashtun are still reluctant to return.
- They still fear illegal taxation, forced recruitment and exploitation at the hands of the military commanders.
- Also, living conditions are comparatively better in the camps in the south than in the home province.
- Reports of the UN Secretary-General reveal slow progress made in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of factional forces.
- Displaced Person Council, consisting of Pashtun IDPs, identified the continued presence and influence of abusive commanders in the North-West as the most serious obstacle to return.
- Abuses included: occupation of the displaced persons' property, encouraging the planting of poppies on this land, taxing the civilian population on any harvests produced, forcibly recruiting young men or engaging civilians in forced labour.
- 20% of IDPs remaining in camps and settlements cite insecurity as the main reason for not returning, most of them Pashtuns
- 600,000 refugees & IDPs (200,000) have returned to the northern provinces since beginning of 2003.
- 60,000 Pashtuns have fled the persecution and ethnic tensions in the north since 2001.

"For the Pashtuns of the first category [Pashtuns displaced from the northern provinces], the security situation has improved and they are no longer directly targeted as a result of their ethnicity. Pashtun representatives from IDP camps have visited their areas of origin on UNHCR-led 'go and see' visits. While local power-holders have made statements encouraging return, the offers of return packages from UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organisation for Migration are insufficient. Returning Pashtuns still fear illegal taxation, forced recruitment and exploitation at the hands of the military commanders in provinces where the central government struggles to impose its authority. The removal in May 2004 of the pro-Kabul governor of Faryab – a key province of potential Pashtun return – has sent a clear signal. Pashtuns in Faryab are not encouraging those who were displaced to return until there is disarmament and the establishment of the rule of law.

Life in the villages of Faryab is hard. It takes many hours on foot to reach the nearest school or clinic, access to clean drinking water is limited and groundwater is often too salty for human or animal consumption. By comparison, in the IDP camps in the south, there is adequate provision of health, education and water, and security is not a concern. Displaced Pashtuns want to see evidence that the billions of dollars pledged to Afghanistan are having an impact in their districts. Faryab has so far seen very little." (Pete Spink, September 2004)

Absence of rule of law is illustrated by slow progress made in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of factional forces

"29. There has been insufficient progress in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of factional forces. The commitment made at the Berlin conference was to achieve the disarmament, demobilization

and reintegration of no less than 40 per cent of the stated troop strength of 100,000 Afghan Militia Forces, as well as the cantonment of all heavy weapons under credible supervision by June, ahead of the 2004 elections.

30. As at 31 July, the number of men who had turned in their weapons and entered the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme stood at some 12,245 or, based on Ministry of Defence figures, a little over 12 per cent of the Afghan Militia Forces' troop strength. In the conduct of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration exercise led by Japan, however, it became evident that the actual troop strength was significantly less than 100,000 and might stand at 60,000 or less, in which case the actual percentage of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration achieved to date would be closer to 20 per cent. It is worth noting that the participation of the various army corps in the exercise has been very uneven. Afghan Militia Forces units in the south-east have been practically demobilized and, in the south, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration was discontinued when it was assessed that a minimum number of soldiers from the Afghan Militia Forces units was required in the fight against the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Among the corps and units whose contribution to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration—relative to their strength—was inadequate, were the forces loyal to the Minister of Defence. These include the two largest corps of the Afghan Militia Forces, the central corps in Kabul and the corps in Parwan; only 5 per cent of these units have entered the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme." (UN Secretary-General, 12 August 2004, p. 9)

At the end of 2003, the continued presence of abusive commanders was identified by the Displaced Person Council as the most serious obstacle to return

"The continued presence and influence of abusive commanders in the North-West was consistently identified by participants as the most serious obstacle to return. Commanders are still strengthening their own power through occupation of the displaced persons' property, encouraging the planting of poppies on this land, taxing the civilian population on any harvests produced, forcibly recruiting young men or engaging civilians in forced labour. Although the US coalition intervention in Afghanistan was welcomed as providing a good opportunity for peace, serious disappointment was expressed over the Coalition's use and support of the aforementioned commanders and competing factions, the latter further perpetuating the crimes against humanity committed in the north west. The rhetorical question was raised: 'How could the Coalition destroy the Taliban so quickly, and yet two years later they have not been able to, or have not wanted to, remove the warlords who are destroying the security of our country?'.

The factions were described as being responsible for creating ethnic divisions, spurred on by Pakistan and Iran, which did not exist before. The recent fighting in Balkh between Jamiat and Jumbesh that resulted in the deaths of civilians, looting, and forced recruitment were used as an illustration. Forced recruitment and taxation was noted to be widespread in Faryab, Saripul, Jowzjana and Balkh, and especially in areas where there was a competition between rival factions. Specific examples of Chimtal (Balkh) and Gosfandi were provided where commanders were engaging in arbitrary arrests and maintaining illegal detention centres, ransoming of prisoners back to their families.

Some participants questioned the ability or will of the main leaders in the north to deal with the low level commanders. One participant noted that mid last year, General Dostum had agreed to his petition for restitution of his property in Sayedabad district of Saripul, but the concerned commanders refused to comply with Dostum's instructions and received no penalty for not complying." (UNHCR 15 November 2003 pp. 2-3)

In June 2003, 20 per cent of IDPs in the south cited insecurity as the main reason for not returning to their homes

"An estimated twenty percent of the IDPs remaining in camps and other concentrations cite safety as their primary reason for not returning to their areas of origin. Most prominent among them are the ethnic

Pashtuns originating from the north and northwest who have been displaced to the south, the west and within the north. Many more, including some very recently displaced, are found throughout the country, with those displaced within the northern provinces are of particular concern. Some IDPs feel threatened simply because of their ethnicity while others were caught in the crossfire of competing local armed factions. The common denominator among all of these displaced is that their areas of origin are too insecure for them to return.

Clearly, a lasting change in the security and rule of law situation in much of Afghanistan would be necessary to address the valid protection concerns prevailing among IDPs and the humanitarian and development community as a whole. A certain level of instability, insecurity and human rights abuses connected to weak governance and rule of law will remain a fact of life for many Afghans for years to come. Therefore, activities in support of IDPs must be based on the reality of relative levels of risk and vulnerability, as well as on informed and voluntary choices being made by the IDPs.

The principal cause of protection problems in the north is the ongoing struggle for power and land among competing paramilitary factions and warlords. Local commanders operating in the name of larger factions retain near-absolute control over civilian life and continue to actively engage in power struggles and armed conflict. Ethnic and tribal cleavages fuel this competition. Such conflicts affect both the locally displaced IDPs within the north as well as the non-displaced population and seriously threatens the process of normalization and recovery of local communities. For those displaced to the south and west, these ongoing conflicts remain the main impediment for return. Creative and aggressive measures by the Government are required to address these security problems immediately while a longer-term reform process and institution building gets underway." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 7-8)

See also:

"AFGHANISTAN: Focus on returns and reintegration in the north", IRIN, 18 June 2003

"AFGHANISTAN: UN reports serious rights violations in northwest", IRIN, 28 April 2003

The Political, Security and Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan, Report on fact-finding mission to Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan and Islamabad, Pakistan, 22 September - 5 October 2002, Danish Immigration Services (DIS), March 2003

"UN suspends IDPs repatriation to Afghanistan's volatile north", AFP, 2 July 2002

"Afghanistan: UN Refugee Chief Hopes Displaced Northern Afghans May Return Home Soon", RFE/RL, 10 July 2002

On the Precipice: Insecurity in Northern Afghanistan, HRW, June 2002

Lack of access to land and housing is the most prevalent obstacle to return (December 2003)

- 900,000 refugees and IDPs expected to return in 2004.
- The most prevalent obstacles preventing return is the lack of access to land and housing.
- During 2003, IRC has undertaken research on property-related obstacles that are preventing return.
- Among the main obstacles identified are: destruction of homes, the presence of landmines, the paucity of arable land, hostile property occupation, interethnic tension, gender discrimination,

fraudulent deeds, inequitable social and financial relations and the lack of effective property recording systems or adequate dispute resolution mechanisms.

- Main difference between Afghanistan and other countries is that landlessness is a much larger concern than property restitution.

"Millions of Afghan refugees and internally displaced Afghans have returned home since the fall of the Taliban, hopeful that their country has finally escaped a quarter century of war. The U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) expects another 900,000 or more to repatriate in 2004 as economic and security conditions continue to improve.

Still, for various reasons, millions of displaced Afghans are unable to go home. And perhaps the most prevalent -- and certainly one of the most complex -- obstacles preventing return is the lack of access to land and housing. The magnitude of the problem led the IRC to hire a property law expert, John Dempsey, to focus on the issue and advocate changes that would have lasting impact on the lives of all Afghans.

During the past year, Dempsey and a team of Afghan national lawyers working for the IRC have engaged in a number of projects, including researching property-related obstacles that are preventing the return of uprooted Afghans. The main concerns identified are the destruction of homes, the presence of landmines, the paucity of arable land, hostile property occupation, interethnic tension, gender discrimination, fraudulent deeds, inequitable social and financial relations and the lack of effective property recording systems or adequate dispute resolution mechanisms.

For many Afghans, the problem is a combination of these factors.

'The 15 jeribs of farmland I abandoned in Kunduz when I fled to Pakistan has been in my family for generations,' explained an elderly man currently living in Pakistan's Kohat Refugee Camp. 'But now, just because we are ethnic Pashtuns, everyone back in my village claims I am part of al Qaeda, so my family can't go back. But my ancestors and I are farmers! We're not terrorists! And because our land is occupied by Tajiks, who have the support of powerful commanders, we are stuck in this camp, working to make bricks 12 hours per day for virtually no pay.'

Dempsey and his colleagues heard similar sentiments from dozens of refugees, indicating how various factors -- occupation of land, ethnic and political tensions, lack of the rule of law -- can contribute to making property disputes some of the most intractable in Afghanistan.

Dempsey points out that one major difference between Afghanistan and other post-conflict countries is that in Afghanistan, landlessness is a much larger concern than property restitution.

'The real issue for most returnees is not ownership of property but access to property,' says Dempsey. 'Most refugees didn't own land in the first place but instead worked as sharecroppers and laborers on others' land. With little hope of getting their jobs back, they're hoping the government might allocate plots to them.'

IRC and UNHCR jointly intervened early in 2003 in a few property cases of displaced persons, but a weak judiciary and police system in the country made resolving these cases fairly difficult. More often than not, corruption and intimidation played a role in the outcome." (IRC 17 December 2003)

See also:

Land and the Constitution, Current Land Issues in Afghanistan, AREU, August 2003

Land Rights in Crisis: Restoring Tenure Security in Afghanistan, AREU, March 2003

Landlessness puts pressure on the village's limited resources and leads to renewed displacement upon return (September 2003)

- WFP's survey carried out in 2002 showed that landlessness varies greatly in the country but is widespread.
- In Kandahar province for example, UNHCR found that only 20% of the region's population hold title over land.
- Majority of the landless returnees either join relatives who are landowners, gain employment as paid farmers on agricultural land or are assigned unoccupied property.
- One of the consequences of landlessness is that it has exacerbated the already existing strain on the resources in a particular village
- In 2002, UNHCR stated that 74.3 percent of returnees do not have farmland to which they can return.
- Many landless returnees being forced into situations of either destitution or internal displacement.
- Many families unable to afford rent of houses or rooms live in dilapidated buildings or unoccupied land, under the constant, and increasingly threatening, shadow of eviction by the landowners.
- Landless returnees cannot, in addition, benefit from shelter projects run by various international agencies, including UNHCR, which stipulate that the returnee must either own a title to the land, or be able to get his community to vouch for his ownership of the land.

"Though UNHCR does not have sufficient information on the scale of landlessness, as it had not been examined closely nor systematically, the issue has been documented in depth by other institutions and experts. It suffices at this point to make special reference to World Food Programme [WFP]'s recently published report. The data contained in it is based on rapid survey carried out in 1,887 villages in 2002. Landlessness varied widely. As many as 68% and 63% of households were landless in respectively Faryab and Jawzjan. Even within a district or province, rates of landlessness vary widely. A recent study of landholding in fifteen villages in Bamyān Province shows that whilst 39 percent of households were landless overall, this ranged from 15 to 86.6 percent by individual village.

The little information that was generated through returnee monitoring reports seems to support their conclusion that landlessness is very widespread in Afghanistan. In Kandahar province for example, UNHCR found that only 20% of the region's population hold title over land. The majority of the landless returnees to the region either join relatives who are landowners, gain employment as paid farmers on agricultural land (and are commonly granted accommodation on the same land or are assigned unoccupied property belonging to families who are still in exile for temporary use by an area's local shura.

In Ghazni, 30% of the interviewees explained that they had their own agricultural land, the average size being 30 Jeribs. The same is true for the East, where UNHCR has gained an initial idea of the dimension of landlessness through analyzing the reasons for rejecting returnees as beneficiaries to the shelter program that is finances. In doing so, it has found that the number of returnees who fulfil the vulnerability criteria, but who were landless (and therefore excluded from the shelter program on that basis only) amounted to 30% and 60% in some districts in Laghman province. One of the consequences of landlessness is that it has exacerbated the already existing strain on the resources in a particular village." (UNHCR 1 September 2003, pp. 1-2)

"Another problem related to return to Afghanistan is that of landlessness. In 2002, UNHCR stated that 74.3 percent of returnees do not have farmland to which they can return. A recent report noted in addition, "it may be assumed that a 'significant' number of returnees did not own land, surviving as workers, tenants, or sharecroppers in varying degrees of dependency to landowners. They left the country landless and may

return landless.” In interviews with returnees and IDPs, Amnesty International was repeatedly confronted with evidence of landless returnees being forced into situations of either destitution or internal displacement. One local NGO told Amnesty International that several returnees in the Bamiyan region had been forced to move into caves in the area as they had no where else to live.

Amnesty International also spoke to returnees in Kabul city who had returned to the city as they owned no land elsewhere in Afghanistan, and hoped to be able to earn a living in the capital. Being unable to afford to rent a room or a house due to spiraling rent prices, however, many have been forced to move into dilapidated buildings or unoccupied land. This was what had happened to Kamaluddin and ten members of his family, who live in one room in the ruined Russian Cultural Centre in Kabul city. “I have no other place to live”, he said, “we sold our land five years ago when we left Panjshir to seek refuge in Badakhshan.” The majority of these families in Kabul live under the constant, and increasingly threatening, shadow of eviction by the landowners. Of the returnees Amnesty International interviewed in Kabul, many were squatting on government owned land and had recently been issued with eviction orders. Around 60 returnee families who had moved into the premises of a ruined shoe factory in western Kabul have been evicted by the authorities, forcing them to set up tents on the surrounding hillside.

Landless returnees cannot, in addition, benefit from shelter projects run by various international agencies, including UNHCR, which stipulate that the returnee must either own a title to the land, or be able to get his community to vouch for his ownership of the land before the agency will assist with rebuilding shelter on this land. Obviously, such projects are of no help to the landless. This is the reason one woman, Fariba, is unable to return to her place of origin in the Shomali valley from Kabul city, where she is living in an informal tented settlement on government land. While many international agencies are involved in helping returnees to rebuild their houses in Shomali, Fariba and her family, despite originating from the Shomali valley, are unable to benefit from this assistance and thus to return “home”, as they do not own any land in the valley on which to build a house. A group of 15 Uzbek families returned from Pakistan to Kunduz city in August 2002. Being landless and unable to afford rents in the city, they had set up tents on government land just outside Kunduz, but were forced to move away by villagers who claimed to own the land. They now reside in tents 50 metres away from their original location. Amnesty International has learned that the provincial government plans to redistribute this land to government employees, which will almost inevitably lead to another displacement for these families.” (AI 23 June 2003, p. 26)

See also:

Case Study, Afghanistan, Land problems in the Context of Sustainable Repatriation in the Eastern Region, UNHCR, 23 May 2003

Absence of social network makes it difficult for returnees to settle in areas other than their area of origin (March 2003)

- Main problems faced by returnees in urban centers is the lack of employment and education opportunities.
- Social networks are less important when resettling in cities than in rural areas when it is not that of origin.
- It is very difficult for returned refugees or internally displaced people to settle in areas, other than their areas of origin, and where they do not have a network.
- Crucial issue in connection with resettlement is the access to resources. Widespread shortage of land and water in the rural areas in Afghanistan often leads to fighting about the scarce resources.
- Pashtuns IDPs trying to resettle in Pashtun areas other than that of origin have not been accepted by the local residents.

"CCA said that for people, who are returning to the towns, the social network is less important in terms of being able to settle in towns other than the place of origin. The general problem, that everybody has to face, is the lack of employment, the economic situation in general and the lack of educational facilities for children. In the rural areas, people are closer. They live in extended families, and if a person does not have a family, that person is in danger of not being able to receive any help or assistance. There may be difficulties, however, the person is not in any real danger.

ICG mentioned that it is very difficult for returned refugees or internally displaced people to settle in areas, other than their areas of origin, and where they do not have a network. Accordingly, it is extremely difficult to settle in other regions, even when (e.g. as a Pashtun) people are settling in an area populated by a dominating ethnic group to which the person belongs. It will be impossible for Hazaras to settle in an area dominated by Pashtuns.

[...]

The coordinator of UNAMA's Civil Affairs Branch advised that the support of the government would be required for any resettlement of ethnic groups in areas other than their areas of origin. In this connection the source was referring to the large group of Pashtun refugees who are currently living in the area around Kandahar and who do not wish to return to the northern areas. The crucial issue in connection with resettlement is the access to resources. There is widespread shortage of land and water in the rural areas in Afghanistan, which often leads to fighting about the scarce resources.

UNHCR, Kabul, said that Pashtuns from northern Afghanistan had attempted settlement in the Pashtun villages in other areas of the country, but that they had not been accepted by the local communities.

ICG also said, that it would be difficult to settle in an area other than a person's area of origin. This was the same for all ethnic groups - both when settling in areas, where they were in minority and when settling in other areas, where they belonged to the major ethnic group in that area. According to the source, the real problem is one of access to resources, especially water. If the resources were not scarce, there would be no fighting. The source compared the situation to that in the former Yugoslavia, emphasizing that contrary to the situation in Yugoslavia, ethnic groups in Afghanistan are generally more pragmatic, and they would not fight if there were sufficient resources." (DIS March 2003, p. 40; 45)

Insufficient assistance upon return can lead to renewed displacement, return not always a viable option (September 2003)

- Whether IDPs return, resettle or choose to integrate in a displacement area, settlement resources such as land, housing and water are crucial to put an end to the displacement situation. Lack of such resources will lead to secondary displacement.
- The idea of a 'self-selected community of choice' recognises that return is not a viable option for everyone.
- This could also apply to a camp situation like Zhare Dhast, where 50% of camp residents are hoping to reside permanently should the central government give rights for the use of land

"Whether IDPs are in a displacement location, are resettled or choose to return to their area of origin, they need certain settlement resources in order to establish a place – resources such as land, water and/or housing. For instance, housing is a key issue for displaced people. Often people in IDP camps who live in tents but have the opportunity to build homes will consider themselves 'settled' once the home is built. This is the case in Zhare Dhast IDP camp in Kandahar as well as the Chaman Waiting Area on the border of Pakistan. IDPs who return to their place of origin without land or are unable to recover lost property will

often not settle in their place of origin but go to relatives in another area who have a house or land. A lack of settlement resources will lead IDPs to become secondary migrants, seeking 'a place' elsewhere. This phenomenon has been duly noted in Cambodia.

This question of 'establishing a place' can also be applied to nomads, who in Afghanistan for example suffer most from insufficient water resources. When Kuchi transhumants in IDP camps in southern Afghanistan were asked whether they had a place of origin or a place to which they wished to return, many would say that they wished to relocate to Helmand province because there is "water in that place" or they have distant relatives who are settled there. Others wanted to remain in the IDP camp for an indefinite period. Recognising that water and animals would be scarce to come by for some time, someone said he wished "to keep the house I built here in Zhare Dhast and learn to work".

The idea of a 'self-selected community of choice' recognises that return is not a viable option for everyone and that other forms of forced settlement, such as villagisation in Rwanda, should not be an acceptable standard of settlement by the international community. This idea of a self-selected community could also apply to a camp situation like Zhare Dhast, where 50% of camp residents are hoping to reside permanently should the central government give rights for the use of land." (Petrin, Sarah September 2003)

Cluster bombs hinder return of IDPs (December 2002)

- Cluster bombs and unexploded ordnances hinder return of IDPs
- IDPs are exposed to these bombs as they contribute to a cycle of displacement.

"Cluster bomblets also hinder the return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). (...)

Bomblets and other unexploded ordnance can contribute to delays in organized returns. UNHCR's guidelines require the agency to look at the safety of roads and return areas before sending inhabitants back to their homes. The guidelines focus on the threats from landmines, but because of their similar effect, unexploded BLUs must be treated the same way. UNHCR is also required to discourage spontaneous repatriation in unsafe circumstances. "The need for return 'in safety and dignity' means that UNHCR *cannot promote* the voluntary repatriation of refugees in patently dangerous situations with the risk of injury or death." By necessitating such precautions, cluster bombs can slow a country's economic recovery and its people's return to normalcy.

(...)

Unexploded bomblets also endanger transients unfamiliar with a region's hazards. Two people from the Mazlach IDP camp encountered cluster bomblets while passing through the field west of Ishaq Suleiman; the 61-year-old father died and his 8-year-old son was injured. Although the earlier deaths of two shepherds kept locals away, the victims had no reason to know of the incident. The deadly bomblets not only harm returning refugees but also contribute to a cycle of displacement, forcing those who find their villages too dangerous to join Afghanistan's large number of IDPs." (HRW December 2002, pp. 28-29)

Obstacles to local settlement

Finding durable solutions for IDPs not high on the local and provincial authorities' agenda (September 2004)

- Many displaced Kuchis unable to return to central highlands are likely to be willing to be allocated land near Kandahar, but local authorities and communities are unwilling to let them do so.

- Local authorities have at times been less than cooperative in ensuring that that most camp IDPs have basic shelter, access to potable water and basic healthcare, as well as minimal nutritional standards for fear of creating poles of attraction in the camps or because they were intent on dispersing the IDPs elsewhere.
- Current IDP situation is one where the majority of IDPs that have been able to return have done so, leaving a residual population made up primarily of IDPs unable or unwilling to return for the time being and who are in need of durable solutions.
- It appears that finding durable solutions for IDPs is not yet high on the agenda of key provincial authorities.

"'Nomadism' was for most Kuchis an uncomfortable necessity rather than an essential feature of their identity. It would therefore be a romanticisation of their lifestyle to assume that all displaced Kuchis yearn to return to 'traditional' livelihoods. Most are now accustomed to accessible health and education services and the easy availability of water. Kuchis unable to return to the central highlands due to hostility of the Hazara would like to be allocated land in Kandahar- it is a right enshrined in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement that IDPs can settle in a location of their choice. However, the provincial government in Kandahar as well as surrounding communities are unwilling to let them do so.

Cycles of droughts and displacement are not a new phenomenon for the Kuchis. What is new is the availability of assistance and the impact this is having on the willingness to return. Many observers doubt whether anything can be done to re-establish the livelihoods of the Registan Kuchis until three or four years of good rain restore their range land." (Spink, Pete, September 2004, p. 35)

"The overall conditions of the IDPs remaining in camps have improved considerably from conditions in early 2002. UNHCR in partnership with UNICEF, WFP and the NGOs have succeeded in ensuring that most camp IDPs now have at least basic shelter, access to potable water and basic healthcare, as well as minimal nutritional standards. However, this has not always been an easy achievement as local authorities have at times been less than cooperative for fear of creating poles of attraction in the camps or because they were intent on dispersing the IDPs elsewhere. UNICEF has been particularly concerned over denial of access to education in some instances for such reasons.

Therefore, given the prevailing security conditions, the current IDP situation is one where the majority of IDPs that have been able to return have done so, leaving a residual population made up primarily of IDPs unable or unwilling to return for the time being. The Government is therefore faced with the challenge of creating enabling environments in areas of origin that will encourage IDPs to return or, alternatively, for creating durable solutions for IDPs in their areas of displacement or elsewhere. In either case, the Government is being encouraged by UNHCR and its partners to shift from a policy that has primarily consisted of care and maintenance of IDPs to one that seeks longer-term and lasting solutions.

However, while the central Government has endorsed a National Reintegration Strategy with the declared objective of mainstreaming returnees and has accepted the overall principle of streamlining the reintegration of IDPs into national development programmes as a declared priority, it appears that finding durable solutions for IDPs is not yet high on the agenda of key provincial authorities. There appears to be little coordinated effort by such authorities to address IDP solutions, despite the continued attempts by UNHCR to engage with representatives of relevant ministries, governors' offices and influential commanders in the various regions, and particularly in the south. Greater priority, understanding and cooperation by national authorities in addressing the gap between agreed policies and poor implementation at the provincial level is, therefore, essential to finding durable solutions. International assistance actors thus need to pay greater attention to such a gap." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, p. 3)

Local integration of IDPs is hampered by the reluctance of local authorities to allocate land (September 2003)

- A significant portion of Afghan are landless and are occupying government land.
- A sizeable number of IDPs wish to permanently settle in their current displacement locations in the South-western region and have filed an application with Kandahar's provincial authorities for land allocation. Only temporary permission has been given.
- In urban areas, the problem is compounded by the fact that IDPs also occupy government buildings.
- In Herat, many of the IDPs are currently being forcefully relocated from Shadayeh camp to Maslakh camp because the governor wants to restitute most of the land to the military.
- Other similar cases are to be found in various areas of the country, affecting many IDPs.

"(...) Given that the majority of the Afghan population is landless, a fair number of them seem to be residing on government land. As one would imagine, their presence is tolerated in some cases and deeply contested in others.

Kandahar City is the site of a controversial application for land allocation filed by a group of IDPs who have occupied government land, and have expressed their interest to resettle there either temporarily or permanently. While these cases cannot be treated as land disputes as such, they raise major concerns with regards to the implementation of a durable solution for the significant population displaced persons in the Region. Initial reports have revealed a sizeable number of IDPs, wish to permanently settle in their current displacement locations in the South- western region. The most obvious case in point is that of Zhari Dasht IDP settlement for which currently only a right of use has been granted by the provincial authorities of Kandahar. The problems becomes more pronounced in the urban areas, where in addition to occupying government land, returnees and citizens are also occupying government buildings.

As expected, the authorities have reaffirmed their control over public land in some cases, to the detriment of the groups that are residing there, and who often, has no alternative places of residence. In Herat for example, many of the IDPs are currently facing the threat of forced relocation from Shaydeh camp to Maslakh camp because the governor wants to restitute most of the land to the military. In Nangarhar province, the authorities have already demolished the houses of 95 families along the Jalalabad canal, on the pretext that their houses are built on governmental land. A recently created land committee has ordered the demolitions. This is a temporary body whose declared purpose is to preserve government owned land from illegal occupancy. There are strong indications that other areas will be targeted. One of the most likely sites for such an activity is reportedly Farma Hadda Camp, a settlement hosting thousands of Afghans that have come as IDPs from other provinces throughout the various periods of fighting, and have later integrated.

A similar scenario is unfolding in Laghman province in the East, where several families have received an expulsion order from the Governor. Though the families claim that this land has been allocated to them under Dawud Shah, the provincial authorities affirm that this land is government land, and that it is illegally occupied by 810 families." (UNHCR 1 September 2003, pp. 11-12)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Security has deteriorated in many areas of the country during 2004 (September 2004)

- Increasing instability in the country was illustrated by the withdrawal of MSF in July 2004 following the killing of 5 of its staff.
- In August 2004, the UN staff union requested the withdrawal of all international employees from the country.
- 17 aid workers were killed in the first 6 months of 2004, compared to 14 in all 2003.
- Afghan security forces are still being formed and local commanders still control largely armed militias.
- Only 13,000 out of 60,000 soldiers have been demobilized as of August 2004

"The security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated steadily over the past six months, a trend that is expected to continue as the election draws near. Perhaps the most vivid illustration of the tenuous stability in the country was the recent withdrawal of the Nobel-prize-winning nongovernmental organization (NGO) Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) from Afghanistan in late July, two months after five of its employees—three Europeans and two Afghans—were killed in a brazen attack attributed to the Taliban. The announcement sent shock waves through the aid community, as MSF had been a mainstay in Afghanistan for over 14 years, having endured both the brutal civil war and oppressive Taliban rule. A sense of pessimism has since descended upon the UN and NGO community, prompting many to consider scaling back their operations or withdrawing altogether. Such sentiments culminated in a late August request by the UN staff union for the United Nations to withdraw all international employees from the country. In light of growing frustration and heightened sensitivity to risk, any major security incident involving foreign workers in the coming months could result in a major disruption in international assistance. One need only glance at security statistics from the first half of 2004 in Afghanistan to grasp the severity of the situation:

23 U.S. soldiers were killed from hostile fire in half of 2004 compared to 12 in all of 2003.

179 Afghans were killed by anti-government insurgents in the first six months of 2004 compared to 119 in all of 2003.

17 international aid workers were killed in the first half of 2004 compared to 14 in all of 2003.

Taliban resurgence is largely responsible for the upsurge of violence in 2004.

(...)

In spite of the rising incidence of Taliban activity, President Karzai has identified warlordism and the persistence of private militias as the greatest threat facing Afghanistan. In July 2004 he signed a decree stipulating that any warlord who did not comply with the ongoing disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process, known as the Afghan New Beginnings Program (ANBP), would be "considered disloyal and rebellious" (EurasiaNet, July 29, 2004). Karzai emphatically claimed that the time for persuasion and accommodation is over and "the stick has to be used" (New York Times, July 12, 2004). The problem is that no one knows where this stick will come from. Afghan security forces, still at a nascent stage in their development, are not capable of enforcing compliance, and the U.S.-led coalition has displayed an unwillingness to engage in so-called "green-on-green" disputes (that is, clashes between rival warlords or between warlords and the central government). The UN-supported ANBP has proceeded at a deliberate pace since the end of the pilot phase. Approximately 13,000 of Afghanistan's 60,000 soldiers

have been demobilized as of August 2004. At this rate the program will be hard-pressed to meet its targets of demobilizing 40% of the country's militiamen by the presidential election and an additional 20% by the parliamentary balloting in May 2005." (FPIF September 2004)

17. The security situation in Afghanistan is volatile, having seriously deteriorated in certain parts of the country. Attacks on national and international forces and on electoral, government and humanitarian workers and their premises in southern Afghanistan have intensified. At the same time, in a disturbing development, several of the most serious acts of violence since the start of the Bonn process took place in the north and west of the country, areas that had been considered low-risk. The protagonists of this destabilizing activity range across a gamut of interests hostile to the peace process, from extremist elements (Al-Qaida and the Taliban, whose numbers include cross-border insurgents), to factional forces and criminals, including some involved in drug trafficking." (UN Secretary-General, 12 August 2004, pp. 6-7)

See also:

Afghanistan Out of sight, out of mind: The fate of the Afghan returnees Amnesty International (AI), 23 June 2003, pp. 21-22

Report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly and the Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, UN Secretary-General, 18 March 2003, pp 7-8)

"AFGHANISTAN: Focus on rights abuses in Baghlan Province", IRIN, 10 December 2003

"AFGHANISTAN: Rights abuses and forced displacement in central Oruzgan province", IRIN, 22 September 2003

"Afghanistan: Aid organisations call for strengthened security", IRIN, 18 June 2003

"Afghanistan: NATO to take over command of ISAF", OCHA, 17 April 2003

On the Precipice: Insecurity in Northern Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch (HRW), June 2002

Volatile security situation hampers access to IDPs and constrains relief and development activities (July 2004)

- Ongoing insecurity in southern and eastern provinces has led to a reduction of aid and reconstruction activity in the region generally.
- It is dangerous to go to IDP camps near Kandahar because of threats of attacks.
- Insecurity and lack of rule of law are major constraints to comprehensively addressing the needs of most of the residual IDP population.
- All UN activities have been suspended in Uruzgan, Zabul and northern Helmand provinces and restrictions on movements have recently been imposed on southern Helmand and parts of Kandahar province.
- Insecurity impacts on most dimensions of the international community's support to IDPs.
- Limited access by the international community and inadequate Government mechanisms for challenging impunity by violators means that adequate protection cannot be provided and many violations remain unreported
- Deteriorating security in parts of Afghanistan is hampering return programmes for refugees IDPs and jeopardising the sustainability of past and future returns.

Insecurity in the south and south-east makes it difficult to access IDP camps

"A state of war in south and southeast Afghanistan exacerbates already precarious living conditions for people in more than a third of the country. Public services are devastated and the vast majority of people have little or no access to essential health services. To reach the infectious disease ward of Kandahar hospital, for example, patients must travel great distances through highly insecure areas and often arrive too late: more than half of the deaths at the hospital, the only referral facility in the area, occur within 24 hours of admission. Aid programs to displaced people at risk of malnutrition in Zhare Dasht camp are insufficient and often interrupted.

Basic emergency aid is not reaching those who need it in these areas because insecurity makes it nearly impossible to provide meaningful assistance. Anti-US forces have deliberately targeted aid workers, forcing many agencies to scale back the reach and level of their programs. Since January 2003, 25 aid workers have been killed in criminal attacks. MSF has had to withdraw its international staff from all areas except Kandahar, while its programs in Ghazni are run by national staff who are only marginally less at risk. "(MSF July 2004)

Security concerns throughout the country cause the suspension of many UN missions

"In the north, UN missions to Gusfandi and Kohistanat districts in Saripul province remained suspended. An improvised explosive device was discovered near UNAMA office in Mazari Sharif and removed safely. The anti-drug operation launched by the Coalition in the northeast is causing security concerns, including stopping and searching of UN vehicles. Sixteen WFP trucks were stopped and searched by armed police on the road between Fayz Abad and Kunduz.

In the east, military operations in Kunar and Nuristan provinces continued and all UN missions remain suspended throughout the region, including Nangarhar and Laghman provinces.

UN missions to southeastern and southern provinces remained impeded due to insecurity with missions on the Kabul-Gardez road, in the vicinity of Kandahar city and in Lashkargar district in Hilmand province, being cleared on a case-by-case basis. Several security incidents took place during the week in Kandahar city: Two bomb explosions killed 14 and injured 70 people. Two hand grenades exploded at the compounds of UNHCR and the Coordination of Afghan Aid, a local NGO, with no casualties.

In the west, UN missions on Shindand-Dilaram highway and to Bakwa and Bala Buluk districts in Farah province remained suspended. Two incidents of armed robbery involving international NGOs' vehicles with national staff took place on the road from Hirat to Baghdis." (WFP 15 January 2004)

"Security conditions remain dissuasive to returns in much of the southern (Kandahar, Helmand) and south-eastern (Khost, Paktiya, Paktika, Uruzgan, Kunar, Logar and Zabul) provinces of the country. This is evidenced by the fact that returns to these regions are far lower than any other region of the country. Although large scale displacement of ethnic *Pushtun* from the north has largely ended, continuing abuses by local commanders make the security conditions in a number of provinces unstable discouraging many IDPs and refugees from returning to their homes. Until these developments are arrested and reversed, they will remain an obstacle to reconstruction and assistance efforts and thus to repatriation prospects. Implementing partners have also been affected by periodic insecurity and direct attacks on humanitarian personnel, particularly in the South and Southeast. As a result, access to certain areas has been limited, constraining activities which require regular presence such as rehabilitation projects, aid delivery and returnee monitoring" (TISA January 2004, p. 15)

Threats of attacks in the south limit access to IDP camps

"The truck bomb on Tuesday and the assault on UNHCR's premises are the latest in a series of assaults increasingly hampering aid and reconstruction work in Kandahar province, former base of the ousted Taliban movement. Ongoing insecurity in southern and eastern provinces has led to a reduction of aid and reconstruction activity in the region generally.

'Our [UNHCR's] operation is already very, very limited because of the general security situation. Of course the environment is not very good for working down there and we have to be very careful,' the assistant information officer said, adding the agency had already withdrawn its international staff from southern provinces following the murder of a UNHCR international staff member in the southern city of Ghazni in mid-November.

'The international staff are in Kabul and occasionally go to the regional offices. National staff work [but] within limitations because it is dangerous to go to IDP [internally displaced persons] camps because of threats of attacks,' he maintained. Farhad said UNHCR's chief of mission in Afghanistan was going to go to Kandahar on Wednesday to further investigate the situation.

'In any case we are not going to close [activities] and we cannot limit our operations any further as it is already too limited. We work through our partners in the camps to keep the operations going, however, it is becoming more and more difficult,' he said." (IRIN 6 January 2004)

Prevailing pattern of targeted attacks on the aid community limit UN international presence in the field

"The UN is reviewing the number of international staff it will permit to operate in Afghanistan following the assassination, on 16th November, of a young French woman employed by UNHCR. She was shot dead at close range by a man on a motor cycle while being driven through Ghazni bazaar. The perpetrator and an accomplice were immediately captured and were later identified as being members of the Taliban militia.

This incident is clearly linked to the prevailing pattern of targeted attacks on the aid community and on those involved in reconstruction programmes. Responding to the attack, the Head of UNHCR reported that UN activities, in general, had been dramatically scaled back with field missions suspended and activities reduced to avoid exposure. He added that UNHCR would move its international staff out of Kandahar, Gardez (which includes Ghazni) and Jalalabad. He noted that a dialogue was ongoing with the government of Afghanistan to bring about better security so that aid organizations could work safely. Noting that repatriation had been halted in Pakistan, he indicated the UNHCR wanted to send a message to the Pakistan and Afghanistan governments that it could not carry out its work without proper security and that these governments had to do more." (BAAG 18 December 2003, p. 1)

Insecurity impacts on most dimensions of the international community's support to IDPs

"Insecurity and lack of rule of law are major constraints to general long-term development in Afghanistan and by extension to comprehensively addressing the needs of most of the residual IDP population. Throughout much of the country the rule of law is at best weak and at worst non-existent. Presently, all UN activities have been suspended in Uruzgan, Zabul and northern Helmand provinces and restrictions on movements have recently been imposed on southern Helmand and parts of Kandahar province which have seriously reduced access to IDP camps and other informal settlements. In parts of the south and southeast, even NGOs have significantly scaled-back their operations in recent months due to increased insecurity. There is growing concern that international staff is being targeted by radical opposition factions in the south and southeast. Thus, national staff is increasingly being utilized for implementing programmes. However, even they are increasingly at risk of being targeted and their deployment to high-risk areas must therefore be closely monitored. The dramatic growth of poppy cultivation throughout the country has added a further dimension to insecurity and risk.

Insecurity impacts on most dimensions of the international community's support to IDPs. Comprehensive assessments cannot be undertaken in many areas, in turn, constraining planning and project development.

Lack of security limits the extent and effectiveness of monitoring IDP needs and providing them with protection. Operations are frequently subject to interruptions or suspension due to security incidents or risks thereof. The limited presence of 'development' actors in many regions is also attributable, at least in part, to insecurity. Hence, both the quality and geographic coverage of support to the authorities for IDP protection and provision of services is seriously compromised in areas of insecurity.

Human rights violations remain widespread and often occur with impunity. Limited access by the international community and inadequate Government mechanisms for challenging impunity by violators means that adequate protection cannot be provided and many violations remain unreported. While traditional conflict and dispute resolution mechanisms are still generally in place, and do indeed often succeed in upholding a degree of rule of law, particularly with respect to competing claims for access to land, these mechanisms are often sidelined with impunity by local commanders.

Until such time when a better trained and unified police force is in place, the judicial reform process runs its course, the Afghan National Army is strengthened and deployed countrywide, and the disarmament and demobilization programme becomes fully operational, it is unlikely that many of the current security constraints will abate. To date, ISAF has not been deployed to areas of high insecurity beyond Kabul. It is also unclear whether the deployment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) by the coalition forces will have any significant effect on reducing insecurity." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 3-4)

See also:

"No government control in 80 percent of Afghan province", AFP, 11 December 2003
"Head of Security Council mission to Afghanistan reports progress in many areas, but says insecurity still challenges peace process", UNSC, 11 November 2003
"Insecurity darkens humanitarian outlook in Afghanistan", AFP, 11 June 2003
"Rocket attack against Afghan deminers", AFP, 5 June 2003
"Deminers suspend operations in southern Afghanistan", AFP, 22 May 2003
"Afghanistan: Insecurity threatening return programs, says UNHCR", 18 April 2003
"Poor security in the southeast hampers humanitarian aid", IRIN, 7 February 2003
"Afghanistan: Security concerns remain for NGOs", IRIN, 3 February 2003
"UN refugee agency warns of need for better security in Afghanistan", AFP, 13 April 2003
"Afghanistan's crisis far from over", Oxfam briefing notes, 23 January 2003

Blurring of line between the humanitarian and military personnel put aid workers at risk (2004)

- NGO express concern that Coalition forces' engagement in reconstruction project will have a negative impact on security level and compromises NGO's ability to work
- Coalition forces are establishing Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), consisting of a modest number of combat troops, civil affairs soldiers and civilian US government officials.
- There is a feeling among humanitarian agencies is that humanitarian aid has been used as a cover for military activities and as a public relations tool.
- If forces engaged in combat also provide aid to civilians, it will be close to impossible to assert that humanitarian aid is non-political and impartial.
- Pentagon has no plans to stop allowing armed US soldiers in civilians cloths distributing humanitarian assistance.

- US-based international aid agencies urged G. Bush to change the policy, saying the practice blurred the distinction between combatants and aid workers on the ground in Afghanistan, putting them at risk.
- Humanitarian leaders added that it also contradicts a consensus reached after years of discussions between American NGOs and senior American military officers on delivering humanitarian aid in conflict or post-conflict areas where U.S. military forces are present.

(...) leaflets distributed by the US-led coalition to people in war-torn southern and southeastern Afghanistan portray the delivery of aid as conditional on Afghans collaborating with the US military. As attacks on aid workers continue, such actions put all aid workers further at risk and undermine the possibility of providing much-needed assistance to Afghans most in need. In response to press inquiries, the Pentagon has stopped circulating these particular leaflets, but the episode raises several issues.

One leaflet pictures an Afghan girl carrying a bag of wheat and reads: "In order to continue the humanitarian aid, pass on any information related to the Taliban, El Qaeda and Gulbaddin." Another leaflet reads: "Any attacks on coalition forces hinder humanitarian aid from reaching your areas."

Threatening to withhold food, water and medical care unless Afghans gather military intelligence for the US military is far from humanitarian. Making assistance a tool of its military goals, the US contributes to suspicion and violence against aid workers, and puts all humanitarian aid workers in southern Afghanistan at risk. As a result, Afghans don't get the help they badly need, and those providing aid are further targeted for attack." (MSF July 2004)

"A US-based NGO working in Afghanistan raised concern on Tuesday over the Coalition forces' engagement in reconstruction projects, saying it could have a negative impact on security levels, and that it was 'not a substitute for security'.

'Our main concern is that there is a security vacuum in Afghanistan, and despite promises made, the international community is not likely to address it in the near future,' the advocacy coordinator for CARE International in Afghanistan, Paul O'Brien, told IRIN from the capital, Kabul.

He referred to the US-dominated Coalition's shift in strategy, from purely hunting Taliban and Al-Qaeda members towards aid work. The Coalition is establishing Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), consisting of a modest number of combat troops, civil affairs soldiers and civilian US government officials. 'We have a number of concerns over this. Our major one is that this prematurely distracts attention from the security situation,' he added.

This view was supported and echoed by several large NGOs working in Afghanistan, including Mercy Corps International. " (OCHA 14 January 2003)

"Never before has the role of the military in delivering humanitarian been so controversial as is the case in Afghanistan. Since the 'foodbombs' in October, the feeling among humanitarian agencies is that humanitarian aid has been used as a cover for military activities and as a public relations tool. The two international forces that remain in the country, i.e. the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) peacekeeping forces and the US-led coalition forces, both have become involved in humanitarian assistance. In fact, donor governments have made funds available in order to allow the military to carry out

so-called quick impact projects, which include activities such as the rehabilitation of schools or medical clinics.

The coalition forces have created the coalition joint civil-military operations task force (CJCMOTK) to deal with civil-humanitarian operations. However, no central mechanism has been set up, either by the UN or other body, to coordinate any humanitarian activities with the military. One reason for this omission may be that, as noted above, the role of the military in providing aid is not undisputed. Many humanitarian agencies have pointed to the blurring of roles. Particularly if forces engaged in combat also provide aid to civilians, it will be close to impossible to assert that humanitarian aid is non-political and impartial. In addition, there is little reason to assume that the local population will distinguish between the international forces, part of the ISAF forces and those that belong to the coalition. The feeling that humanitarian aid has been used as a cover for military activities has been reinforced by the fact that humanitarian agencies have witnessed coalition forces in civilian clothes but carrying arms going around in rural areas and villages in order to provide aid. It is clear that these forces are more interested in gathering intelligence than delivering humanitarian assistance.

Many NGOs have raised strong objections to this so-called 'humanitarian role' and a joint statement under the umbrella of the NGO Forum was issued in the third week of March. However, in view of the political forces behind this military involvement and the interests at stake, it is unlikely that NGOs will be able to have a real impact. But, as was pointed out by one NGO staff, if we do not speak out against these practices, nobody will. 'We must put these issues in the public domain in order to show where we stand regarding our principles.' " (Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop 9 April 2002, pp. 15-16)

See also:

"Humanitarian leaders ask White House to review policy allowing American soldiers to conduct humanitarian relief programs in civilian clothes", Inter Action, 2 April 2002

Visibility of IDPs in settlements in Kabul makes them easier to assist than returnees scattered over the city (January 2004)

- In 2003 MSF conducted a survey in Kabul and identified 17 temporary squatter settlements also called 'returnee' or 'IDP' settlements.
- The visibility of these settlements made it easier to provide its residents with assistance.
- Those who are living in similar conditions but scattered over the city are much more difficult to identify, therefore also to assist.

"Over the course of this survey the team identified and visited several temporary squatter settlements , often labelled 'returnee' or 'IDP' settlements. Médecins Sans Frontières conducted a survey, which found 17 such temporary settlements throughout the city. As a result, in 2003, MSF along with the UNHCR, provided a winterisation package to these groups in the form of latrines, doors, windows, plastic sheeting and some shallow wells.

To a certain extent however, the visibility of these settlements have made them easier to identify and to target for assistance over the last two years. The other hundreds of thousands of returnees who have resettled throughout the city are in essence hidden and thus will not necessarily benefit from such 'package-type' interventions.

In fact, rapid assessments and interviews confirmed that the households living in these sites are, like many others in Kabul (whether they arrive from the countryside or from abroad), looking for opportunities in the city. Indeed, in Wasal Abad the many tents planted on the hillside is an alarming sight, but these people,

like many others, have simply moved in and settled on illegal land and are now starting to build their houses. Similar to other households throughout the city, their housing situation is precarious and the lack of services an issue. As with the returnees, this study chose to present structural vulnerability within the different neighbourhoods of the city, without specifically focusing on these settlements." (ACF January 2004, pp. 14-15)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response

IDP National Plan promotes return and sustained reintegration (April 2004)

- In April 2004, the government, under the leadership of the MRRD, adopted an IDP National Plan in an effort to promote and accelerate return and reintegration of IDPs by 2007.
- The Plan is an inter-ministerial effort bringing together the MoRR, the MRRD and the MFTA.
- Four groups of IDPs are identified: Pashtuns from the north; Kuchi IDPs displaced by drought from the south (Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz); Kuchi IDPs from the central provinces (Ghazni, Uruzgan and Bamyan); and drought-affected non-Kuchis.
- The shift in policy from care and maintenance of IDPs to longer-term solutions also implies a shift between the CG1(Refugees and IDPs) and the CG4 (Livelihood and social protection)
- Budget of the Plan is at \$60 million
- In 2003, the government started by issuing a 'National Return, Displacement and Reintegration Strategy' in March 2003, followed 3 months later by a more IDP focused 'IDP Strategy' (July 2003) and later in the year by 'Regional operation plan for IDPs in the south' (October 2003)

"In April 2004 the government committed itself to an IDP National Plan to promote and accelerate return and sustainable reintegration of IDPs in villages of origin by 2007. The plan has brought together the Ministries of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR), Frontiers and Tribal Affairs (MFTA) and Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)-itself no mean feat in Afghanistan. The plan has demonstrated government commitment and desire to play the lead role in addressing problems of internal displacement. It does not confine itself to caring for the currently vulnerable IDP caseload but looks forward to durable solutions.

The IDP plan distinguishes four groups of IDPs: Pashtuns displaced from the northern provinces; Kuchi IDPs displaced by drought from the Registan desert in the southern provinces of Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz; Kuchi IDPs whose migrator routes encompass the pastoral lands in Ghazni, Uruzgan and Bamyan; and drought-affected non-Kuchis. These categories are not necessarily exclusive. " (Spink, Pete September 2004, p. 1)

IDP National Plan					
Investment Requirement 1383 – 1385 (SUS)					
1383			1383 – 1385		
Total Required	Committed	Gap	Total Required	Committed	Gap
20.00	0.583	19.45	58	0.583	57.418

1. Project Description

The objective of the plan is to increase the rate of IDP return to their place of origin and ensure this return is sustainable within a time frame of 3 years.

As a member of the Consultative Group for Refugees and IDPs and in light of its the specific reintegration mandate, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) in full consultation and collaboration with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs (MFTA) has developed a National Plan seeking permanent solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan. The IDP National Plan has been submitted to the National Development Budget for Livelihoods and Social Protection, with the Consultative Group 4, chaired by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. Regular reports will also be submitted to the Consultative Group 1 for Refugees and IDPs.

The Plan focuses on potential solutions encouraging return, rather than on the perpetuation of care and maintenance in the camps/settlement locations.

The identified categories of IDPs in the Plan are:

1. Protection related IDP from the Northwest
2. Kuchi IDPs from Registan
3. Other Kuchis affected by drought
4. Non Kuchi – drought affected IDPs

These categories are not necessarily exclusive (a Protection related IDP can also be affected by drought, or be a Kuchi), but aim at facilitating the approach towards identification of solutions focusing on the origin of the IDPs rather on their present location.

The Plan aims to return IDPs to their areas of origin and ensure their sustainable reintegration through area based development plans that will benefit both the returning and receiving communities. These projects will encourage co-existence between the communities. In addition the Plan seeks community empowerment and the creation of traditional or alternative livelihood." (TISA April 20004, p. 1)

In October 2003, the government adopted a regional operation plan for IDPs in the South with the objective of finding solutions for all categories of displaced within a time frame of 3 years.

"The Regional Operation Plan recognises the difficult and hard work of all agencies involved in the protection and provision of care and maintenance of IDPs and seeks their support and cooperation to ensure a rapid, effective and permanent solution to their displacement. As a member of the Consultative Group for Refugees and IDPs and in light of its the specific reintegration mandate, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development [MRRD] has proposed the elaboration of Government led regional plans for permanent solutions for Internally Displaced Persons in Afghanistan. This effort will be complementary and under the direct supervision of the Consultative Group on Returnees and IDPs of which the Ministry of Repatriation and Refugees [MoRR] is the chairman and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] is the Focal Po int.

(...)

The objective of the plan is to draw a path for the identification of solutions for the different IDP categories within a time frame of 3 years.

This Regional Operation Plan is an attempt to harmonizing implementation without delay, against the background of an agreed plan. It also indicates potential resource gaps, which shall be taken as very indicative, and to a large extent dependent on the outcome of the processes.

A first draft of this Plan was prepared by MRRD, MoRR, and the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs [MFTA], and was deliberately left relatively open ended, to allow all actors to contribute in areas of their particular expertise. This draft Plan was consolidated in a workshop in Kandahar on September 7th, where all relevant actors in the South reviewed and contributed to the development of the current Regional Operation Plan.

The Regional Operation Plan is meant to be an implementation focused document, with acknowledged gaps and recommendations for further assessments and community dialogue, and shall therefore remain a living document for some time. The relevant actors and in particular the government and the donor agencies shall endorse the process of on-going up-dating and operationalization of the Plan, for which this document lays the foundation." (MoRR & MRRD, October 2003, pp. 2-3)

Click here to download the [Regional Operation Plan: Towards Definite Solutions for IDPs in the South](#), MoRR & MRRD, October 2003

In July 2003, the Consultative Group on Refugees and IDPs issued an IDP Strategy. The main objective of the strategy was to find solutions to internal displacement in its various forms, while at the same time continuing to provide protection and assistance to IDP populations.

"This proposed strategy – still in concise form – is aimed at finding solutions to internal displacement in its various forms, while at the same time continuing to provide protection and (whenever required) assistance to IDP populations.

Projected planning figures for December 2003: estimated 300,000 IDPs (mainly in settlements the South and West), December 2004: 180,000 IDPs (mainly in settlements in the South) [figures will need thorough revalidation in 2003]

Assumptions: continued peace process with limited periods of instability, slow pace of development, further drought mitigation, government increases its engagement with IDPs, donors continue to provide support for humanitarian and development interventions

Goal: In cooperation with government and other actors, find effective solutions for people displaced by drought and human rights violations or conflict, and prevent further displacement in accordance with the UN guiding principles on internal displacement, humanitarian standards and in the framework of relevant national IDP regulations." (CG1 18 July 2003, p. 1)

Click here to download the [IDP Strategy for Afghanistan](#), CG1, 18 July 2004

In March 2003, the government issued a National Return, Displacement and Reintegration Strategy intended to outline its strategy for the return and reintegration of both refugees and IDPs.

"1. The Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, aware of its responsibilities to promote the safe and sustainable return of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons to their areas of origin, has prepared the following strategy. The document outlines the main return and displacement related tasks as well as the main policy, institutional, and operational ingredients for a sustainable reintegration.

(...)

2. While its immediate scope is the programme year 1382/2003, its vision and application are intended to be progressive and multi-annual, in order to achieve a gradual shift from repatriation to reintegration, thus paving the way to rehabilitation and reconstruction. The approach will be an integrated one involving all actors, including development ones, to ensure a smooth and timely phase-out of humanitarian actors, such as UNHCR, ICRC and IOM. A detailed plan of action will be established after the Government presents the strategy to all relevant actors, particularly those involved in Rural Development." (TISA March 2003, p. 1)

Return Commission for the North set up to facilitate the return of refugees and IDPs to the northern provinces (March 2003)

- The first meeting of the Return Commission was held on 28 February 2003
- Following a fact-finding mission in IDP camps in the Kandahar region to ascertain the reasons for the continued arrival of population (mainly Pashtuns) from the North, and a fact-finding mission in the northern provinces, a "Return Commission for the North" was set up in Mazar-I-Sharif to facilitate the return of IDPs and refugees in the northern provinces.
- The commission will be coordinated by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. It will include representatives from the civilian authorities in the North, representatives of the different factions, a representative of the Afghan Human Rights Commission and representatives of UNHCR and UNAMA.
- Its tasks will be to: promote the return of refugees and IDPs in dignified and safe conditions; monitor the situation in the districts most affected by violence; investigate complaints by refugees and IDPs; recommend corrective action by the central and regional authorities when misbehavior by local authorities is involved; organize initiatives aimed at communal reconciliation; and promote social and economic reconstruction in the communities of return

"Thousands of ethnic Pashtuns displaced in Afghanistan in fear of persecution were given some hope of being able to return to their homes in the north, following the inaugural meeting of the country's Return Commission, which was attended by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers, Enayatollah Nazeri, the Afghan minister for refugees and repatriation, and Afghan commanders.

(...)

There have been reports of harassment of ethnic Pashtuns in the north by new leaders, who are ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks. Of the estimated 700,000 displaced people throughout the country, 400,000 are in the south and up to 15 percent of them are thought to be Pashtuns who fled their homes in the north in fear of persecution following the Northern Alliance offensive late in 2001.

The meeting, which was held on 28 February, was the first in a series of government-sponsored return commissions to explore ways of helping displaced Afghans return to their communities. But continuing ethnic tension in some parts of the country was a major impediment to return and development aid, UNHCR warned.

(...)

Under an accord signed by the three tribal leaders following the meeting, they agreed to broadly publicise the ground-breaking agreement and said they would take measures against any of their local commanders who did wrong.

With reports of security deteriorating in the north, and increased fighting in Gosfandi in Sar-e Pol Province, leading to the suspension of the UN mission there, Lubbers admitted there were still a number of problems. However, he maintained that he was convinced they were on the right track. 'The solution is not to backtrack,' he said." (IRIN 5 March 2003)

"On 17 October an agreement was reached in Mazar-i-Sharif on the establishment of a "Return Commission for the North" that will facilitate the return of refugees and internally displaced people to the Northern provinces of Afghanistan.

The need for a special effort in this regard was highlighted by the recent arrivals of IDPs from the north to camps in the Kandahar region. This development urged the Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation, the Afghan Human Rights Commission, UNHCR and UNAMA to carry out a fact-finding mission to the IDP camps in order to ascertain the reasons for this new displacement. The joint mission learned that violent

incidents and continued abuses by local commanders in the North were involved in the decision of Pashtun families to flee their homes.

Further fact-finding in Northern provinces confirmed that while the number of displacements from the North has dropped significantly in recent months, conditions in a number of districts are such as to deter refugees and IDPs from coming back to their homes or even to prod further displacements. Violent acts - including extortion, stealing of crops and forcible recruitment - often affect the population as a whole rather than Pashtuns alone. While the origin of this violence is complex and involves historical factors as well as the predatory behaviour of local commanders, bringing it under control and allowing all Afghans irrespective of their ethnic background to live free of fear is clearly an important objective of the peace process in Afghanistan.

The new Commission, which will start to operate shortly, will be coordinated by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. It will include representatives from the civilian authorities in the North, representatives of the different factions, a representative of the Afghan Human Rights Commission and representatives of UNHCR and UNAMA. Among its tasks will be that of promoting the return of refugees and IDPs in dignified and safe conditions; monitoring the situation in the districts most affected by violence; investigating complaints by refugees and IDPs; recommending corrective action by the central and regional authorities when misbehavior by local authorities is involved; organizing initiatives aimed at communal reconciliation; and promoting social and economic reconstruction in the communities of return." (UNAMA 20 October 2002)

Displaced Persons Council (DPC) to complement the activities of the Northern Return Commission (November 2003)

- DPC is a joint initiative of the MORR and UNHCR, intended to complement the activities of the Northern Return Commission and increase the participation of the displaced persons themselves in this process.
- The DPC is initially comprised of Pashtun displaced persons from 5 northern provinces, currently in displacement in the South, West, North of Afghanistan and Balouchistan (Pakistan).
- The objectives of the meeting was to look into the causes of displacement and make practical recommendations to resolve the obstacles to their return.
- DPC formulated their recommendations on how to best address obstacles for return, providing the displaced persons a unified voice at the central level to lobby for their interests.

"The first Displaced Persons¹ Council (DPC) meeting took place between 19th and 22nd October 2003, hosted by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR) in Kabul. The DPC is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR) and UNHCR, intended to complement the activities of the Northern Return Commission and increase the participation of the displaced persons themselves in this process. Considering the geographical scope of the Return Commission, the DPC is initially comprised of Pashtun displaced persons from the 5 northern provinces of Faryab, Saripul, Jowzjan, Balkh and Samangan, currently in displacement in the South, West, North of Afghanistan and Balouchistan (Pakistan). Four persons still living in Faryab, Balkh and Saripul were also included to facilitate the discussions on actual conditions in the return areas.

(...)

The objectives of the meeting included primarily to facilitate an open and frank discussion among the displaced persons on the causes of their displacement, and facilitate them to make practical recommendations to resolve the obstacles to their return. Effectively, the intention was to empower the displaced persons to feel both more involved and have more ownership for the process of removing the obstacles to return. In this way, although MORR chaired the first meeting, the displaced persons were also invited to select one representative as the Chair of the DPC for future meetings and

activities. Similarly, one outcome of the meeting was that members of the DPC agreed to travel on missions with MORR and UNHCR, or with the Return Commission Working Group, thereby contributing to the assessments and beginning to make contacts with the various ethnic communities resident in the north-west.

After the initial discussions, the DPC formulated their recommendations into a concise presentation to be shared with governmental and external actors, providing the displaced persons a unified voice at the central level to lobby for their interests. These presentations (in annex) were shared orally with Minister Nazari, Jean Arnault (DSRSG), Daniel Endres (UNHCR), AIHRC, members of the Human Rights Advisory Group, International NGOs, Embassies and Donors. UNAMA then facilitated the DPC to meet with and make the same presentation to Lakhdar Brahimi, SRSR, and President Karzai." (UNHCR 15 November 2003, p. 1)

The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (December 2003)

- During 2003, the AIHRC, supported by UNAMA and OHCHR, has strengthened its capacity and position by establishing 7 satellite offices across the country.
- The Human Rights Advisory Group has provided a monthly forum for representatives of the Government, the donor community, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to coordinate broader human rights issues.
- AIHRC has the task to promote human rights in Afghanistan, investigate human rights abuses and implement and design a human rights education programme.

"Throughout the past year, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, with support from UNAMA and OHCHR has refined its capacity to process petitions and complaints and to conduct human rights investigations. The ability of the Commission to serve as an effective advocate for victims of abuse has been aided by its relationship with the United Nations. The Commission has also begun to operate at the national level following the opening of seven satellite offices across the country between March and May 2003. The arrival of the Chief Technical Adviser to the Commission has facilitated its strategic planning and prioritization of activities. The Commission has consulted with the Judicial Reform Commission and the Constitutional Commission to ensure that the latter adequately reflects human rights concerns, and has also organized a number of human rights education and training seminars for an array of constituents, including Government ministries, journalists, mullahs and religious scholars and the national police. Additionally, the Human Rights Advisory Group, established in the context of the consultative process for the national development budget and chaired by the Commission, has provided a monthly forum for representatives of the Government, the donor community, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to coordinate broader human rights issues."(UNGA 3 December 2003, paragr. 42)

"The most important role in promoting human rights in Afghanistan has been assigned to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission is led by Dr. Sema Samar, a well-known human rights activist. She has ten fellow-Commissioners responsible to carry out the specific aspects of the Afghan National Human Rights Programme.

See list of [Members of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission](#), UNAMA

This programme includes:

Strengthening the Commission itself: capacitating its staff to investigate human rights, to receive and process complaints, to manage a data-base, strengthening the presence of the Commission in the country through the opening of satellite regional offices;

Designing and implementing a programme of human rights education;

Promoting the human rights of women;

Organizing a nationwide debate on options on transitional justice, which, in simpler words means, a debate on how to address the abuses of the past, to achieve peace with justice and to promote national reconciliation.

UNAMA supports the Afghan Human Rights Commission in all these activities. A special support-project is being launched to empower the Afghan Human Rights Commission and enable it to fully deploy its capacities throughout the country and respond to the great expectations of the Afghan people. Many donor countries have already announced their willingness to financially contribute to this project." (UNAMA 2003)

International response

IOM assists the displaced with their return and reintegration needs (August 2004)

- 13,275 IDPs have been assisted by IOM to return between January and August 2004
- IOM's IDP Return and Reintegration Assistance Programme (IRRAP) is being implemented as a priority area under the National Development Framework.
- In 2002, IOM assisted home over 370,000 returning IDPs and refugees.

"A total of 13,275 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have been assisted by IOM so far this year to return to their places of origin in the Western, Northern, Southern, Central and Eastern regions of Afghanistan.

Those returning from IDP camps in Southern or Western parts of the country receive an IOM/UNHCR reintegration package that includes an agricultural kit with seeds and fertilizers from FAO and 10 farming tools; plus a shelter kit with 15 wooden beams, a tent, blankets, buckets, plastic sheeting lanterns, mats, tool kits, wheat from WFP and other items.

IOM assistance also includes pre-travel medical screening, safe and dignified return transport with a fleet of 75 heavy duty trucks (Kamaz) escorted by light vehicles, the overnight stay and meals in four transit centres located along the main return routes, and reintegration projects in the places of origin that include vocational training.

Due to deteriorating security conditions in the Southern and South-Eastern Provinces, IOM vehicles are unable to access certain high-risk areas and therefore cannot provide the much-needed return assistance. In these cases, private transport is hired to provide assistance. Certain convoys require military escort when passing through insecure areas. In the past weeks, several return movements had to be cancelled due to security concerns. Last week, return movements to the Province of Faryab were held up due to factional fighting.

For the second time in 2004 an IOM return movement from Zar-e-Dasht camp in the volatile southern Kandahar Province to North-Western provinces took place this week. The five-day journey safely returned 293 IDPs to Badghis, Herat and Farah Provinces.

IOM is also assisting in the relocation of IDPs from the soon to be closed Spin Boldak camp at the Pakistani border to Zar-e-Dasht IDP camp near Kandahar. So far 4,958 IDPs have been assisted with transport and medical escorting from this camp.

Since the fall of the Taliban regime IOM has assisted 350,000 IDPs to return to their areas of origin, with funding from Australia, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States." (IOM 13 August 2004)

"The IOM IDP Return and Reintegration Assistance Programme (IRRAP) is being implemented as a priority area under the National Development Framework for which funds have been sought through the TAPA appeal for Afghanistan. IOM return assistance has been a key component of the ITAA and UN policy of supporting return as the most desirable option for most internally displaced persons.

Within this context, IOM has worked with partners such as UNHCR and relevant ITAA ministries to ensure that return decisions are both informed and voluntary, and that basic reintegration assistance materials are provided to support the initial return phase. In 2002, IOM assisted home over 370,000 returning IDPs and refugees." (IOM August 2003)

The Ogata Initiative now in its fourth phase (2004)

- In March 2004, Japan provided an emergency grant assistance of \$8.7 million to further support phase IV of the Ogata programme
- Japan's assistance has selected 3 regions to receive priority assistance: regional cities of Kandahar in the south, Jalalabad in the east, and Mazar-i-Sharif in the north.
- Overall aims of the programme are to look for forms of development that lead to regional reconstruction, provide a seamless transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery and reconstruction assistance.
- Phase 1 puts the focus on resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons
- Phase 2 of the initiative will include emergency income-creation projects, distribution of food as payment for labor, construction of basic infrastructure, protection of mother-child health, the strengthening of educational implementation capacity, and anti-landmine projects in the three priority regions.
- Phase 4 will focus on employment creation, government capacity building and community empowerment.

"The Government of Japan decided on March 19 (Fri) to extend emergency grant assistance of about \$8.7 million (about 1,060 million yen) in total to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the Phase IV of Ogata Initiative, a Regional Comprehensive Development Assistance Programme.

(...)

To enhance the quality and integrity of regional comprehensive development assistance, the Ogata Initiative Phase IV formulated projects to support Kapisa Province near Kabul, in addition to Kandahar in the south, Mazar-e-Sharif in the north and Jalalabad in the east, through consultations conducted both in Kabul and regional areas with the ministries and agencies concerned in the central and regional governments and the related organizations of the United Nations. Specifically, the UNHCR will engage in improving the supply of water, irrigation, road construction (income generation) and vocational training in the areas where returnees repatriate; the UNICEF will provide training for teachers, regional-driven educational infrastructure improvement, improvement of potable water and public hygiene in schools and

in the community and rehabilitation of child soldiers; and before all these projects, the Initiative will clear land mines in the designated areas." (Government of Japan, 23 March 2004)

"The Government of Japan has just announced the start of the fourth phase of the Initiative. The focus of interventions to be funded under this phase will be employment creation, government capacity building and community empowerment. Previous phases have focused on returnees, emergency relief and education.

Preparations are underway for phase IV by bringing together participants from the Embassy of Japan, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and the United Nations inter-agency Joint Support Unit. Project proposals will be submitted in the coming month and new funds will be released in January 2004." (UN News Service 23 October 2003)

"Following her inspection of the actual conditions of refugees and displaced persons on the occasion of her two visits to Afghanistan, Sadako Ogata, the prime minister's special representative, announced regional comprehensive development assistance that offers suggestions and proposals for the direction of Japan's assistance for Afghanistan from now on. Three regions have been selected to receive priority assistance under this program - those regions centering on the regional cities of Kandahar in the south, Jalalabad in the east, and Mazar-i-Sharif in the north. The aims of the program are to search for forms of comprehensive development that lead to regional reconstruction, provide a seamless transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery and reconstruction assistance, and achieve these targets as quickly as possible. Furthermore, as well as just regional recovery and reconstruction, the program aims to strengthen the capacity of the transitional administration, bolster links between the central government and regional authorities, and promote the independence of communities.

As the first phase, the program puts the spotlight on resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons. Through U.N. and other organizations, it is, among other things, supplying equipment and materials for temporary housing, improving water-supply systems, rebuilding agriculture, distributing educational materials for children and teachers, and supplying temporary educational facilities. Through NGOs, it is, among other things, extending assistance for the redevelopment of communities. It is estimated that about 1.5 million people will benefit from this program, which has been steadily implemented since its announcement in July.

As a pillar of the package announced on October 29, Japan announced the Ogata Initiative Phase 2, a program to provide regional comprehensive development assistance on an even larger scale. It is estimated that 3 million people will benefit from this Phase 2, which includes emergency income-creation projects, distribution of food as payment for labor, construction of basic infrastructure, protection of mother-child health, the strengthening of educational implementation capacity, and anti-landmine projects in the three priority regions. Through linkage between this program and such projects as the Kabul - Kandahar primary road construction project described above, bilateral assistance from Japan through JICA, and regional development projects scheduled to be implemented by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, Japan hopes that its program will become a model case of comprehensive regional development." (Government of Japan 20 May 2003)

See also:

[Project Document for the Ogata Initiative Phase IV, Livelihoods and Social Protection, MRRD, April 2004](#)

UNHCR establishes an unit to further the understanding of population movements (April 2004)

"In order to prepare for the post-2005 scenario for these Afghan populations, UNHCR has established a unit (ACSU –Afghan Comprehensive Solutions Unit), which will conduct studies to further the understanding of population movement dynamics to and from Afghanistan, and examine the different options for the future management of this displacement (be it a refugee or a migratory framework)." (ECHO, April 2004, p. 5)

"In consultation with the three main governments concerned, UNHCR has now established an Afghan Comprehensive Solutions Unit at Headquarters. The Unit, which consists of a Head of Unit and a Senior Advisor on Development and Technical Cooperation, coordinates UNHCR policy formulation, sustains dialogue and exchanges with key stakeholders, drafts policy and analytical documents and provides technical support. It is expected to function for 24 months, until November 2005. The Unit operates under the supervision of the CASWANAME Director and in full coordination with the relevant geographical Desks and the UNHCR field offices in the region. A special relationship has been established with UNHCR's Convention Plus Unit given the similar objectives of the two projects.

2004 Objectives and Activities

Over the next 12 months, the ACSU will work towards three main objectives:
deeper analysis and knowledge of key aspects of population movements to and from Afghanistan;
broader working partnerships with agencies and institutes in the fields of migration and development;
examining with key constituencies the different options for the future management of refugees and displacement.

This will provide the foundations on which the policy architecture for the post-2005 period can be built.

A sharper understanding of the contemporary nature of population movements to and from Afghanistan, and indeed, of the composition of the populations themselves, is a prerequisite." (UNHCR 26 January 2004, pp. 16-17)

European Commission involved in reconstruction and the reintegration process (October 2004)

"The Commission has been fully involved with the reconstruction of Afghanistan since 2001 and pledged approximately € 1 billion over 5 years (2002-2006) at the Tokyo Conference in January 2002. This does not include humanitarian assistance delivered through ECHO which accounts for an additional €163 million since 2002" (EC 1 October 2004)

With the proposed 6th reconstruction programme, the Commission is continuing to deliver on the Tokyo pledge. The proposed programme is part of a €400 million Commission package for 2003-2004 which concentrates on the four sectors of rural development and food security, public sector reform, economic infrastructure and support for the health sector.

In 2002, the Commission provided more than €280 million for reconstructing Afghanistan, which includes about €73 million for humanitarian assistance provided by ECHO. Most of these funds have been contracted, demonstrating that the European Commission is not only strongly committed to Afghanistan, but is fulfilling its commitments efficiently. In 2003, the Commission provided an overall budget of €246 million plus approx. €54 million in humanitarian aid (ECHO). For the year 2004, commitments have been made already for a total of € 136.5 million to which this Programme will be added." (EC 1 October 2004)

"ECHO's strategy for 2004 is not so different from that in 2003 in that it continues to focus on sustaining the reintegration process in Afghanistan, whilst addressing basic needs of the most vulnerable.

(...)

In 2004, ECHO's principal objective is to provide essential humanitarian aid to the people affected by the Afghan crisis in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. This comprises five specific objectives:

- To sustain the reintegration process and livelihood security of returnees, IDPs and other vulnerable populations in Afghanistan;
- To ensure the provision of basic health services to the most vulnerable populations who, for a variety of reasons, are not reached by the national health policies;
- To provide protection and assistance to refugees, IDPs and affected populations in Pakistan, Iran and border areas, as well as to populations at risk in Afghanistan;
- To provide support services to humanitarian organisations;
- To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.

The main constraint for the implementation of this strategy is the lack of access to a large part of the country, where most needs are located. For security reasons, very few interventions can, at this stage, be funded in the South. Should the situation improve, notably after the planned Presidential Elections in summer 2004, another funding decision may be needed.

The present global plan proposes humanitarian operations for 35,160,000 €, benefiting about 2,350,000 people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran." (ECHO April 2004, p. 3)

UN Security Council Mission calls for the respect for the rule of law in the north (December 2003)

- A UN Security Council mission that visited Afghanistan in November 2003 called for increased efforts to uphold the rule of law and the removal of militia forces in the north and a strengthening of the judicial institutions.
- Deployments of PRTs were seen as insufficient and the mission called for ISAF deployment throughout Afghanistan.

"A delegation of UN ambassadors, representing the UN Security Council, arrived in Kabul, on November 2nd, on a five day mission to lend their support to the Bonn Process. The delegation, which was led by Gunter Pleuger, Germany's ambassador to the UN, and included UN ambassadors from the USA, Britain, France, Mexico, Spain and Bulgaria, visited Kabul, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif. In a statement following the mission, Mr Pleuger stated that the issue of security had dominated the many discussions it had held.

He commented that, in the north, the rule of the gun had to be changed into the rule of law. He called, in particular, for the removal of militia forces from Kabul, noting that their continued presence was in violation of the Bonn Agreement.

In a subsequent press release by the UN Security Council on the mission, Mr Pleuger was quoted as saying that 'in too many areas of Afghanistan, individuals and communities suffered from abuses of their basic rights by local commanders and factional leaders' and that 'judicial institutions remained weak'. He also commented that the active participation of women in social, political and economic spheres continued to be seriously hampered by cultural constraints and by the lack of security. While commenting positively on the contribution of ISAF to security in Kabul and on the role of the British Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar, he added that the planned deployment of a German PRT to Kunduz was considered

insufficient and that interlocutors had called for ISAF deployment throughout Afghanistan." (BAAG 18 December 2003, p. 4)

See: [Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan, 31Oct - 7 Nov 2003](#), UNSC, 11 November 2003

["Head of Security Council mission to Afghanistan reports progress in many areas, but says insecurity still challenges peace process"](#), UNSC, 11 November 2003

Key achievements of the Refugee and IDP Return programme during 2003 (September 2003)

- As of September 2003, some 60,000 IDPs had returned home with assistance from IOM (transport) and UNHCR.
- 100,000 IDPs in camps received mine awareness education
- A total of 220,000 IDPs have been receiving humanitarian assistance during 2003.
- Out of a planning figure of 60,000 shelters for 2003, so far funds provided only allowed for the construction of 45,000 shelters.
- CG assisted the Government in preparing a National Return, Displacement and Reintegration Strategy for 1382 and an IDP strategy, which was then endorsed by the Government through the MoRR and the MRRD.
- Additional financial commitments are needed to ensure the sustainability of returns of IDPs and refugees.
- It is envisaged that in 2004, there will be a refocusing of and a reduction in the assisted return and basic reintegration programme in Afghanistan, and more targeted interventions which are increasingly aligned with Government policies and programmes.

"Nearly half a million Afghans returned to their homes in 2003 (January to August). Over 370,000 refugees were assisted to return from 17 countries under the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation/UNHCR programme, and provided with Mine Risk Education. A further 55,000 Afghan refugees returned spontaneously without assistance. 60,000 IDPs were assisted to return home supported by IOM, and 100,000 received Mine Risk Education in camps across the country. UNHCR provided returnees with return transport grants amounting to a total of \$3.5 million.

IDPs: 220,000 vulnerable IDPs are receiving humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.

Food and non-food distributed to returnees: over 6,000 metric tons of wheat and 244 metric tons of non food items were distributed by WFP. 80,000 plastic sheets, 80,000 meters of hygienic cloth, and over 120,000 kg of soap were distributed by UNHCR.

Shelter: UNHCR signed agreements with NGOs for the construction of 45,000 shelters for 2003 throughout Afghanistan to assist returnees with initial reintegration. Additional funding is still needed to achieve the target of more than 60,000 shelters for returnees.

Water and sanitation: work is ongoing to construct 1,000 dug wells, and a further 1,000 tube wells, over 3,000 baths, and almost 15,000 latrines. One third are complete.

“Cash for work”: national projects for “cash for work” underway, in partnership with UNHCR and others, to generate income through activities such as wool spinning, agriculture, irrigation, and road/bridge rehabilitation.

Protection: the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation and UNHCR signed tripartite agreements with the governments of Iran, Pakistan and the Netherlands (in addition to existing agreements with France and the UK) on the return of Afghans. UNHCR returnee monitoring teams assisted returnees throughout Afghanistan, ensuring that returns are voluntary, safe and gradual.

Policy: the CG assisted the Government in preparing a National Return, Displacement and Reintegration Strategy for 1382 and an IDP strategy, which was then endorsed by the Government through the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. The CG convened an inter-Ministerial working group (Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing) to develop and implement a strategy for urban returns, with a particular focus on winter preparedness for vulnerable returnees in Kabul.

(...)

Next steps

Financial: unless additional commitments are made to provide shelter and other facilities for returnees including those who came back last year, vulnerable people will remain without minimum necessary shelter and infrastructure, putting at risk the sustainability of return, and the willingness of others to return.

Long-term strategy: 1383 will see a refocusing of and a reduction in the assisted return and basic reintegration programme in Afghanistan, and feature more targeted interventions which are increasingly aligned with Government policies and programmes, particularly through the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, whose capacity UNHCR, IOM and other actors will continue to help develop. The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation will continue to increase its role in the implementation and management of all facets of the repatriation operation.

Discussions have begun between the Government and UNHCR on a long-term approach to displacement in the region. A strategy paper has been drafted outlining the shift from a situation dominated by large numbers of refugees to a more diverse approach which would cover, among other issues, ongoing migration and work permits. This would require support from the three most concerned governments – Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan – as well as donors and development/migration agencies.

The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation is in discussion with Denmark for an agreement on refugee return.” (TISA 21 September 2003, pp. 11-13))

Inter-agency mission assesses the IDP situation in Afghanistan (May 2003)

- Inter-agency mission visited Afghanistan in late May, early June 2003 as a follow-up to the OCHA IDP Unit mission of March 2002.
- Objectives of the mission were:
- to identify the gaps in the response to the IDP situation and suggest how to address them.

- to examine the linkages between humanitarian and recovery interventions on behalf of IDPs and to recommend how transitional activities could be strengthened, and
- to review institutional arrangements for addressing IDP needs both within the UN system and its partners and between it and the ATA

"The Inter-agency mission was deployed at the request of UNAMA and as a follow-up of an assessment mission by OCHA's Internally Displacement Unit undertaken in March 2002. The purpose of the mission was basically threefold, namely:

to review the prevailing IDP situation in order to identify outstanding gaps in the response to the needs of IDPs and to recommend how such gaps should be addressed;

to examine the linkages between humanitarian and recovery interventions on behalf of IDPs and to recommend how transitional activities could be strengthened; and

to review institutional arrangements for addressing IDP needs both within the UN system and its partners and between it and the Afghanistan Transitional Administration (ATA).

The mission was composed of representatives of seven UN agencies, See Annex 1 for the mission composition IOM and a representative from the NGO community. Following an initial three days of consultations in Kabul, the mission split into two teams for a week - one focusing on Kandahar and Hirat and the second on Mazar-i-Sharif and Maimana. Further consultations and debriefings were undertaken in Kabul for three days at the conclusion of the mission.

This report is to the UN Country Team (UNCT) and should be shared with the ATA and the NGO community in Afghanistan." (Inter-Agency Missions, 19 June 2003, p. 1)

Returnee monitoring network established in 2002 by UNHCR and partners (July 2003)

- UNHCR and its partners established a returnee monitoring network in June 2002 covering most provinces of Afghanistan in an effort to support the newly created government structures in ensuring the protection of returnees and IDPs, and their socio-economic reintegration into communities of their choice.
- Some 4,000 missions to returnee villages were conducted to gain a better understanding of the problem related to return of refugees and IDPs.
- The report highlights the challenges faced by returnees to Afghanistan and provides basic information on conditions in places of origin for refugees and IDPs.

"UNHCR and its partners, which include government and non-government bodies and United Nations agencies, established a returnee monitoring network in June 2002, which covered most provinces of Afghanistan. This extensive and geographically broad network was part of an overall effort to support the newly created government structures in ensuring the protection of returnees and IDPs, and their socio-economic reintegration into communities of their choice.

First steps to build confidence were taken through regular meetings with local authorities and community leaders in returnee areas. In some locations, this led to the establishment of good relations with authorities and resulted in some direct and indirect interventions.

Some 4,000 missions to returnee villages were conducted to interview local leaders and both male and female groups and individuals to obtain a better understanding of their current problems, to direct appropriate programme interventions, and, in cases of violations, to intervene on their behalf. This first returnee monitoring report is a summary of the findings of these monitoring missions. It highlights the challenges faced by returnees to Afghanistan and provides basic information on conditions in places of

origin for refugees and IDPs (as potential returnees) and for relevant authorities in countries of asylum." (UNHCR 5 July 2003, pp. 2-3)

See : [UNHCR Returnee Monitoring Report, Afghanistan Repatriation, January 2003-March 2003](#), 5 July 2003

Reference to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known reference to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as of December 2003

- Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation
- Other References to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)
- Training on the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

The Regional Operation Plan is meant to be an implementation focused document, with acknowledged gaps and recommendations for further assessments and community dialogue, and shall therefore remain a living document for some time. The relevant actors and in particular the government and the donor agencies shall endorse the process of on-going up-dating and operationalization of the Plan, for which this document lays the foundation. It is envisaged that the Regional Operation Plan shall be incorporated in the National Development budget for the coming years.

2. PRINCIPLES

The State of Afghanistan is responsible for protection and durable solutions for the IDP population in the country with support from specialised agencies such as UNHCR, IOM and with financial assistance by the international community.

The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are to be adhered to by the Afghan State to promote and seek permanent solutions for IDPs.

IDPs have the right to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity to their places of origin or their habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country.

The beneficiaries have the right to participate in decision-making processes and to be actively involved in the design of strategies and programmes intended for their benefit.

The International Community should continue to support through the provision of financial resources, technical advice and co-ordination in the preparation and implementation of the Regional Plans.

The Regional Plans will focus on achieving effective, durable and realistic solutions to the different groups of IDPs ensuring particular attention to the living characteristics of nomadic populations and giving priority to the most favourable solution for return and sustained reintegration in areas of origin or of traditional migration. Consideration to cultural values and traditions will be at the centre of the solutions particularly in regards to the Kuchi population. Families that have benefited from facilitated return programmes will not be eligible for future assistance in areas of displacement unless new valid reasons for displacement occur. This Plan will not promote that refugees or other displaced groups are further relocated into a continuous IDP situation but that permanent solutions for their displacement are achieved."
Sources: MoRR & MRRD
Date: October 2003
Documents: Towards Definite Solutions for IDPs in the South: A Regional Operation Plan, MoRR & MRRD, October 2003, p. 2

"This proposed [IDP] strategy – still in concise form – is aimed at finding solutions to internal displacement in its various forms, while at the same time continuing to provide protection and (whenever required) assistance to IDP populations. Projected planning figures for December 2003: estimated 300,000 IDPs (mainly in settlements the South and West), December 2004: 180,000 IDPs (mainly in settlements in the South) [figures will need thorough revalidation in 2003] Assumptions: continued peace process with limited periods of instability, slow pace of development, further drought mitigation, government increases its engagement with IDPs, donors continue to provide support for humanitarian and development interventions Goal: In cooperation with government and other actors, find effective solutions for people displaced by drought and human rights violations or conflict, and prevent further displacement in accordance with the UN guiding principles on internal displacement, humanitarian standards and in the framework of relevant national IDP regulations."
Sources: Consultative Group on Returnees and IDPs
Date: 18 July 2003
Documents: IDP Strategy for Afghanistan, CG1, 18 July 2003

"[...] the Government has committed itself to a policy on IDPs, focussed particularly on the search for durable solutions. The intent is that once formulated, such a policy will be implemented through a Presidential Decree. There is urgency in achieving this objective and it is critical that the policy is steeped in the Guiding Principles. The RSG on IDPs is expected to visit Afghanistan later this summer and it would therefore be desirable that he strongly promotes a solutions orientated and rights-based policy with the Government."
Sources: Inter-Agency Missions
Date: 19 June 2003
Documents: The Internally Displaced in Afghanistan: towards durable solutions, Report of the Inter-agency Mission, May 2003 [Internal]

"37. The Government of Afghanistan will adopt the four main principles agreed by the Consultative Group on Refugees and IDPs to address the IDP issue: – (i) respect for the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, (ii) support to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation to enable it to take progressively more responsibility, (iii) the pursuit of solutions to internal displacement, and (iv) improved inter-agency coordination and cooperation."
Source: TISA
Date: March 2003
Documents: National Return, Displacement and Reintegration Strategy for the year 1382, TISA, March 2003

Other References to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

"To reinforce the safety and accountability of the returns process, IOM staff directly monitor all return and transit operations. In accordance with IOM's mandate and the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, IOM escorts provide reporting on the transit process, community conditions, and the reception of return groups upon arrival. IOM and UNHCR are increasing cooperation in the area of protection monitoring to ensure the continued safety of returns as caseload profiles indicate more potential vulnerabilities. Medical personnel also attend all IOM return movements to screen, monitor and treat traveling IDPs."
Source: IOM
Date: August 2003
Documents: Afghanistan, IDP Return and Reintegration Assistance Programme (IRRAP), IOM, August 2003

Training on the Guiding Principles

NRC Training Workshops A two-day training workshop on the Guiding Principles in Afghanistan was jointly organized by the Global IDP Project of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the office of NRC in Kabul and UNHCR's Office of the Chief of Mission in Afghanistan on 7-8 December 2003. The workshop was attended by about 25 participants, including UNHCR local staff, representatives of national and provincial authorities (mainly from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation), other international organizations and local NGOs. The agenda was mainly based on NRC training modules on the Guiding Principles, which review the origin and legal background of the Guiding Principles, the IDP definition, protection of IDP from arbitrary displacement and during displacement, and durable solutions. A special session on property issues in Afghanistan was facilitated by one UNHCR protection officer in Kabul.
Source: The Global IDP Project
Date: January 2004
Documents: Report of the Workshop on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Kabul, Afghanistan, 7-8 December 2003 [Internal link]

Training needs: "Virtually every sector in Afghanistan has unmet training needs, including all sectors dealing with the internally displaced. UNHCR has provided a series of training packages to national authorities and has loaned staff in MoRR and MRRD to provide on-the-job capacitation. However, the need for further capacitation of all authorities addressing IDPs is evident at both central and provincial levels. Promotion of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement is important and needs to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

[...]

The mission therefore recommends that a three-day workshop on the Guiding Principles on IDPs be provided to Government authorities responsible for IDPs as soon as the Government indicates it is prepared to assume full ownership of such a workshop. Participants should be drawn from relevant ministries such as MoRR, MRRD, MBTA, MHUD, Ministry of Justice, etc., and should also include a number of national programme officers drawn from key UN agencies. It is suggested that the workshop be organized jointly by the MoRR, MRRD and UNHCR, in collaboration with OCHA's Internal Displacement Unit, which has extensive experience in delivering Guiding Principles based training programmes. The Internal Displacement Unit should be requested to fund this workshop (together with the proposed Kuchi Workshop) from the Unit's IFP Fund. If possible this workshop should be undertaken during the Summer 2003.

The mission also recommends that the primary objective of the above workshop is a contribution to the formulation of a draft national policy on IDPs. It is proposed that the MoRR be tasked with responsibility for moving this process and that UNHCR provides whatever support required. The proposed visit of the RSG for IDPs to Afghanistan would substantially contribute to the process of formulating such a policy. It is also suggested, that following this workshop a one-day workshop be held for representatives of UN agencies, select NGOs and the donor community in order to define a strategy for supporting the Government's policy on IDPs.

With the formulation of a national policy, it will be necessary to ensure that training on the Guiding Principles on IDPs be brought to the provinces for both local authorities, including members of the Return Commission, and the humanitarian assistance community. It is therefore recommended that further training workshops on the Guiding Principles be mounted at the provincial level. It is proposed that responsibility for this be vested jointly with UNAMA's Senior IDP Advisor and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and that this be undertaken in collaboration with the OCHA Internal Displacement Unit. IOM also has an interest in supporting such training.

Sources: Inter-Agency Missions

Date: 19 June 2003

Documents:

The Internally Displaced in Afghanistan: towards durable solutions, Report of the Inter-agency Mission, May 2003, pp. 17-18) [Internal]

Coordination

Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation in charge of coordinating assistance to IDPs (January 2004)

"It is predicted that present institutional mechanisms and policy frameworks will be retained for managing future repatriation (refugees, IDPs) during the period 2004-2007. Depending on the volume of returns, and the future course of policy development, there may be adjustments to the institutional responsibilities and arrangements. Due to resource constraints and internal procedures, the performance of provincial authorities has been of variable quality. Investments in capacity development, and the strengthening of the public reform programme, should permit the government authorities to play an enhanced role in future.

(...)

To address IDP issues, two *ad hoc* bodies have been established – the Return Commission, and a Kandahar based IDP Task Force. They deal with the return of displaced *Pushtuns* to the north, and the provision of assistance and the search for solutions for those displaced by drought, poverty, and violence in the southern and western regions.

The Return Commission is chaired by MoRR and is composed of local authorities, UNHCR, and UNAMA. Its purpose is to examine and address protection and solutions issues relating to the return of Afghans (primarily *Pushtuns*) displaced from the northern provinces by ethically motivated violence. Return Commission Working Groups with mixed compositions have visited affected villages to collect first-hand information. Visits by local community leaders to IDPs in the south have been organized.

During the period 2004-2007, the mechanisms for IDPs will need to attract greater political support and resources (both international and domestic) in order to (i) develop links with broader efforts to establish security, law and order, (ii) set agreed targets and timeframes for return, (iii) attach conditionality to assistance programmes in conflict affected districts/provinces, and (iv) negotiate opportunities for local integration and settlement for the protracted IDP populations through specific assistance interventions. If these objectives are successfully pursued, the present specific protection mechanisms for internal displacement will not be required beyond the medium term and could be folded into broader public management arrangements for social protection." (TISA January 2004, pp. 17-18)

MRRD in charge of ensuring the reintegration of the returning IDPs (April 2004)

"(...) MRRD plays a central role in inclusion of returnees through its national programmes, in addition to the activities of its Reintegration Unit, aiming to promote in particular the social and economic reintegration of the refugee and IDP returnees.

Objectives

To increase the rate of IDP return.

To sustain IDP reintegration into areas of origin.

Strategy and implementation plan

MRRD has decided not to design projects specifically for returnees but to mainstream their inclusion within the national development programmes. This inclusion in existing development programmes is aimed to facilitate their reintegration back into their villages of origin. It is understood that returnees are not the only prioritised beneficiary group, but the reintegration of over 3 million people (refugees returned) is a long-term objective that will require a sustainable commitment of resources. Within all of MRRD's national development programmes, returnees will be considered as a cross-cutting issue in planning, programming and implementation. The NSP will select its villages according to the criteria including the concentration of refugee and IDP returnees.

NEEP will consider the levels of return within its social targeting and the Rural Water Supply programme will identify priority areas of high return where an increased population exacerbates scant resources.

The IDP National Plan is the initiative of the MRRD, Ministry of Refugees & Repatriation and the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs, closely supported by UNHCR, UNDP, WFP, and UNAMA. This plan seeks an end to the perpetuation of care and maintenance in the IDP camps and strives toward durable solutions to facilitate return and a sustained reintegration.

Summary of achievements up-to-date The activities within the IDP National Plan will start in 2004. At this stage there are a number of ongoing activities including an assessment of the feasibility of return by Kuchis to Registan and the establishment of provincial and central co-ordination mechanisms. The IDPs in the camps in the South are currently being profiled to determine those who wish to return and the obstacles to return and reintegration that must be addressed within the context of the plan. This plan also complements the activities of UNHCR, such as the Go and See Visits for IDP representatives to their areas of origin in the Northern provinces.

Plan for 1383

For all IDPs, their return will only be sustained through area reintegration projects that benefit those who are returning, in addition to the receiving and neighbouring communities. The project activities of the National Plan in 1383 will include:

Support for the restocking of livestock herds and livestock bank.

Skills training in agricultural and livestock activities.

Rehabilitation of water supply systems.

Rehabilitation of dams, reservoirs and protection walls.

Information on funding

Total budget of the programme over 3-years is an estimated \$60m. UNHCR, WFP and IOM's programme activities are included within this Plan, but not included in the budget. The outstanding budget for 1383 is an estimated \$19.5m, however, specific budgets will be proposed after technical assessments completed in July." (MRRD April 2004, p. 7)

Overall coordination for the IDP Operation Plan for the South led by the CG for Returnees and IDPs (October 2003)

- At regional level, the Operational Plan for the Southern Region will be lead by the MoRR, MRRD and the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs (MFTA), with direct support from the Governor of Kandahar and Helmand.
- At national level, coordination and promotion for this Regional Operation Plan shall fall under the responsibility of the Consultative Group for Return and IDPs.
- Implementation Task Force will be created at regional level.
- A Kuchi Vulnerability Committee, a body for coordination and consultation on issues related to pastoralists, has been established under the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs. It aims at identifying appropriate support mechanisms and work towards the development of a national support strategy for sustainable pastoralism.
- Reintegration of IDPs into their areas of origin is led by MRRD.

"The Operational Plan for the Southern Region will be lead by the MoRR, MRRD and the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs (MFTA), with direct support from the Governor of Kandahar and Helmand. At the National Level the coordination and promotion for this Regional Operation Plan shall fall under the

responsibility of the Consultative Group for Return and IDPs – CG 1. Task Force meetings can be called under the CG 1 when issues require national level support.

For the implementation of this Regional Operational Plan, an Implementation Task Force shall be created at regional level, consisting of MoRR, MRRD, and MFTA provincial directorates with MoRR in the leading role. Institutional support is required, and the minimum an international adviser with national counterpart is envisaged with support from UNDP (refer ToR in Annex I), and additional support shall be looked into. This Task Force shall use existing mechanisms for IDP co-ordination and operational response, to allow all stakeholders to adopt and contribute to the implementation of the Plan.

The Kuchi Vulnerability Committee, a body for coordination and consultation on issues related to pastoralists, has been established under the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs. Sectoral Working Groups have been formed, among which the Sectoral Working Group on 'definite solutions for IDPs', which aims at providing coordination and support to the development and implementation of the Regional Operation Plans.

Reintegration of IDPs into their areas of origin is led by MRRD, for which a Reintegration Unit has been established at national level, with the aim of ensuring that IDP and returnees' interests are considered in the programmes of the Livelihood and Social Protection Programme Area. A Pastoralist Support Unit has been created in MRRD, with the same purpose but with specific focus on pastoralists. Mainstreaming of pastoralists' interests into other National Programme areas is coordinated and supported by the Kuchi Vulnerability Committee that aims at identifying appropriate support mechanisms and work towards the development of a national support strategy for sustainable pastoralism." (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, p. 4)

UNHCR in charge of coordinating the delivery of assistance to IDPs as well as supervising the protection activities (July 2002)

- In late 2001, UNCO asked UNHCR to take over co-ordination of IDP activities in the Central, Southern and Eastern regions; and the overseeing of IDP protection activities throughout the country, within this framework.
- UNHCR was designated Secretariat for the Returnee and IDP Programme Group
- UNHCR is required to co-ordinate and supervise protection activities in camps and communities
- UNHCR has been tasked with supporting the Transitional Authority in co-ordinating the delivery of assistance to IDPs.

This paper aims to outline the primary objectives, activities, and institutional arrangements relating to the provision of protection and assistance to IDPs in Afghanistan. The activities, some of which are already taking place or planned for the near future, will be subject to the availability of resources, which is not currently assured. They will be undertaken in close cooperation by members of the Returnee and IDP Programme Group, in support of the Islamic Transitional Authority of Afghanistan, which bears primary responsibility for the protection and wellbeing of the citizens of the country.

[...]

Until this year, responsibility for co-ordination of IDP assistance in Afghanistan lay with the Office of the UN Co-ordinator (UNCO) and in particular of its humanitarian branch, UNOCHA. In late 2001, UNCO asked UNHCR to take over co-ordination of IDP activities in the Central, Southern and Eastern regions; and the overseeing of IDP protection activities throughout the country, within this framework.

Following the establishment of the Interim Administration in Afghanistan at the end of 2001, and the formation of UNAMA, a new assistance co-ordination structure was drawn up. This was based on "programmes" identified in the Interim Administration's National Development Framework. Within the

framework, a range of Programme Groups have been created to support different line Ministries. Within each Programme Group, a number of agencies work together to address issues of concern to that group. Each Programme Group has a Secretariat - a function that is carried out by an organisation appointed by the Administration and UNAMA. In this context, UNHCR was designated Secretariat for the Returnee and IDP Programme Group (hereafter referred to as the Programme Group).

This arrangement was formalised in a Letter of Understanding signed on 6 June 2002 by the Minister of Repatriation, the Director of the Afghan Assistance Co-ordination Authority, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the UNHCR Chief of Mission in Afghanistan.

The Letter declares that: "The main responsibility of UNHCR at the national and sub-national level will be to assist the Ministry of Repatriation in ensuring the assistance and protection needs of all people of concern to the programme group (returning refugees, IDPs, and communities receiving returnees) are adequately met and that solutions to problems of displacement in Afghanistan are identified and pursued."

4. IDP-related goals and parameters for the Programme Group

The key aim is to find solutions to the problem of displacement in Afghanistan, while ensuring that material assistance and protection needs are met in the meantime. With this in mind, the Programme Group has agreed on a number of key points. These include the need to:

(a) *Support the Ministry of Repatriation* of the Islamic Transitional Authority of Afghanistan in co-ordinating protection and assistance to IDPs

(b) *Pursue solutions to internal displacement*: safe return home, settlement in the place of initial displacement, or relocation to another part of the country - on a voluntary basis. The focus should, however, be - wherever possible - on supporting the return of IDPs to areas of origin, in a manner consistent with modalities adopted for the voluntary repatriation of refugees. Particular efforts should be made to promote and implement innovative reconciliation projects fostering community dialogue, which would at the same time also serve to avoid further displacement.

(c) *Respect the UN "Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement"*, especially those relating to the safety and security of IDPs, their access to basic services (in camps and communities) and the fostering of peaceful co-existence of all members of communities receiving returnees or hosting displaced persons.

(d) *Coordinate cross-sectorally* among all concerned actors, within the Returnee and IDP Programme Group and with other Programme Groups.

5. Main activities of the Programme Group

In this context, a number of activities are being or will be carried out - as mentioned earlier, subject to the availability of funds. These can be divided into three broad categories:

Assistance to voluntary return and reintegration

Prospects for IDPs to return in safety and dignity and their protection would be enhanced by the establishment and implementation of a national legal framework, including the adoption of decrees providing for guarantees or assurances against arrest, arbitrary detention, threat or discrimination upon return. It will also be important to ensure that proper measures are in place for property restitution. Enforcement of such a framework will depend, to a large extent, on capacity building. It will therefore be important to train national and local entities, particularly via the dissemination of the UN "Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement".

Assistance to returning IDPs should be as similar as possible to that provided to returning refugees. Activities would include the registration of candidates opting to return. To enable IDPs to make informed decisions as to whether or not to go home, they receive information on areas of origin (via the mass information programme based on district profiles compiled by UNHCR and its partners). Where necessary, confidence-building measures, such as pre-return visits by representatives of displaced communities, should also help inform the decision-making process. Once displaced people have returned, their situation will be monitored closely in order to address any problems in cooperation with the relevant authorities.

Efforts are made to address the needs of particularly vulnerable groups of IDPs as they return through way-stations and other support structures. Direct assistance is beginning to be provided to both returnee families and needy communities in areas of return, to promote harmonious relations.

The Programme Group will assist the Afghan authorities in promoting initial reintegration of IDPs in their communities of origin, by providing community-based support, especially in the areas of shelter and water. It will facilitate access to basic services and employment by acting as catalyst in attracting assistance of other Programme Groups (such as those dealing with health and education) to areas of refugee and IDP return.

Within the Programme Group, UNHCR will focus on the provision of legal aid, capacity building, and training. It supports the Afghan authorities in addressing legal issues related to return, notably: criminal law enforcement matters, property restitution, and issues of registration and documentation.

Protection in areas of displacement

There are many groups of IDPs in Afghanistan, facing different problems in different areas. The situation and problems of the various groups will therefore be assessed, and location- and group-specific strategies developed for them, including especially those who are not yet able to return to their areas of origin or for whom other solutions are not yet in sight. Internal population movements should be monitored, also with a view to identifying people who are particularly vulnerable and in need of special attention. Protection networks, host community participation, and mass information should help to address protection problems.

The Programme Group aims to ensure standardised registration of IDPs by use of the UNHCR IDP Registration Form. As Secretariat to the Programme Group, UNHCR is required to co-ordinate and supervise protection activities in camps and communities. Such activities include undertaking security assessments; monitoring and reporting on conditions of IDPs; interventions to address abuses, including discrimination; facilitation of family reunion; and where necessary enhancing physical protection, including the prevention of forceful relocation, arbitrary detention, forcible military recruitment, particularly of children, and violence against women and children.

When protection problems are identified, local, provincial and central authorities will be approached. Their active cooperation will be required, in particular in relation to physical protection and safety, which humanitarian organisations will not be able to assume, let alone guarantee. The authorities may, however, require assistance in addressing abuses through fact-finding missions, the establishment of ad hoc commissions, etc.

The Programme Group will also support UNAMA's efforts to enhance the building of effective and sustainable domestic institutions covering human rights and the rule of law. This will entail participating in human rights co-ordination mechanisms at the national and area level, and supporting the recently created Afghanistan Human Rights Commission.

Humanitarian assistance in areas of displacement

UNHCR has been tasked with supporting the Transitional Authority in co-ordinating the delivery of assistance to IDPs. This should be, wherever possible, community-based. The aim is to support IDPs and communities hosting them, with a view to strengthening and supporting acceptance and protective mechanisms through host communities. Possibilities will be investigated, in consultation with the

authorities, for medium or long-term local settlement or through voluntary relocation, for IDPs who are unable or unwilling to return to their areas of origin.

It will be important to avoid the establishment of large IDP camps. These should be of a temporary nature, and kept small in an effort to reduce the risk of creating pull-factors and potential security problems. Camps should be in safe locations, have access to safe and sufficient drinking water, and comply with internationally established standards. One of the most important concerns will be the mobilisation of food assistance. In existing camps, efforts are to be made to enhance the streamlining and co-ordination of emergency assistance." (UNHCR 1 July 2002)

See also:

Comments on the Coordination of Affairs related to Internally Displaced Persons in Afghanistan, UNAMA, July 2002

NGO coordination arrangements (April 2002)

- The two main NGO coordination structures are the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) and the Afghan NGO's Coordinating Bureau's (ANCB's)
- SCF-US leads a security alert system
- UNHCR leads meetings related to contingency planning
- ACBAR is the main NGO coordinating body

"There are at least two NGO coordination structures that have been in existence for more than a decade and that bring together a significant part, if not the large majority, of the NGO community. ACBAR's membership (some 60 NGOs) is composed of both international and national NGOs. The Afghan NGOs' Coordination Bureau's (ANCB's) 140 members are all national, Afghan NGOs. In addition to these two main structures, two others bodies are said to exist: SWABAC for NGOs working in Beluchistan, and ICC for Islamic NGOs. However, perhaps because of their geographical scope or membership limitations, they are not visibly present and their capacity seems to be limited. They are not further discussed here. The relationship between ACBAR and ANCB can probably be best qualified as constructive. There is some overlap in membership (some of ANCB's members are ACBAR's members) and as such the two bodies are kept informed of each others' activities." (Ed Schenkenberg Van Mierop April 2002)

"Both in Islamabad (for humanitarian activities inside Afghanistan) and Peshawar (for refugees from Afghanistan) NGO coordination bodies exist and are numerous. In Islamabad, SCF-US has taken the lead to organize a security alert system, information exchange meetings and joint press releases (see Annex 6). It is considered important that InterSOS participates actively in these efforts for coordination and cooperation. Contacts with UNOCHA (Letizia Rossano) can provide and update schedule of meetings. In general there are sectorial meetings in Islamabad and each sector has a focal point (WFP for food, UNOCHA for NFI - non food items, UNICEF for nutrition, etc.). These meetings concern operations both in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

UNHCR and WFP conduct regular information sessions for NGOs in Islamabad. As these meetings seem to be somewhat 'global' in nature, it is important to establish close professional links to individuals in the system. For UNHCR, this could be Rita Richter (Programme Officer). Lucienne Maas of SCF-US and Kiny Mottier of ACTED are important sources of information.

Specifically for Pakistan and NWFP there are in Peshawar similar structures in place. UNHCR is in general leading all meetings related to contingency planning. These are sectorial and task force meetings. A good relation was established during the mission with William Tarpai of UNHCR. The profiles and data of all

178 (!) NGOs and international agencies working in Peshawar are compiled in a compendium by ACBAR. It will be important to gather information on local Afghan NGOs, not only through ACBAR (their coordination body), but also through personal discussions and through information from previous donors.

For Afghanistan, beside the above mentioned sectorial meetings, there have been some regional meetings called by UNOCHA. In each region, UNOCHA had a Regional Co-ordination Officer (RCO) that is now "in exile". For the Northern region, the RCO was previously based in Mazar and is now in Turkmenistan, together with all the UN agencies' representatives for the Northern region. It is advisable to get in contact with the RCO and the other regional representatives before the implementation of any activity in the region." (Intersos 10 October 2001)

See also:

"Afghanistan: NGO concern over new regulatory framework", IRIN, 19 March 2003

Assistance to IDPs is coordinated between the government and the UN through the Consultative Group¹ (April 2003)

- Government has established a Consultative Group Framework with 12 groups, corresponding to the 12 programmes of the NDF. The groups chaired by the relevant ministers are supported by donors and the UN, which participates in the groups with focal points. Advisory Groups are also established to ensure that the cross-cutting issues are effectively addressed.
- The Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programme is responsible to support the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) in co-ordinating and facilitating the work related to the return and initial re-integration of Returnees and IDPs.

"The Government has established a Consultative Group framework, within which the National Budget will be planned, financed and implemented. Twelve Consultative Groups, one for each of the National Development Programmes, will be convened by the chair Ministry (eg Ministry of Health of the Health and Nutrition CG), supported by a donor or donor/UN agency Focal Point. Other concerned ministries will participate, as will the major donors, UN agencies, and representative NGOs.

Advisory Groups are being established to ensure that cross-cutting issues are mainstreamed effectively in the work of the 12 CGs and reflected in the policy framework and budget. Arrangements are being finalised for Gender, Humanitarian Affairs, Human Rights and Environment Advisory Groups.

Click here to see a [diagram of the Consultative Group](#)

Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programme

The Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programme is responsible to support the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) in co-ordinating and facilitating the work related to the return and initial re-integration of Returnees and IDPs. The Consultative Group will provide to MoRR at the national and sub-national level capacity, advice and other support for policy development, assessment, programme design, budgeting, implementation and evaluation. The CG also supports MoRR to ensure that programmes related to return and IDPs comply with the agreed policy as set out in the principles of the National Development Framework, the Government Returnee and IDP strategy and humanitarian standards. The Consultative Group will provide support and mobilise other actors to ensure a sustainable reintegration of returnees at the national and sub-national level. The Consultative Group on Returnees and

IDPs will meet regularly to ensure co-ordination, problem-solving and progress review with other CGs and with the Cross-cutting Advisory Groups.

In line with the overall objectives stated above, the specific responsibilities of the CG will be to:

-provide advice and support for the preparation, submission and implementation of the MoRR contribution to the national budget and ensure that projects are consistent with the principles of the National Development Framework and linked to fiscal sustainability;

-provide every 3 months updates of progress against output and outcome indicators (e.g. returnees provided with return assistance, percentage of voluntary vs. involuntary return, wells provided to returnee communities, shelter provided to vulnerable returnees)

-ensure that cross-cutting issues of gender, environment, protection, human rights and humanitarian principles are reflected in the return and IDP policies, programmes and budgets;

-closely collaborate with the MRRD-led CG on Livelihoods and Social Protection and other relevant CGs, to co-ordinate the re-integration returnees and to assist IDPs who choose to settle in the areas of displacement;

mobilise resources and provide an information-sharing forum to enable the effective updating of the existing record of assistance and technical assistance contained in the Donor Assistance Database (DAD)" (AACA April 2003)

Selected UN activities

WFP's activities range from food to reintegration assistance (2004)

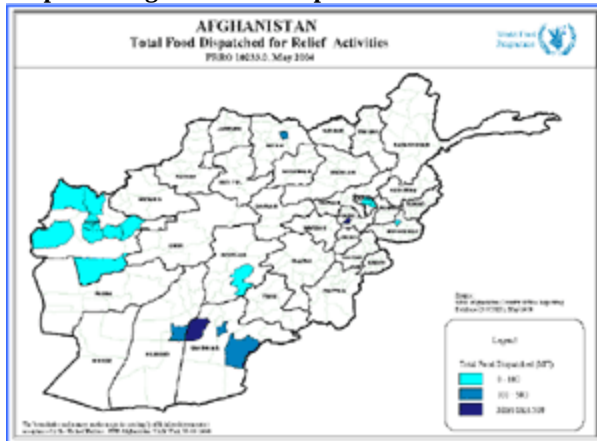
- WFP's PRRO started in April 2003 and will aim at contributing to the protection and re-establishment of livelihoods and household food security by providing assistance to over 9.2 million beneficiaries over two years.
- In urban areas, the large numbers of returnees and IDPs, some 360,000, or approximately 10 percent of the urban population, are vulnerable and need assistance to meet their basic food needs.
- Two-thirds of the resources will be used for recovery activities such as Food for Work and Food for Education while only one-third of the assistance funds provided will be used for relief activities

"In collaboration with Government partners and UN agencies, including UNHCR, FAO, UNICEF and UNMACA, WFP is conducting a joint assessment on returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) through phase four of the Ogata Initiative in four districts of Balkh province. The Ogata Initiative was launched in October 2002 to support the reintegration of IDPs and returnees into their communities of return. The assessment will help in identifying the needs of returnees and IDPs in these districts." (WFP 27 August 2004)

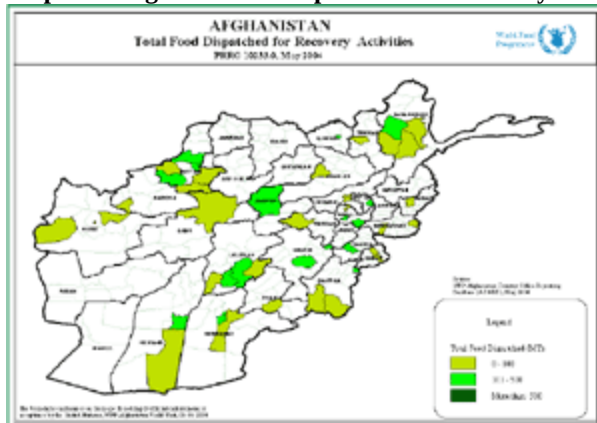
"On 25 May, UNHCR and WFP signed a letter of agreement entitled "Return and Reintegration of Afghan Refugees and IDPs," under which WFP will provide food assistance to an estimated 75,000 refugees returning to food insecure areas, including Ghazni, Kandahar, Paktika, Paktya, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces. UNHCR will provide cash assistance to the same refugees.

Returning IDPs will receive a food package through a separate project implemented in cooperation with IOM." (WFP June 2004)

Map showing total food dispatched for relief activities



Map showing total food dispatched for recovery activities



Source for both maps: WFP, June 2004

"On 15 April, WFP and IOM signed an agreement to implement the "Return and Reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)" project, aimed at ensuring that returning IDPs are provided with basic returnee food packages. WFP will support community based-activities primarily in food insecure areas through food for work (FFW), providing priority employment to returning IDPs who meet the criteria of vulnerability. Under the project, an estimated 9,000 IDP families will receive 1,350 tons of food by 31 March 2005." (WFP 23 April 2004)

"(...) UNHCR and WFP met in Kandahar on 24 February and discussed durable solutions to the reintegration of 2,000 IDP families at Mukhtar camp in their places of origin. The following day, at a workshop in Kabul, WFP and NGOs reviewed and discussed WFP's policies and activities." (WFP 27 February 2004)

"Within the framework of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Program for Afghanistan (TAPA), and in support of the nation-building objectives of the National Development Framework and the emerging National Strategy for Social and Livelihood Protection, WFP has formulated a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO). The PRRO will commence in April 2003 and is designed to contribute to the protection and re-establishment of livelihoods and household food security by providing assistance to over

9.2 million beneficiaries over two years. The total food requirement for the two years will be 618,989 MT of commodities, valued at \$337.5 million. According to WFP's Countrywide Food Security Assessment, 4.3 million Afghans in rural settled areas still lack sufficient resources to meet basic food needs. Food aid is critical, particularly to carry them through the lean pre-harvest period, when stocks from previous harvests are typically depleted and coping mechanisms exhausted. In urban areas, the large numbers of returnees and IDPs, some 360,000, or approximately 10 percent of the urban population, are vulnerable and need assistance to meet their basic food needs. These are the families without breadwinners, who cannot participate in income generating activities.

Two-thirds of the resources will be used for recovery activities such as Food for Work, focusing on community-level rehabilitation of infrastructure; and Food for Education, including non-formal education for women, adolescent girls and ex-combatants; distribution of Indian biscuits to schoolchildren in food-insecure communities; and support for teachers nationwide. Relief activities, which will use only one-third of the assistance funds provided, will support returning refugees, internally displaced persons, the acutely malnourished, and vulnerable households. The activities conducted under WFP's PRRO will have a stronger emphasis on recovery activities than on relief." (UNAMA 13 March 2003)

Continued UN engagement with IDPs in 2004 (November 2003)

- 2004 will witness a strategic refocusing of the Refugee and IDP return sector in Afghanistan with more targeted interventions, strengthening of linkages between government and partners and a priority given to group returns.
- There will be continued UN engagement with IDPs in 2004 through prevention, care and maintenance of humanitarian standards, and search for solutions, particularly for protection-related displaced person
- It is hoped that obstacles to the return of IDPs to their areas of origin in the Northwest, as identified by the Return Commission, will be more directly and robustly addressed in 2004

"2004 will witness a strategic refocusing of the Refugee and IDP return sector in Afghanistan. UN interventions will be more targeted, linkages with Government and other partners will be strengthened and the facilitation of group returns will be prioritized. In terms of assistance, there will be closer alignment to Government's policies and programmes, particularly with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing. The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation will continue to increase its role in the implementation and management of all facets of the repatriation operation. Discussions have begun between the Government, the UN and neighbouring countries on a long-term approach to displacement in the region in order to identify solutions to such issues as trans-border migration and work permits. There will be continued UN engagement with IDPs in 2004 through prevention, care and maintenance of humanitarian standards, and search for solutions, particularly for protection-related displaced persons. The reintegration of IDP and returnee women will be supported by fostering community spaces in which women can forge new social and economic partnerships. Critically, it is hoped that obstacles to the return of IDPs to their areas of origin in the Northwest, as identified by the Return Commission, will be more directly and robustly addressed in 2004, supported by an intensification of support for the reintegration of returnees. The UN and Ministry of Refugees will continue to monitor conditions of return, and to reinforce capacities for addressing abuses by local authorities." (UNAMA 20 November 2003)

UNHCR's Strategy in 2004 and beyond (September 2003)

- UNHCR's plan is to identify and pursue solutions to the problem of Afghan displacement by the end of 2005 by providing assistance and protection to refugees and IDPs.

- In 2002, the focus was on return providing returning IDPs and refugees with return and reintegration assistance
- In 2003, the same focus was pursued in line with the 4Rs strategy and a key priority was to ensure that returnees were involved in national development programmes.
- In 2004, UNHCR will progressively reduce the “hardware” (shelter, water) component of its programme and focus on “soft” components such as capacity building, advocacy, protection, returnee monitoring and mass information. UNHCR's now extensive presence will be reduced.
- In 2005, the shift towards “soft component” approach will continue and UNHCR's presence in Afghanistan will be further reduced.

"The overall goal is to identify and pursue solutions to the problems of Afghan displacement by the end of 2005, ensuring in the process the protection and assistance of Afghans who are still refugees or internally displaced people. Building on the achievements of 2002, a three-year strategy is proposed (in line with parallel strategies in Iran and Pakistan), articulated as follows:

2002: focus on return.

UNHCR played a key role in facilitating the return of over two million Afghans to their chosen locations, by helping governments (including the Afghan government) provide return and initial reintegration assistance.

2003: Building reintegration.

As part of the 4Rs strategy, UNHCR will continue along the lines established in 2002, assuming that a slow but progressive improvement of security conditions, a strengthening of the government, and the launch of national development programmes will help create conditions conducive to the reintegration of returnees. The key priority will be to ensure that returnees are involved in national development programmes.

2004: Transition to “soft” programmes.

UNHCR will progressively (but substantially) reduce the “hardware” component of its programme (e.g. reduce shelter by two thirds, phase-out water, etc.). Essential “soft” components such as capacity building, advocacy, protection, returnee monitoring and mass information will continue, as will return assistance. In-country reintegration assistance provided by UNHCR will be limited and focused (coexistence projects, groups with special needs, residual IDPs). UNHCR's secretariat of the Consultative Group on refugees and IDPs is likely to be necessary at least until the elections. UNHCR's now extensive presence will be reduced, although the implementation of “soft” components will require the maintenance of at least part of the network could be more staff intensive than hardware projects.

2005: Towards the Endgame.

The 2004 shift towards “soft component” approach will continue and UNHCR's presence in Afghanistan will be further reduced. Assuming that elections are held in 2004 and cause no instability, shifting to a promotion mode in repatriation should be considered. In parallel, discussions with host countries on the “residual caseload” will be held.” (UNHCR September 2003)

UNHCR's shelter initiative has helped 250,000 Afghans during 2003 (December 2003)

- As of December 2003, more than 65% of the 52,000 homes UNHCR is funding this year have been completed. The 34,000 finished homes are providing shelter for some 170,000 people.
- By end 2003, an additional 16,000 homes should be finished.
- In addition to receiving tool kits and construction material, participants to the shelter programme also receive cash (50-100 dollars) to compensate for the loss of income while constructing their home or if they can not build the homes themselves.

- In Maslakh IDP camp, UNHCR has started distributing an additional two plastic tarpaulins and two blankets to some 16,000 Afghans. Other non-food items including kerosene and clothing are also distributed.

"Afghans are now rapidly completing work on their homes funded under our shelter initiative. So far more than 65 percent of the 52,000 homes we're funding this year have been completed. The 34,000 finished homes are housing more than 170,000 people who arrived back in Afghanistan this year but lacked adequate housing.

An additional 16,000 homes are currently under construction and should be finished before the end of the year, putting a total of a quarter million Afghans under their own roofs before the end of 2003, roughly 95 percent of our goal. Some 2,000 units are in the planning stages and should be finished early next year.

Under our shelter programme, needy returnee families identified by our partners receive tool kits and construct walls up to shoulder height before they receive roofing timbers, doors and window frames that we've purchased from suppliers in Europe, Africa and south Asia. Participants also get a stipend of between \$50 and \$100 that compensates them for the loss of income during construction or to pay laborers if they cannot do the work themselves.

In addition to our shelter initiative we are also contributing to the UN's joint winter preparedness operation. UNHCR is stockpiling winter items such as tents, blankets, plastic sheets, kerosene stoves, and fuel for 45,000 Afghans who may need emergency assistance during the coming months. Distribution has begun in all regions, but the security situation in the eastern and southern Afghanistan has delayed some deliveries.

In Herat's Maslakh displaced persons camp, we've begun distributing an additional two plastic tarpaulins and two blankets to some 16,000 Afghans. Kerosene distribution is also underway. Another some 15,000 Afghans in western Afghanistan's Ghor, Badgis, Herat and Farah provinces will also benefit from aid, including two blankets, a \$25 cash grant for fuel, two plastic tarpaulins, detergent and a lantern. They will also receive four metres of hygiene cloth, a plastic mat, shovel, hoe and collapsible jerry can. Some 500 tents are also being pre-positioned in case of a winter emergency." (UNHCR December 2003)

UNHCR and partners distribute non-food items to urban displaced in Kabul (December 2003)

- UNHCR, MoRR and partners have distributed winter items to some 1,000 displaced families living in informal settlements in Kabul and winterized the buildings.
- Provided UNHCR gets approval from the government on this, they will rehabilitate more buildings to accommodate the some 400 families living under tents.

"In Kabul, UNHCR and the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) have completed the distribution of winter items to some 1,000 displaced families squatting in nine public buildings and four tent sites. The displaced Afghans received blankets, plastic sheeting, cookers, heaters and charcoal to brace them for the cold weather.

Médecins sans Frontières is providing winter items for another 800 displaced families in four locations in the capital.

To improve living conditions for the displaced Afghans, UNHCR's partner, THW (Technisches Hilfswerk, or Technical Relief Service), is fixing the windows, doors, partitions, latrines and bathrooms in nine public buildings. The refugee agency hopes to rehabilitate more public buildings to house an estimated 400

families now squatting in tent sites, and is awaiting the Afghan government's approval on this." (UNHCR 11 December 2003)

FAO distributes seeds to returning IDPs (December 2003)

- FAO has during 2003 distributed 3,000 tonnes of quality wheat to and fertilizers to some 60,000 Afghan families, from which 500,000 are expected to benefit from.

"Around 60 000 Afghan farm families have received high quality seeds and fertilizers ahead of the planting season, FAO said today.

FAO has distributed 3 000 tonnes of quality wheat seed and 4 500 tonnes of fertilizer to households across the country in time for the next planting season.

Over 500 000 people are expected to benefit from the improved harvests and income generated by the seeds.

Seeds and fertilizers were given to vulnerable families returning home to their land. Thousands were forced to flee their farms and abandon their land during the country's civil war.

"Since 2002, FAO has carried out several large-scale distribution programmes in Afghanistan, reaching some 300 000 poor families, around 2.7 million people, with quality wheat and vegetable seeds, fertilizers and hand tools in nearly every province and district of the country," said Serge Verniau, FAO Representative in Afghanistan.

FAO worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MAAH) and other partners to distribute the seeds." (FAO 18 December 2003)

UNICEF provides basic education, health care services and water and sanitation facilities to IDPs (December 2003)

- UNICEF overall strategy for the assistance of IDP and refugee returnees is to re-integrate them into surrounding communities where they newly settled or the place of origin.
- UNICEF has during 2001-2002 provided non-food items, water and medical services to IDPs but the long-term strategy is to support the Afghan government provide these people and receiving communities with educational, medical and other facilities.
- About 120,000 IDPs children were supported through UNICEF supported projects in 2003.
- School construction and rehabilitation has been also supported for 200 schools throughout the country, many of which are in the areas of high IDPs and returnees.
- Other activities include installing safe water in 3,500 schools, equip 1,500 schools with safe sanitation systems, supplementary feeding activities through 130 centres and provision of Mine Risk Education (MRE)

"UNICEF Strategy for supporting IDP and Refugee Returnees

UNICEF overall strategy for the assistance of IDP and refugee returnees is to re-integrate them into surrounding communities where they newly settled or the place of origin. When providing assistance in Afghanistan, UNICEF aims to support all population in need, prioritizing vulnerable groups, regardless of their background. While UNICEF provided emergency assistance to IDP

and returnee population with provision of non-food items, water and medical services during late 2001-2002, the long-term strategy is to support the Afghan government to provide them and their host/surrounding communities with educational, medical, and other social services/facilities, as a part of the activities for all Afghan people, especially women and children.

(...)

Achievements for January - December 2003

UNICEF procured educational supplies for IDP and returnee children and supplied those to the children through national NGOs. YCDP, a national NGO provided educational support to 5 encashment centre throughout the year with UNICEF support. About 120,000 IDPs and 400,000 returnee children were supported through UNICEF supported projects in 2003. The school construction and rehabilitation has been also supported for 200 schools throughout the country, many of which are in the areas of high IDPs and returnees. UNICEF continued to promote education (especially for girls) in 5 encashment centres (Jalalabad, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar and Kabul) by providing stationary, information and leaflets to returnees' children and women.

To increase enrolment in schools the programme planned to install safe water in all 3,500 schools that presently did not have safe water supply. In additional, 1,500 schools were to receive safe sanitation system, (installation a 6 latrine block). Hygiene promotion would also be conducted in all schools where water points would be installed. In response to drought, IDPs and returnees, the programme would install 2000 water points and conduct hygiene education in each location. Support would also be provided for the reduction in and response to outbreaks of water-bourne disease.

Also, the return of 2 million refugees and 500,000 IDPs to their place of origin increased pressure on the already limited water and sanitation services in these often overcrowded communities, resulting in some cases in the outbreak of water-borne and sanitation related diseases. In total 500,000 people gained access to drinking water through 1,000 new water points. In addition, 600 household sanitary latrines were constructed for demonstration purpose in three model rural project areas in Kapisa, Kabul and Wardak provinces.

Regarding emergency nutrition, 22 NGO partners agencies have been involved in the implementation of the targeted supplementary feeding activities through 130 centres. Under supplementary feeding, a total of 330,000 malnourished children and women receive the blended food ration which provides approximately 1,200 Kcal/person/day. Standard protocols of SFP and TFP have been developed. A draft MoH Nutrition Policy has been developed. TFC programmes have been implemented in 9 provincial hospitals and training modules for hospital based treatment of severe malnutrition developed. UNICEF supported MoH to conduct a nutrition survey in Zabul, Southern region, in response to reports of deteriorating food security and nutrition situation due to continued drought, security, returnees and IDPs.

Also 400,000 Mine Risk Education (MRE) posters and 200,000 leaflets were distributed to schools, encashment centres for returnees, and other project areas. MRE was provided, along with the training of teachers, health workers, and others in their communities. MRE sessions took place through schools and communities, along with radio and TV programmes." (UNICEF 21 December 2003)

See also: [UNICEF Activities for IDPs and Returnees in Afghanistan Oct. 2001-Dec. 2003](#), UNICEF, 21 December 2003

UN-Habitat provides shelter to the displaced in the Shomali region and in Jalalabad (June 2003)

- Un-Habitat has implemented Government of Japan-financed housing program for returnees in Jalalabad with the construction of 1,500 homes built by the returnees themselves.
- Still 14,000 houses are needed in Jalalabad.
- UN-HABITAT has begun work reconstructing 3,000 houses in the Shomali area of the country to provide shelter for some 21,000 people.

"UN-HABITAT and Japan this month completed the construction of 1,500 homes for returning refugees in the eastern Afghanistan city of Jalalabad. In a major post-war project financed by the Japanese government and implemented by UN-HABITAT, the returnees were able to build their homes with a Japanese government grant of US\$ 375 to each household.

The completion of the project was marked at a ceremony on 8 June attended by Japanese and UN officials. Designed to help refugees returning to the Jalalabad urban area, the homes were built in the settlements of Sukrod and Nasmuljahad. While most of Sukrod's houses had been destroyed by the bombings during the country's years of devastating civil war, Nasmuljahad had only just started to develop when the war interrupted its growth.

Implementation started in January 2003 and UN-HABITAT's role was one of support and advice. The agency's officials visited each family and provided them with the opportunity to design their future homes while staying within the given budget.

UN-HABITAT's Chief Technical Adviser, Lalith Lankatilleke received certificates of appreciation on the agency's behalf. Despite the achievements that have been made, so far, the Afghan city still needs 14,000 more homes for returnees, a regular water supply and sanitation." (UN Habitat 13 June 2003)

See also:

"Afghanistan: Housing for widows", IRIN, 26 May 2003

"With the coming winter adding urgency to Afghanistan's need for homes, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) has begun work reconstructing 3,000 houses in the Shomali area of the country to provide shelter for some 21,000 people.

According to a spokesman for the UN mission in Afghanistan, HABITAT's project, begun earlier this month in consultation with the Ministry of Rural Development and Rehabilitation, has been carefully organized around the full participation of the local communities.

HABITAT has also set up local workshops with cash donations of \$2,000 to enable craftsmen to buy material and employ apprentice workmen, while serving their own communities. This project is able to operate thanks to a \$1.5 million grant from the Italian Government, according to the spokesman.

"There are indications that following the beginning of work, returning refugee families that were staying with friends and relatives in Kabul have begun returning to [the Shomali] area,' spokesman Manoel de Almeida e Silva said. 'Work is expected to take a further two months to provide shelter before the winter sets in.'" (UN News Service, 23 September 2002)

See also: *Shomali plains shelter recovery project 2002, Terminal Report, UNCHS/Habitat, April 2003*

UNDP and UNHCR aim at ensuring a smooth transition from relief to development (January 2003)

- UNDP and UNHCR have agreed to collaborate closely to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development based on the 4Rs concept and also building on the Ogata Initiative.
- UNHCR to assist returning Afghans with a focus on shelter and water and, UNDP and other development agencies to support the Afghan government to make the transition from post-conflict recovery to long-term development.

"The United Nations Refugee Agency and the United Nations Development Programme signed this morning an agreement, or a letter of understanding, in an attempt to promote a smooth transition between relief and development activities in Afghanistan.

The agreement is based on a concept referred to as "4Rs" (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction) or four stages through which development agencies gradually take over from the humanitarian agencies. The agreement also builds on what is known as "Ogata Initiative" - an idea promoted by the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, to pursue an integrated approach in bridging the gap between relief and development assistance in Afghanistan

Recognizing that refugees, internally displaced and returnees are valuable resources in the recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan, the two agencies agreed to targeting assistance particularly to communities or areas with high number of returns, which would also benefit the local population.

Working closely with the Afghan government and within the framework of the national strategy, other agreed areas include: making joint efforts to mobilize resources; encouraging the participation of other competent agencies; helping the government set up an employment database containing data on individual skills, absorption capacity and job opportunities; and joint monitoring of progress with the government.

The challenge of this year's repatriation operation is how to allow returning Afghans to stay in their home communities. UNHCR will continue to assist returning Afghans with a focus on shelter and water and, along with UNDP and other development agencies, will support the Afghan government to make the transition from post-conflict recovery to long-term development." (UNDP 23 January 2003)

For more information on the "Ogata Initiative", see:

"Japan's regional comprehensive development assistance to Afghanistan - The Ogata Initiative", Government of Japan, 7 October 2002

Selected NGO activities

NRC provides IDPs and returnees with legal aid and counselling (May 2004)

- NRC established its fifth legal aid center in Maimana, Faryab province in April/May 2004.
- NRC organized 2 training seminars for judges and provincial officials in May 2004: one in Mazar-i-Sharif and one in Jalalabad.
- Three legal aid centers were opened by NRC in 2003, the only of their kind in Afghanistan.

- IDPs and refugees returning are provided with free legal advice and representation when confronted with land and property disputes. Information is also provided on the current situation in areas of origin so that people can make an informed decision to return.

"NRC is establishing eight centers in Afghanistan as part of a regional Afghanistan/Pakistan project supported by the European Communities Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), the Royal Norwegian Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

(...)

NRC established the fifth of these centers, which is based in Maimana, in Faryab Province in April/May 2004. This is the third center that NRC has established in Northern Afghanistan and its existence will complement the existing centers in Mazar-i-Sharif and Pul-i Khumri and help to tackle some of the legal problems in the north on a regional basis. As elsewhere in Afghanistan, disputes related to land and property are a significant issue in the north. The three centers in the north registered cases relating to land disputes that have over 10,000 potential beneficiaries in northern Afghanistan in May 2004 alone.

As well as establishing its center in Maimana, NRC also officially opened its other two centers in Mazar-i-Sharif and Pul-i Khumri in May 2004. The inauguration ceremonies were attended by the Governors of Balkh and Baghlan province, representatives of UNHCR and numerous provincial officials. Both openings also received widespread media coverage including features on local television and radio and a lengthy slot on the BBC Persian Service.

NRC organized two successful training seminars for judges and provincial officials in May 2004: one in Mazar-i-Sharif and one in Jalalabad. Both were well-attended and led to interesting discussions amongst the participants. The seminars were jointly organized with UNHCR and involved collaboration with other humanitarian agencies. NRC would particularly like to thank the International Rescue Committee for their support.

These trainings are aimed at strengthening the capacity of Afghanistan's judiciary to deal with issues relating to property law. It is clear from the experiences of NRC's legal counselors that there is considerable confusion about the applicable law relating to land and property disputes in Afghanistan. The successive regime changes over the last 30 years and the different policies that they have pursued in relation to land reform, combined with the de-stabilizing impact of the conflict, the rapid return of so many landless refugees and the low level of training and capacity amongst much of the judiciary means that many judges are very uncertain about exactly what laws they should be attempting to apply in their rulings. This is an issue which NRC hopes to address further in the future." (NRC May 2004, p. 1)

"NRC established a number of legal aid centres in Pakistan in 2002, and opened three more in Afghanistan in 2003. These are currently the only centres of their kind in the country. The programme is expanding during 2004, with another four centres opening in the north and west. The centres provide free assistance, including direct legal representation by local Afghan lawyers, to people who have been forced to flee their homes or who have recently returned. They also provide information and advice about the current situation in places of origin so that people can make an informed decision about whether to return. The centres work closely with protection staff of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). In their first six months, NRC's information and legal aid centres had registered over 300 cases, and had achieved a number of notable settlements." (NRC January 2004)

Who's doing what where ? (March 2004)

- Reports of who is doing what where as of March 2004

Report 1 - Lists Organizations by Location

(15 March 2004)

To access Report 1 click [here](#). [249KB - PDF]

Report 2 - Lists Organizations and the Locations where they are working

(15 March 2004)

To access Report 2 click [here](#). [177KB - PDF]

Report 3 - Lists Organizations and the Sectors in which they are working

(15 March 2004)

To access Report 3 click [here](#). [38.3KB - PDF]

Report 4 - Lists Organizations by Sector

(15 March 2004)

To access Report 4 click [here](#). [38.0KB - PDF]

Report 5 - Lists Organizations, their Locations and Sectors

(15 March 2004)

To access Report 5 click [here](#). [196KB - PDF]

Report 6 - Shows the list of Organizations by Province

(15 March 2004)

To access Report 6 click [here](#). [48.7KB - PDF]

Report 7 - Lists UN projects in the North Region

(15 March 2004)

To access Report 7 click [here](#). [14.2KB - PDF]

IRC works on property law initiatives to address IDPs' lack of access to land and housing (December 2003)

- The most prevalent and most complex obstacles preventing return is the lack of access to land and housing.
- IRC hired a property law expert, John Dempsey, to focus on the issue and advocate changes that would have lasting impact.

"(...) for various reasons, millions of displaced Afghans are unable to go home. And perhaps the most prevalent -- and certainly one of the most complex -- obstacles preventing return is the lack of access to land and housing. The magnitude of the problem led the IRC to hire a property law expert, John Dempsey, to focus on the issue and advocate changes that would have lasting impact on the lives of all Afghans.

During the past year, Dempsey and a team of Afghan national lawyers working for the IRC have engaged in a number of projects, including researching property-related obstacles that are preventing the return of uprooted Afghans. The main concerns identified are the destruction of homes, the presence of landmines, the paucity of arable land, hostile property occupation, interethnic tension, gender discrimination, fraudulent deeds, inequitable social and financial relations and the lack of effective property recording systems or adequate dispute resolution mechanisms.

(...)

IRC and UNHCR jointly intervened early in 2003 in a few property cases of displaced persons, but a weak judiciary and police system in the country made resolving these cases fairly difficult. More often than not, corruption and intimidation played a role in the outcome.

(...)

Given the magnitude of the property problems in the country, the IRC plans to continue work on property law initiatives in Afghanistan in 2004 and beyond." (IRC 17 December 2003)

Assistance gaps

IDP National Plan largely underfunded (September 2004)

- Only 1 per cent of the IDP National Plan has been funded 4 months after the launching of the plan.
- As of September 2003, commitments for the Refugee and IDP return programme total \$79m against a requirement of \$164m for 2003.
- Unless more projects are funded, vulnerable returnees will remain without minimum standard shelter and adequate infrastructure, putting at risk the sustainability of existing returnees and the willingness of others to return.

"Though there is increasing recognition that the sustainable return and reintegration of IDPs, especially the Kuchis, is a long-term development issue, the government and international community are doing relatively little. The six national priority programmes launched in 2003 were not accessible to IDPs in the camps or to Kuchi returnees. One new priority programme, the National Vulnerability Programme, will specifically target IDPs and Kuchis but only the extremely vulnerable. The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) targets areas of high refugee and IDP return but does not include the Registan as it does not have settled communities.

The inclusion of IDPs in existing flagship national development programmes is probably the only way to ensure they receive sufficient financial support. The World Bank-administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) has stated its preference for funding to go to national priority programmes and has been reluctant to support the IDP National Plan as a standalone project. Political manoeuvring is also hampering the mobilisation of funds. Although the IDP Plan is an inter-ministerial effort, its reintegration activities fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). However, as ARTF resources are already supporting existing national programmes within MRRD there is a reluctance to offer support to another programme.

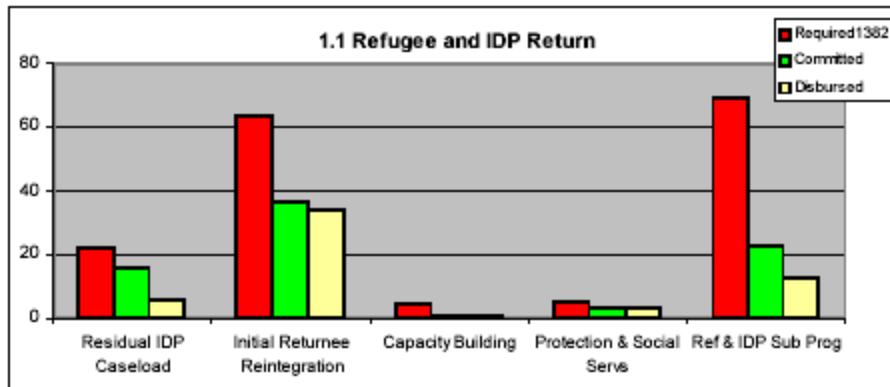
President Karzai has repeatedly emphasised that reducing the IDP caseload is a national priority. The IDP National Plan outlines the strategy for a return and sustainable reintegration but funding has not materialised. Four months after its public launch, only UNDP's Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery has offered funding support for the Plan." (Spink, Pete, September 2004, p. 36)

"Refugee and IDP Return: While nearly half a million Afghans returned home in 2003, it appears the 1.5 million returnees estimated for 1382 is unlikely to be achieved. Commitments total \$79m against a requirement of \$164m for 1382. While implementation of national recovery programmes is being expanded across provinces, many return communities have yet to feel a significant impact. This has been further hampered by security concerns. Improved government capacity and the mainstreaming of reintegration concerns, including through the National Solidarity Programme, should bring better results in the second half of 2003. However, unless more projects are funded, vulnerable returnees will remain without minimum standard shelter and adequate infrastructure, putting at risk the sustainability of existing returnees and the willingness of others to return.

(...)

Although the number of returnees is lower than predicted and thus requirements for returnees are lower than required under the 1383 National Development Budget, commitments and disbursements are not sufficient to meet needs. The financial breakdown by sub-programme is shown below.

1382 Financial Overview	
Required:	164.08
Committed:	78.84
Disbursed:	56.56



Source: TISA, 21 September 2003

" (TISA 21 September 2003, pp. 4-12)

HRW claims only a very small percentage of the reconstruction aid has actually been delivered (January 2004)

"Despite the self-congratulatory liberation rhetoric emanating from Washington, London, and other western capitals, Afghans know that it wasn't humanitarian concern, but the September 11 attacks and Osama bin Laden's unwanted residence in Afghanistan that prompted the international community to take notice of Afghanistan again. Afghans fear that the world outside will fail them and banish them again to insecurity, conflict, and chaos, as happened after the Afghan mujahideen's success in driving out the Soviet Union. Failure following quickly upon proclaimed liberation is an option that Afghans have experienced before, and have no wish to repeat.

Afghans are right to worry. The signs are troubling. Despite the initial enthusiasm for rebuilding the country, the world seems to have forgotten them. International support has been scarce. Comparisons with recent peacekeeping and nation-building exercises are troubling. As pointed out by the humanitarian organization CARE International, in Rwanda, East Timor, Kosovo, and Bosnia, donors spent an average of \$250 per person annually in aid. If that average were applied in Afghanistan, the country would receive \$5.5 billion in aid every year for the next four years. Instead, it has received pledges amounting to less than one-fourth of that sum. The Henry L. Stimson Center, a Washington, D.C.-based think-tank, has pointed out that in Kosovo the international community spent twenty-five times more money, on a per capita basis, than it has pledged in Afghanistan. Similarly, in Kosovo the international community committed fifty times more troops per capita than it has in Afghanistan. Comparisons with Iraq, of course, are even worse: while Iraq received U.S.\$26 billion in reconstruction aid in 2003, Afghanistan received less than \$1 billion.

(...)

Despite grandiose promises, the international community has been stingy with Afghans. In a shocking display of political short-sightedness, countries that have declared war on terror and on drugs—Afghanistan's two biggest exports in the recent past—have failed or refused to marshal the resources

necessary to combat the resurgence of armed groups and drug lords in Afghanistan. Afghans will be the first to pay the price for this failure, but they will not be the last.

(...)

Far easier to grasp is the level of financial assistance necessary and adequate for the job of reconstructing Afghanistan: most estimates suggest that at least \$15-20 billion U.S. dollars will be needed over the next five years. The Afghan government believes it needs even more: some \$30 billion. These are relatively small sums, as recent peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts go. By comparison, recent reconstruction budgets in Kosovo, Bosnia, and East Timor were up to fifty times greater when measured on a per capita basis. The amount pledged by donors for Afghanistan is also significantly smaller than the \$26 billion sum pledged for the reconstruction of Iraq by the United States this year alone. (And, as The Economist magazine has pointed out, Afghanistan is larger than Iraq in terms of population, area, and need.)

Not many of those who control the purse strings in the international community seem to have listened to the call for assistance. Despite the call for \$20 billion over five years, the international community has pledged only \$7 billion (\$1.6 billion from the United States).

Of this \$7 billion sum, the international community has to date actually provided only \$4 billion. Only a third of this amount has made its way to Afghanistan over the last two years. And of that amount, only some \$200 million has resulted in completed projects.

So: two years after the fall of the Taliban, during a period when international and local experts have suggested that five to eight billion dollars worth of international aid was necessary for reconstructing Afghanistan, only some two to five percent of the amount has been delivered to Afghanistan. This hardly seems like the formula for success." (HRW January 2004)

According to HRW the Afghan Human Rights Commission lacks the power to do its job (January 2004)

- The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), created December 2001 Bonn Agreement was given a mandate by the new constitution adopted in January 2004, but according to HRW it lacks many of the powers to credibly protect basic rights.
- Also, it was not given a specific mandate to look into abuses and serious war crimes of the past.

"The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), created by the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, is given a mandate, but lacks many of the powers necessary for it to credibly protect basic rights.

The constitution fails to adequately address the role of Islamic law and its relationship to human rights protections. Human Rights Watch is concerned that conservative factions could use appointments to the new judiciary to implement interpretations of Islam that may violate human rights standards.

The issue of accountability is also not addressed in the document. Despite Afghanistan's recent history of mass atrocities, the charter does not directly address issues of past war crimes and serious human rights abuses. The AIHRC may be able to delve further into this area-but lacks any specific constitutional mandate to do so." (HRW 8 January 2004)

UN's strategy not effective in addressing the human rights situation (January 2004)

- Partially due to the limited scope of ISAF, UNAMA has focused on maintaining short-term political stability in Afghanistan with a minimum of U.N. involvement in human rights monitoring.
- UNAMA human rights officials did investigate human rights abuses in various parts of Afghanistan throughout 2002.
- Persistent insecurity has made it at times impossible for the U.N. to offer meaningful protection to persons at risk.
- Reluctance of UNAMA to expose the human rights abuses of politically important Afghan actors has contributed to the general sense of impunity surrounding the warlords.

"The United Nations has adopted an admirable policy of operating with a light footprint, but there is a time when the print can be too light. Afghanistan is in such a period now. Only eight human rights monitors are envisioned for covering all of Afghanistan, as opposed to the hundreds that monitored the post-conflict period in Guatemala, East Timor, or the Balkans. Even worse, of these eight, only five positions are filled. U.N. officials claim they simply cannot find qualified candidates for these posts. At a policy level, this seems to violate one of the tenets of Lakhdar Brahimi's own blueprint for U.N. operations, namely that bureaucratic obstacles should not be allowed to hobble operational needs. On a more practical level, however, this obvious failure of management bolsters the suspicion that the United Nations may be reluctant to listen to what Afghans have to say, lest it upset the carefully balanced (though ultimately unstable) political structure maintained in Afghanistan by the United States and the United Nations.

The international community should also support emergent voices for accountability and the rule of law in Afghanistan, such as the brave but beleaguered Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). Created by the Bonn Agreement, the Commission has performed admirably to date, listening to ordinary Afghans and voicing their concerns, even as each report it issues on abuses by members of the current government is followed by threats to AIHRC members.

One thing AIHRC members have asked for, repeating the demands of ordinary Afghans, is justice for past and current abuses. As mentioned above, many of the senior members of the current cabinet have bloody hands. They should be investigated, arrested, prosecuted. They should be kept out of politics, as was envisioned by the Bonn Agreement. The international community shamefully failed to follow the will of the Afghan people when they allowed warlords into the emergency loya jirga process. They are making the same mistake during the constitutional process. It is essential to begin a process of securing justice for the worst crimes, demonstrating that a repeat of the past will not be tolerated. Ignoring this issue, which consistently tops the list of demands by ordinary Afghans, will aggravate insecurity, decrease legitimacy, and perpetuate longstanding conflicts. The international community should help by providing funding, expertise and, most importantly, political support to create a justice mechanism capable of helping Afghans grapple with their bloody past." (HRW January 2004)

"In Annex II of the Bonn Agreement the United Nations was given an affirmative right under the Bonn Agreement to investigate human rights violations. However, UNAMA has not implemented a strong strategy on human rights over the past year. Partially because of the limited scope of ISAF, UNAMA has focused on maintaining short-term political stability in Afghanistan with a minimum of U.N. involvement in human rights monitoring.

UNAMA human rights officials did investigate human rights abuses in various parts of Afghanistan throughout 2002 and maintained a limited number of human rights monitoring staff in all regional areas. UNAMA staff mediated many disputes between commanders and in a number of cases prevented local armed conflicts from erupting. UNAMA human rights staff also intervened in several cases to protect vulnerable persons and encourage warlords to change their conduct.

But UNAMA's work was seriously hampered by the absence of adequate security forces beyond Kabul, which made it difficult and at times impossible for the U.N. to offer meaningful protection to persons at risk. Afghans who wished to be politically active, open newspapers, challenge local authorities, or engage in similar activities have often been too scared to act. Moreover,

UNAMA's leadership was often reluctant to publish its findings openly or to highlight human rights abuses by politically important Afghan actors. This contributed to the general sense of impunity surrounding the warlords, and further disheartened Afghans who sought to sideline those abusing power.

Overall, UNAMA's "light footprint" approach—limiting the number of international staff and increase Afghan participation in reconstruction efforts—was not an effective approach in addressing the human rights situation in Afghanistan. U.N. offices in the mission had an insufficient number of human rights staff, and monitoring and investigation work has only been a modest priority. UNAMA continues to reject suggestions to substantially increase the number and geographical breadth of U.N. human rights monitors despite its unique mandate to carry out this work and the expressed desire of many Afghans for a greater U.N. presence. UNAMA's

human rights staff needs to be strengthened so that it can effectively report on abuses and intervene with authorities to remedy and prevent them.

(...)

The failure of the international community and UNAMA to give human rights greater priority has contributed to the general sense of impunity in the year since the Bonn Agreement. For example, in Herat Ismail Khan has consolidated his power, creating a mini-state in the west of Afghanistan in which there is no dissent and his opponents have been threatened, tortured, and sometimes killed. Warlords like Ismail Khan and others continue to literally get away with murder." (HRW 5 December 2002, pp. 7-8)

See also:

All Our Hopes Are Crushed: Violence and Repression in Western Afghanistan, HRW, 5 November 2002

Lack of objective, accurate and neutral information on conditions in areas of return lead to renewed displacement (June 2003)

- Repatriation packages offered by UNHCR may have prompted many to return too early.
- Many IDPs claim they did not have access to objective, accurate and neutral information on the conditions to which they were returning in their villages or places of origin.
- Some were not aware that assistance from UNHCR would be discontinued after return.
- Some displaced women were not provided with accurate information to help them make an informed decision to return

"Amnesty International is of the opinion that, in "supporting refugee decision-making" in relation to return, UNHCR should be mindful of the reinforcing effect its attempts to facilitate repatriation can have on the making of these decisions. Many refugees and IDPs interviewed by Amnesty International said they did not have access to objective, accurate and neutral information on the conditions to which they were returning in their villages or places of origin. Amnesty International interviewed a group of Uzbek villagers, who had fled to Pakistan to escape the persecution of Turkmen Taleban in their native Imansahib district, and who then returned in August 2002 unaware that the same group of Turkmen, now allied to the *Jamiat-e-Islami* faction, were still in control of the village and of their land. The Turkmen continue to threaten the Uzbeks, who are now forced to live in ruined buildings on the outskirts of the village, and are still denied access to their land. In another case, returnees at the brink of destitution in Kabul said they were unaware, at the time they made the decision to return to Afghanistan from Pakistan, that the assistance from UNHCR would not

be continued once they had arrived in their country of origin. Many displaced women have also not been given accurate and impartial information, provided to them in a manner which is accessible and culturally-sensitive, in order to be able to make an independent decision on return." (AI 23 June 2003, p. 18)

Afghan authorities neglecting southern IDPs, international agencies need to address their long-term needs (April 2003)

- No concrete steps have been taken so far to find a strategy that would respond to the long-term needs of IDPs in the south.
- Most assistance has been in the form of addressing the immediate needs.
- Being aware of the limitations of the government's assistance, all international actors share responsibility in finding durable solutions for the displaced Kuchis and Pashtuns.
- OCHA's IDP Unit will undertake training to increase the government's capacity to deal effectively with IDPs, but training/advocacy efforts will be necessary for many years.

"Most IDPs [in the south] have been living in limbo for over four years ever since the drought began to decimate the nomads' herds in the southern Reg. No concrete steps apart from the creation of Zare Dasht (ZD) have been taken by the government or assistance actors to implement a strategy to find a durable solution for the IDP population, and that was not until after the fall of the Taliban government and many Pashtun IDPs arrived from the north. To be fair, given the large numbers, the continuing drought and insecurity in the area and the lack of human and development resources, not much could be expected from assistance agencies to deal with this large IDP group given the fact the rest of the population was and still is in need. All efforts to date in the south have been merely to address the immediate care and maintenance of these vulnerable groups of IDPs. It can be argued that the main responsibility is with the Afghan authorities as the legitimate authority. However, all actors working in the south have knowledge that the authorities do not have the capacity, skill, or desire at this period of time to address the IDP problem in a way that considers the needs of the IDPs before their political and personal economic advantage. As long as the authorities show little interest to respond, a responsibility remains for the international actors to continue to find ways through long-term investments and interventions to address the authorities to begin to find a solution for the drought affected Kuchi and Pashtun IDPs from the northern provinces.

To add to the uncertainty for the future, UNHCR and other assistance actors, will not be able to continue its assistance to IDPs to the same extent as it has in the past year and one half. Which organisation(s) will fill UNHCR's lead role will be an important question to answer? The OCHA IDP Unit will be involved in trainings and increasing the understanding of government officials to be able to give priority and to deal with the continued areas in need of assistance. It will also assist the government in developing an over all strategy to assist IDPs in the future. Through advocacy it will keep the issue alive in the minds of international donors as focus on Afghanistan decreases over time. As development activities improve in some areas and the drought persists in others and Pashtun tribes and others continue to cause instability with their anti-government efforts, more population movements will occur in a less secure environment. Efforts to develop the capacity of Afghans to deal with these problems and to continue advocacy for IDPs will be necessary over many years." (UNAMA 7 April 2003, pp. 1-2)

Recommendations

Recommendations from the Displaced Persons Council (DPC) (November 2003)

- The Male DPC and the Female DPC established two sets of recommendations following a meeting held in October 2003.

"Recommendations of the Male DPC Meeting

There are so many problems that cannot be covered within these few minutes. We [the DPC-Males] have a number of concrete recommendations as follows:

- 1- Implementation of the process of disarmament in particular in Almar, Qaisar, Shirin Tagab and Dawlatabad districts of Faryab province and the center and districts of Sozma Qala, Sayedabad and Gosfandi of Sar-e-Pul province.
- 2- Removal/transfer of strong commanders and develop changes in the administrative structure of the provinces.
- 3- Restitution of moveable and immoveable property of the illegally dispossessed.
- 4- Expansion of the mandate of International Security Assistance Forces into Sayedabad, Kohistanat and Gosfandi districts of Sar-e-Pul and Qaisar, Almar, Shirin Tagab and Dawlatabad districts of Faryab province as well as other places in the north where security remains an issue of concern.
- 5- Allocation of land for landless returnees for shelter and agriculture, digging deep wells for the purpose of potable and irrigation water and constructing schools, roads and clinics in the places of return.
- 6- Establishment of National Army and National Police centers in Northern provinces.
- 7- Restitution of pasture lands that have been confiscated by the commanders and having been changed into agricultural land.
- 8- Implementation of judicial reforms
- 9- Representation of the displaced persons at the civil and military positions as well as in National Army and Police of Afghanistan.
- 10- Continuation of UNHCR and MoRR assistance to those residing in the camps until their return to their places of origin, in particular during the winter months.
- 11- It is recommended that after the winter season the obstacles of return should be removed and the way should be paved for the return of the displaced persons, otherwise, not only these people will remain in the camps but also another influx of refugees and displaced persons would take place.

We the members of the Displaced Persons Council would like to state that we are committed to be part of the solution process and will try our level best to take an active role in the activities of MoRR and UNHCR in solving the problems of displaced persons.

Statements and Recommendations of the Female DPC Meeting

The female DPC meeting outlined similar issues and recommendations to the male DPC meeting. They focused on two main sections in their final report: Reasons for Displacement/Obstacles to Return, and Recommendations for removing the obstacles to return.

Reasons for Displacement and Obstacles to Return

The participants described how after the fall of the Taliban, they had been forced to flee Faryab and Saripul, and the arriving militias and commanders proceeded to loot and physically abuse Pashtun communities in these provinces. They noted reports of rape and sexual abuse of women and children by these militias during this period, these reports subsequently encouraging other communities to flee out of fear. For those civilians remaining in the north, local commanders forced them to work, provide money, provide young men as soldiers, and occasionally there were reports of forced marriages of Pashtun women outside of their families' control. In general they highlighted a continued absence of good government or justice in the north-west, with the lack of security and commander rule contributing to their anxiety not to return. They have received this information from IDPs/Refugees who arrived in the West and South within

the last two months from the Faryab and Saripul with reports of continued abuses, taxation, forced recruitment, abductions of women and arbitrary arrests.

Recommendations

The female representatives made the following recommendations to remove the obstacles to their return:

- 1- The establishment and expansion of a strong central government in Afghanistan to the northwest provinces.
- 2- The disarmament and removal of abusive commanders by the ANA with the support of the international community.
- 3- Equal ethnic representation in high level governmental posts.
- 4- Following the re-establishment of security for civilians in the north west, investigation by the government regarding occupied Pashtun lands by commanders and persons supported by commanders, with the aim to give restitution to the real owners.
- 5- Distribution of governmental land to landless persons and Koochi near to their places of origin.
- 6- Investigation into the cases of Pashtun held in prisons in the North-west by the central government.
- 7- Reintegration assistance in especially water sector in their places of origin." (UNHCR 15 November 2003, pp.5-6)

Need for a coherent policy of land reform together with a restoration of peace and security (June 2004)

"As stated above, the overwhelming priority for Afghanistan is the restoration of peace and stability and the rule of law. Tackling the problem of land disputes needs to be done in parallel with this process and this should go hand-in-hand with a coherent policy of land reform. There is also a need for far greater analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Afghanistan's informal justice system. The international community and donors should include this in any strategy for rebuilding the capacity of Afghanistan's judicial system. In the short-term NRC would offer a number of specific recommendations:

Judges need to be trained on the current applicable law, and sources of law, governing land and property rights.

Information about land rights should be disseminated as widely as possible and people should be encouraged to come forward with claims.

Courts should be required to reach decisions in land and property cases within certain time-limits – as it is widely believed that many delays are due to corruption or intimidation of judges and public officials – and those that fail to do so should be called to account.

A 'name and shame' policy should be adopted towards commanders and public officials who misuse their powers. Where commanders are refusing to implement or abide by the official decisions of the courts or administrative authorities, or where judges or public officials are making blatantly biased decisions these should be exposed and, where possible, removed from office.

All land registration exercises should be closely monitored to guard against corruption and land-grabbing. This applies both to government and provincial land registration and mapping exercises as well as proposals for land registration emanating from the international community.

The decisions of Shuras and Jirgas need to be monitored more closely and, where these can be shown to be fair, they should be registered officially. A human rights training program aimed at the members of Shuras and Jirgas should be introduced." (NRC June 2004, pp. 20-21)

Conditions for return should be assessed in close association with the IDPs themselves (September 2003)

- ICMC carried out an Informed Decision Making (IDM) project in Kandahar from November 2002 to May 2003, aiming at determining whether IDPs originating from the western provinces and displaced in the south, wished to return, remain in their displacement location or seek alternative settlement solutions.
- UNHCR offices in Kabul, Herat and Kandahar believed that conditions were safe to return basing their decision on the fact that fighting in these areas had ended and no major protection problem had been reported.
- However, the IDM project found out that more than half of the IDPs in Zhare Dhast camp feared local commanders who took their women, homes, animals and other possessions during the period of Taliban-Northern Alliance fighting. Before returning they were asking if these commanders were still in place.
- UNHCR preferred to disregard this information and did not verify the information provided by the IDM project. However, several weeks after reporting the IDPs' concerns, fighting broke out between commanders in two districts of Badghis which led the UN to evacuate its staff from the entire province.
- Factors by which displaced people make the decision to return or not are more intricate than those which can be determined from a checklist survey, therefore, Sarah Petrin recommends to better involve the IDPs themselves before making decisions regarding the safety in the areas of origin of IDPs.

"Let us look at the example of Afghanistan more closely, drawing from the Informed Decision Making (IDM) project carried out by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) in Kandahar under the auspices of UNHCR from November 2002 to May 2003. The project aimed to find those displaced people located in five major camp locations in the south who originated from the western provinces to determine whether they wished to remain in their displacement location, return to their area of origin or seek alternative settlement options.

The IDM programme first began working with camp populations from Badghis province, an area northwest of Herat where fighting between the Taliban and Northern Alliance forces in early 2002 was particularly acute, leading thousands of ethnic Pashtuns from the area to flee to the southern provinces. UNHCR offices in Kabul, Herat and Kandahar believed that Pashtuns from Badghis who were not politically involved in the Taliban regime could return to their communities of origin in safety and dignity. They came to this conclusion for two reasons; firstly because Taliban and Northern Alliance fighting in Badghis had come to an end and secondly because UNHCR's Field Officer in Badghis province reported that no major protection issues in the area impeded the safe return of non-political persons.

As the Programme Manager for the IDM project, I was able to locate substantial information in returnee monitoring reports on whether material, educational and health resources were available at the district level in Badghis. However, I could not locate any factual evidence that there were no ongoing, low-level conflicts in the area. However, such protection indicators were aptly supplied by the IDPs themselves. The project found that

more than half of the IDPs in Zhare Dhast camp feared local commanders who took their women, homes, animals and other possessions during the period of Taliban-Northern Alliance fighting. They wanted to know whether specific individuals were present in their places of origin, whether they were occupying their property and especially if they were part of new government forces.

The IDM project team collected the names of 28 local commanders impeding the return of hundreds of families who would otherwise like to return. This information was given to the UNHCR office in Kandahar, with the suggestion that the UNHCR office in the west provide information concerning these

individuals for dissemination to the IDPs. The information was disregarded, based on the fact that the 'circumstances which led to displacement had fundamentally changed'.

Yet, many IDPs felt that conditions in their place of origin had not fundamentally changed since the time of flight. While they recognised that major fighting between Taliban and Northern Alliance had ceased, they were aware of low-level conflict between commanders that I could not confirm from other sources. Although UNHCR felt this information was not credible, several weeks after reporting the IDPs' concerns, fighting broke out between commanders in two districts of Badghis which led the UN to evacuate its staff from the entire province. An important lesson was learned here. The factors by which displaced people make the decision to return or not are more intricate than those which can be determined from a checklist survey. The quantitative facts that are gathered from asking IDPs more probing questions about the situation in their place of origin can unearth important political indicators that could be easily overlooked without such investigation." (Petrin, Sarah, September 2003)

Inter-Agency mission recommends that UNDP take the lead in finding durable solutions for the non-protection residual IDPs (June 2003)

- UNHCR is advocating for a shift to a more comprehensive development oriented strategy for IDPs who remain affected by loss of livelihoods.
- It has proposed to the Government that responsibility to seek and implement longer-term solutions for the non-protection IDPs - primarily the Kuchi and other drought displaced - be vested with MRRD and supported by UNAMA in close collaboration with the development community.
- Government has commit itself to include IDPs into national development programmes, but it remains reluctant, however, to set up special programmes for local integration of IDPs.
- UNDP's presence is required at the provincial level - in Kandahar especially - in order to galvanize the relevant organizations into an integrated programme approach in support of the provincial authorities' implementation of durable solutions for the displaced.
- Inter-agency mission recommends that UNDP provides the operational leadership, in close coordination with other development agencies and NGOs, for finding durable solutions for the non-protection residual IDPs.

"While UNHCR remains fully committed to assisting MoRR in IDP care and maintenance and is looking for return solutions for the remaining protection IDPs, it is advocating for a shift to a more comprehensive development oriented strategy for IDPs who remain affected by loss of livelihoods. It has proposed to the Government that responsibility to seek and implement longer-term solutions for the non-protection IDPs - primarily the Kuchi and other drought displaced - be vested with MRRD and supported by UNAMA in close collaboration with the development community. The Government has yet to endorse this shift in policy. Given that large sectors of this IDP population are unable and/or unwilling to return to traditional pastoral livelihoods, and consequently will need to be integrated among local populations, it is necessary that the required 'development' responsibilities are assumed by the development actors - MRRD and relevant line ministries in partnership with UNDP, FAO, ILO, UN Habitat, other appropriate UN agencies and NGOs.

Initial response by MRRD to UNHCR's proposal has been to commit itself to mainstreaming those IDPs unable to return to their traditional livelihoods into national development programmes. It remains reluctant, however, to set up special programmes for local integration of IDPs. Clearly some middle ground must be found since the national development programmes such as NEEP, NSP, NABDP and NCP, are slow to get off the ground and are unlikely to impact areas of Kuchi IDP concentrations for some time to come. In the interim, the Kuchi Commission in MRRD Kabul must broaden its membership to include all actors that can support the integration and mainstreaming of Kuchi into Afghan society.

The mission was frequently advised by informants at the provincial level of the limited visibility of the development community outside of Kabul. UNDP was especially singled out. The mission was pleased to learn that regional advisors are now being deployed by UNDP's NABDP to strengthen the capacities of MRRD, and that NEEP is posting professional staff into each provincial administration. However, it is unlikely that these interventions will have any tangible impact on finding durable solutions for IDPs as part of larger community-based programmes. UNDP's presence is required at the provincial level - in Kandahar especially - in order to galvanize the relevant organizations into an integrated programme approach in support of the provincial authorities' implementation of durable solutions for the displaced. Likewise, UNDP has an important role to play in support of MRRD in other IDP concentrations in the west and north.

The MOUs between UNHCR and UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF, the current joint initiatives on the 4Rs Repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction in other post-conflict countries, and the ongoing discussions of the UNDG-ECHA Transitional Working Group, all clearly define the roles that should be assumed by the development community in addressing displacement issues in the broader longer-term recovery context. Therefore, the mission ***recommends that UNDP provides the operational leadership, in close coordination with other development agencies and NGOs, for finding durable solutions for the non-protection residual IDPs.*** Working with MRRD and the Consultative Group on Livelihoods, and linked to the NABDP, UNDP should facilitate the integration of IDPs into host communities through targeted development initiatives to those communities that are willing to have IDPs integrate among them." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 15-16)

Inter-Agency mission recommends establishing a small task force to assist the Gov. develop a policy and operational strategy for durable solutions for all IDPs (June 2003)

- UNAMA has a responsibility for advocating for and coordinating UN system programming, but limited capacity of the office has resulted in little success in promoting integrated programming.
- UNAMA has proposed that a small task force represented both at the Kabul (policy) and provincial (operational) levels be immediately established to assist the Government develop a policy and operational strategy for durable solutions for all IDPs that are unable or unwilling to return.
- Inter-Agency mission recommends that this task force be immediately established, including representation from the NGO community, to assist Government define a durable solutions strategy for all IDPs.
- It also recommends that UNAMA intervenes at the highest level of Government to ensure that President Karzai's stated aims of solving the country's IDP problem be translated into concrete actions, while ensuring that the rights of IDPs are fully respected.

"While UNAMA remains a non-operational mission, it has a responsibility for advocating for and coordinating UN system programming. However, its attempts at promoting integrated programming, much desired by the donors, have so far met with only limited success. In part this is due to the limited capacity of the office. Hence, based on UNHCR's proposal that UNAMA takes on a more prominent role in the search for longer-term durable solutions for the non-protection IDPs, UNAMA has accepted to promote as a first step the integrated programming of the operational agencies, especially UNDP, UNHCR, UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP. It should also consider including some 'development' NGOs. Consequently UNAMA has proposed that a small task force represented both at the Kabul (policy) and provincial (operational) levels be immediately established to assist the Government develop a policy and operational strategy for durable solutions for all IDPs that are unable or unwilling to return. The mission therefore ***recommends that this task force be immediately established, including representation from the NGO community, to assist Government define a durable solutions strategy for all IDPs, with special reference to those unable or unwilling to return to areas of origin.*** This UN system task force should feed directly into the

Consultative Group on Refugees and IDP Programmes and aim at having an integrated durable solutions strategy in place by August. OCHA's Internal Displacement Unit could provide short-term assistance to the task force if this is required. The planning of programmes has, to date, often remained restricted to UN agencies and Government officials. By bringing in the NGOs into planning and design of programmes at an earlier stage, the chances of successful implementation could be greatly enhanced

UNAMA must also continue playing a key advocacy role on behalf of IDPs. The mission therefore ***recommends that UNAMA intervenes at the highest level of Government to ensure that President Karzai's stated aims of solving the country's IDP problem be translated into concrete actions, while ensuring that the rights of IDPs are fully respected.*** " (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 16-17)

Need to better integrate existing information on IDPs (June 2003)

- There is a need for the various databases on the IDP situation to be integrated, together with other relevant databases such as those from the NGOs, in order to build a clearer and more comprehensive picture of vulnerability.
- Role of AIMS in information gathering and dissemination could be significantly strengthened.
- Inter-Agency mission recommends a heightened level of information gathering and dissemination by AIMS on behalf of the UN system and that UNAMA officers in the field ensure a systematic and proactive dissemination of information that would benefit all UN agencies and NGOs working in camps or areas of return.
- UNAMA's Senior IDP Advisor has played a key role in monitoring and reporting on the on-going IDP situation.
- Mission recommends that this post be maintained for another year and that the recruitment of three national assistants be expedited.

"One area where the mission believes UNAMA can strengthen its activities is in information gathering and dissemination. There appears to be a widespread consensus that the role of AIMS could be significantly strengthened. While UNHCR, IOM, WFP and UN Habitat, as well as MoRR, all have extensive databases on the IDP situation, there is a need for these to be integrated, together with other relevant databases such as those from the NGOs, in order to build a clearer and more comprehensive picture of vulnerability, as well as identifying where, who, when and how agencies are addressing IDP needs within communities.. The mission also heard concern about the level of detail and timeliness of UNAMA's dissemination of information, especially at the field level. Therefore the mission ***recommends a heightened level of information gathering and dissemination by AIMS on behalf of the UN system and that UNAMA officers in the field ensure a systematic and proactive dissemination of information that would benefit all UN agencies and NGOs working in camps or areas of return.*** Responsibility for this should rest with UNAMA management in Kabul as well as with the heads of all UNAMA field offices. There should also be stronger linkages established between AIMS and the Central Office for Statistics.

Over the past six months, UNAMA's Senior IDP Advisor has played a key role in monitoring and reporting on the on-going IDP situation. While based primarily in Kandahar, he has also covered the rest of the country where IDPs are located. The mission ***recommends that this post be maintained for another year and that the recruitment of three national assistants be expedited.*** However, in the light of some of the recommendations made in this report, it will be necessary to review and adjust the TORs of the Senior IDP Advisor. It will also be necessary to clearly define the working relationships with UNHCR that the national assistants are expected to assume. The mission concurs that these three assistants will be posted to Mazar, Kabul and Kandahar. With the placement of these assistants, the Senior IDP Advisor will be in a better placed to spend more time in all areas with IDPs. With the proposed shift in responsibility for longer-term solutions for the non-protection IDPs from UNHCR to UNAMA and the development actors, the Senior IDP Advisor will also have an additional responsibility of ensuring that coordination among UN actors and

between them and the relevant national and provincial authorities is sustained." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 16-17)

Government and international community should address the long-term needs of the displaced (June 2003)

- MoRR, MRRD, MBTA (Ministry for Border and Tribal Affairs) and local authorities are responsible for developing strategies for local integration or relocation for IDPs that have no intent or ability to return to areas of origin.
- IDP groups most concerned are the Kuchis and the Pashtuns from north and northwest.
- Inter-Agency mission recommends that the Government, together with the international community, address the full range of options for durable solutions simultaneously, determine which options are most appropriate for specific IDP groups, and make provisions for access to land where necessary.
- It also recommends that every effort be made to implement the agreed principle to include IDP populations, whether in areas of return or in process of being integrated locally, into national development programmes such as NEEP, NSP, the NABDP and the soon to be initiated National Credit Programme (NCP).

"[...], it is incumbent upon the MoRR, in close collaboration with the MRRD, the Ministry for Border and Tribal Affairs (MBTA) and local authorities, to develop strategies for local integration or relocation for IDPs that have no intent or ability to return to areas of origin. The international community, and especially UNHCR, UNDP and UNAMA must strongly advocate for the acceptance of such durable solutions and for the authorities to provide the necessary access to land to make integration feasible while keeping in mind the 'do no harm principles'. This would primarily address the Kuchi, albeit there are many IDPs from the north and northwest who will never be able to return for fear of retaliation for actual or alleged past political affiliation or crimes.

The mission therefore ***recommends that the Government, together with the international community, address the full range of options for durable solutions simultaneously, determine which options are most appropriate for specific IDP groups, and make provisions for access to land where necessary.*** It is proposed that the Consultative Group for Refugees and IDPs, together with the Consultative Group on Livelihoods, be responsible for following up on this recommendation. At the same time, the phasing out of relief assistance should be gradual, synchronized, and coordinated with the introduction of these long-term initiatives in order to avoid the oft-noted 'gap' between relief and development interventions.

The mission also ***recommends that every effort be made to implement the agreed principle to include IDP populations, whether in areas of return or in process of being integrated locally, into national development programmes such as NEEP, NSP, the NABDP and the soon to be initiated National Credit Programme (NCP).*** It is suggested that this need be placed on the agenda of the Consultative Group on Livelihoods by MRRD in close collaboration with UNAMA and UNHCR. The Senior IDP Advisor in UNAMA should sustain close working relationships with the project managers of the above programmes to ensure the IDP agenda is being actively addressed by the respective managers while reporting to the UNCT regularly on progress made and/or unresolved issues." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 6-7)

Amnesty calls for a better monitoring of return in urban areas (June 2003)

- UNHCR is not monitoring and assisting returnees in urban areas where the majority of refugees have gone during 2002.

- Lack of access to employment, to adequate shelter, and to security for many vulnerable groups has meant that urban centres can be as treacherous for returnees as rural areas.
- Returnees are often forced to occupy deserted buildings and land, often living in very poor and sometimes dangerous conditions.
- The absorption capacity of urban centres is also reaching its limit in many areas, and particularly in Kabul.
- Many donors have stipulated that international agencies, including UNHCR, restrict their assistance activities to the rural areas, at least partially to avoid a “pull factor” to the cities.

"Amnesty International is concerned about the decision taken by UNHCR, among other agencies, not to actively monitor and, in most cases, assist returnees in urban areas. During the return movements in 2002, UNHCR reported that the majority of returnees went back to urban areas. It is almost certain that this trend is being repeated in the returns taking place in 2003. Despite this fact, however, UNHCR only started a very limited post-return monitoring programme in some urban centres in spring 2003, and provides no reintegration assistance at all. As this report has noted previously, it is not possible to substantiate the assumption held by many that all returnees to urban centres find themselves secure and able to sustain this return. Lack of access to employment, to adequate shelter given the depleted housing stock of many cities including Kabul, and to security for many vulnerable groups including female headed households and unaccompanied women, has meant that urban centres can be as treacherous for returnees as rural areas. Returnees are often forced to occupy deserted buildings and land, often living in very poor and sometimes dangerous conditions. Amnesty International was told of more than one case of children suffering fatal falls from unprotected ledges in dilapidated buildings housing returnee families.

The absorption capacity of urban centres is also reaching its limit in many areas, and particularly in Kabul. Refugees, IDPs and rejected asylum seekers are “returning” to Kabul (even though this might not have been the place they left when forced into flight) in search of material, physical and sometimes legal protection. Mirza, who came to Kabul from Quetta, Pakistan with his family in July 2002, originates from Logar province in central Afghanistan.

“There is no work in the countryside”, he told Amnesty International, “I had to come to Kabul to provide food for my family.” Agencies estimate that more than half a million returnees settled in Kabul in 2002. In many respects this is making a ‘ticking bomb’ out of the capital, which is already seeing a rise in incidents of crime, overcrowding and violence against women.

(...)

Many donors have stipulated that international agencies, including UNHCR, restrict their assistance activities to the rural areas, at least partially to avoid a “pull factor” to the cities. There are, however, obvious concerns about policies that avoid the unavoidable reality of urbanization in a country as insecure and devastated as Afghanistan. Returnees, including the landless, that have made a rational decision to return to urban centres in the hope of sustaining their return through access to security, employment and shelter should not be penalized by being denied access to basic reintegration assistance and services, including adequate monitoring by the competent agencies." (AI 23 June 2003, pp. 29-30)

Conditions in areas of return should be better monitored and IDPs should be better informed (June 2003)

- In west and south local authorities push for IDP return to areas of origin and are reluctant to support any moves for local integration of those who are determined not to return to their areas of origin.
- Inter-Agency mission recommends that MoRR, in close collaboration with UNHCR, expedites the systematic re-profiling of existing IDP population and, where necessary, undertake additional

screening in order to specifically identify protection IDPs who are unwilling and/or fearful of returning to areas of origin in the current climate.

- By international standards it is unacceptable for the international community to promote movements to areas where returning individuals will likely be exposed to serious human rights violations.
- The mission recommends that the humanitarian community continue to provide potential returnees with current and accurate information on prevailing security and livelihood conditions in areas of origin. It also recommends that as an integral part of any return facilitation all operational agencies and NGOs working in sensitive areas reinforce their responsibility for monitoring the outcome of these returns under the coordination of MoRR and UNHCR.
- Any return or relocation must be on a voluntary and informed basis.
- It is recommended that advocacy for, and support to the Return Commission be heightened among the international community, including donors, and that the Commission be encouraged, through its Mazar-based Working Group, to consult with NGOs and broader sections of the community, including women and children, regarding current conditions, return scenarios and community needs.

"With respect to the protection cases that are currently in the south and west, it is clear that local authorities are resolute that these IDPs return to their areas of origin. In the west, this is primarily because of their ethnicity. Indeed, the authorities appear to be placing pressure on people to return regardless of the prevailing situation at their places of origin. In the south, where the protection IDPs are of the same ethnicity as the local population, the reason for wanting them to return is to prevent any legitimization of the displacement of predominantly Pashtun communities from the north and northwest. The latter position was strongly reinforced to the mission by the Governor of Kandahar and his senior advisors despite the fact that many displaced from the north have clearly indicated their wish to remain in the south. The implication of this in both the west, and especially in the south, is that local authorities remain reluctant to supporting any moves for local integration of those who are determined not to return to their areas of origin.

Given the above scenario, the mission ***recommends that MoRR, in close collaboration with UNHCR, expedites the systematic re-profiling of existing IDP population and, where necessary, undertake additional screening in order to specifically identify protection IDPs who are unwilling and/or fearful of returning to areas of origin in the current climate.*** Such data will more clearly identify IDPs for whom alternate durable solutions need to be sought while maintaining their rights to return and property and kinship rights. It will also identify IDPs for which continuing assistance will be required pending the Government and the international community finding other means to sustain them as they await return. Responsibility for this task has been allocated to Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programmes (see Annex 2 for TORs of this Consultative Group).

While by international standards it is unacceptable for the international community to promote movements to areas where returning individuals will likely be exposed to serious human rights violations, an obligation is still placed on international actors to ensure that any IDPs wishing to return to their areas of origin do so in a well-informed manner and that their return is voluntary. Hence, the mission ***recommends that the humanitarian community continue to provide potential returnees with current and accurate information on prevailing security and livelihood conditions in areas of origin.*** It also ***recommends that as an integral part of any return facilitation all operational agencies and NGOs working in sensitive areas reinforce their responsibility for monitoring the outcome of these returns under the coordination of MoRR and UNHCR.*** As such, operational UN agencies and NGOs need to ensure their programmes incorporate protection elements and build stronger linkages with UNAMA's human rights monitors and with the Independent Afghan Human Rights Commission. The mission proposes that UNHCR, in collaboration with UNAMA's human rights monitors, be responsible for the increased dissemination of information on conditions in areas of return and facilitates return where appropriate. In order to be able to

successfully undertake this role, the human rights monitoring and protection role that UNAMA needs to be strengthened, particularly at the provincial level.

Any return or relocation must be on a voluntary and informed basis. Information regarding humanitarian assistance, about conditions in areas of origin, and related to return or relocation must be provided in a timely manner to those in the camps/settlements. The local authorities and UNHCR must take a lead in ensuring that the rights of IDPs to information is respected.

Given the critical need for the creation of enabling environments for return in the north, it is ***recommended that advocacy for, and support to the Return Commission be heightened among the international community, including donors, and that the Commission be encouraged, through its Mazar-based Working Group, to consult with NGOs and broader sections of the community, including women and children, regarding current conditions, return scenarios and community needs.*** It is proposed that the Consultative Group on Returnee and IDP Programmes be responsible for mobilizing further support to the commission and broadening its web of consultative partners. UNHCR should follow-up on this recommendation, including with donors, and that UNICEF assists in ensuring that the voices of women and children are heard by the Return Commission Working Group." (OCHA IDP Unit 19 June 2003, pp. 9-10)

Drought-induced IDPs' needs differ from those of conflict-induced IDPs in the return phase (March 2002)

- Majority of IDPs in west and north are drought-induced and the preconditions for their return differ significantly from those of the conflict-induced IDPs.
- ICRC estimates that only 10 percent of the dryland farming areas of Badghis and Faryab provinces, two of the three principal source areas of IDPs in Herat have been cultivated.
- Until May 2003, the next opportunity to cultivate is the winter season, the drought-induced IDPs will require food assistance, as there are virtually no alternate sources of income.
- No agency appears to be addressing the critical need for animal power, which was sold before people left as IDPs.
- Potable water is still extremely scarce in many areas as it will take several years to recharge the drained aquifers.
- Potential villages of return are surveyed and cleared before return takes place. However, agricultural areas cannot be cleared rapidly and thus many potentially productive areas, such as large parts of the fertile Shamali Plains, will remain uncultivable for some time.
- It is essential that IDPs be provided with the same level of reintegration assistance as is being provided to returning refugees

"The majority of IDPs in the north and west have been displaced by four years of severe drought. Their needs and the precondition for their return differ in many respects from those of conflict-induced IDPs. Their levels of destitution is acute and without significant reintegration assistance, the chances of successfully re-establishing themselves and becoming self-reliant is minimal. Moreover, they remain at the mercy of climatic vagaries and, without traditional coping mechanisms – their livestock – can readily become IDPs again if there are inadequate rains next season.

Moreover, it is questionable whether the points of origin are able to absorb any large influx of returning population. ICRC estimates that only 10 percent of the dryland farming areas of Badghis and Faryab provinces, two of the three principal source areas of IDPs in Herat have been cultivated. IDPs are currently returning at a time when the spring sowing period is ending and are thus unlikely to get much, if any, crop into the ground for an August harvest. Hence, their next opportunity to cultivate is the winter sowing

season that will only produce a crop in May 2003. Until then, they will require food assistance, as there are virtually no alternate sources of income.

Seed shortages remain acute. There is considerable concern among the humanitarian community about FAO's capacity to deliver sufficient seed to underpin a recovery of the drought-affected regions during the next winter and spring planting seasons. An equally serious deficiency is that of animal power as most of the animal power was sold before people left as IDPs. Drought animals are essential for cultivating rainfed lands. However, no agency appears to be addressing this critical need. In addition, potable water is still extremely scarce in many areas as it will take several years to recharge the drained aquifers. Detailed community assessments are only now being undertaken in areas of return to fully ascertain such needs as availability of potable water, community assets, seed availability, winter crops in the ground, etc.

Returnees to former conflict areas face the additional constraint of mines and unexploded ordinances. Fortunately, there is close coordination between the mine-action groups and agencies and NGOs assisting returnees. Potential villages of return are surveyed and cleared before return takes place. However, agricultural areas cannot be cleared rapidly and thus many potentially productive areas, such as large parts of the fertile Shamali Plains, will remain uncultivable for some time. Shelter is a major problem facing returnees to former conflict areas (which is less of a problem for drought returnees) where most villages have been completely destroyed.

Given the serious levels of impoverishment of IDPs, it is essential that they be provided with the same level of reintegration assistance as is being provided to returning refugees. Indeed, most returning refugees are much more likely to bring considerable assets with them and hence the risk of increasing the disparity among the two groups of returnees unless they are treated equitably.

UNDP has yet to establish an operational field presence to facilitate and resource community programming and livelihood promotion in the principal areas of return. The Mission was informed that in the absence of UN development bodies, the NGO's efforts in promoting community development have been critical. Notwithstanding concerns about the pace of return expressed earlier in this report, it is highly desirable that such 'pulls' to the rural areas be rapidly redressed by the development actors if the return movements are to be sustainable." (IDP Unit-OCHA 28 March 2002, p. 7)

UN Security Council and UNAMA should clarify their strategies on human rights and aid conditionalities (August 2002)

- Contrary positions by the UN Security Council and UNAMA regarding aid conditionalities is affecting the credibility of both, but foremost of the protection of human rights in Afghanistan.

"The consternation generated by the contrary positions of the Security Council and UNAMA regarding aid conditionalities is having an especially deleterious effect on the credibility of both, and perhaps upon the protection of human rights in Afghanistan too. The confusion concerning the human rights monitoring arrangements and lack of progress on the establishment of the Independent Human Rights Commission warrants urgent attention.

a. The UN Security Council and UNAMA should clarify their strategies on human rights and aid conditionalities. It is quite conceivable that there may be irreconcilable differences between the Security Council and UNAMA, and between UN agencies, donors, NGOs and the AIA/ATA. It is better that these are acknowledged and then managed on an "agree to disagree" basis, than to allow critical amounts of senior management time to be swallowed up in the politics allowed by the current confusion.

b. The independence of the Human Rights Commission should be reviewed. If it is to be in fact a government led commission, it is inappropriate for it to be called "independent". If instead the spirit of the

Bonn Agreement is to be upheld, the composition of the Commission needs reconsidering and adequate international support should be availed rapidly.

c. The human rights monitoring arrangements are confused and unsatisfactory. The decision to place the human rights monitoring function in Pillar One, reporting to the SRSG's office should be reviewed. The possibility of merging the two monitoring capacities under a revitalised and genuinely independent Human Rights Commission should be considered." (AREU August 2002, p. 4)

IDPs unable or unwilling to return have specific protection needs (July 2002)

- When returning refugees and IDPs are in the same areas, the integrated approach seems adequate.
- However, when IDPs cannot or are unwilling to return and once most refugees have returned, IDPs could be isolated and ostracized.
- As long as IDPs are returning, their treatment can and should be analogous to returnees, but if they cannot return they will face a different reality and mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure the realization of their rights as well as satisfaction of needs.

"Given the generalized problem of forced human mobility, amongst other reasons, agencies working in the field have opted for an integrated response to both returnee and IDP needs and rights. In as much as returnees and IDPs can be found in proximate if not the same areas, the integrated approach seems adequate – particularly when undertaking return processes. For the immediate and mid-term future, IDPs in this situation would be adequately protected under the analogous application of refugee standards and practice.

However, caution should be taken with regards to those IDPs that cannot or will not return to their place of origin. As time goes by, and the returnee/refugee caseload diminishes and the bulk has surpassed the initial reintegration period, IDPs could be isolated and ostracized. In the absence of their refugee counterparts and the operations on their behalf, IDPs could face severe discrimination and simply be marginalized.

The manifestation of this concern is not meant to advocate for the creation of a special task force on behalf of IDPs, but rather to underscore the importance of addressing particular IDP issues within the Programme, which is currently immersed in responding to a massive return operation and ensuring proper reintegration.

To conclude, as long as IDPs are returning, their treatment can and should be analogous to returnees. Upon return these two groups are likely to face similar rights conflicts – involving economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights – that will require adequate resolution. However, if IDPs cannot or choose not to return, they will face a different reality and mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure the realization of their rights as well as satisfaction of needs. This caveat is especially relevant provided the weakness (or non-existence) of national protection mechanisms. Where international protection is clearly defined on behalf of refugees/returnees, it is not clear *vis a vis* IDPs.

This predicament presents one of the most important challenges for the Programme Secretariat, in its coordination role. The protection of IDPs that cannot or choose not to return will demand a differentiated set of actions as well as a different response on behalf of the government." (UNAMA July 2002, p. 2)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

4Rs	Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction
AACA	Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority
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
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AHSAO	Afghans' Health and Social Assistance Organisation
AIA	Afghan Interim Administration
AIMS	Afghanistan Information Management Service
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
ATA	Afghanistan Transitional Administration
CARE	Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere
CAWS	Central Authority for Water and Sanitation
CCA	Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
CIC	Children in Crisis
CJCMOTF	Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force
CWS	Church World Service
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DAD	Donor Assistance Database
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDR	Disarmement, Demobilisation, Reintegration
DPVPV	Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice
DFID	Department for International Development
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
EO/CA	Ecumenical office/Christian aid
EPI	Expanded Immunisation Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFW	Food for Work
FOODAC	Food for Asset Creation
GAA	German Agro Action
GAF	German Afghanistan Foundation
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative
GIS	Geographic Information System
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HICFA	Humanitarian Information Center for Afghanistan
IA	Interim Authority
IAM	International Assistance Mission
IASF	International Security Assistance Force
ICC	Islamic Coordination Council

ICC	Inter-Agency Coordination Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
ISRA	Islamic Relief Agency
ITAP	Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme 2002
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LEP	Landmine Education Programme
LVAU	Livelihoods and Vulnerability Analysis Unit
MACA	Mine Action Center for Afghanistan
MAAH	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
MAPA	UN Mine Action Programme
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MDM	Medecins Du Monde
MEDAIR	Christian Relief and Aid Organisation
MIWRE	Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Environment
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MoC	Ministry of Construction
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoRR	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
MoUDH	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MUDH	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
NABDP	National Area-Based Development Plan
NDB	National Development Budget
NDF	National Development Framework
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NIDs	National Immunization Days
NPF	New Police Force
NSC	National Security Council
NSF	National Security Force
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
NWFP	Northwest Frontier Practice
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODP	Office of Disaster Preparedness
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
PHC	Primary Health Care

PHR	Physicians for Human Rights
PRB	Pamir Reconstruction Bureau
ProMIS	Project Management Information System
RCB	Regional Coordination Bodies
RCOs	Regional Coordination Officers
RDD	Rehabilitation and Development Department
REACH	Radio Education for Afghan Children
RMAC	Regional Mine Action Center
RTMP	Road and Transport Master Plan
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SC/US	Save the Children (US)
SFA	Strategic Framework for Afghanistan
SMEs	Small and Micro Enterprises
SNI	Shelter Now International
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TAPA	Transitional Assistance Programme for Afghanistan
TB	Tuberculosis
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendants
TISA	Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
TPUs	Training Production Units
UF	United Front (The Northern Alliance)
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCHS	United Nations Center for Human Settlements
UNCO	United Nations Coordinator's Office
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNIC	United Nations Information Service
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistics Center
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNSMA	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCR	United States Committee for Refugees
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
VRF	Voluntary Repatriation Form
WES	Water and Environmental Sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WSS	Water and Sanitation Services

LIST OF SOURCES USED

(alphabetical order)

Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, 12 October 2001, Emergency Assistance Appeal -ASAF-11 (Revision 1)
Internet : http://www.act-intl.org/appeals/appeals_2001/ASAF11Rev1.pdf , accessed 19 October 2001

Action contre la Faim (ACF), 2004, Kabul Vulnerability Mapping

Afghanistan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACA), April 2003, Terms of Reference (TOR's) of the Returnee & IDPs Consultative Group
Internet : http://www.afghanistangov.org./resources/aaca/cg+adf/refugee_return_cg/IDPs%20-%20Returnees%20TOR.doc , accessed 17 June 2003

Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS), 9 October 2002, Who's doing What Where, Report 4 - Lists Organizations by Sector, AIMS, 9 October 2002
Internet : http://www.aims.org.af/database_services/wdww/documents/wdww_reports/wdww_report4.pdf , accessed 21 October 2002

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), August 2002, Strategic Coordination in Afghanistan
Internet : http://www.areu.org.af/publications/strategic%20coordination/strategic_coord.pdf , accessed 24 April 2003

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), August 2004, Uzbek IDPs in western Afghanistan: to move onward, to stay or to return
Internet : <http://www.areu.org.af/publications/Uzbek%20IDPs.pdf> , accessed 13 September 2004

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), February 2004, Some Notes on the Livelihoods of the Urban Poor in Kabul, Afghanistan
Internet : <http://www.areu.org.af/publications/livelihoods/Some%20Notes%20on%20Livelihoods%20of%20Urban%20Poor.pdf> , accessed 3 March 2004

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 13 September 2004, "UN, aid agencies pull staff from Afghan city after deadly riots"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/7dbffb8d60448dafc1256f0e0043e198?OpenDocument> , accessed 14 September 2004

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 17 August 2004, "Residents flee homes as rebel forces march on western Afghan city"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/d4e2467c84da97c5c1256ef300465a78?OpenDocument> , accessed 17 August 2004

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 21 February 2002, "Tens of thousands flee ethnic persecution in northern Afghanistan"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/ffcac6e4b1e3f081c1256b67005659c9?OpenDocument> , accessed 1 March 2002

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 3 April 2002, "No change in policy allowing military to distribute aid: Pentagon"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/73421329e1797cce85256b90006fec0d?OpenDocument> , accessed 4 April 2002

Agence France-Presse (AFP), 6 June 2003, "Afghan farmers welcome return of rains"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/34086c97f1b1cfbfc1256d3d0042cb4d?OpenDocument> , accessed 20 January 2004

Agence France-Presse (AFP), September 2004, "Aid workers accuse military in Afghanistan of putting them in danger"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/06dd8be42b4cc405c1256f02002dd03d?OpenDocument> , accessed 14 October 2004

AlertNet, 28 May 2003, "International community is failing displaced Afghans -MSF"

Internet : <http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/AFdisplaced.htm> , accessed 3 June 2003

Amnesty International (AI), 23 June 2003, Afghanistan Out of sight, out of mind: The fate of the Afghan returnees

Internet :
[http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA110142003ENGLISH/\\$File/ASA1101403.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA110142003ENGLISH/$File/ASA1101403.pdf) , accessed 23 June 2003

Amnesty International (AI), 9 October 2001, Protect Afghan civilians and refugees

Internet :
[http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA110122001ENGLISH/\\$File/ASA1101201.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/ASA110122001ENGLISH/$File/ASA1101201.pdf) , accessed 9 July 2002

Amnesty International (AI), November 1999, Afghanistan: the Human Rights of Minorities, November 1999, ASA 11/14/99, (AI November 1999a)

Internet : <http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/ASA110141999> , accessed 9 July 2002

Associated Press (AP), 4 October 2004, "Afghanistan Death Toll in 2004 Up to 957"
Internet : http://abcnews.go.com/wire/World/ap20041003_556.html , accessed 6 October 2004

British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), 18 December 2003, BAAG Afghanistan Monthly Review Nov 2003

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/1c1f0e6d0c5ce437c1256e00004a0d35?OpenDocument> , accessed 19 December 2003

British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), 31 August 2002, BAAG Afghanistan Monthly Review Aug 2002

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/3a81e21068ec1871c1256633003c1c6f/3bf0a9d95c09fa1c85256c330065b8e7?OpenDocument> , accessed 25 September 2002

British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), 31 December 2003, BAAG Afghanistan Monthly Review Dec 2003

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/f303799b16d2074285256830007fb33f/f74f6718830073b785256e200065e17c?OpenDocument> , accessed 20 January 2004

British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), 4 October 2001, BAAG Afghanistan Monthly Review Sep 2001

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/efd26a35afdbda9585256adb00601956?OpenDocument> , accessed 5 October 2001

CARE, 22 June 2004, "54 NGOs call for NATO to address security in Afghanistan"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/c7ca0eaf6c79faae852567af003c69ca/9e214fff8452643b85256ebb00791a8c?OpenDocument> , accessed 14 October 2004

CARE, 25 July 2003, "Insecurity in Afghanistan must be addressed now says CARE International"

Internet : http://www.careinternational.org.uk/cgi-bin/display_mediarelease.cgi?mr_id=228 , accessed 27 January 2004

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), 2003, Update on Afghanistan

Internet : <http://www.cafod.org.uk/archive/afghanistan/afghanistanupdate200301.shtml> , accessed 20 January 2004

Center of Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA), 10 September 2004, Humanitarian Assistance for Afghan Refugees and IDPs
Internet : <http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/14624.pdf> , accessed 15 September 2004

Children in Crisis (CIC), 17 July 2000, E-mail from CIC Official

Children in Crisis (CIC), July 2000, Educating children in Afghanistan
Internet : <http://www.childrenincrisis.org.uk/> , accessed 14 January 2003

CONCERN, 22 December 2000, "Concern's response to the latest emergency in Afghanistan"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/e42dd5ec48e8a9e8852569bd005cd9d9?OpenDocument> , accessed 12 February 2001

Consultative Group on IDPs and Returnees (CG1), 18 July 2003, IDP Strategy for Afghanistan

Consultative Group on IDPs and Returnees (CG1), 22 February 2004, Returnees & IDPs CG Minutes
Internet : http://www.afghanistangov.org./resources/aaca/cg%2Badf/refugee_return_cg/Cg1SteeringGroupMeetingMinute.doc , accessed 12 May 2004

Danish Immigration Service, March 2003, The Political, Security and Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan, Report on fact-finding mission to Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan and Islamabad, Pakistan, 22 September - 5 October 2002

Department for International Development, UK (DFID), 5 October 2001, Afghanistan crisis situation report No. 10
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/6481438aefe82900c1256adc0036348f?OpenDocument> , accessed 8 October 2001

Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop, 9 April 2002, NGO Coordination and Some Other Relevant Issues in the Context of Afghanistan from an NGO Perspective

EurasiaNet, 12 October 2004, "Challenge to election results is subsiding in Afghanistan"
Internet : <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101204.shtml> , accessed 13 October 2004

EurasiaNet, 5 April 2004, "Experts wonder if \$8.2 billion in Afghan aid is sufficient to break the country's vicious cycle"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/3a81e21068ec1871c1256633003c1c6f/d9eebdb53b07dff249256e7700050b37?OpenDocument> , accessed 14 October 2004

European Commission, October 2004, "Afghanistan: Commission continues to deliver on its reconstruction pledge"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/62ff142be45c1fedc1256f20003e4b2a?OpenDocument> , accessed 13 October 2004

European Commission - Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), April 2004, Humanitarian aid for vulnerable people affected by the consequences of the Afghan crisis in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran

Internet : http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/pdf_files/decisions/2004/gp_as_01000_en.pdf , accessed 20 September 2004

Farr, Grant, September 2001, Afghanistan: Displaced in a Devastated Country, in Caught Between Borders - Response Strategies of the Internally Displaced, ed. Birgit Refslund and Marc Vincent

Federation of American Researchers (FAS), Intelligence Resource Program, 8 September 1998, Afghanistan - Introduction

Internet : <http://web.archive.org/web/20010426184925/209.207.236.112/irp/world/afghan/intro.htm> , accessed 14 January 2003

Feinstein International Famine Center, May 2002, Food Insecurity in Afghanistan 1999 - 2002

Internet : http://famine.tufts.edu/pdf/cash_famine.pdf , accessed 17 October 2002

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 18 December 2003, "FAO distributes seeds to returnees in Afghanistan"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/c7ca0eaf6c79faae852567af003c69ca/294130700ca58ecbc1256e0000366de1?OpenDocument> , accessed 19 January 2004

Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF), September 2004, "Afghanistan: Democracy Before Peace?"

Internet : <http://www.fpif.org/pdf/papers/2004afghandem.pdf> , accessed 27 September 2004

Government of Japan, 20 May 2003, Japan's Support for Afghanistan

Internet : <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/policies/political/supportforafghanistan.htm> , accessed 18 June 2003

Government of Japan, 23 March 2004, "Emergency Grant Assistance to Afghanistan for Ogata Initiative (Regional Comprehensive Development Assistance Programme) Phase IV"

Internet : <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2004/3/0323-2.html> , accessed 27 September 2004

Human Rights Advisory Group (HRAG), 12 June 2003, Human Rights Advisory Group Minutes, Meeting No. 6

Human Rights Watch (HRW), 20 March 2002, For the Sins of the Taliban
Internet : http://www.hrw.org/editorials/2002/afghan_0320.htm#author , accessed 22 March 2002

Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2004, Losing the Peace in Afghanistan
Internet : <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k4/5.htm> , accessed 27 September 2004

Human Rights Watch (HRW), 28 September 2004, The Rule of the Gun, Human Rights Abuses and Political Repression in the Run-up to Afghanistan's Presidential Election
Internet : <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/afghanistan0904/afghanistan0904.pdf> , accessed 29 September 2004

Human Rights Watch (HRW), 3 March 2002, Anti-Pashtun Violence Widespread In Afghanistan
Internet : <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/03/afghanistan0303.htm> , accessed 8 March 2002

Human Rights Watch (HRW), 5 December 2002, Afghanistan's Bonn Agreement One Year Later, A Catalog of Missed Opportunities
Internet : <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/afghanistan/bonn1yr-bck.pdf> , accessed 22 January 2003

Human Rights Watch (HRW), 8 January 2004, "Afghanistan: Constitutional Process Marred by Abuses"
Internet : http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/01/07/afghan6914_txt.htm , accessed 8 January 2004

Human Rights Watch (HRW), December 2002, Fatally Flawed: Cluster Bombs and Their Use by the United States in Afghanistan
Internet : <http://hrw.org/reports/2002/us-afghanistan/> , accessed 28 May 2003

Human Rights Watch (HRW), June 2002, On the Precipice: Insecurity in Northern Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, June 2002
Internet : <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/afghanistan/afghan-bck.pdf> , accessed 2 July 2002

Human Rights Watch (HRW), November 1998, The Massacre in Mazar-I Sharif
Internet : <http://www.hrw.org/hrw/reports98/afghan/index.htm#TopOfPage> , accessed 19 October 1999

Humanitarian Affairs Advisory Group (HAAG), 22 April 2003, Minutes of the Humanitarian Affairs Advisory Group (HAAG), Meeting No. 6

Internet

: [http://www.afghanistangov.org/resources/aaca/cg+adf/humanitarian_aff_ag/Humanitarian%20Affairs%20AG%20Minutes%20\(22.04.03\).doc](http://www.afghanistangov.org/resources/aaca/cg+adf/humanitarian_aff_ag/Humanitarian%20Affairs%20AG%20Minutes%20(22.04.03).doc) , accessed 17 June 2003

Information & Communication Unit of the Hunger Belt Programme, 12 March 2001, Hunger Belt Weekly News Bulletin, Third Issue, February 26-March 12, 2001

Institute for War & Peace Reporting (IWPR), 5 July 2004, "Land Disputes Unsettle the North"

Internet : http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/arr/arr_200407_124_1_eng.txt , accessed 7 July 2004

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 12 September 2003, "AFGHANISTAN: Interview with UN Special Rapporteur on Housing"

Internet

: http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=36561&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 24 September 2003

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 15 April 2003, "AFGHANISTAN: IDPs continue arriving in the south"

Internet : <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=33482> , accessed 24 April 2003

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 18 June 2003, "AFGHANISTAN: Focus on returns and reintegration in the north"

Internet : <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=34840> , accessed 19 June 2003

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 19 January 2004, "Floods displace at least a thousand families around Herat"

Internet

: <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/5ddc1c0900b6e8e785256e20006567a8?OpenDocument> , accessed 20 January 2004

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 20 March 2002, "Afghanistan: Focus on nomads and the drought"

Internet

: http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=26549&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 21 March 2002

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 21 July 2003, "AFGHANISTAN: Three children die from Diphtheria in camp"

Internet

: http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=35519&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 23 July 2003

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 27 January 2003, "AFGHANISTAN: IDPs in Kabul face bleak conditions"

Internet :

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=31927&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 4 February 2003

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 5 August 2002, "Afghanistan: Focus on shelter"

Internet :

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=29167&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 10 October 2002

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 5 June 2003, "AFGHANISTAN: Water a serious problem nationwide"

Internet :

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=34552&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 18 June 2003

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 5 March 2001, "Afghanistan: Displaced Afghans dying of cold and hunger"

Internet :

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=2383&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 9 July 2002

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 5 March 2003, "AFGHANISTAN: UN High Commissioner for Refugees inaugurates Return Commission"

Internet :

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=32640&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 27 March 2003

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 6 January 2004, "AFGHANISTAN: Bomb attacks in Kandahar kill 8 and damage UNHCR office"

Internet :

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/0a2beaa3f57bb28949256e150008870a?OpenDocument> , accessed 8 January 2004

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 8 February 2001, "Afghanistan: Summary of Displaced and Refugees since June 2000"

Internet :

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=1855&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN , accessed 19 July 2002

Inter-Agency missions, 19 June 2003, The Internally Displaced in Afghanistan: towards durable solutions, Report of the Inter-agency Mission, May 2003

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), December 2000, Drought and Displacement in Afghanistan

Inter Action, 2 April 2002, "Humanitarian leaders ask White House to review policy allowing American soldiers to conduct humanitarian relief programs in civilian clothes"
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/a5434df6dbd62ca485256b8f006c3bd6?OpenDocument> , accessed 4 April 2002

Internal Displacement Unit, OCHA, 28 March 2002, The IDP Situation in Afghanistan: Report of a mission by the Internal Displacement Unit

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), August 2002, Afghanistan, in Landmine Monitor report 2002
Internet : <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2002/afghanistan.html> , accessed 16 October 2002

International Organization for Migration (IOM), 13 August 2004, "Afghanistan - Return and Reintegration Assistance to IDPs Continues"
Internet : <http://www.iom.int/en/news/pbn130804.shtml#item3> , accessed 17 August 2004

International Organization for Migration (IOM), August 2003, Afghanistan, IDP Return and Reintegration Assistance Programme (IRRAP)

International Rescue Committee (IRC), 17 December 2003, "IRC Pushes for Property Rights in Afghanistan"
Internet : <http://www.theirc.org/index.cfm/wwwID/1901> , accessed 19 December 2003

Intersos, 10 October 2001, Intersos assessment report from Afghanistan
Internet : <http://wwwwww.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/2d0047eb3ca307f8c1256ae300445616?OpenDocument> , accessed 12 October 2001

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), 14 August 2003, "Diphtheria outbreak in Zhare Dasht IDP camp, southern Afghanistan"
Internet : <http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=2673DD59-61DC-4FDB-92B68EBCA9A1FF9E> , accessed 29 August 2003

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), 4 December 2003, "MSF suspends activities in Zhare Dasht camp, Afghanistan"
Internet : <http://www.msf.org/countries/page.cfm?articleid=0B153B94-535B-4A4D-8F25979E498C2B0A> , accessed 17 December 2003

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), 7 October 2002, "Afghanistan, One Year On: A Special Report from Kandahar "
Internet : http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news/2002/afghanistan_4.shtml , accessed 16 June 2003

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), July 2004, "Humanitarian Assistance Unable to Reach Afghans in War-Torn Southern Regions"

Internet : http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/other/opinion_nicolasdetorrente_pf.html , accessed 7 July 2004

Ministry of Rural Development and Rehabilitation (MRRD) & Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR), October 2003, Towards Definite Solutions for IDPs in the South: A Regional Operation Plan

Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), 13 April 2003, Government Guidelines for Agencies Funding, Implementing and Monitoring Shelter Activities in Rural Afghanistan

Internet : http://www.afghanistangov.org./resources/aaca/cg+adf/refugee_return_cg/Provision%20of%20Shelter%20Assistance%20to%20Vulnerable%20Families%20in%20rural%20Afghanistan.doc , accessed 17 June 2003

Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), April 2004, IDP National Plan, Livelihoods and Social Protection

Internet : <http://www.afghanistangov.org/resources/mof/PIP1383/1.4/ProDoc/english/AFG-04613.pdf> , accessed 27 September 2004

Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), April 2004, What MRRD does?

Internet : <http://www.mrrd.gov.af/WEB%20CONTENTS/What%20MRRD%20DOES/WHAT%20MRRD%20DOES%20FINAL%20VERSION%20ENGLISH.pdf> , accessed 27 September 2004

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2004, "Legal aid for returnees: the NRC programme in Afghanistan"

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), June 2004, Land and property disputes in Eastern Afghanistan

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), May 2004, Information and Legal Advice Project, Afghanistan

Petrin, Sarah, September 2003, "Internal displacement in Afghanistan ends for some, not for others", in FMR No. 18

Internet : <http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR18/fmr18debate.pdf> , accessed 8 January 2004

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), April 2002, A Survey of Human Rights Abuses Among New Internally Displaced Persons Herat, Afghanistan

Internet : http://www.phrusa.org/research/afghanistan/report_idp.html , accessed 14 May 2004

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), 21 February 2002, "Afghans to vacate camps on Tajik border"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/4645065a8544cdd2c1256b6700546dd4?OpenDocument> , accessed 1 March 2002

Refugee Nutrition Information System (RNIS), July 2002, Report on the nutrition situation of refugees and displaced populations, No. 38

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2002/unscn-rnis38-26jul.pdf> , accessed 10 October 2002

Refugees International (RI), 15 July 2004, Kuchi Nomads: Displaced and Destitute in Afghanistan

Internet : <http://www.refintl.org/content/article/detail/3017/> , accessed 19 July 2004

Refugees International (RI), 8 January 2002, A Recovery Investment for Afghanistan's Refugees and Displaced People

Internet : <http://www.refintl.org/content/article/detail/782/?PHPSESSID=3a5f319c26ed676977d69f62913b592c> , accessed 25 March 2002

Shelter Now International (SNI), 18 December 2000, SNI Afghanistan Situation Report 10

Spink, Pete, September 2004, "A closing window? Are Afghanistan IDPs being forgotten?", in FMR No 21

Internet : <http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR21/FMR2113.pdf> , accessed 27 September 2004

TISA, ADB, UNAMA, UNDP, WB, 17 March 2004, Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward

Internet : <http://www.afghanistangov.org/resources/mof/recosting/SECURING%20AFGHNAISTANS%20FUTURE.pdf> , accessed 13 September 2004

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan (TISA), 2004, Securing Afghanistan's Future: Accomplishments and the Strategic Path Forward, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, Technical Annex

Internet : <http://www.af/resources/mof/recosting/draft%20papers/Pillar%201/Refugees%20and%20Internally%20Displaced%20-%20Annex.pdf> , accessed 16 March 2004

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan (TISA), 21 September 2003, 1382 Mid-Term Budget Review, National Development Budget

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan (TISA), March 2003, National Return, Displacement and Reintegration Strategy for the year 1382

Internet : http://www.afghanistangov.org./resources/aaca/cg+adf/refugee_return_cg/National%20Return%20Displacement%20And%20Reintegration%20Strategy%20For%20The%20Year%201382.doc , accessed 17 June 2003

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan (TISA), September 2004, The decline towards crisis. Afghanistan's deteriorating drought situation

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2004/govafgh-afg-01sep.pdf> , accessed 8 October 2004

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 14 January 2003, "Afghanistan: NGOs raise concern over Coalition's aid work"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/6d062216a1c4579d85256cae0067fa45?OpenDocument> , accessed 22 January 2003

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 17 October 2000, Afghanistan Weekly Update No. 384

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/437a83f9fa966c40c12564f2004fde87/a342cccdff46d31ec125697c004d7801?OpenDocument> , accessed 12 February 2001

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 18 April 2000, "Afghanistan Weekly Update No. 359"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/8ba15f0b27f52209852568c60059f64f?OpenDocument> , accessed 22 June 2000

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 19 January 2001, Information Note for Donor Meeting in Geneva

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 2 November 1999, "Afghanistan Weekly Update No. 337"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/3a81e21068ec1871c1256633003c1c6f/01ae7b7b8cf125fac125681d005732af?OpenDocument> , accessed 8 February 2000

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 20 September 2001, Afghanistan OCHA Situation Report No. 3

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/cab9eee073f6fe7849256ace00232159?OpenDocument> , accessed 8 October 2001

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 23 November 1999, "Afghanistan Weekly Update No. 339"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/3a81e21068ec1871c1256633003c1c6f/ae2f09bfe512ed5bc1256833004e4f70?OpenDocument> , accessed 8 February 2000

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 24 May 2001, Afghanistan Weekly Update No. 413

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/437a83f9fa966c40c12564f2004fde87/80e410a02bb26a0cc1256a5a00543acb?OpenDocument> , accessed 22 October 2001

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 26 October 1999, "Afghanistan Weekly Update No. 336"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/3a81e21068ec1871c1256633003c1c6f/6feb59a41c3eabbbc12568170029636c?OpenDocument> , accessed 8 February 2000

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 3 October 2001, Afghanistan Crisis OCHA Situation Report No. 7

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/Rwb.nsf/vID/42916E7E792DA1A085256ADA0075D09E?OpenDocument> , accessed 8 October 2001

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 6 April 2001, "Misery increasing in western Afghanistan"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/859fac7966a507b9c1256a260028b4c8?OpenDocument> , accessed 18 April 2001

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 9 April 2001, "Food stocks dwindling in Northeastern Afghanistan"

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/ed64801cc377d57ac1256a29004636b6?OpenDocument> , accessed 18 April 2001

UN Secretary-General, 12 August 2004, Report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly and the Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, A/58/868-S/2004/634

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2004/unsc-afg-12aug.pdf> , accessed 17 August 2004

UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition, November 2003, RNIS 43, Afghanistan
Internet : http://www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/RNIS/countries/afghanistan_all.htm
accessed 23 January 2004

United Nations, 21 January 2002, Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People 2002
Internet : http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2002/un_afg_21jan.pdf , , accessed 22 January 2002

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 13 March 2003, Afghanistan weekly situation report
Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/c7ca0eaf6c79faae852567af003c69ca/189867cc67d0cf505c1256cec00523ecb?OpenDocument> , accessed 10 June 2003

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 20 November 2003, Afghanistan: Priorities for 2004
Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/c7ca0eaf6c79faae852567af003c69ca/8c9c8a4dac3430dec1256de40056c482?OpenDocument> , accessed 19 January 2004

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 20 October 2002, Press briefing by Manoel de Almeida e Silva, UNAMA Spokesman 20 Oct 2002
Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/4bcc1da3baba6bc6c1256c5900340d56?OpenDocument> , accessed 21 October 2002

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 30 January 2003, UNAMA fact sheet: Refugee - IDP return and reintegration
Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/UNID/0B62A9CB133B9389C1256CBE0054A8FD> ,
accessed 3 February 2003

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 30 March 2003, Press briefing by Manoel de Almeida e Silva, UNAMA Spokesman 30 Mar 2003
Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/d1b76662b3d6e216c1256cf90044af2a?OpenDocument> , accessed 4 April 2003

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 31 July 2003, Voter registration in Afghanistan, Operation Plan

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 7 April 2003, Strategy approach on finding a solution for IDPs in the south west region

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), July 2002, Comments on the Coordination of Affairs related to Internally Displaced Persons in Afghanistan

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat), 13 June 2003, "Helping Afghanistan's returning war victims"
Internet : <http://www.unhabitat.org/jalalabad.asp> , accessed 16 June 2003

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat), 31 July 2000, E-mail sent to NRC by UNHCS Official

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat), April 2003, Shomali Plains Shelter Recovery Project 2002
Internet : <http://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org/english/information/reports/Shomali%20Plain%20Final%20Report.May%2003.pdf> , accessed 14 January 2004

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat), March 2003, Preliminary Study of Land Tenure Issues in Urban Afghanistan With Special Reference to Kabul City

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 21 December 2003, UNICEF Activities for IDP and Returnees in Afghanistan, Oct. 2001-Dec. 2003

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 21 December 2003, UNICEF Afghanistan Achievements for IDP and Refugee Returnees, October 2001-December 2003

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 30 September 2004, UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Afghanistan Donor Update 30 Sep 2004
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/44c95492c4cfa538c1256f200031e9ee?OpenDocument> , accessed 11 October 2004

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 8 March 2001, UNICEF Afghanistan Proposal for Emergency Assistance to Drought and Conflict IDPs, March-August 2001
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/Rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/aea86766bb1c413dc1256a16003a8538?OpenDocument> , accessed 18 April 2001

United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR), 14 July 1999, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, submitted in accordance Sub-Commission resolution 1998/17, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/13
Internet : [http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.Sub.2.1999.13.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.Sub.2.1999.13.En?OpenDocument) , accessed 11 February 2000

United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR), 4 March 2004, Adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Mission to Afghanistan (31 August -13 September 2003)

Internet : [http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/3e519fe3b3b9d779c1256e67004c42a8/\\$FILE/G0411517.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/3e519fe3b3b9d779c1256e67004c42a8/$FILE/G0411517.pdf), accessed 27 September 2004

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 23 January 2003, "UNHCR and UNDP agree to jointly support reintegration and recovery of Afghanistan"

Internet : <http://mirror.undp.org/afghanistan/archive/2003/23jan03.html> , accessed 12 June 2003

United Nations General Assembly (UN GA), 3 December 2003, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/29920e0d696679b685256df6006a1935?OpenDocument> , accessed 17 December 2003

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 10 November 2003, Returnees & IDPs CG Minutes

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 11 December 2003, "UNHCR prepares for winter in Afghanistan despite security constraints "

Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/+YwwBmefSzWCwwwqwwwwwwwwhFqnN0bItFqnDni5zFqnN0bIAFqnN0bIDzmxwwwwww1FqnN0bI/opensdoc.htm> , accessed 17 December 2003

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 12 February 2004, "Go-and-See visit by displaced Afghans gets underway"

Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/afghan?page=news&id=402b8e994> , accessed 17 March 2004

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 14 July 2000, E-mail from UNHCR Official

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 15 December 2003, IDP Assisted Return Movement Report, Province of Destination (TO), Province of Displacement (FROM), (January to December 2003)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 15 November 2003, Report of the Displaced Persons Council Meeting, 19-21 October 2003

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 15 October 2003, Returnee Update, Issue 43, 1-15 October 2003

Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=3f9928ca4> , accessed 18 November 2003

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 17 April 2003, "Lubbers: Insecurity threatening Afghan return programs"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/37f7029fef0e565185256d0b0054b6c9?OpenDocument> , accessed 17 June 2003

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 19 April 2002, "Afghan-Tajik returns boost repatriation numbers to 300,000 "

Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+/-wwBmefiqbswwwnwwwwwwwhFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIcFqGwhtrwDe2DxwzoAafy75Dzmxwwwwww/opendoc.htm> , accessed 22 October 2002

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 26 January 2004, Afghan Operations 2004

Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=401636922> , accessed 27 September 2004

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 29 September 2004, E-mail from UNHCR official to NRC

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 3 January 2003, UNHCR Afghanistan humanitarian update No. 67

Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/print?page=home&tbl=NEWS&id=3e15b2184> , accessed 22 January 2003

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 3 May 2004, "Displaced Afghans journey home from Khost province"

Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/afghan?page=news&id=409668244> , accessed 12 May 2004

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 30 June 2004, UNHCR's Operation in Afghanistan: Donor Update on Afghanistan

Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=413f23634> , accessed 27 September 2004

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5 February 2002, "UNHCR to begin helping Afghans return in late March"

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/3a81e21068ec1871c1256633003c1c6f/d4a8a32ebbce6a28c1256b58003cface?OpenDocument> , accessed 25 March 2002

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5 July 2003, UNHCR Returnee Monitoring Report, Afghanistan Repatriation, January 2002-March 2003
Internet : http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/+twwBmeN+_tCwwwwnwwwwwwwtFqcEhtrwDo5BwDcFqo-uPPyER0MFmqDFqm7y-dFqo2IyP0HEP3zmqwwwwwwGFqmE-H/rsddocview.pdf , accessed 8 January 2004

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5 September 2004, "Relocation Operation from Spin Boldak Completed"
Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/print?page=home&tbl=SUBSITES&id=413f20784> , accessed 21 September 2004

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), December 2003, Monthly IDP Settlement Report, December 2003

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), December 2003, "Afghanistan: shelter initiative home progress"
Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/print.html?CATEGORY=NEWS&id=3fd069420> , accessed 8 January 2004

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), July 2002, Considerations relating to the provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons in Afghanistan
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/s/9083D80A00DE8D63C1256BFA002EBA40> , accessed 13 September 2002

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), May 2004, South IDP Profiling Analysis

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), September 2003, Land Issues within the Repatriation Process of Afghan Refugees

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), September 2003, UNHCR Country Operations Plan 2004 - Afghanistan
Internet : <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/+NwwBmeJDO0CwwwwnwwwwwwwtFqcEhtrwDo5BwDMFmqDFqm7y-dFqt2IygZf3zmnwwwwwwGFqmE-H/rsddocview.pdf> , accessed 8 January 2004

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), September 2004, Some information on IDPs

United Nations News Service, 24 September 2002, "Afghanistan: UN agency begins reconstruction work of 3,000 houses in Shomali"

United Nations Regional Coordination Office (UNRCO) Kabul, 5 November 1999, IDP Update: Kabul 5.11.99, e-mail to NRC

United Nations Sub-Committee on Nutrition (ACC/SCN), July 2001, RNIS 34, Report on the situation of Refugees and Displaced Populations
Internet : <http://www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/RNIS/rnis34.pdf> , accessed 22 October 2001

United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UN SSCN), February 2004, Nutrition Information in Crisis Situations (NICS), Vol 1
Internet : <http://www.unsystem.org/scn/archives/nics01/index.htm#Afghanistan> , accessed 27 September 2004

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), 13 March 2003, Afghanistan Complex Emergency Situation Report 04 (FY 2003)
Internet : http://www.usaid.gov/ofda/publications/situation_reports/FY2003/afghanistan_ce/afghani stan_ce_sr04_fy2003.html , accessed 17 March 2003

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), 22 March 2002, Central Asia Region - Complex emergency situation report #25 (FY 2002)
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/f8dd04a5d1672bfa49256b8700166594?OpenDocument> , accessed 25 March 2002

U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), 2 February 2001, Afghans in Crisis

World Food Programme (WFP), 15 January 2004, Afghanistan Weekly Situation Report 8-14 Jan 2004
Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/326a13ed48771dff1256e1c00478c4c?OpenDocument> , accessed 20 January 2004

World Food Programme (WFP), 25 August 2000, WFP Emergency Report No. 34
Internet : <http://web.archive.org/web/20010110195900/www.wfp.org/ereport/2000/000825.htm> , accessed 9 July 2002

World Food Programme (WFP), 27 August 2004, WFP Emergency Report No. 35 of 2004

Internet :
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/b0d9a483364b7cf049256f000002e4cb?OpenDocument> , accessed 13 October 2004

World Food Programme (WFP), 4 August 2000, WFP Emergency Report No. 31
Internet :
<http://web.archive.org/web/20000819072207/www.wfp.org/ereport/2000/000804.htm> ,
accessed 9 July 2002

World Food Programme (WFP), June 2004, Country Office Afghanistan May 2004
Monthly Report
Internet :
http://www.aims.org.af/sectoral_activities/agriculture/food_security/wfp/monthly_reports/WFP_Afghanistan_Monthly_Report_May_2004.pdf , accessed 27 September 2004

World Food Programme (WFP), October 2001, EMOP 10126.0 Regional Emergency
Operation: "Emergency Food Assistance to Refugees and Vulnerable Populations in
Afghanistan"
Internet : http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2001/wfp_afg_01oct.pdf , accessed
8 October 2001