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Conflict analysis: Chak and Sayedabad districts, Wardak province



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Glossary

ANBP	Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme	NDS	National Security Department
BBC	British Broadcast Corporation	NGO	Non Government Organisation
CCR	Crude Conflict Rate	NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
CDCs	Community Development Councils	NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
CSO	Central Statistics Office	NSP	National Solidarity Programme
CPAU	Cooperation for Peace and Unity	OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration	PTS	Programme Tahkim-i Sulh
DFID	Department for International Development	SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
DIAG	Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups	UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan

HRW	Human Rights Watch	UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
IWPR	Institute for War & Peace Reporting	UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
MP	Member of Parliament	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development	WFP	World Food Programme

Dari and Pashto terms

Khel	Clan or sub-tribe	Shabnamah	Night letters
Hizb	Party	Sharia	Islamic law
Jirga	Council	Shura	Council
Karez	Irrigation system	Shura-i Ulema	Religious council
Madrasa	Religious school	Toyana	Bride price
Meshrano Jirga	Upper house of Parliament	Wolesi Jirga	Lower House of Parliament
Mullah	Religious leader	Woluswal	District governor

List of Parties

Afghan Millat

Harakat-i Islami

Harakat-i Islami Afghanistan,

Hizb-i Islami (Hekmetyar)

Hizb-i Islami (Khalis)

Hizb-i Wahdat Islami Afghanistan (Khalili)

Hizb-i Wahdat Islami Mardom-i Afghanistan (Mohaqeq)

Ittihad-i Islami (Sayaf),

Jamiat Islami Afghanistan,

Junbesh-i Milli

Mahaz-i Milli (Pir Ishaq Gailani)

United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan

1. Introduction

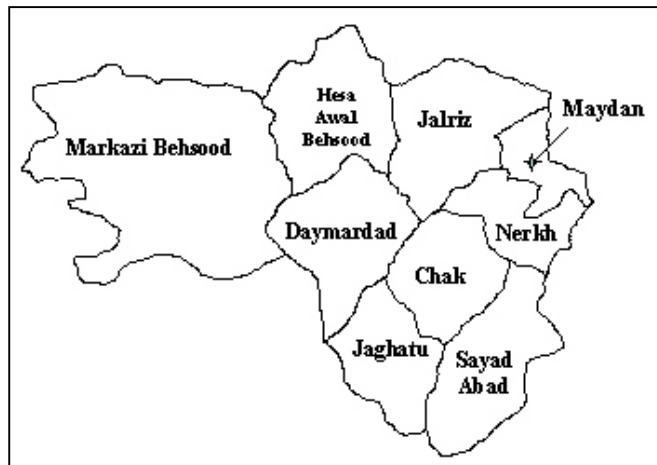


Figure 1 Map showing districts of Wardak province

The security situation in Wardak deteriorated significantly in 2008 and was covered significantly by the media. The deterioration of security was marked by increased Taliban influence and operations by international and Afghan military forces. However the deteriorating security situation was only part of the story as many of the changes in local perceptions of the Afghan government and international community had been evolving for some time, as had the increasing influence of non-state actors.

One of the key areas at stake was control of the informal justice mechanisms which are present in every village in Wardak. These community groups involving elders, mullahs

and other leading community figures continued to attempt to resolve conflicts in their communities despite of the conflict that was raging around them.

Within Chak and Sayedabad districts the major local conflict drivers are land and water, consistent with the findings of the other papers in this series. However the focus of the international community, the deployment of additional forces and growing influence of other actors has had an impact on local conflict, and in some ways has exacerbated the issues that communities face in preserving their livelihoods.

More broadly in the province, ongoing communal conflict was reported in Behsud in the spring of 2008, which may also be a feature of the conflict landscape in 2009. Regardless of the motivations for the conflicts between nomadic and settled groups it is the communities, on both sides, that suffer the consequences. A particularly salient aspect of the nomadic – settled community disputes is that they have the potential to polarise ethnic relations within the province in a way which could lead to further local conflict, but also greater instability.

This paper is the last in the conflict analysis series that CPAU has conducted in 2008. It is worth noting that this paper is somewhat different in design and purpose from the other papers. It was not possible to obtain the Peace Council conflict data for Chak and therefore the analysis in this paper is based primarily on other sources, also used in the other papers. The outcomes of this paper are more tentative and less sure than the other papers because we are not able to use all of the datasets available in other areas to corroborate the data. The report does however provide some information about Wardak which has not been made public, and has allowed us to demonstrate the need for consistent local conflict monitoring if robust conflict analysis is to be made.

2. Methodology

Definitions

The definitions applied in this project reflect the perception of conflict as defined by the Peace Councils. This has been adopted in place of an externally applied definition so as to reflect an Afghan interpretation of their experiences of conflict. This led to several categorical and definitional challenges and therefore coding of conflicts, who was involved and what was the cause of the conflict have been driven by what the councils have reported rather than a pre-defined list set by CPAU. This step is crucial in the understanding of what conflict is in Afghanistan.

Conflict

'Conflict' in the context of this study is an incident that has been brought to a Peace Council run by CPAU in the districts under investigation. The range of conflicts is diverse, including everything from fights over parking; access to pasture land; control of water resources; domestic violence; kidnapping; murder; debt amongst others. Further conflicts are not recorded in terms of the number of times they are brought to a council for resolution, nor the length of the conflict (though some records note that conflicts have been present for a number of years). In addition the councils do not record whether this is a conflict that had been addressed by another body, or been considered dormant by the parties.

These limitations mean that we cannot make any judgements on how many times the Peace Council must meet to address a conflict, how long conflicts last, what is the rate at which they are dormant but then re-emerge at a later date. These are issues that could be looked at in future studies but are beyond the ability of the current data-set.

Parties

'Parties' to the conflict recorded are individuals or groups that are directly engaged in the conflict. The councils recorded not only the individuals, who were involved, but their affiliation and relation to other parties in the conflicts, including both individual and communal groups. The team created a separation between conflicts within families (intra-family), between 2 families (inter-family), between families in the same community (intra-community) and finally between different communities (inter-community).

Cause

Conflict is often caused by more than one factor, and conflicts can continue over many episodes (see definition above). When the data was collected the councils were asked to identify the *primary* reason or cause for the conflict that they recorded. The team then formed categories based on the themes that came out from the data. They include conflicts caused by; water, land, weddings/marriages, debt/financial, murder/blood feud, domestic violence. These 6 categories captured 82% of the conflicts recorded. Another category of 28 'other' conflicts was created as well as one for the 18 'interpersonal' conflicts (11% and 7% respectively of the total included in the data set). The 'interpersonal' conflicts were all recorded in one district and 'other/interpersonal' is considered one category in the analysis – though the reason why one district would have a large number of different interpersonal conflicts should be investigated further.

Conflict rate

The 'conflict rate' that is applied in some of the quantitative data analysis and graphs is based on the calculation of crude mortality rates used in humanitarian situations such as refugee camps to identify the severity of the health issues facing a community. The rationale behind the use of the 'crude conflict rate' is to address some of the perennial data issues in Afghanistan. Firstly, there is an extreme variation in population sizes between districts – within this sample alone the range is from 15,000 – 249,000. Secondly, simple counting of conflicts no grounding in how severe a situation could be. As an example we could imagine the report 'a car accident on a road killed 3 people and injured 7'. The accident itself doesn't tell us anything about how dangerous the area where the accident happened actually is. Is it a one off accident, or the latest in a series of accidents?

Using an example using conflict, if there are 15 cases of conflict in a district with 250,000 people how do we know if it is not as bad as a 15 conflict cases in a district with 15,000 people? This should make it clear that

simple reporting of conflicts tells us very little, and why the project has devised a Crude Conflict Rate to provide some empirical basis for qualitative and quantitative data.

The crude conflict rate indicates severity allowing greater comparability between districts with differing populations b) by indicating severity over time we can also identify which conflicts are affected by other conflict drivers. Replacing deaths with 'conflicts' allows gives the following calculation;

$$\text{Crude Conflict Rate (CCR)} = \frac{\text{No of conflicts} \times \text{Population of District}}{100,000}$$

The crude in the title is important – this is a crude indicator, and conflict is not as finite as mortality, so caution should be exercised in taking the analysis too far. This is particularly important because the CCR does not differentiate the seriousness between the different causes or parties – a murder is given the same importance as a debt related conflict. What it can help with is analysing which districts are affected by a very high rate of conflict – from which, using other data and analysis, strategies can then be developed to mitigate, address and reduce conflict.

Primary sources

CPAU monitoring

The key primary resource is a data-set of the monitoring carried out by CPAU of its Peace Councils in 6 of the 8 target districts. Once the data was cleaned and re-coded the data for 5 districts was significant and include 256 unique conflict incidents in 5 of 8 districts. One district, Chak, had only 8 incidents and it was decided to drop Chak from the quantitative analysis – but it was retained, along with Sayedabad and Jaghori which had no monitoring data collected, in the analysis as a null category to identify whether the CPAU monitoring made a significant difference to our understanding of conflict in the district.

The remaining districts provide information over the period 2005-2008 (first half). Not all districts had data for all years – and in one district there was a gap in reporting for one year, though this did not affect the trends noted in the analysis.

The analysis of Chak, Sayedabad and Jaghori districts continued without the quantitative data, in effect creating a null category where a conflict analysis is done with qualitative data only. This is important in demonstrating the value added by using quantitative data in support of qualitative analysis.

The data is a comprehensive set of what the Peace Councils experienced but from interviews with Peace Council members and reviewing the data it is clear that a) the councils are not reporting all of the incidents they deal with b) they are not reporting many incidents they fail to 'resolve'. These issues are discussed in greater depth in Implications for Peace Building Programming later in this synthesis paper.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire was sent to CPAU staff to assist with political, social and economy understanding of each district under investigation. The questionnaire covered number of areas including the political affiliations of key individuals in the district and province; movements of nomadic groups; presence of armed groups and functioning of state institutions. The questionnaires were designed to fill gaps in knowledge about the relationships between district level conflicts and provincial level conflicts and / or dynamics. For some districts where information was difficult to verify additional organisations and individuals were contacted to provide further analysis.

Secondary sources

Each of the researchers reviewed literature with regard to their region, province and district to investigate the historical conflict trends in that area. This included a range of academic and policy related information and was summarised in a background paper for each district (Provinces where two districts were under investigation were combined in to 1 paper). Further the team was able to access a media database covering 2002-2008 for all of the target districts. This allowed the staff to corroborate academic material, the security databases and the CPAU monitoring against reporting from that area.

Security databases

The team has access to 2 security datasets which are not public. They cover 2002-5 for all provinces/districts and 2007-8 for some of the districts. The two datasets are not comparable.

They provide a benchmark to investigate the statistical linkages between local conflicts (as reported by the CPAU Peace Councils) and higher order conflicts – though simple inferences should not be made and causality can only be made from further qualitative data.

Analytical frameworks

In order to assist in the ordering, prioritisation and critique of the large amount of data generated by the project various frameworks were developed in the process of the project. Of these two were selected to help provide an appreciation of the dynamics of conflict and another for the dimensions of conflict.

The framework for dimensions of conflict was developed to represent the international/regional, national, provincial and local dynamics and factors in conflicts that had emerged out of the various data sources. The types of conflicts, such as land or water, were inserted in to the matrix and the team was asked to identify the links that the major conflicts in their areas had with other actors.

The dynamics of conflict framework is adapted from DfID's Conflict assessment tool developed by the Conflict Security and Development Group. (Goodhand, 2001) The dynamics take the same list of major conflicts used in the first database and asks questions about the relation of the conflict to economic, social, political, and security elements. It has been modified in this project to include space for discussing the policy implications of each section where relations are identified.

3. Conflict history in Wardak

Wardak province is located in the Central (or Central East) region of Afghanistan; bordering with Parwan to the Northeast, Kabul and Logar, to the east, Ghazni to the south and Bamyan to the west. The capital of Wardak province is Maidan Shahr about 35 km from Kabul. Wardak province covers area of 10,348 Sq Km and the majority of the provincial population (527,750 people) live in rural areas. The most heavily populated areas are along the Kabul – Kandahar Highway, and the rest of the province is thinly populated with villages which are concentrated in areas with available irrigation and water sources (CSO and UNFPA, 2003).

Pashtuns are the major ethnic group in Wardak province.¹ Pashtuns of the Wardak tribe inhabit the districts: Chak, Sayedabad, Jaghatu and Daymirdad (65%). Pashtuns of different tribes (Andar, Sheenzi, Autmanzi), inhabit Nirkh district. In Jalrez district about 45% of the population are Karooti Pashtuns, and 65% of the population in the provincial capital Maidan Shahr are Pashtun (Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007).

The two Behsud districts in the western part of Wardak are predominantly populated by Hazaras. Kuchis migrate across parts of Sayedabad, Daymirdad and Nirkh between April and September. There are ongoing conflicts between settled and nomadic groups in the Behsud districts with regard to access to pastureland (RRERS, Undated).

Electricity is available to 15% of the Wardak population. There are about 40-50 micro hydro power stations, some people get electricity through private and NSP funded generators (RRERS, Undated). Chak dam on the Logar River produces 3,300 Kilo Watts. There are three major river basins, including those of the Helmand, Logar and Maidan rivers. Despite the presence of river water Karez provide a significant amount of irrigation in the districts and 128,000 acres of the land in Wardak is irrigated (RRERS, Undated). The rehabilitated Kabul-Kandahar Highway is important factor in the socio-economic development in the province.

Table 1 General information Wardak, Sayedabad and Chak

	Population ²	Area (km ²) ³	Major ethnicities and tribal groups ⁴	Major political parties ⁵	Major agricultural products ⁶
Wardak	529,343	9,934	Wardak Pashtuns Hazaras Tajiks Kuchis	Afghan Millat Hizb-i Islami (HiG) Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami-i Afghanistan Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami-i Mardom-i Afghanistan Harakat-i Islami Ittihad-i Islami (Sayyaf) Mahaz-i Milli (Pir Gailani) Hizb-i Afghanistan Nawaen Jamiat-i Islami Taliban	Wheat, barley, maize, potatoes, fruits. Wardak is famous with its apples and apricots.

¹ There is some disagreement whether the Wardaks are of the Karlanri or Ghilzai Pashtun groups. Most evidence suggests they are Karlanri (NPS, Undated).

² CSO and UNFPA, 2003; Wardak seems to have more significant than usual variations in population estimations for the province. The figure in the tables, as in the other papers, is from the UNFPA and CSO household listing from 2003. Alternative figures include; 506,300 from CSO 2005-6; 886,465 supplied by the Governor of Wardak (Governors Office, 2008).

³ Taken from the 398 district model for Afghanistan held by author.

⁴ Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007; NPS, Undated.

⁵ Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007; NPS, Undated.

⁶ CSO and UNFPA, 2003.

Sayed Abad	114,793	1,163	Pashtuns Ethnic groups: Wardak, Naseer, Alizai and Gadkhel Hazaras ; Other	Hizb-i Islami (HiG) Ittihad-i Islami Mahaz-i Milli Taliban	Wheat, corn, maize, potatoes, fruits
Chak	83,376	1,273	Wardak Pashtuns	Hizb-i Islami (HiG) Taliban	Wheat, corn rice, maize, grapes, potatoes

1995 - 2001

The Taliban captured Wardak on 10 February 1995, which was well received by the majority Pashtun population. The mullahs were also initially pleased, as they were given more respect by the Taliban and were invited by the Taliban to consult on Sharia in the Taliban government. Nevertheless, after a while conflict over the direction of the government between the Taliban, mullahs and other actors became evident. The population of Wardak was not affected greatly by the gender restrictions, banning of TV and music, imposed by the Taliban, as they often did not enjoy these freedoms previously. Although brutal punishments were carried out by the Taliban, there are still many supporters of the Taliban in Wardak (Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007).

2001 - Present

After the Taliban fled from Wardak, the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (also known as the Northern Alliance) moved into the provincial administration, but could not establish control over the province. The Governorship was seized and disputed by different commanders – on one side by Abdul Ahmad Durrani, a Mujahidin linked to Sayyaf's Ittihad-i Islami and then by the acting police chief Commander Nangiyalai, previously of Hizb-i Islami (Khalis). The government in Kabul accused Nangiyalai of being supported by ISI (Inter-Service Intelligence of Pakistan) and tried to bring security in the area by backing Commander Muzafarudin a former Hizb-i Islami (HiG) leader who is currently the Police Chief (R.K., 2003).

After the Taliban departure from Wardak, the political power in the districts was taken over by "shuras". The shuras were formed by commanders and armed groups among the local population, and used by warlords to legitimize their power.

The first legal governor of post-Taliban Wardak province, Governor Saifullah was appointed by Chairman Karzai in the autumn of 2002. Saifullah put an end to the conflicts in the province by dividing authority amongst different armed groups and commanders – he removed the acting woluswals and placed them in other districts to weaken their power base and he brought in woluswals from other districts.

The security situation reportedly improved in the province, although there were still armed groups operating under the government security forces. There were tensions between the security organs acting in Wardak – the Afghan National Police (ANP), National Directorate of Security (NDS) and Afghan Military Forces (AMF). The three security agencies seemed to have the same mandates and responsibilities to fight terrorism and narcotics, but these agencies complied with different judicial systems – the police referred cases to the attorney and the courts, the Army to military courts, the NDS to "special security courts". The tensions between the security institutions were also based on the fact that ANP, NDS and AMF were affiliated with different political groups: the police was controlled by Mujahideen affiliated with Ittihad-i Islami, while the NDS (and to lesser extend the Army) were loyal to Shura-i Nazar (R.K., 2003).

According to 2004 survey carried out by Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, the real power holders among the Pashtuns in Wardak are the big landlords, and whilst there are no major warlords in the province there are several small armed groups (Larsson, 2004).

The security situation in Wardak deteriorated significantly in 2008 with fighting between international military forces, the Afghan military and the Taliban in several districts, including both Chak and Sayedabad (for example see (CNN, 2008; BBC, 2008). The Taliban may have also been able to establish parallel state systems in some districts in Wardak (Gopal, 2009).

Political parties and actors

There are a wide range of political actors operating in Wardak province, though the three key parties seem to be; Hizb-i Islami (HiG), one faction of the former Hizb-i Wahdat; Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami-i Mardom-i Afghanistan, and the Taliban.⁷ Government appointments were contested after the fall of the Taliban government in 2001 (see above), but seem to have settled in to a pattern where Hizb-i Islami related actors have been given significant positions in the police and governor's office (Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007).

This is in contrast to the Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami-i Mardom-i Afghanistan which has done better at the ballot box and is linked to a number of the elected MPs and Provincial Councils members (though officially in both elections parties did not stand, only candidates).

The Taliban exercise both military and political presence in the province. Taliban forces in Wardak have been estimated at about 800 lightly armed men, split into dozens of different factions (Burke, 2008). However, a Taliban Commander, active in Wardak province, claimed having 6,000 fighters and that the Taliban controlled three quarters of the province. Although these figures are likely exaggerated, the Taliban are reported to have been freely moving at the night, which gives the impression to local people that there is a high level of Taliban presence in the province (BBC, 2008).

The Taliban in Wardak have kept low profile during 2002, and many fled to Pakistan. By 2005, Taliban forces started to return to the province, focusing on reactivating old networks and exploiting the situation: there were a range of factors, which were favourable to the Taliban eg. the anger about civilian casualties caused by the military actions of the international forces, the anger of the villagers at the corrupt government, and overall insecurity. The Taliban started preaching against the international forces and by end of 2007 year the Taliban started their recruitment process among the Wardak population (Burke, 2008). The Provincial Governor has denied that the Taliban have influence in the province, claiming that the government has absolute control over the province and the Taliban do not have the support of the people (Leithead, 2008).

Wardak has 5 representatives in the Wolesi Jirga: two independent, two from the Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami Mardom-i Afghanistan party, and one member is from the Hizb-i Harakat-i Islami Mardom-i Afghanistan. Interestingly, although the majority of the population of Wardak Pashtun, three of the elected representatives from Wardak are Hazaras. The Wardak Provincial Council, is comprised of 9 members, eight of whom declared that they were independent. The ninth elected members is Mohammad Hussain Fahimee is Hazara from the Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami Mardom-i Afghanistan party.⁸

In the 2004 presidential elections, Hamid Karzai (Pashtun, Independent), received 60.8% of the vote of the province; Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq (Hazara, Independent) received 32.7%; and the Tajik Yonous Qanooni from Hizb-i Nihzat-i Milli Afghanistan got 2.7%. These results reflect some of the ethnic composition of Wardak.⁹ Significantly, 42% of voters in Wardak were women.

Another significant factor that impacts the security situation in Wardak is land disputes between Hazaras and Kuchis, which have gradually intensified over the last two years in the two Behsud districts of Wardak. The Behsud Districts were part of Hazarajat, are inhabited mostly by Hazaras, who are not sympathetic to the Taliban and they associate the Kuchis with the Taliban. In 2007 Hazaras claimed that armed Kuchis burnt villagers' houses and forced thousands of villagers out of their homes. It was reported that more than 4,000 people fled the province (Coghlan, 2007). In the beginning of the spring in March 2008, ethnic Hazaras protested in Kabul against the armed attacks by Kuchis on their lands, followed by further protests in July 2008 which led to President Karzai ordering the Kuchis to leave the Hazara's areas (Associated Press, 2008). President Karzai set up several commissions to investigate the causes of the problems and make suggestions, but as yet no solution has been found.

⁷ Correspondence with CPAU staff in Wardak, 25/09/08

⁸ See Appendix 1

⁹ Total votes: 127,654; Invalid votes 1,693 (IEC, 2004).

Table 2 Key actors in Wardak province

	Name	Known current affiliation	Known previous affiliation	Any known relations between officials
Governor	Halim Fedayi		Hizb-i Islami (HiG)	
Police Chief	General Abdul Yamil Muzafarudin	Difficult to identify	Commander of Hizb-i Islami (HiG) Good relationship with the Northern Alliance	

4. Sayedabad District

Sayedabad and Chak districts are adjacent districts in the south-east of Wardak province. Both districts are predominantly Pashtun. Sayedabad borders, on the south and on the east with Logar province and Ghazni. The districts bordering Sayedabad in Ghazni are populated mostly with Hazara communities, while the bordering Logar districts have some minority Tajiks (Khanwar) and Ghilzai Pashtuns (in Baraki Barak District). The Kabul-Kandahar Highway runs through Sayedabad which has been the site of numerous security incidents.

Sayedabad is a largely rural district, comprised of 117 main and 73-sub villages. The average household size is 12 people, which is double than the average household size in the province and Afghanistan more generally (CSO and UNFPA, 2003).

As well as different ethnic communities, the Pashtun majority are split in to a number of different tribes and khel. The largest are the Mayar, Mir Khel and Noori who are part of the Wardaks. Other groups include the Naseer, Alizai and Gadkhel. The latter groups are believed to be economically disadvantaged (CPAU field data, 2008).

The geographical terrain of the district is semi-mountainous, and semi-flat. Most of the villages of the western part of Sayedabad are accessible by car for the majority of the year. The primary economic activities are farming and raising livestock.

According to a survey, carried out by CPAU in 2007 on the role of the religious leaders, the population of Sayedabad is very traditional and religious, religion structures their daily life and therefore the role of the religious leaders is significant in the daily life of the communities. The religious leaders in Sayedabad are not involved in politics, at least publicly; they sympathize with the armed opposition groups and jihad against the "foreign invaders" (Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007).

Another factor for the radicalization of Sayedabad is that a large number of people migrated to Pakistan during the war in the 80s. In Pakistan the Afghan refugees end up in the refugee camps, where they send their children to religious schools and madrasas. In Sayedabad there is a mosque for every 50 households (Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007).

Although the people in Sayedabad have strong religious beliefs, there is no umbrella organization of religious leaders in Sayedabad because the religious groups are afraid of reprisals by the Taliban. In addition there are no mullahs who are elected representatives in the Provincial Council or Parliament,¹⁰ or in the Provincial and National Shura-i Ulema of religious leaders. This is part because the Taliban are not in favour of strong religious political groups which could challenge their power in the district and the mullahs would fear reprisals if they were to challenge the Taliban.¹¹

The Sayedabad district governor is Fazel Karim, he is a Wardak Pashtun affiliated with the Hizb-i Islami (HiG) party. He is from the district, and has been in post about two and half years.¹² The district police chief

¹⁰ There are representatives from Sayedabad district in both the Wolesi Jirga and the Provincial Council.

¹¹ "The issue of membership of the Shura-i Ulema is particularly sensitive due to the religious authority given to this body by the government and its ability to produce Islamic edicts against the Taleban..." (Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007, p. 35)

¹² Questionnaire to local CPAU staff, 2008

Commander Zalmay is also Pashtun from Charkh district in Logar province. He has been in the post for about 1 year. He is affiliated with the Mahaz-i Milli (Pashtun) party.

The dominant political parties in Sayedabad are Hizb-i Islami (HiG), Ittihad-i Islami and Mahaz-i Milli.¹³ Hizb-i Islami (HiG) was the largest political party during the jihad, and they were the first party to fight with the Taliban, and competed to recruit among the Pashtun population in Wardak (Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007). During Mujahedin times, with the aid coming from the Western states and Arab supporters, many people from Sayedabad were also forced to join Harakat-i Islami, Ittihad-i Islami, Mahaz-i Milli, Hizb-i Islami (HiG) and Jamiat-i Islami.

Table 3 Key actors in Sayedabad

	Name	Known current affiliation	Known previous affiliation	Any known relations between officials
Governor	Fazel Karim	Hizb-i Islami (HiG)		
Police Chief	Commander Zalmay	Mahaz-i Milli		

5. Chak District

Chak is located in south eastern Wardak, bordering Sayedabad to the east and Jaghatu in the south. The population of Chak district are predominantly Wardak Pashtuns.

In 2002 UNCHR reported that 14,497 refugees from Chak were in Pakistan many of whom do not seem to have returned (see table 5). About 10% of the houses in the district were destroyed due to the conflicts from 1978 onwards. In addition to high levels of displacement it was estimated that almost half of the young males from the district worked outside the country to provide an income for their families (UNHCR, 2002). Most people in Chak make their livelihoods from agriculture and raising livestock, though they have been adversely affected by droughts in recent years.

Chak has been badly affected by the insurgency. There has been widespread use of nightletters and religious leaders in the district are reported to be preaching jihad and urging people to join the Taliban. The District Governor echoed the fears of other observers that the increasing influence of the Taliban in the districts was as a result of the release of the Taliban leader Ustad Yassar from Chak in exchange for the Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo in March 2007 (Amani, 2007).

The district governor has recently been replaced. Formerly the district governor was Anayatullah Mangal, a Pashtun from Mangal District of Paktia Province. He had no known affiliation with any political or armed groups and held the post for approximately 2 and half years. The new district governor is Mohammad Ismael who was appointed two months ago. He is from Daimerdad district and is affiliated with Hizb-i Islami (HiG).

The district police chief is Mahmud, a Wardak Pashtun from Chak district. He has been in post for 1 year and he is affiliated with Hizb-i Islami (HiG). According to Almas Khan, commander of Chak's auxiliary police, the situation is worst at the night, when the government's movements are restricted and the Taliban are moving freely in the district.

There have also been reports of attacks by Afghan and international military forces against Taliban commanders, including, **Commander Mohammad Haidar, in September 2008, who was allegedly involved in attacks against Afghan security forces (Rahmani, 2008).** Chak has one representative of the district in Meshrano Jirga, and three representatives in the Provincial Council.

¹³ The rest of other Pashtun parties that are active in Wardak are also present in the district, but their actions are not visible.

Table 4 Key actors in Chak

	Name	Known current affiliation	Known previous affiliation	Any known relations between officials
Governor	Mohammad Ismael	Hizb-i Islami (HiG)		
Police Chief	Mahmod	Hizb-i Islami (HiG)		
Provincial council members	Shershah Wardak	Hizb-i Islami (HiG)		
	Rahila Wardak		Former Khalqi,	
	Bas Bibi	Independent		

6. Conflict dynamics

Local level conflict dynamics

CPAU case studies provide evidence of local conflicts in Wardak which focus mainly on land and water issues as well as a high level of conflicts involving women and children – domestic violence, forced marriages, under age marriages, and multiple marriages.

Local conflicts in Wardak are particularly difficult because many local people have lost faith in the Afghan government due to the high levels of corruption in local and central government and they are choosing to use Taliban justice, not only for civil cases but also in criminal cases such as robbery. The villagers go to the Taliban to solve a myriad property disputes, where they will receive decision quickly, as opposed to cases brought to the government which may not be resolved for many years.

As one report noted, “the only cases that come before Amanullah Ishaqzai, a government judge in Wardak, are those which require an official stamp or disputes among the province's mainly Shia Muslim Hazara ethnic minority, who have historically suffered at the hands of the Sunni Pashtun tribes who make up the bulk of the Taliban. Most of the province's ...inhabitants, mainly peasants, go to the insurgents for rough but often effective justice.” (Burke, 2008)

In Chak and Sayedabad districts, where there are no effective government judicial institutions (courts, police, etc), conflict resolution is provided by traditional local Shuras, where the customary law and Sharia is mostly applied to solve conflicts. Mullahs are part of the Shuras and their opinion is binding on all parties of the conflict (Nawabi, Wardak, & Zaman, 2007).

Women are generally not involved in conflict resolution, whether it involved the Taliban para-statal structures or not, with exceptions made when dealing with small domestic conflicts this further marginalises women and generates injustice in conflicts involving women.

Links between Provincial Level Conflicts and Local Conflicts

The overall security situation in Wardak province has been gradually deteriorating during the years since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. The province is bordering with Kabul and the insecurity of Wardak can affect the security in the capital significantly.

The conflict situation in Wardak during 2004 was dominated by the presidential elections and the resistance to the government by the Taliban and other armed groups. Although the elections were largely peaceful, there were reports of intimidation through night letters and attacks on the voting centres, which aimed to disrupt the elections for the “western backed government”.

As a result of intimidation by anti-government entities, many of the voters burnt their voting cards and were unable to vote, which undermined the fairness of the elections in Wardak. Another factor that might have

undermined the elections in problematic districts (such as Sayedabad and Chak) of Wardak was that the local commanders were required to maintain a secure environment for the voting process (IWPR, 2004). In contrast to the Pashtun districts, the election process in the Behsud I and II districts, populated with Hazaras, was calmer.

By 2005 senior Taliban leaders had started to return to Wardak to regroup and renew the old connections, and gather followers. 2005 and 2006 were also characterised with brazen attacks on schools, especially girls schools; attacks on health workers, NGOs, kidnappings of aid workers. In order to continue to provide education for girls, some groups in Wardak have opened home schools, although teachers and students continued to be intimidated and fear reprisals by the Taliban (Constable, 2006). HRW estimated about 12 attacks were committed against teachers, students and schools by the armed opposition groups in Wardak province between January 2005 and June 2006 (HRW, 2006).

During 2007 and 2008, the Taliban became stronger in Wardak province. After they returned to the province they started to recruit among the Pashtuns, including among the population of Sayedabad and Chak districts. The everyday life of the ordinary people has been significantly affected by the insurgency and the feeling of insecurity has increased.

The Taliban have become visible in Wardak, not only on the main road Kabul-Kandahar Highway, where they carry out ambushes on convoys of international troops and national government army and officials such as the burning of 50 trucks in August 2008 but also in rural areas (BBC, 2008). The Taliban have also become more active inside the province, especially in the districts with significant Pashtun populations. The people of Wardak have mixed views about the Taliban: some support the Taliban saying that they are providing security, which the government is failing to do, others praise the government for building schools and bringing development in the province. (See map on p.16 identifying the areas under Taliban control in Wardak Province).

It was estimated that in 2008 almost all districts with significant Pashtun population were under the control of the Taliban, with only the district centres being secured. The Taliban also have established parallel administrative systems in areas of Wardak where they exercise strict Sharia law (Burke, 2008).

Criminal - Criminal Groups

Along with the deterioration of the security in the province criminal activities have increased. In such a situation, it is difficult for the government to maintain law and order and the Taliban have been trying and punishing criminals through their administrative systems.

There has been an increase in the incidents of robbery and attacks on commercial vehicles on road through Wardak province. In southern Wardak province on 28 May 2008, unidentified gunmen hijacked a food convoy carrying 60 metric tonnes of wheat to Miramoor district, Daikundi province which led WFP to suspended food delivery to Daikundi province (IRIN, 2008).

Other actors and conflict

Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG)

Disarmament has taken place in Wardak, and may have contributed to a range of shifting political and power dynamics in the province.

Mullah Mussa Hotak, an important religious leader from Jalrez district, was detained by American forces in 2004 for alleged links to Taliban after he disarmed as part of the Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) in 2004 (Associated Press, 2004). He is now MP in the Wolesi Jirga and was recently elected as the leader of Harakat-i Islami replacing Mullah Mohammad Nabi.

Under the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) more than 600 weapons and stockpiles of ammunition were collected (Governors Office, 2008). This involved seven former commanders from Wardak handing in about 37 light weapons to the DIAG in 2008 (UNDP-ANBP, 2008). Interestingly there do not seem to be reports of high level commanders who have retained armed groups in the province – except for those affiliated with the Taliban.

Returning refugees

Whilst the overall numbers of returning refugees is small for both districts, they make up a significant proportion of overall returns to the province. Returns clearly spiked early and then fell – and as widespread insecurity gripped Wardak returns have shrunk to negligible amounts. Based on 2003 population estimates 2.7% of the population of Sayedabad returned, and 3.9% of the population of Chak returned.

Given the fact that there is no local conflict data it is difficult to assert whether returnees are the primary cause of local conflict. Interestingly Taliban comments about local conflict in Wardak also suggest that they are often land related – though it seems unlikely that they are necessarily caused by returnees, or that they would make up a disproportionate level of land disputes because of their small number (Abdul, 2008).

Table 5 UNHCR assisted returns to Sayedabad and Chak districts and Wardak province 2002-8, percentages are district returns compared to total provincial returns (UNHCR, 2008)¹⁴

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Sayedabad	1,409 (17.3%)	447 (7.4%)	275 (9%)	201 (7.9%)	76 (6.1%)	205 (12.6%)	118 (7.2%)	2,971 (12.2%)
Chak	1,420 (17.4%)	676 (11.3%)	330 (10.8%)	402 (15.8%)	496 (39%)	97 (6%)	47 (2.9%)	3,228 (13.3%)
Wardak Province	8,160	6,004	3,056	2,547	1,244	1,625	1,629	24,265

Links between local conflict and higher level conflict

With the lack of data and increasing insecurity in the districts it is difficult to give a comprehensive overview of the links between local conflict and higher level conflict. However the following trends seem to be evident. There has been a gradual shift of support towards the Taliban amongst some religious leaders in Wardak (Giustozzi, 2007). The Taliban have used a number of tactics, including night letters to increase their influence.

Armed resistance factions have gained ground in the province including in Sayedabad and Chak. On a national level the insurgency is evolving, and slowly moving towards the provinces surrounding Kabul including Wardak. Another significant factor is the increase of militant activities in the tribal areas of Pakistan, bordering Afghanistan. Resistance groups from the region including Waziristan-Paktika-Khost are moving from Ghazni to increase instability in Wardak (BBC, 2007). Taliban suicide bombers who have been trained in Waziristan (Pakistan) are moving into Wardak to carry out their activities (BBC, 2008b) which provides an international aspect to insecurity and conflict in the province.

By 2008, the Taliban were not only able to move around freely, but were running an alternative justice mechanism – at times involving mullahs who have been living in their communities for many years (Gopal, 2008). The apparent ability to give justice to local communities has greatly enhanced some people's view of the Taliban.

¹⁴ This covers assisted returnees from Pakistan between 3rd March 2002 to- 31st October 2008 and from Iran between 9th April 2002 – 31st October 2008. Note this does not include those resident in Pakistan for migrant labour who may have returned or those who did not accept UNHCR support.

7. Dimensions of Conflict

Through this study it is clear that there are numerous interlinking factors that lead to and impact on conflict trends in Chak and Sayedabad. Local or district-level conflicts that have been discussed on the basis of CPAU Peace Council data can be understood as linked to causes at provincial, national, and even regional levels. Effectively pursuing an agenda of local-level conflict resolution thus requires an examination and understanding of the often complex higher level conflicts and factors of influence. The table below aims to consolidate and present some of the numerous possible causal links between local conflict and contributing higher level factors, which are outlined as they apply to the categories of 'Regional', 'National' and 'Provincial'.

Table 6 Dimensions of conflict - Chak and Sayedabad

Local Conflict	Regional	National	Provincial
1. Land and water conflicts – Type 1 - localised livelihoods	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
2. Land conflict – Type 2 – Land acquisition	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
3. Land conflict – Type 3 – migration of nomadic groups	N/A	One of the causes of the disputes over grazing lands is the lack of land registers and census.	Land grabs in Wardak are mainly concentrated in Behsud Hazaras districts. Kuchis armed attacks have killed more than 10 Hazaras in 2008 and sparked Hazara demonstrations in Kabul. It may affect Chak and Sayedabad, Kuchis pas through these districts.
4. Activity of government opposition groups	Taliban from Waziristan (Pakistan), where suicide bombers are trained, move into Wardak	The growing activities of Taliban on the south and east of Afghanistan, have led to their influence increasing in the districts	Some of the local population support the Taliban, but many are just scared. The provincial government affiliated with HIG, lack of support to the police
5. Inter-party or factional conflicts	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
6. Criminal activities	Unknown	Unknown	Insecurity allows for criminal groups to act more freely
7. Debt and financial conflicts	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
8. Marriage and domestic violence	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

8. Conclusion

Local conflict in Wardak is dominated by insecurity created by the resistance to the government and the resulting operations by Afghan and International military forces. Local authorities are failing to address inter-personal and inter-community conflicts in the province, due to inefficient administration, in part because of insecurity, but also because local mechanisms are unable to respond to local people's needs. Local people are therefore relying on the parallel administrative systems of the Taliban in Wardak.

Although development projects of schools, roads and clinics have been undertaken in Wardak province, the continual deterioration in the security situation since 2005 has meant that much of the progress has been undermined. This has not been helped by growing anger at civilian casualties and perceived corruption by government officials. The Taliban in response have been able to establish some para-statal systems and provide an outlet for the frustrations of some local people.

The conflict dynamics linked to the insurgency and resistance to government forces also affects the livelihoods of the population, as insecurity on the roads has led to the suspension of some humanitarian food supplies and restricted the work of aid workers. The increased attacks on NGOs forced many organizations to leave the province or limit their activities. Many children especially girls have been deprived of schooling because of the poor security situation and deliberate attacks against teachers, students and schools.

Appendix 1 Wardak: Provincial Councils Elected Candidates

-   **Mohammad Hussain Fahimee** (Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami Mardom-e-Afghanistan)
-   **Mohammad Mokhles Mokhles** (Independent)
-   **Shair Shah** (Independent)
-   **Haji Mohammad Hazrat Janan** (Independent)
-   **Sayed Mohammad Saeedi** (Independent)
-   **Sultan Hussain Razi** (Independent)
-   **Rahila Wardak** (Independent)
-   **Rabia Amini** (Independent)
-   **Bas Bibi** (Independent)

Wardak: Wolesi Jirga Elected Representatives

-   **Abdul Reza Rezaee** (Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami Mardom-e-Afghanistan)
-   **Ahmad Hassain Sangar Dost** (Hizb-e-Harakat-e-Islami Mardom-e-Afghanistan)
-   **Haji Mosa Hotak** (Independent)
-   **Sediqa Mubariz** (Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami Mardom-e-Afghanistan)
-   **Doctor Roshanak Wardak** (independent)

Appendix 2 Map of areas believed to be under Taliban control

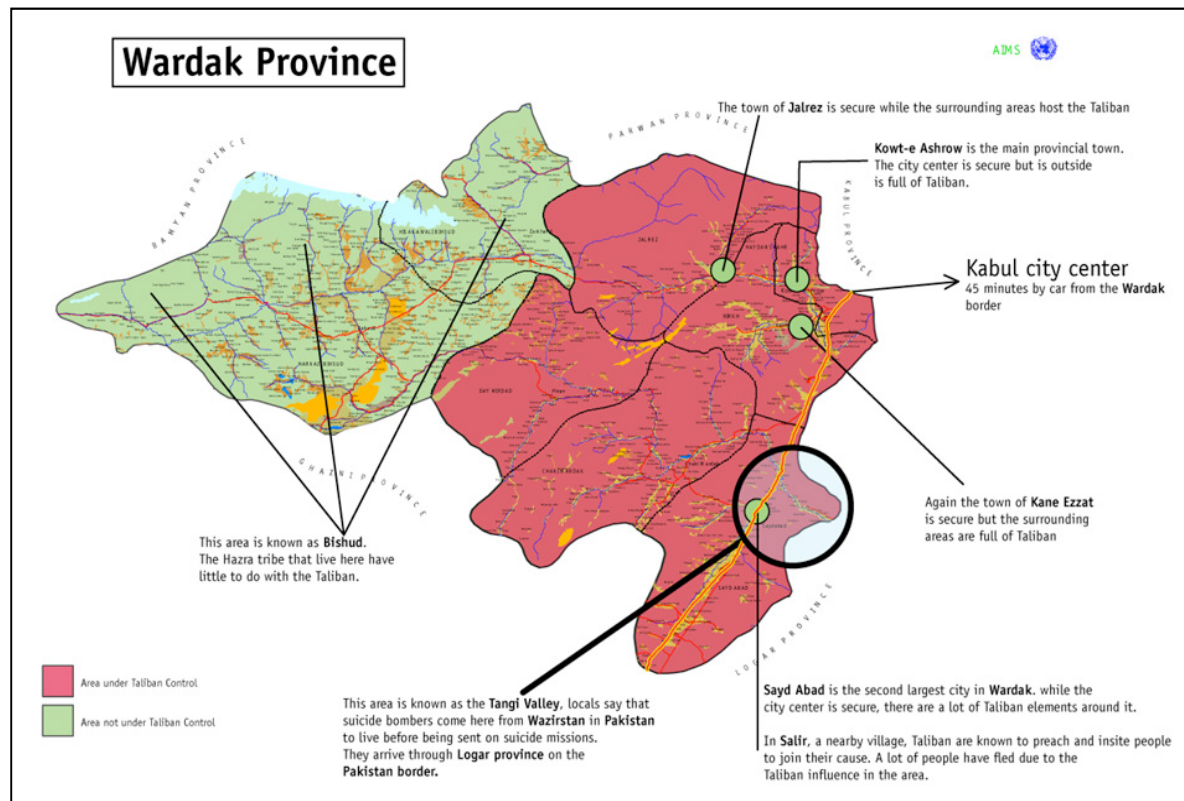


Figure 2 Areas under Taliban control in the Wardak Province (Senlis Council, 2008)

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