

**Global IDP**  
DATABASE

24/3/04

## PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : AFGHANISTAN

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

(as of 2 February, 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 Moïse Duboule, 59  
1209 Geneva - Switzerland  
Tel: + 41 22 799 07 00  
Fax: + 41 22 799 07 01  
E-mail : [jdpsurvey@nrc.ch](mailto:jdpsurvey@nrc.ch)

## CONTENTS

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PROFILE SUMMARY</b>	<b>9</b>
RETURN OF IDPS CONSTRAINED BY INSECURITY, LAND DISPUTES AND LACK OF AID	9
<b>CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>14</b>
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LAND AND PEOPLE	14
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF AFGHANISTAN (OCTOBER 2001)	14
DROUGHT AND ECONOMIC DISRUPTION IN THE NORTHEAST (DECEMBER 2000)	16
<b>THE CIVIL WAR</b>	<b>17</b>
A HISTORY OF CONFLICT	17
OVERVIEW OF MAIN DISPLACEMENTS (1992-2000)	18
CONFLICT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT IN 2001	19
MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS DURING 2001	20
<b>THE U.S. - AFGHANISTAN WAR</b>	<b>21</b>
US ASK TALEBAN TO HAND OVER BEN LADEN OR FACE MILITARY CONSEQUENCES (OCTOBER 2001)	21
US POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN IS LARGELY A FUNCTION OF OIL (OCTOBER 2001)	21
PEOPLE FLEE MAJOR CITIES TO RURAL AREAS IN FEAR OF U.S. ATTACKS (JANUARY 2002)	23
<b>THE POST-TALEBAN ERA</b>	<b>25</b>
ANTI-PASHTUN VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN DISPLACES THOUSANDS IN THE NORTH (MARCH 2002)	25
ABUSES BY ARMED MILITIAS, LACK OF FOOD AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FORCE PEOPLE TO FLEE IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN (APRIL 2002)	26
HUMAN RIGHTS, PUBLIC SECURITY AND THE RULE OF LAW STILL NOT UPHELD (DECEMBER 2002)	27
INSECURITY AND FORCED RECRUITMENT IN THE NORTH CAUSE DISPLACEMENT AND HAMPER RETURN (APRIL 2003)	29
CONTINUED FIGHTING AND INSECURITY ARE THE MOST SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO PEACE AND RETURN (JUNE 2003)	30
DISPLACEMENT UPON RETURN DUE TO LAND TENURE PROBLEMS (SEPTEMBER 2003)	32
<b>NATURAL DISASTERS</b>	<b>34</b>
RAIN RETURNS TO SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN AFTER 4 YEARS OF DROUGHT (JUNE 2003)	34
FLOODS DISPLACE THOUSANDS IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN (JANUARY 2004)	35
<b>POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS</b>	<b>36</b>
SEVERE POLITICAL AND LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES AHEAD OF THE JUNE 2004 ELECTIONS (DECEMBER 2003)	36
LOYA JIRGA ADOPTS NEW CONSTITUTION AMID POLITICAL INTIMIDATION (JANUARY 2004)	37

**POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES** 40

---

<b>GENERAL</b>	40
WHO ARE THE IDPs IN AFGHANISTAN? (OCTOBER 2003)	40
<b>GLOBAL FIGURES</b>	43
BETWEEN 184,000 AND 300,000 IDPs AS OF DECEMBER 2003	43
TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs AS OF MID-OCTOBER 2001 AND PROJECTED DISPLACEMENT	45
TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs AS OF APRIL 2001: 300,000-400,000	47
TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs AT THE END OF 1999: 500,000-700,000	48
TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPs AT THE END OF 1998: 540,000-1,000,000	49
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION</b>	50
SOUTHERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	50
WESTERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	51
NORTHERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	52
SOUTHEASTERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	52
EASTERN REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	53
CENTRAL REGION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2003)	54
<b>VULNERABLE GROUPS</b>	55
KUCHIS IDPs, THE LARGEST OF AFGHANISTAN'S DISPLACED POPULATION, NEED ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS (JUNE 2003)	55
DISPLACED WOMEN ARE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE (JUNE 2003)	56

**PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT** 58

---

<b>GENERAL</b>	58
PASHTUNS FLEEING THE ETHNIC TENSIONS IN THE NORTH AND KUCHIS FLEEING THE DROUGHT END UP AS DISPLACED IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2002)	58
HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND LACK OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION FORCE PEOPLE TO FLEE IN THE WEST TO HERAT (APRIL 2002)	58
PEOPLE FLEE THE MAIN CITIES TO SEEK REFUGE IN RURAL AREAS IN FEAR OF U.S. BOMBING (OCTOBER 2001)	59
THE PATTERN OF DISPLACEMENT FOLLOWS THE PATTERN OF FIGHTING (SEPTEMBER 2001)	60
FOUR MAJOR PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT (OCTOBER 1999)	60

**PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT** 62

---

<b>GENERAL</b>	62
HRW CONCERNED THAT NEW CONSTITUTION FAILS TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF PAST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND PREVENT NEW ONES (JANUARY 2004)	62
PROTECTION IS LARGELY DEPENDENT ON SOCIAL NETWORKS (MARCH 2003)	63
GOVERNMENT'S MAIN PROTECTION ISSUES FOR RETURNEES (MARCH 2003)	64
U.S. "WARLORD STRATEGY" SHOWS PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT A PRIORITY (DECEMBER 2002)	64
<b>PHYSICAL SECURITY</b>	66
CHILDREN IN IDP CAMP IN THE SOUTH AT RISK OF BEING KILLED BY WOLVES (JULY 2003)	66
RETURNING IDPs FACE PRECARIOUS SECURITY CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES (JUNE 2003)	67
IDPs IN CAMPS IN THE NORTH SUBJECTED TO FORCIBLE RELOCATIONS, COMPULSORY PERFORMANCE OF MILITARY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (JUNE 2002)	68

SURVEY REVEALS PASHTUN HOUSEHOLDS IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN ARE 2-5 TIMES MORE EXPOSED TO ABUSES THAN OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS (APRIL 2002)	70
CLUSTER BOMBS PUT IDPs AT RISK (DECEMBER 2002)	70
LANDMINES IN AFGHANISTAN (AUGUST 2002)	71
<b><u>SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)</u></b>	<b>73</b>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>73</b>
GENERAL HUMANITARIAN SITUATION STILL EXTREMELY PRECARIOUS (JULY 2002)	73
DROUGHT, WAR AND ECONOMIC COLLAPSE HAVE CAUSED WIDESPREAD VULNERABILITY AMONG THE POPULATION (MAY 2002)	74
CONCENTRATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES IN URBAN AREAS (APRIL 2002)	75
ETHNICITY, TRIBALISM AND SURVIVAL (SEPTEMBER 2001)	76
<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>76</b>
DIPHTHERIA OUTBREAKS IN ZHARE DASHT IDP CAMP NEAR KANDAHAR (AUGUST 2003)	76
MSF CONCERNED ABOUT THE RELOCATION OF 12,000 IDPs FROM SHAYDAYEE TO MASLAKH CAMP (JUNE 2003)	77
MALNUTRITION AND MORTALITY RATES SURPRISINGLY LOW IN ACUTELY FOOD INSECURE SAR-E-POL (JULY 2002)	78
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF DISPLACED PERSONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS URGENT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS (MAY 2003)	79
SURVEY OF MASLAKH CAMP SHOWS ALARMING LEVELS OF MORTALITY (JULY 2002)	80
WHO REPORTS A SIGNIFICANT MORTALITY RATE DROP IN MASLAKH CAMP (MARCH 2002)	82
APPROXIMATELY 2 DOCTORS FOR EVERY 10,000 PERSONS IN AFGHANISTAN (JANUARY 2002)	83
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>83</b>
INCREASE IN MALNUTRITION IN NORTHERN SHAMALI-SOUTHERN PANSHEER (NOVEMBER 2003)	83
ENDING OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN CAMPS PUT THE MOST VULNERABLE AT RISK (JUNE 2003)	84
GENERAL FOOD SECURITY IMPROVEMENT DURING 2002, EXCEPT IN THE SOUTH (APRIL 2003)	85
6 MILLION PEOPLE REMAIN VULNERABLE TO FOOD INSECURITY (AUGUST 2002)	85
NUTRITION SURVEYS IN THE SHOMALI PLAINS AND PANISHEER VALLEY SHOWS HIGH LEVELS OF MALNUTRITION AMONG MOTHERS (JULY 2002)	86
<b>SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS</b>	<b>87</b>
RETURN OF DISPLACED AFGHANS HIGHLIGHTS THE FUNDAMENTAL AND URGENT NEED TO ADDRESS HOUSING AND LAND ISSUES (SEPTEMBER 2003)	87
PROJECTED NEED OF 100,000 SHELTER DURING 2003 (APRIL 2003)	89
RETURNEES IN MAZAR-I-SHARIF ARE IN DIRE NEED OF ACCOMODATION (MARCH 2003)	89
IDPs IN CAMPS IN KABUL NEED HOUSING, CLOTHING AND HEATING FACILITIES (JANUARY 2003)	90
SURVEY SHOWS SOME 140,000 PEOPLE IN KABUL ARE IN NEED OF SHELTER AND RELIEF ASSISTANCE (AUGUST 2002)	91
<b>WATER AND SANITATION</b>	<b>93</b>
ALL IDP CAMPS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH SAFE DRINKING WATER FACILITIES (DECEMBER 2003)	93
ONLY 20 PERCENT OF AFGHANS HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER (JUNE 2003)	94
ACCESS TO WATER FOR IRRIGATION SOMETIMES DETERMINED BY POLITICAL ALLEGIANCE (MAY 2002)	95
<b>NEEDS OF IDPs BY GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION</b>	<b>95</b>
IDPs CITE SHELTER AND WATER AS THE MAIN ASSISTANCE NEEDS FOR RETURN TO THE NORTH-WEST (NOVEMBER 2003)	95

IDPs IN ZHARE DASHT CAMP LACK INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES (FEBRUARY 2003)	96
SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS CONTINUE TO BE OF GREAT CONCERN (JULY 2002)	96
LIMITED HEALTH, SHELTER AND SANITATION FACILITIES IN SPIN BOLDAK IDP CAMPS (MARCH 2002)	97
RETURNEES AND IDPs PUT PRESSURE ON THE OVERSTRETCHED RESOURCES OF KABUL (JULY 2002)	98
<b><u>ACCESS TO EDUCATION</u></b>	<b>99</b>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>99</b>
MANY RETURNING IDP CHILDREN CANNOT AFFORD TO ATTEND SCHOOL AS THEY HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILY (JUNE 2003)	99
70% OF THE EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE HAS BEEN DESTROYED (SEPTEMBER 2002)	99
CLOSE TO 3 MILLION CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ENROLLED IN SCHOOL SINCE MARCH 2002 (AUGUST 2002)	102
RI ADVOCATES FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF EDUCATION TO REACH MORE CHILDREN (MARCH 2002)	103
<b><u>ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u></b>	<b>105</b>
<b>SELF RELIANCE</b>	<b>105</b>
OVERCROWDED JOB MARKET AND LACK OF CULTIVATED LAND MAKE RETURN UNSUSTAINABLE (JUNE 2003)	105
FEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND INCREASING NUMBER OF JOB SEEKERS LIMIT WAGES AND PURCHASING POWER (MAY 2002)	105
IDPs FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BORROW MONEY OR TO PURCHASE GOODS ON CREDIT (MAY 2002)	106
<b>ACCESS TO LAND</b>	<b>107</b>
IDP OPERATION PLAN FOR THE SOUTH ENVISAGES THE CREATION OF A LAND ACCESS WORKING GROUP FOR THE RESIDUAL IDP CASELOAD (OCTOBER 2003)	107
DROUGHT AND GROWTH OF FAMILIES IN DISPLACEMENT MAKES LAND A LIMITED SOURCE OF INCOME UPON RETURN (SEPTEMBER 2003)	108
<b><u>DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP</u></b>	<b>109</b>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>109</b>
GOVERNMENT PLANS TO ISSUE NEW ID CARDS AS SOON AS FINANCES ARE AVAILABLE (MARCH 2003)	109
<b><u>ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE</u></b>	<b>110</b>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>110</b>
75% OF ORPHANS SURVEYED IN THE WEST EXPRESS THEIR PREFERENCE FOR STAYING WITH FAMILY INSTEAD OF BEING PLACED IN INSTITUTIONS (JUNE 2003)	110
<b><u>PROPERTY ISSUES</u></b>	<b>111</b>

<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>111</b>
PROPERTY RESTITUTION IS A KEY PROBLEM FACING RETURNING IDPS, REFUGEES AND THE LOCAL POPULATION (SEPTEMBER 2003)	111
PROPERTY DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM ARE GENERALLY WEAK AND SUBJECT TO INFLUENCE (SEPTEMBER 2003)	112
OCCUPATION OF HOUSES AND PROPERTY BY COMMANDERS AFFECTS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS COUNTRY WIDE (SEPTEMBER 2003)	113
DISPUTES OVER LAND AND PROPERTY OWNERSHIP PROLIFERATE AFFECTING MANY RETURNEES (JUNE 2003)	114
 <b><u>PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT</u></b>	 <b>116</b>
 <b>RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT MOVEMENTS</b>	 <b>116</b>
82,000 IDPS HAVE RETURNED SINCE JANUARY 2003 (DECEMBER 2003)	116
CLOSE TO 93,000 IDPS HAVE RETURNED HOME FROM THE WESTERN REGION BETWEEN FEBRUARY 2002 AND SEPTEMBER 2003 (OCTOBER 2003)	117
300,000 IDPS EXPECTED TO RETURN DURING 2003 (JANUARY 2003)	118
MORE THAN 70,000 IDPS HAVE LEFT HERAT CAMPS BETWEEN MARCH AND JULY TO RETURN HOME (JULY 2002)	119
<b>RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMMES</b>	<b>119</b>
GOVERNMENT FORESEES A GRADUAL INCREASE OF OPERATIONAL FOCUS FROM REPATRIATION TO REINTEGRATION DURING 2003 (NOVEMBER 2003)	119
ASSISTANCE IS BEING PHASED OUT IN THE WEST (OCTOBER 2003)	121
MAINSTREAMING OF IDPS INTO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IS A STRATEGIC LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE (OCTOBER 2003)	122
OPERATION PLAN FOR THE PROTECTION-RELATED IDPS IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	124
OPERATION PLAN FOR THE REGISTAN KUCHIS IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	127
OPERATION PLAN FOR THE NON-REGISTAN KUCHIS IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	129
OPERATION PLAN FOR THE DROUGHT-AFFECTED NON-KUCHIS IDPS IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	132
INSUFFICIENT ASSISTANCE UPON RETURN CAN LEAD TO RENEWED DISPLACEMENT, RETURN NOT ALWAYS A VIABLE OPTION (SEPTEMBER 2003)	133
RURAL INTEGRATION (MARCH 2003)	134
URBAN REINTEGRATION (APRIL 2003)	135
<b>OBSTACLES TO RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT</b>	<b>136</b>
LACK OF ACCESS TO LAND AND HOUSING IS THE MOST PREVALENT OBSTACLE TO RETURN (DECEMBER 2003)	136
PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE OF ABUSIVE COMMANDERS IN THE NORTHWEST PREVENTS RETURN (NOVEMBER 2003)	137
INTEGRATION OF IDPS IN THEIR AREA OF DISPLACEMENT IS CONSTRAINED BY ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF GOVERNMENT LAND (SEPTEMBER 2003)	138
CHALLENGES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFUGEE AND IDP RETURN PROGRAM (SEPTEMBER 2003)	139
LANDLESSNESS PUTS PRESSURE ON THE VILLAGE'S LIMITED RESSOURCES AND LEADS TO RENEWED DISPLACEMENT UPON RETURN (SEPTEMBER 2003)	140
MAJOR RETURNS TO NORT HEAST BUT FEW RETURNS TO NORTWEST DUE TO PERSISTENT TENSION, LACK OF LONG-TERM ASSISTANCE (JUNE 2003)	141
URBAN AREAS' ABSORPTION CAPACITY REACHING ITS LIMIT (JUNE 2003)	145
NO IMMEDIATE RETURN SOLUTION FOR KUCHI IDPS (JUNE 2003)	146

IDPS RESETTLING IN MAZAR-I-SHARIF CANNOT DO SO UNLESS THEY ORIGINATE FROM THE AREA (MARCH 2003)	147
ABSENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORK MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR RETURNEES TO SETTLE IN AREAS OTHER THAN THEIR AREA OF ORIGIN (MARCH 2003)	148
<b>HUMANITARIAN ACCESS</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>149</b>
VOLATILE SECURITY SITUATION HAMPERS ACCESS TO IDPS AND CONSTRAINS RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES (JANUARY 2004)	149
DISTRIBUTION OF AID BY THE MILITARY MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSERT THAT HUMANITARIAN AID IS NON-POLITICAL AND IMPARTIAL (JANUARY 2003)	152
INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN NGOS IN THE NORTH FACE VIOLENT ATTACKS (AUGUST 2002)	154
<b>NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>NATIONAL RESPONSE</b>	<b>157</b>
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE REFUGEE AND IDP RETURN PROGRAMME DURING 2003 (SEPTEMBER 2003)	157
REGIONAL OPERATION PLAN FOR IDPS IN THE SOUTH (OCTOBER 2003)	158
IDP STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN ENVISAGES DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND CONTINUED ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION (JULY 2003)	160
GOVERNMENT COOPERATES WITH DONORS AND THE UN THROUGH THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON RETURNEE AND IDP PROGRAMME (APRIL 2003)	163
RURAL POPULATION IS THE MAIN ACTOR IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SHELTER (APRIL 2003)	164
THE AFGHAN INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (JANUARY 2004)	165
NATIONAL AREA BASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TO TARGET SPECIFIC AREAS FOR RECONSTRUCTION (APRIL 2003)	166
RETURN COMMISSION FOR THE NORTH SET UP TO FACILITATE THE RETURN OF REFUGEES AND IDPS TO THE NORTHERN PROVINCES (MARCH 2003)	167
DISPLACED PERSONS COUNCIL (DPC) TO COMPLEMENT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NORTHERN RETURN COMMISSION (NOVEMBER 2003)	168
INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RETURN AND REINTEGRATION STRATEGY (MARCH 2003)	169
GOVERNMENT TO USE THE GPID AS A PRINCIPLE TO GUIDE ITS ACTIONS TOWARDS IDPS (MARCH 2003)	170
AFGHAN MINISTRY OF REFUGEES AND REPATRIATION WILL LEAD THE NATIONAL RESPONSE TO IDPS WITH ASSISTANCE FROM UN (JANUARY 2003)	171
AFGHAN ASSISTANCE COORDINATION AUTHORITY (AACA) RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN (JULY 2002)	172
NDF ENVISAGES A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO ENABLE IDPS TO RETURN AND RE-INTEGRATE (APRIL 2002)	173
<b>INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE</b>	<b>174</b>
UN SECURITY COUNCIL MISSION CALLS FOR THE RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW IN THE NORTH (DECEMBER 2003)	174
IOM'S ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF IDPS DURING 2003 AND FUTURE PLANS (AUGUST 2003)	175
INTER-AGENCY MISSION ASSESSES THE IDP SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN (MAY 2003)	177

THE OGATA INITIATIVE FOCUSES ASSISTANCE ON KANDAHAR IN THE SOUTH, JALALABAD IN THE EAST, AND MAZAR-I-SHARIF IN NORTH (MAY 2003)	178
US STATE DEPARTMENT HAS CONTRIBUTED 174 MIO TO REFUGEE AND IDP PROGRAMS SINCE SEPT. 2001 (MARCH 2003)	179
RETURNEE MONITORING NETWORK ESTABLISHED IN 2002 BY UNHCR AND PARTNERS	180
REFERENCE TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT	180
KNOWN REFERENCE TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AS OF DECEMBER 2003	181
COORDINATION	183
OVERALL COORDINATION FOR THE IDP OPERATION PLAN FOR THE SOUTH LED BY THE CG FOR RETURNEES AND IDPs (OCTOBER 2003)	183
UNHCR IN CHARGE OF COORDINATING THE DELIVERY OF ASSISTANCE TO IDPs AS WELL AS SUPERVISING THE PROTECTION ACTIVITIES (JULY 2002)	184
NGO COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS (APRIL 2002)	187
IDP UNIT SUPPORTS UNHCR'S LEAD ROLE IN THE IDP SECTOR (MARCH 2002)	188
SELECTED UN ACTIVITIES	189
CONTINUED UN ENGAGEMENT WITH IDPs IN 2004 (NOVEMBER 2004)	189
UNHCR'S STRATEGY IN 2004 AND BEYOND (SEPTEMBER 2003)	190
UNHCR'S SHELTER INITIATIVE HAS HELPED 250,000 AFGHANS DURING 2003 (DECEMBER 2003)	191
UNHCR AND PARTNERS DISTRIBUTE NON-FOOD ITEMS TO URBAN DISPLACED IN KABUL (DECEMBER 2003)	191
FAO DISTRIBUTES SEEDS TO RETURNING IDPs (DECEMBER 2003)	192
UNICEF PROVIDES BASIC EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES TO IDPs (DECEMBER 2003)	192
UN-HABITAT PROVIDES SHELTER TO THE DISPLACED IN THE SHOMALI REGION AND IN JALALABAD (JUNE 2003)	194
WFP TO FOCUS ON RECOVERY ACTIVITIES THROUGH FOOD FOR WORK AND FOOD FOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES (MARCH 2003)	195
UNDP AND UNHCR TO ENSURE SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT (JANUARY 2003)	195
SELECTED NGO ACTIVITIES	196
LIST OF PARTICIPATING AGENCIES BY SECTOR (FEBRUARY 2003)	196
NRC PROVIDES IDPs AND RETURNEES WITH LEGAL AID AND CONSELLING (JANUARY 2004)	197
IRC WORKS ON PROPERTY LAW INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS IDPs' LACK OF ACCESS TO LAND AND HOUSING (DECEMBER 2003)	197
SWEDISH COMMITTEE FOR AFGHANISTAN SUPPORTS HEALTH CARE CLINICS (MARCH 2003)	197
ACTED PROVIDES HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO IDPs IN BAGHLAN AND TAKHAR PROVINCE (JANUARY 2003)	198
SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND'S ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF IDPs (MARCH 2002)	199
UNITED NATIONS RESPONSE TO THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS	200
ONLY FIFTY PERCENT OF THE FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE TAPA HAVE BEEN MET AS OF OCTOBER 2003	200
THE ROLE OF THE UN IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD (OCTOBER 2002)	201
ITAP PROJECTS MERGED INTO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (JULY 2002)	203
ASSISTANCE GAPS	206
UNDERFUNDING OF THE REFUGEE AND IDP RETURN PROGRAM PUTS SUSTAINABILITY OF RETURN AT RISK (SEPTEMBER 2003)	206
FINDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR IDPs NOT HIGH ON THE LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES' AGENDA (JUNE 2003)	206



LACK OF OBJECTIVE, ACCURATE AND NEUTRAL INFORMATION ON CONDITIONS IN AREAS OF RETURN LEAD TO RENEWED DISPLACEMENT (JUNE 2003)	207
AFGHAN AUTHORITIES NEGLECTING SOUTHERN IDPs, INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES NEED TO ADDRESS THEIR LONG-TERM NEEDS (APRIL 2003)	207
UN'S STRATEGY NOT EFFECTIVE IN ADDRESSING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION (DECEMBER 2002)	208
DATA COLLECTED ON IDPs LACKS UNIFORMITY AND QUALITY (JULY 2002)	210
FOOD INSECURITY PERSISTS AS A RESULT OF THE GAP BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN ASPIRATIONS AND RELIEF REALITIES (MAY 2002)	211
RELIEF OPERATIONS TOO OFTEN LIMITED TO URBAN AREAS AND NEAR ROADS NETWORKS (MAY 2002)	213
CLOSE LINKS BETWEEN UNAMA AND THE AFGHAN INTERIM AUTHORITY MAY REDUCE THE HUMANITARIAN SPACE (APRIL 2002)	214
RECOMMENDATIONS	215
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DISPLACED PERSONS COUNCIL (DPC) (NOVEMBER 2003)	215
CONDITIONS FOR RETURN SHOULD BE ASSESSED IN CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE IDPs THEMSELVES (SEPTEMBER 2003)	216
INTER-AGENCY MISSION RECOMMENDS THAT UNDP TAKE THE LEAD IN FINDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE NON-PROTECTION RESIDUAL IDPs (JUNE 2003)	217
INTER-AGENCY MISSION RECOMMENDS ESTABLISHMENT OF A SMALL TASK FORCE TO ASSIST THE GOV. DEVELOP A POLICY AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR ALL IDPs (JUNE 2003)	218
NEED TO BETTER INTEGRATE EXISTING INFORMATION ON IDPs (JUNE 2003)	219
GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD ADDRESS THE LONG-TERM NEEDS OF THE DISPLACED (JUNE 2003)	220
CONDITIONS IN AREAS OF RETURN SHOULD BE BETTER MONITORED AND IDPs SHOULD BE BETTER INFORMED (JUNE 2003)	221
DROUGHT-INDUCED IDPs' NEEDS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF CONFLICT-INDUCED IDPs IN THE RETURN PHASE (MARCH 2002)	222
UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND UNAMA SHOULD CLARIFY THEIR STRATEGIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND AID CONDITIONALITIES (AUGUST 2002)	223
IDPs UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO RETURN HAVE SPECIFIC PROTECTION NEEDS (JULY 2002)	224
OCHA'S IDP UNIT VISITS AFGHANISTAN TO ASSESS THE THE IDP SITUATION : RECOMMENDATIONS (MARCH 2002)	224
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	228
 <b>LIST OF SOURCES USED</b>	 <b>231</b>

## PROFILE SUMMARY

### Return of IDPs constrained by insecurity, land disputes and lack of aid

*Persistent insecurity in many areas of the country and disputes related to land and property are major constraints to IDP return. The huge wave of IDPs returning home in 2002 has not been sustained during 2003, mainly because of continued instability, poor economic progress and harsh living conditions. Some 400,000 IDPs returned home in 2002, the majority without any assistance. UNHCR estimated that during 2003 around 300,000 IDPs would return, but in the event only 82,000 IDPs made the journey back home. While some have been able to regain their land and houses and managed to secure some level of sustainable livelihood, many refugees and IDPs have found that their homes were either destroyed or are now occupied by others. This has led in many cases to complex land and property disputes, which – coupled with a lack of jobs, widespread instability and years of drought – has meant that many have been unable to return or have been forced into renewed displacement. Officially the number of IDPs in the country has dramatically fallen over the last 12 months, from 720,000 at the end of 2002 to less than 200,000 at the end of December 2003. However, it is more than likely that these figures fail to capture the extent of the repeated displacement of those attempting to go back to their homes. The official IDP figure for Afghanistan is now 182,000, although the true total could well be closer to 300,000.*

### Background

Internal displacement in Afghanistan affects all ethnic groups, but two groups are particularly concerned: ethnic Pashtuns and Kuchis, a nomadic group which also is of Pashtun ethnicity.

The Kuchis are pastoralists who were forced to abandon their lifestyle when they lost their livestock in a drought that began in 1999. The Pashtuns, who are widely associated with the previous regime, fled harassment and human rights violations in the northern regions after the overthrow of the Taliban by an US-led coalition in late 2001.

Following the defeat of the Taliban, an interim government, headed by Hamid Karzai, was established. However, the new government has not been able to extend its authority beyond the limited area around the capital controlled by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Large parts of the country remained under the control of various war lords. The armed struggle of war lords and local commanders for the control of territories and resources, as well as continued attacks by groups reportedly linked to the Taliban, have created a climate of lawlessness and insecurity throughout much of the country. International humanitarian agencies have been directly targeted as well, and about one third of the country is considered high risk for aid workers. The worrying security situation has severely hampered efforts to provide assistance to the Afghan population and to rebuild the country after more than twenty years of civil war. It also puts into question the feasibility of holding nation-wide elections in June 2004 as foreseen by the 2001 Bonn Agreement and provided for by the new constitution adopted by the Loya Jirga in January 2004.

### Up to 300,000 IDPs still awaiting return

According to UN statistics, the number of IDPs in Afghanistan decreased sharply from 724,000 in December 2002 to 184,000 as of December 2003 (UNHCR 3 January 2003; December 2003). 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.

UNHCR explains this drop-off by saying previous figures were inflated and there is now an improved assessment of the real number of IDPs. Re-registration conducted during 2003 led the UN refugee agency to focus on two groups of displaced in the south and west, consisting mainly of drought-affected Kuchis and ethnic Pashtuns from the north who have been displaced by human rights abuses. Those who have returned or live in conditions similar to the general population are now excluded from the statistics on the very optimistic assumption that they have attained a minimal level of self-sufficiency. This explains that although only 82,000 IDPs returned in 2003, the official number of IDPs now stands at 184,000, compared to a total of 720,000 in the beginning of 2003.

The exact number of IDPs and the scope of renewed displacement are difficult to ascertain with any accuracy, but the number of people falling under the definition of an IDP could be much higher than UNHCR's figure of 184,000, and closer to 300,000. This is the figure used by the UN Secretary General in his last report to the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan (UNGA 3 December 2003).

It is understandable that the government and the UN want to avoid attracting destitute people to the camps and encourage IDPs to return home if conditions permit. But the phasing-out of the assistance in camps in the west and the exclusion of several hundred thousand people from the statistics raise concern that many genuine IDPs could have been ignored and deprived of their only source of assistance. The lack of return monitoring in urban areas, where large number of IDPs have chosen to resettle, means that little is known about their conditions and if they have attained a minimum level of self-sufficiency.

Despite the optimistic drop in the official figures, it is clear that many of the refugees and IDPs who went back in 2002 were unable to sustain their returns because of land and property disputes, widespread landlessness, lack of aid and reconstruction assistance, and an absence of economic opportunities to restart their lives. The UN and the government's assumption that once returned, all IDPs automatically reintegrate is clearly questionable and runs contrary to evidence and information gathered by Amnesty International. In a report published by Amnesty in June 2003, many refugees and IDPs claim that they were not given enough accurate information before returning. 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 internal displacement (AI 23 June 2003, p. 26).

### **Insecurity hampers assistance, causes further displacement**

Persistent insecurity throughout the country; the virtual inexistence of a criminal justice system; and the absence of any national entity capable of enforcing the rule of law have been major causes of concern for the Afghan people and for humanitarian agencies since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. 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. UN and NGO staff pulled out and programmes were suspended following the killing of international staff members during 2003. Large areas of the southeast are off-limits due to threats of Taliban attacks against humanitarian workers. The impossibility of gaining access to these areas for assessment and monitoring activities constrain planning and project development. In addition, it reduces the extent of assistance and protection provided to the displaced. Aid workers only have limited access, for example, to the IDP camps near Kandahar (IRIN 6 January 2004).

The absence of any national or international force capable of enforcing the rule of law outside of Kabul remains a major impediment to the return of the remaining internally displaced people, the protection of human rights, and humanitarian access. The US "warlord strategy", effective in winning the war against the Taliban, has failed to date to provide a secure environment outside of the capital. In October 2003, the UN Security Council voted for the expansion of the NATO-led peace-keeping force outside of Kabul, but as yet few countries have been willing to commit resources and soldiers to this.

The US has deployed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) teams in major cities during 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 is not a 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 NGOs and military personnel (CARE 25 July 2003).

Continued fighting and aggression towards ethnic groups has caused further displacement during 2003 and prevented returns. There has been factional fighting between rival warlords in the north, where local commanders have committed human rights violations against ethnic Pashtuns. Some 60,000 ethnic Pashtuns have fled the north since 2001 (IRIN 18 June 2003).

### **Insecurity and continued drought prevent returns**

The Kuchis currently constitute the single largest IDP group in Afghanistan. They represent some eighty percent of the total number of IDPs. Most of them were displaced from the southern Pashtun area of Kandahar and Helmand province, where they also found refuge. Others were displaced from the north and northwest and fled to camps in the western region of Herat (Inter-Agency Mission, 19 June 2003, p. 2). As the south is still affected by the drought, the displaced Kuchis face difficulties in returning to their places of origin. 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 (UNAMA 7 April 2003).

Ethnic Pashtuns displaced from the north by human rights violations, harassment and forced recruitment constitute the second main group of displaced. They fled to the west and south where they are accommodated in IDP camps. UNHCR estimates that some 60,000 Pashtuns have fled the north since December 2001. Many have returned since, most of them to the northeast, while a few have returned to the northwest where continued instability is threatening their security (IRIN 18 June 2003). A Return Commission for the North, set up by the government in 2002 to look into the human rights abuses and to promote returns, has completed some initial assessments and identified abuses by local commanders. But efforts are still needed to redress these problems and persuade Pashtun IDPs that conditions are conducive to return. A Displaced Person Council, comprising displaced Pashtuns from five northern provinces, was set up in 2003 and has been working with the Return Commission. Complementing the work of the Commission, the Displaced Person Council is intended to increase the participation of the displaced themselves in the return process (UNHCR 15 November 2003).

### **Land and property issues threaten sustainability of returns**

Since the take-over of the country by the US-led coalition and the demise of the Taleban in late 2001, close to two million refugees and over 400,000 IDPs have returned home at a pace that took everyone by surprise (OCHA 3 June 2003). 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. 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. According to a 2003 WFP report, landlessness is widespread in the country with important variations between provinces and between individual villages. In the central province of Bamyan an average of 39 per cent of households were landless while UNHCR found that only 20 per cent of households in Kandahar province hold title over land (UNHCR 1 September 2003, pp. 1-2). This means that 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 refugees and IDPs returning have found that their homes and land had been taken over by neighbours or confiscated by local commanders. Sometimes different groups return to a land to which they think they have a legitimate claim on 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, often are not able to enforce their claims. Social networks are crucial to get protection, but also to access land.

In some cases IDPs have been forced into renewed displacement because they could not even reach their home areas. This was usually either because of insecurity on the roads or the physical state of the roads. Those who reach their home areas were in some cases deprived of their return packages as a form of illegal taxation by local commanders. The presence of some five to ten million landmines is another obstacle to sustainable return. In rural areas, some 200 people are reportedly killed every month by the explosion of landmines (AI 23 June 2003, pp. 22-23).

#### **Absorption capacity of urban areas reaching its limits**

Most of those who returned to Afghanistan during 2002, 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. Between November 2001 and November 2002, the population of Kabul has reportedly doubled in size.

As in any post-conflict situation, inevitable trends of urban migration are likely to exacerbate the problems and increase the pressure on urban infrastructure and the provision of basic services. Donors are reportedly reluctant to fund assistance activities in urban areas to avoid attracting too many people to the cities. But 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. A survey conducted in 2002 in Kabul showed that twenty percent of the returnees lived in informal shelters or abandoned buildings and that at least 140,000 persons were in dire need of shelter and relief assistance (BAAG 31 August 2002).

#### **Assistance to IDPs**

The general instability and the deteriorating security conditions in many areas of the country during 2003, while discouraging many to return, has also reduced the extent of assistance provided to IDPs in camps and the capacity of aid agencies to monitor the assistance projects. At the end of last year, MSF suspended its activities in Zahre Dasht IDP camp where it had been providing basic health care to 40,000 IDPs (MSF 4 December 2003). UNHCR, the UN agency which has been in charge of coordinating the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs for the past two years, dramatically scaled down its activities following the murder of an international staff member in November and suspended field missions throughout the country (BAAG 18 December, p.1). Since the beginning of 2004, military operations in the east, anti-drug operations in the north and security incidents in the south and west have forced the UN to suspend missions to these areas in order to limit the exposure of its staff (WFP 15 January 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 aimed at finding durable solutions to the remaining number of displaced while continuing to provide assistance and protection. 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 concerned government ministries, UN agencies and NGOs, and its function is to support the MoRR in co-ordinating and facilitating work related to the return and initial re-integration 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), who assume responsibility for the reintegration of IDPs within their respective geographic and programme areas (TISA March 2003, p. 4). 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 unable or unwilling to return (CG1 18 July 2003).

In October 2003, the government developed a Regional Operation Plan for the IDPs in the south, suggesting potential solutions for the displaced within a timeframe of three years. The initial focus of the plan is to encourage returns and support reintegration in order to reduce the residual caseload in need of alternative solutions. For those unable or unwilling to return, it is envisaged that they will be provided with access to land on a permanent or temporary basis (MoRR & MRRD October 2003, pp. 5-6).

In October 2002, the provincial authorities and the main UN agencies jointly launched a phasing-out strategy for IDPs in the western region. Some 45,000 individuals were assisted in returning home during 2003, while assistance was scaled down in the camps and some of them closed (UNHCR 15 October 2003).

The UN Inter-Agency mission that visited Afghanistan during May and June 2003 pointed out that the central government was to be commended for making important efforts to assist the IDP population. The local authorities, on the other hand, were often described as reluctant to engage in discussions that would involve long-term thinking about alternate solutions to return. This was especially true when there was no option to return in the foreseeable future as is the case for most of the displaced Kuchis and the ethnic Pashtuns (Inter-Agency Mission 19 June 2003, p. 5).

Given the lack of capacity and will of the local authorities to place the interest of these IDPs before their political or economic interest, the international community has a responsibility to ensure that this gap is properly addressed (UNAMA 7 April 2003).

## 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 49% 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)

#### Socio-economic profile of Afghanistan (October 2001)

- Afghanistan ranks among the most destitute countries in the world in terms of human development
- Economic decline has exacerbated the level of poverty and economic hardship throughout the country

"With an average life expectancy of about 40 years, a staggering mortality rate of 25.7 percent for children under five years old, and an illiteracy rate of 64 percent, Afghanistan ranks among the most destitute, war-weary countries in the world in terms of human development.

Seventy percent of the Afghan population are estimated to be under-nourished, and only 13 percent have access to improved water sources.

"In most aspects, Afghanistan is worse off than almost any country in the world. The country's social and economic indicators are comparable, or lower than the indicators for sub-Saharan Africa," said Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Director of the Human Development Report Office at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Among 187 countries, only seven have lower life expectancy than Afghanistan, including Sierra Leone and Zambia - countries ravaged by HIV/AIDS or armed conflict. One of every four children born alive in Afghanistan will not survive until their fifth birthday.

Only three of the 191 countries surveyed have higher levels of mortality for children under five years: Angola, Niger and Sierra Leone.

Nearly two-thirds of Afghani adults are illiterate, almost 15 percent higher than the average level for least developed countries. Only five countries of 171 surveyed have lower literacy rates than Afghanistan - all are in sub-Saharan Africa.

With less than one-third of children enrolled in schools in 1999, Afghanistan lags catastrophically behind other countries and regions. Only 14 of 172 countries surveyed have lower school enrolment than Afghanistan, which is the only country in the world that bars girls from attending school.

Due to a lack of available estimate of income per capita, Afghanistan has not appeared in UNDP's Human Development Index since 1996. It then ranked as number 169 of a total of 174 countries. The HDI is an annual index produced by UNDP's Human Development Report Office, and is based on indicators for health, education and income." (UNDP 8 October 2001)

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

### **Drought and economic disruption in the northeast (December 2000)**

#### **"Drought**

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

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

*See the latest WFP map showing drought-affected areas in Afghanistan, 5 October 2001 [66kb, jpg]*

#### **Economic disruption**

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

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

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

## The Civil War

---

### A history of conflict

"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 Zaher 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 *madrassa* (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 displacements (1992-2000)

Number of Displaced by Year, Reason for Displacement, Place and Origin

Period of Displacement	Reason for Displacement	Number of Displaced	Displacement site	Place of Origin
1992-1993	Fear of reprisal from	400,000	Mazar-i-Sharif and	Kabul

	Islamic militias		Jalalabad	
1992-1993	Combat	200,000	Kabul	surround-ing 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.

### Conflict-induced displacement in 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)

### **Military developments during 2001**

- Intensified fighting since May but no significant territorial gains on either side.

"Fighting between the Taliban and the United Front has intensified since the beginning of May, with neither party yet scoring meaningful territorial gains. The focus remains on Takhar as both warring sides continue to reinforce the main confrontation lines in that strategic north-eastern province. Fighting has also spread to other areas of the country with the return of some commanders once ousted by the Taliban.

In early May, fighting broke out in the Farkhar Gorge, east of Taloqan, the provincial capital of Takhar, with the Taliban forces launching a major offensive on the Chal district and in the Gorge at the beginning of June. The United Front, for its part, launched an unsuccessful attack in late June from Khwajaghar towards Taloqan. The fighting subsided during the first two weeks of July, allowing both sides needed time for regrouping and reinforcement. Fighting resumed south of Taloqan on 19 July but after two days it declined again. The middle and southern part of the confrontation line has also been very tense during the period under review.

[...]

The forces under General Dostum, who returned to Afghanistan in April, are based in Sar-e Pul Province. After launching an unsuccessful attack in Balkh Province, they are now concentrating their military activities in the northern provinces of Badghis and Faryab, so far without much success. The former Governor of Herat, Ismail Khan, arrived in the western province of Ghor in the middle of May and has successfully strengthened his position in that province, cutting off the roads to the provincial capital of Chaghcharan.

The forces of the Hezb-e Wahdat leader, Karim Khalili, have remained active in the central province of Bamyan and kept Yakawlang, the second largest city in the province, which has changed hands several times in recent months, under their control since 11 June. The Taliban have taken up defensive positions east of Bamyan city." (UNSG 17 August 2001 32-36)

*For information on the military developments during 2000, see the previous reports by the Secretary General:*

*"The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", 19 April 2001, 20 November 2000, 18 September 2000, 16 June 2000, 10 March 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.
- USA refuse to negotiate and to follow normal standard in extradition proceedings.

"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)

### US policy in Afghanistan is largely a function of oil (October 2001)

- Control and export of the region's vast oil and gas reserves central in the Afghanistan geo-political equation.
- Afghanistan's geographical position as a potential transit route for oil and gas exports from central Asia to the Arabian sea makes it an important player.
- This oil is non-OPEC, lies in the non-Arab world the population although Muslim is heavily secularised.
- Afghanistan's route is seen as being advantageous as it is close to the Asian markets.

"As the war in Afghanistan unfolds, there is frantic diplomatic activity to ensure that any post-Taliban government will be both democratic and pro-west. Hidden in this explosive geo-political equation is the sensitive issue of securing control and export of the region's vast oil and gas reserves.

The Soviets estimated Afghanistan's proven and probable natural gas reserves at 5 trillion cubic feet - enough for the UK's requirement for two years - but this remains largely untapped because of the country's civil war and poor pipeline infrastructure.

More importantly, according to the US government, "Afghanistan's significance from an energy standpoint stems from its geographical position as a potential transit route for oil and natural gas exports from central Asia to the Arabian Sea".

To the north of Afghanistan lies the Caspian and central Asian region, one of the world's last great frontiers for the oil industry due to its tremendous untapped reserves. The US government believes that total oil reserves could be 270bn barrels. Total gas reserves could be 576 trillion cubic feet. These dwarf the UK's proven reserves of 5bn barrels of oil and 27 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

The reason oil is so attractive to the US - which imports half of its oil - and the west, is for three reasons. "Firstly it is non-Opec oil," says James Marriott, an oil expert from Platform, an environmental NGO. "Opec has been the *bête-noire* of the west since its inception in 1960. Secondly, these states are not within the Arab world and thirdly, although they are Muslim, they are heavily secularised."

The presence of these oil reserves and the possibility of their export raises new strategic concerns for the US and other western industrial powers. "As oil companies build oil pipelines from the Caucasus and central Asia to supply Japan and the west, these strategic concerns gain military implications," argued an article in the *Military Review*, the *Journal of the US Army*, earlier in the year.

Despite this, host governments and western oil companies have been rushing to get in on the act. Kazakhstan, it is believed, could earn \$700bn (£486bn) from offshore oil and gas fields over the next 40 years. Both American and British oil companies have struck black gold. In April 1993, Chevron concluded a \$20bn joint venture to develop the Tengiz oil field, with 6.9bn barrels of estimated oil reserves in Kazakhstan alone. The following year, in what was described as "the deal of the century", AIOC, an international consortium of companies led by BP, signed an \$8bn deal to exploit reserves estimated at 3-5bn barrels in Azerbaijan.

The oil industry has long been trying to find a way to bring the oil and gas to market. This frustration was evident in the submission by oil company Unocal's vice-president John Maresca, before the US House of Representatives in 1998. "Central Asia is isolated. Their natural resources are landlocked, both geographically and politically. Each of the countries in the Caucasus and central Asia faces difficult political challenges. Some have unsettled wars or latent conflicts."

The industry has been looking at different routes. The Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) route is 1,000 miles west from Tengiz in Kazakhstan to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk and came on stream last week. Oil will go by tanker through the Bosphorus to the Mediterranean. Another route being considered by AIOC goes from Baku through Tbilisi in Georgia to Ceyhan in Turkey. However, parts of the route are seen as politically unstable as it goes through the Kurdistan region of Turkey and its \$3bn price tag is prohibitively expensive.

But even if these pipelines are built, they would not be enough to exploit the region's vast oil and gas reserves. Nor crucially would they have the capacity to move oil to where it is really needed, the growing markets of Asia. Other export pipelines must therefore be built. One option is to go east across China, but at 3,000km it is seen as too long. Another option is through Iran, but US companies are banned due to American sanctions. The only other possible route is through Afghanistan to Pakistan. This is seen as being advantageous as it is close to the Asian markets.

Unocal, the US company with a controversial history of investment in Burma, has been trying to secure the Afghan route. To be viable Unocal has made it clear that "construction of the pipeline cannot begin until a recognised government is in place in Kabul that has the confidence of governments, leaders, and our company."

This, it can be argued, is precisely what Washington is now trying to do. 'Washington's attitude towards the Taliban has been, in large part, a function of oil,' argues Steve Kretzmann, from the Institute for Policy Studies in the US. 'Before 1997, Washington refused to criticise and isolate the Taliban because Kabul seemed to favour Unocal, to build a proposed natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to the Pakistan coast.'

In 1997, the Taliban signed an agreement that would allow a proposed 890-mile, \$2bn natural gas pipeline project called Centgas led by Unocal to proceed. However by December 1998, Unocal had pulled out citing turmoil in Afghanistan making the project too risky.

To secure stability for the Afghan pipeline route, the US State Department and Pakistan's intelligence service funnelled arms to the Taliban, argues Ahmed Rashid in his book: *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, the book Tony Blair has been reportedly reading since the conflict started. Rashid called the struggle for control of post-Soviet central Asia "the new Great Game".

Critics of the industry argue that so long as this game is dependent on fossil fuels the region will remain impoverished due to the effects of the oil industry, which is, says Kretzmann, 'essentially a neo-colonial set-up that extracts wealth from a region. The industry is sowing the seeds of poverty and terrorism. True security, for all of us, can only be achieved by reducing our dependence on oil.' (The Guardian 24 October 2001)

*See also: "Pakistan seeks Central Asia gas", BBC, 7 November 2000, "Afghan Pipeline: A New Great Game", BBC, 4 November 1997 and "Taleban in Texas for talks on gas pipeline", BBC, 5 December 1997*

#### **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 already internally stuck or stranded.
- Aid should reach those unable to flee to prevent further displacement.
- 1/4 of Kabul's population and 1/2 of Kandahar's population has fled in fear of U.S. strikes. Many have reportedly 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 Badkhis 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-Taliban 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*

#### **Human rights, public security and the rule of law still not upheld (December 2002)**

- Representatives of various factions met in Bonn in December 2001 and agreed on an interim power sharing agreement, creation of new constitution and elections in 2004.
- Despite the agreement, Afghanistan remains a country where violence and the use of force had become the first resort to settle disputes and resolve conflicting claims to power.
- Because of the conscious choices made by key actors, notably Afghan military leaders and the United States, the processes set in motion by the Bonn Agreement are now faltering in key areas such as human rights, public security, the rule of law, and economic reconstruction

"A few weeks after the United States and its coalition partners toppled the Taliban in late 2001, representatives of various Afghan factions met in Bonn, Germany under the auspices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan to map out Afghanistan's future. After laborious negotiations between Afghan military commanders, representatives of Afghanistan's different ethnic groups, expatriate Afghans, and representatives of the exiled monarch—and under substantial pressure from the United States and other external powers to reach an agreement—the Bonn Agreement was signed on December 5, 2001.

The delegates to the Bonn conference, some of whom had been bitter enemies during the last two decades, made surprising progress. They agreed on an interim power sharing arrangement, the creation of a new constitution, and elections in 2004. Through the Bonn Agreement they set out a schematic roadmap and timetable for establishing peace and security, reconstructing the country, reestablishing some key institutions, and protecting human rights.

Though it was not a comprehensive peace agreement and did not include key provisions, such as formal commitments by Afghanistan's neighbors to respect the country's neutrality (and end outside support to different military factions), most Afghans believed that the Bonn Agreement represented the best chance possible for establishing peace, security, and protection of human rights in Afghanistan. With the participation of so many Afghan factions and the promise of political and economic support from the world's major powers, the agreement offered hope to some of the world's most repressed and abused people. Afghans could finally dream of an end to violence, better living conditions, and a future for their children.

But this hope was tempered by the immense challenges that lay ahead. Virtually all the institutions of a functioning civil society had been destroyed, including the parliament, the courts, much of the civil service, and most of the educational and health systems. Under the Taliban the majority of the population—females—had been denied the right to education and work. The country was littered with landmines. Much of its infrastructure had been destroyed by the shelling, shooting, and neglect that had become the staple of everyday life.

It was beyond the capacity of the Bonn Agreement or any other agreement to provide a short-term remedy for all these problems. At best, reconstruction will take years. It will also take time to develop and nurture a new political culture in which civilian authority will be supreme, national interests will prevail over regional or sectarian ones, and disputes will be resolved peacefully. Even with the formal signing of the Bonn Agreement, Afghanistan remained a country where violence and the use of force had become the first resort to settle disputes and resolve conflicting claims to power.

In spite of the inevitable and predictable obstacles, there was still much that could have, and still can be, achieved, even if at times only in the form of incremental progress. But, because of the conscious choices made by key actors, notably Afghan military leaders and the United States, the processes set in motion by the Bonn Agreement are now faltering in key areas such as human rights, public security, the rule of law, and economic reconstruction." (HRW 5 December 2002, p. 1)

*See also:*

*Final report on the Afghan Interim Authority Fund, UNDP, 20 April 2003*

*The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, Report of the Secretary-General, 18 March 2003*

*The Afghan Transitional Administration: Prospects and Perils, International Crisis Group (ICG), 30 July 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, Jowzjan, 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 Jowzjan. 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)

## Continued fighting and insecurity are the most serious challenge to peace and return (June 2003)

- AI contends that Afghanistan is a country to which most refugee and IDP returns should be considered unsustainable, mainly because levels of security are not adequate, access to shelter, water and employment are very limited and the absence of rule of law puts human rights at risk.
- Insecurity is as prevalent in the urban centres of Afghanistan as it is in the countryside
- Landmines kill 200 people every month in rural areas.
- Afghans in many parts of the country remain unprotected by legitimate State security structures.
- Rivalries between factional leaders worsened in the west during 2002.
- In early 2003, there has been increased activity by elements hostile to the Government and to the international community in Afghanistan
- Insecurity severely threatens the fragile peace in the country, increases the possibility of more people being displaced, prevents returns of the population to their areas of origin, and undermines the authority of the new government.
- Delivery of aid is threatened by rising insecurity in many areas, which has resulted in increases in direct attacks on humanitarian aid workers and Afghan civilians

"Amnesty International believes that Afghanistan is not a country that has crossed over into a post-conflict situation, and therefore is one to which most refugee and IDP returns should be considered unsustainable. At a basic minimum, a post-conflict situation would be characterized by adequate levels of security in the majority of the country, access to adequate shelter, access to food and potable water, access to employment, the rule of law and due regard for the human rights of all persons, including in particular those of vulnerable groups. In contemporary Afghanistan, these conditions are not being met for the vast majority of Afghans, including refugees returning to their country of origin who are especially vulnerable, having been uprooted for protracted periods of time.

The security situation in Afghanistan has steadily deteriorated in 2003. Attacks targeted at foreigners, such as the murder of an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff member in Uruzgan province in March 2003, have led to a withdrawal of NGO and UN staff, in particular international staff, from aid projects throughout the south of the country. Humanitarian aid workers and de-mining teams have also been the target of attacks in other parts of the country. Growing insecurity over the last months has meant that up to two-thirds of the country is not readily accessible to international aid agencies to conduct relief and monitoring exercises. UN agencies in the south have recently had to request armed escorts in order to be able to travel with some measure of security. This insecurity is as prevalent in the urban centres of Afghanistan as it is in the countryside. As the pace of reconstruction in Afghanistan slows, and the living conditions of most ordinary Afghans fails to improve, many are turning to extremist forces, such as a revitalized Taliban now active in the south-east and east, to express their disappointment in the present administration and its foreign backers. US-led military action along Afghanistan's border with Pakistan has been the cause of further deaths and consequent resentment of the presence of foreigners. On 9 April, eleven civilians, including seven women, were killed when a US bomb hit their house on the outskirts of Shikin, Paktika province. In Kabul there has been a sharp decrease in the level of security experienced by Afghans and members of the international community.

There has also been an upsurge in factional fighting amongst rival regional and local commanders across Afghanistan. In early April, fighting between the forces of Abdul Rashid Dostum and Ustad Atta Mohammed in Maimana city, Faryab province, killed up to eight civilians. In Imamsahib district of Kunduz, a group of Uzbek returnees from Pakistan complained that local Turkmen militia allied to the *Jamiat-e-Islami* faction had kidnapped eight people, including five women, in order to force the community to give up their land. Processes of disarmament and demobilization have to date been largely ineffectual.

Between 5 and 10 million landmines and unexploded ordnances continue to litter the countryside, killing an estimated 200 persons every month. The Special Representative of the Secretary General in Afghanistan noted recently that "The issue of security in Afghanistan cast a long shadow over the whole peace process there and, indeed, over the whole future of the country." Furthermore, public confidence in the police, including in Kabul, is very low, with the police being responsible for human rights abuses including torture and arbitrary detention." (AI 23 June 2003, pp. 21-22)

"20. Security remains the most serious challenge facing the peace process in Afghanistan. Security must be improved to allow the re-establishment of the rule of law, ensure the protection of human rights, promote the reconstruction effort and facilitate the success of the complex political processes, including the development of the new constitution and the holding of free and fair elections. Afghans in many parts of the country remain unprotected by legitimate State security structures. Criminal activity by armed groups has of late been particularly evident in the north, east and south, and in many areas confrontation between local commanders continues to contribute to instability.

21. During the reporting period, rivalries between factional leaders worsened in the west when the forces of Herat's Governor, Ismael Khan, clashed with those of a local commander, Amanullah Khan, in Shindand in late 2002. In January 2003, fighting broke out in the province of Badghis between forces loyal to Ismael Khan and the local Governor, Gul Mohammad.



22. In Kandahar, rivalries over local power and tribal dominance came to a head when forces belonging to the Governor, Gul Agha, from the Barakzay tribe, tried to disarm police under the command of General Akram, from the Alokozai tribe. The dispute over responsibility for law and order in the city was resolved after the intervention of tribal leaders.

23. Sporadic acts of terror continue to occur all too frequently. The worst of these in recent months was on 31 January, when a bus drove over an improvised mine near Kandahar, killing 12 passengers. In late December 2002, in Kabul, an explosive device was thrown into a car carrying two United States plain-clothed soldiers and their interpreter, injuring them. In a separate incident, also in Kabul, two Afghans were killed and two foreign aid workers were injured when a grenade was thrown into a crowd of people outside an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) base. An ISAF national interpreter was killed on 7 March while on patrol, when an improvised, remote-controlled explosive device detonated as his vehicle passed.

24. Reports from several sources in the first months of 2003 point to increased activity by elements hostile to the Government and to the international community in Afghanistan. There were signs that remnant Taliban groups and factions loyal to Gulbuddin Hikmatyar were trying to reorganize in the south-eastern and eastern border areas. There has also been an increase in the number of attacks against the personnel and assets of international and non-governmental organizations, particularly in the border provinces of Nangahar, Khost, Kunar, Paktya, Paktika, Kandahar and Helmand. In December 2002, two grenades were thrown into the compound of the Gardez office of UNAMA, and in February 2003 an explosive device detonated outside the office in Kandahar of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and another was thrown into the office compound of the International Organization of Migration (IOM) in Kunduz. Over the reporting period there has also been a series of unexplained explosions in Jalalabad that resulted in no casualties. Attacks against coalition forces continued to occur, resulting in numerous injuries and one fatality.

25. UNAMA and United Nations agencies are taking precautionary measures to ensure the security of staff, such as limiting non-essential movements around the country. Although travel or activities have been suspended for two or three days in specific cases and places, security has not yet deteriorated to a level that would require a cessation of local operations. Security assessments will be made on an area-by-area basis, and should operations in any one area have to be curtailed, those in other areas of Afghanistan should not necessarily be affected." (UN Secretary-General 18 March 2003, pp. 7-8)

*See also:*

*"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*

### **Displacement upon return due to land tenure problems (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. They are originally from various provinces such as Parwan, Logar, Kunduz, Kabul and Bamyan. They claim that their land in their areas of origin is still occupied by families of Hazara ethnicity. There were also 60-70 families from the same province and with the same problem residing in several partially destroyed houses in Karte Se.

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. In a third case, 10 Pashtoon IDP families residing in rental houses in Qalacha area of sub-district 8 claim to have come to Kabul when their village became the frontline between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance about 6 years ago. Later on, when the Taliban were defeated, the Pashayee commanders took control of the area and continue to occupy it.

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 Piazqul 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 Khujja 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)"

## 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 are 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)

## Political developments

---

### Severe political and logistical challenges ahead of the June 2004 elections (December 2003)

- Controversy about the feasibility of holding elections in June 2004 as provided for by the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, mainly because of ongoing security and logistical challenges.
- US government may be seeking to use the holding of elections as an indicator of success in relation to its intervention in Afghanistan and to present this to the US public in pursuit of its electoral objectives.
- However, failure to adhere to the Bonn Agreement on this matter may undermine respect for the Bonn Agreement as a whole.
- Registration of voters is underway, but large areas remain difficult to access because of adverse security.
- AREU (research institute) stresses the importance of "the rule of law" as a pre-condition for fair elections

"In a recently published report to the Intelligence Oversight Committee of the US Congress, the CIA stated that the Afghan government faced logistical and political challenges so severe that it might not be able to hold elections, as provided in the Bonn Agreement, in June 2004. They thus lent their voice to a controversy which has been very much vocalised in recent weeks, with strong arguments being made for delaying the elections because of the very serious security situation in many areas. There is particular concern that the US government may be seeking to use the holding of elections as an indicator of success in relation to its intervention in Afghanistan and to present this to the US public in pursuit of its electoral objectives within the USA later in the year. However, there are also others, within the Afghan government, who fear that, if the elections are postponed, this will evoke memories of the situation during the period of the Mujahidin government of 1992-96 when President Rabbani perpetuated his period in office beyond that previously agreed.

It is also feared that failure to adhere to the Bonn Agreement on this matter may undermine respect for the Bonn Agreement as a whole. On the other hand, there is already talk of the June elections being only for the President and of parliamentary elections being deferred. In this context, some observers have commented that the population might react with cynicism to the elections, expecting that the outcome would already be determined, and stay away from the polls. The UN has argued, however, that there has been positive interest in the electoral process when they have been visiting the various areas of Afghanistan. The UN plans to go ahead with the registration of voters in early December but acknowledges that large areas remain difficult to access because of adverse security. The security of both voters and UN staff engaged in the electoral process is a key issue in this regard.

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit has encapsulated these and other arguments in a new report, entitled "Afghan Elections: the Great Gamble". The report "challenges Afghans and the international community working in Afghanistan to take a step back from the Bonn Agreement timeframe and to consider whether elections should go ahead as planned in June 2004 given the current security and political environment". The paper argues that it will be difficult to ensure fair elections in a situation in which voters can be intimidated by the various power holders and in which the Pushtun population will be disadvantaged due to the inability of election officials to reach large sections of the Pushtun belt. It notes that voters could also be threatened into not participating by the boycott of the elections called for by the Taliban. The paper lays stress on the importance of "the rule of law" as a pre-condition for fair elections. It also draws attention to the cultural and other constraints on achieving full participation by women in an electoral process. It comments that, while the UN is making some progress in preparing to register the electorate, the government is far from being in a position to exercise its responsibility to organise elections in June." (BAAG 31 December 2003)

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

- New constitution adopted by Constitutional Loya Jirga on 4th January 2004 during which clear fault lines were revealed between various groups present.
- US has actively sought to influence the outcome.
- The relative power of the Pushtun population within the government appears to have been strengthened by the adoption of a strong presidency.
- Female representation has been doubled to reach 64 out of 250 seats in the Wolesi Jirga (lower house). Constitution also provides specific equality between men and women under law.
- HRW raised concern that 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.
- HRW argues that constitution fails to adequately address the role of Islamic law and its relationship to human rights protections, resulting in potential violation of human rights standards.
- Further, 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, Turkmen 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.

(...)

Important changes were made to the draft to strengthen the position of women in Afghanistan. The addition of "-whether man or woman -" to create a new provision that "The citizens of Afghanistan - whether man or woman - have equal rights and duties before the law." is one such example. Equally significant was the provision that at least two delegates should be elected from each province to the Wolesi Jirga, thus doubling female representation. Women will thus have 64 out of the 250 seats. The provision in the draft constitution that the President appoints 50% of the members of the Meshrano Jirga, or upper house of the National Assembly, was ratified. The President was also required to appoint two representatives from the disabled and impaired and two representatives from the Kuchis (nomads) to the upper house." (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)

3  
2

See also: *Ending Impunity and Building Justice in Afghanistan*, AREU, December 2003



## POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

### General

---

#### Who are the IDPs in Afghanistan ? (October 2003)

- Due to the continued drought, the nomadic pastoralist Kuchi currently represent the single largest IDP group, most of them located in the southern Pashtun 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, but 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.
- Urban IDPs experience social and economic marginalization as they join the long process of urban integration.
- 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.

#### Pastoralist Kuchis constitute the single largest IDP group in Afghanistan

"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)

#### 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, December 2003

### **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 184,000 and 300,000 IDPs as of December 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.
- There is a clear need for more accurate IDP figures. One of the main problem is identifying those who have returned to urban areas and are still vulnerable.

*As of end-2003, UNHCR reports the "active" caseload of IDPs in Afghanistan to stand at 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.*

*UNHCR's figure is based on the assumption that those that have returned or locally integrated have attained at least a minimal level of self-sufficiency.*

*Click here to see a UNHCR map showing the IDP Caseload (pdf 250 kb) as of December 2003.*

*In the December 2003 report of the UN Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan, the total number of IDPs was estimated at 300,000 (paragr. 66)*

*Amnesty International in their June 2003 report -"Out of sight, out of minds"- highlighted the problem of the sustainability of the returns that occurred in 2002 and in the second half of 2003, both for returning refugees and IDPs, and stated that some 600,000 persons remained displaced.*

Monthly IDP Settlement Report, UNHCR, December 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%

*For more details, see the December 2003 IDP Settlement report (excell 25 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. 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)

"During 1381/2002 most attention has understandably been focused on the huge scale of refugee return from the neighbouring countries. This however, substantial IDP returns have also occurred in the northern, central, western and eastern parts of the country. Concentrations of IDPs totalling in the region of 600,000 continue to be found scattered across much of southern Afghanistan, around Herat in the west, and in parts of the north.

[...]

The main areas of concentration of IDPs are in Zhare Dasht, Panjwai and other settlements in the south, Maslakh and Shaidayee camps in the west, and a number of smaller camps in the north." (TISA March 2003, p. 3/8)

#### 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)	4,150,000
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

**Table 1: Summary of Vulnerable Population**

Regions	Currently Vulnerable			Projected Additional Vulnerable	TOTAL VULNERABLE	Refugees among the Total Vulnerable	
	IDPs	Others	Total			Refugees	Countries
North-East (Faizabad)	100,000	200,000	300,000	50,000	350,000	50,000	Tajikistan
						40,000	Pakistan
Central (Kabul)	100,000	900,000	1,000,000	500,000	1,500,000	320,000	Pakistan
Hazarajat (Bamyan)	60,000	600,000	660,000	200,000	860,000	30,000	Iran
North (Mazar)	500,000	900,000	1,400,000	600,000	2,000,000	30,000	Iran
						25,000	Turkmenistan
						100,000	Pakistan
South (Kandahar)	200,000	500,000	700,000	310,000	1,010,000	400,000	Pakistan
						100,000	Iran
West (Herat)	200,000	700,000	900,000	300,000	1,200,000	240,000	Iran
						25,000	Turkmenistan
East (Jalalabad)	0	350,000	350,000	250,000	600,000	140,000	Pakistan
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,160,000</b>	<b>4,150,000</b>	<b>5,310,000</b>	<b>2,210,000</b>	<b>7,520,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	
<b>Total Planning Figure</b>			<b>5,300,000</b>	<b>2,200,000</b>	<b>7,500,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	

Source: WFP 1 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  
Panjshir Valley : 75,000 + 10,400 (new arrivals Takhar)  
Kabul: 16,000 + 60,000  
Jalalabad : 2,600  
Hazarajat: 5,000

**Total: 316,000 IDPs**

(USCR 2 February 2001)  
(Office for the UN co-ordinator for Afghanistan 19 January 2001)  
(WFP 4 August 2000, 25 August 2000)  
(UNHCR, 14 July 2000)  
(IASC 1 December 2000)  
(IRIN 8 February 2001)

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

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

16,000 IDPs staying in the ex-Soviet Embassy compound in Kabul  
55,000 to 60,000 registered IDPs in Kabul, spread out in the city, staying with relatives, etc.  
Approximately 50,000 IDPs (7,568 families) in the Panjshir Valley. These figures exclude IDPs in the areas of Gulbahar, Jabulsaraj and Char-I-Kar (UNHCR, 14 July 2000)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **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)

"There are an estimated 350,000 internally displaced persons in southern Afghanistan, most of them in six settlements in Kandahar and Helmand provinces. People are still arriving in these settlements after fleeing harassment and insecurity in the north - from Faryab, Jawzjan and Badghis provinces." (UNHCR 17 April 2003)

### 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.
- 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

"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: "Focus on displacement in the western region", IRIN, 16 August 2002

*For more detailed information at the district level, see UNHCR Sub-Office Western Region District Profiles for the following provinces: Badghis, Farah, Hirat*

### 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.
- Since 2002, some 8,000 IDPs have returned home.
- 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.
- Also it has been meeting with IDP representatives of IDP camps from the south and west to inform IDPs about the security and social situation in their places of origin.

"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 Saedi 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 3,5000 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 Kamdih (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)

*For more detailed information at the district level, see UNHCR Sub-Office Central Region District Profiles for the following provinces: Bamyan, Ghazni, Kabul, Kapisa, Logar, Parwan, Wardak*

## **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.
- Early 1980's Afghanistan's nomadic population was estimated to be 2.5 million, scattered across the country in almost all the provinces.
- Drought and insecurity have disrupted the migration routes, destroyed pasture and decimated livestock herds, leaving the Kuchi not just without livelihoods but bringing to an end a traditional way of life, with the majority being forced to settle in makeshift camps along major highways.

"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)

"Afghan nomads or Kuchis, once a proud community of herd raisers and merchants, have been turned into destitute farmers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and beggars by the ongoing drought in the region.

[...]

Habibullah Rafi, director of the Afghanistan Cultural Centre in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar told IRIN that nomads were an important part of Afghanistan's ethnic patchwork. "These livestock raisers have a considerable share in shaping the history and society of the country. These sturdy have their areas of origin but they move, chasing pastures and water in different weathers," he said.

In the early 1980's Afghanistan's nomadic population was estimated to be 2.5 million, scattered across the country in almost all the provinces. Hundreds of thousands of them are desperately trying to preserve their way of life during the fourth year of the worst regional drought in living memory.

Many fail and end up trying to get work as labourers in areas such as Helmand and Kandahar where irrigation allows crops to grow. Those without work beg on the dusty streets of the region's towns. Traditionally nomads depend on livestock raising but they also engage in trade along ancient migratory caravan trails east and north of the central Hindu Kush mountains." (IRIN 20 March 2002)

"A minority group that has generated considerable concern is the Kuchi, traditional nomads who follow traditional livestock migration routes in search of grazing. The drought and insecurity have disrupted the migration routes, destroyed pasture and decimated livestock herds, leaving the Kuchi not just without livelihoods but bringing to an end a traditional way of life, with the majority being forced to settle in makeshift camps along major highways." (ACC/SCN July 2001 pp. 42-43)

*See also:*

*"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

---

#### **Pashtuns fleeing the ethnic tensions in the north and Kuchis fleeing the drought end up as displaced in the south (October 2002)**

- 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.
- A few tens of thousands managed to get through to Pakistan where they were hosted in refugee camps
- 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.

"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 Kuchis. 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 Kuchis; 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)

### **People flee the main cities to seek refuge in rural areas in fear of U.S. bombing (October 2001)**

- Unknown number of people have fled the main cities in fear of U.S. reprisals.
- UNHCR estimated that up to 2.2 million people could be displaced inside Afghanistan by March 2002

"Population flows outside of Afghanistan are still limited in numbers. Many reports indicate that a growing number of people are moving towards rural areas, but the UN does not have confirmed figures at this time" (OCHA 10 October 2001)

"During the first half of 2001, IDP camps sprang up in the vicinity of almost every bigger city of Afghanistan. Hardest hit were Herat, Kabul and Mazar, but even smaller centres started having IDP camps, places where hungry families hoped to be more visible and accessible by aid agencies. Estimates go up to 2,000,000 IDPs uprooted from rural areas all over Afghanistan. It is also known that impoverished urban dwellers resorted to shift their homes from urban slums to IDP camps in order to obtain food.

In the first days and weeks after the 11th of September, there are speculations that many of these IDP camps were left by a part of their inhabitants. There was great initial fear of being too close to urban targets of an American military attack, but there was also little reason to stay in IDP camps with aid agencies having sharply reduced or even stopped their food distribution. In September, UNOCHA's compiled data indicated 1,160,000 internally displaced. The events of the last days may have triggered further movements from urban to rural areas.

All internal movements are very difficult to predict. If, on one hand, the fear for the air-strikes is pushing people towards rural areas, on the other hand, the effects of widespread hunger may also cause short distance movements of weak village people in the opposite direction, hoping to find access to food in nearby towns.

Completely unpredictable are movements caused by fighting between opposition and Taliban troops and by the notorious habit of looting once combatants are leaving or taking over cities and villages. There is fear that disintegrating Taliban militias will also be increasingly out of control of Taliban commanders." (Intersos 10 October 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." (AI 9 October 2001)

### **The pattern of displacement follows the pattern of fighting (September 2001)**

- Early 1990s many fled Kabul in fear of reprisal and settled around Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad while others fled the provinces to Kabul for the same reasons.
- Mid-1990s, people moved north to flee Taliban advances.
- In 1996 Taliban captured Jalalabad and Kabul and people, mostly non Pushtun, fled both cities to seek refuge around Mazar-i-Sharif.
- July 1998 Taliban captured Mazar-i-Sharif and massacred civilians and displaced from the Hazara ethnic group.

"The pattern of displacement follows the pattern of fighting. In the early 1990s, after the marxist government fell and the resistance militias returned to Afghanistan, those who feared reprisal from these groups, largely because of complicity or suspicion of complicity with the Marxist government, fled the capital. With the Pakistani border closed, many who were displaced from Kabul went north to the area around Mazar-i-Sharif or south to Jalalabad, where large camps were set up for the displaced. During this period, many people from the provinces who feared retribution flooded into Kabul.

By the mid-1990s, when the Taliban movement began to expand out of the Kandahar area, displaced people moved north, fleeing the Taliban advance. As the Taliban approached Kabul in 1995, people again fled the capital, only to return shortly thereafter when the Taliban forces were temporarily defeated. But in September 1996, the Taliban captured Jalalabad, a principal city and the site of two large camps for the displaced. Most of these people were forced to move again. In the following weeks, the Taliban pushed into Kabul. The capital, and thus the government of Afghanistan, fell to Taliban control on 27 September 1996 and a mass exodus out of the capital ensued.

Those who fled Kabul in the autumn of 1996 were largely non-Pushtun minorities who feared retribution from the Pushtun-based Taliban. With the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan under Taliban control, many of those fleeing Kabul moved north into the Tajik areas or to the Uzbek area around the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

After capturing Kabul, the Taliban forces continued to press north creating another wave of displacement. Displaced persons, now mostly Tajiks, were forced to continue to flee north, although some sought refuge in Kabul itself. By July 1998, the Taliban forces took the city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

The capture of Mazar-i-Sharif had great strategic and symbolic importance. The city had become the headquarters of the Taliban opposition and was an important stronghold for non-Pushtun groups. Its capture meant that Taliban forces controlled almost all of Afghanistan. After Mazar-i-Sharif was captured, Taliban forces massacred thousands of civilians including many displaced persons, who were members of the Hazara ethnic groups.

The displaced populations in Afghanistan now have very few options. The main escape routes to the south and east are under Taliban control and the borders into Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are closed. Although some have fled west to the city of Herat, that city is also under Taliban control. Some have voluntarily moved to Kabul to live with relatives; others have been forcibly relocated by the Taliban, to compounds in the capital. The few areas not under Taliban control are the Tajik areas in the north-east and in the high central mountains of the Hazarajat. Yet even in these areas, the Taliban are slowly gaining control." (Farr, G. 1 September 2001 pp. 123-126)

### **Four major patterns of displacement (October 1999)**

- The momentum of displacement increases with the fear and terror that follows each fighting.
- Collective fear, fear of reprisal, house-to-house search, checking operations, recruitment of young conscripts cause people to move.
- Recently, in the Panjshir Valley, evacuation preceded the attacks.

- The areas most affected by displacement are the strategically important ones
- Over the last 20 years, 4 major patterns of displacement have emerged: movement towards the mountains nearest to the area abandoned; refuge to major cities; refuge in Pakistan and refuge in Iran

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

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

## PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

### General

---

#### HRW concerned that new Constitution fails to address issues of past human rights violations and prevent new ones (January 2004)

- New constitution improves women's political representation and provides specific equality between men and women under law.
- HRW thinks that the constitution fails to adequately address the role of Islamic law and its relationship to human rights protections.
- The issue of accountability is also not addressed in the document and the charter does not directly address issues of past war crimes and serious human rights abuses.
- HRW noted that political intimidation and vote-buying that took place before and during the convention.

"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.

'A constitution cannot itself reduce the power of the warlords,' said Sifton, 'But an open political process in drafting it could have weakened their influence. Instead, the warlords flexed their muscles and proved that they still hold a lot of power.' " (HRW January 2004)

*See also:*

*"Killing you is a very easy thing for us": Human Rights Abuses in Southeast Afghanistan, HRW, July 2003*

### **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
- No responsible government to which the IDPs can appeal for protection.
- 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)

#### **Government's main protection issues for returnees (March 2003)**

"Protection of returnees is the primary responsibility of TISA, with MoRR playing a major role in this area. The development of national protection capacities is a priority concern, so assistance will focus on strengthening local capacity and structures for the development and implementation of national legislation. To do so, the Government will rely on UNHCR's expertise and international protection mandate.

##### **Main protection issues:**

- (a) the right to return to places of returnee and IDP choice, without prejudice to their ethnic origin, religion or political affiliation;
- (b) the unity of the family;
- (c) the transfer and or recovery of personal assets;
- (d) special assistance and protection measures for vulnerable returnees;
- (e) mine awareness;
- (f) non forceful military recruitment; and
- (g) the respect of the rule of law (amnesties, recuperation of land ownership, personal documentation, detention cases, etc)." (TISA March 2003, p. 8)

#### **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.
- Local and regional military commanders and their troops regularly abuse the human rights of those Afghans living in areas under their control
- 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**

---

### **Children in IDP camp in the south at risk of being killed by wolves (July 2003)**

- As a consequence of the disappearance of Kuchi's livestock, wolves start targeting children in IDP camps in the south

"Mandozai Camp in Maiwand Province, an hour's drive southwest from Kandahar, is a sad, subdued place. In the past two weeks, two infants have been snatched in the night and killed by the packs of wolves that have started preying on children, as their other prey has become more scarce. Mandozai Camp is home to 156 families. It's inhabitants are all Kuchis, (Afghanistan's nomadic people) who have lived in Registan Desert south of Kandahar for centuries herding their flocks of sheep north every summer for the high mountain pastures in Uruzgan and back down again in winter. That cyclical way of life, however, is almost completely finished for these people. The terrible drought of the past five years has devastated the desert's fragile ecosystem, and destroyed the grazing. The Kuchis have gradually had to sell or eat their flocks to survive. This has had a knock on effect with the wolves. Previously they would have picked off the odd sheep. Now those flocks are gone, the wolves are moving in on the only other available food source; the camps themselves and the people who live in them.

Din Mohammad, a 70-year-old Kuchi sheep owner with 12 children and 36 grandchildren, says life in the camp is now a nightly terror.

'We are afraid of the wolves. They are very big, they come up to a man's waist. Yesterday a wolf bit a boy on the leg during the night, but the child struggled so the wolf snatched a sheep that was also in the tent. We launched a hunt party to get the sheep back, but by the time we found it, the wolves had devoured it. We have only sticks to defend ourselves, so we couldn't even kill the wolves. They just loped back to their desert lair. We are keeping vigil at night and we have posted watchmen, but we dare not sleep at night.'

Local NGO, VARA is working in Mandozai Camp with Cordaid support to provide relief and livelihoods to the Kuchis from Registan. Mr Najmuhddin is VARA's director. His reaction was one of shock. 'Wolves in the region are not a new phenomenon,' he explains. 'What is new, however, is that the wolves are targeting children'

All the attacks occurred between midnight and 4am. 'We can hear them moving around outside the tent', says Din Mohammad. 'In the morning we can see their tracks. Paw prints as big as my hand.' Mandozai Camp is one of a cluster of 11 camps strung out along a dry river bed. All the camps are inhabited by Kuchis who have been stranded on the desert's edge by the drought. More than five and a half thousand people with no means of supporting themselves in a place where no water flows and temperatures reach 50 C." (Caritas Network for Afghanistan 25 July 2003)

### 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

#### **IDPs in camps in the north subjected to forcible relocations, compulsory performance of military support functions, and sexual violence (June 2002)**

- Competition between Jamiat and Jumbish and the establishment of their military posts within or in close proximity to IDP camps has resulted in abuses against IDPs. Among them, forcible relocations, compulsory performance of military support functions, and sexual violence.

- In Camp 65 the establishment of Junbish military camp forced IDPs settled close to it, to relocate in less convenient areas to the outskirts of the camp. Male residents of the camp were ordered to serve as night watchmen and dig trenches—in both cases without payment.
- Sakhi camp was described by local residents and humanitarian aid workers as being dominated by men affiliated with Jamiat. Pashtuns living in the camp faced widespread sexual violence and looting by Jamiat and Junbish militiamen and many of the Pashtun residents subsequently fled the camp.

The competition between Jamiat and Junbish and the establishment of their military posts within or in close proximity to IDP camps has had dire consequences for the security of camp residents. Among the abuses against civilians reported to Human Rights Watch have been forcible relocations, compulsory performance of military support functions, and sexual violence. Two large camps with which these abuses have been associated are Camp 65, in Chintal district, west of Mazar, and Sakhi camp, located east of the city.

۶  
۱

### *Camp 65*

Junbish forces partially reoccupied Camp 65, a former military base, amid a heavy buildup of troops and military hardware by the rival parties in and around Mazar in late April and early May. Internally displaced persons whose settlements lay close to the newly established Junbish base were forcibly evicted and their dwellings bulldozed, according to humanitarian aid workers and camp residents; the remains of their demolished homes were clearly visible when Human Rights Watch visited the camp in early June. Most of those who had been evicted—largely ethnic Arabs and Tajiks from Shiram in Sar-e Pul province—relocated on their own to the outskirts of the camp, at a site without easy access to water resources.

When confronted with the order to move, the Shiram population first sought help from the local Junbish commanders. 'Some of the elders went to the commanders and asked them not to make us move,' said A, a camp resident. 'They [the commanders] said we should seek assistance from aid organizations, who might point us in the direction we need to go.' No offer was made by the commanders themselves to assist in the relocation, he said. The eviction itself was abrupt. 'The bulldozer came at about noon,' A said. 'In less than one hour they had destroyed the homes.' Another, older man reported, 'They didn't give us time to remove our mattresses or blankets.'

Concurrently with the establishment of the Junbish presence, male residents of the camp were ordered to serve as night watchmen and dig trenches—in both cases without payment. M, who estimated his age as being between 55 and 60, and S, a man of about 30, went to the base to complain on behalf of the camp population. Both were severely beaten by Junbish troops for their efforts.

[...]

### *Sakhi camp*

Sakhi camp is a planned community of clay and wood homes that was originally built to house refugees from Tajikistan during that country's 1992-97 civil war. Its population is now entirely Afghan, of diverse ethnic origins. Although not militarized to the extent of Camp 65, Sakhi camp was described by local residents and humanitarian aid workers as being dominated by men affiliated with Jamiat, including the de facto leader of the camp, Lal Mohammad.

Many ethnic Pashtuns in Sakhi camp were targeted by the newly victorious Northern Alliance forces, initially including both Jamiat and Junbish troops, who established a presence in the camp following the collapse of Taliban rule in Mazar. According to residents and aid workers interviewed by Human Rights Watch, Pashtuns living in the camp faced widespread sexual violence and looting by Jamiat and Junbish militiamen. An entire section of the camp housing an estimated 400 Pashtun families was destroyed, and lay in ruins at the time of Human Rights Watch's visit to the camp in early June. Many of the Pashtun

residents subsequently fled the camp, with some reportedly heading toward the largely Pashtun town of Balkh.

Pashtun women remaining in the camp who were interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that cases of sexual violence had diminished since the immediate post-Taliban period, largely due to the reduced presence of armed men in the camp. But all spoke of a continued fear of sexual assault.

[...]

According to the representative of a group of Pashtun families in the camp, sexual violence by armed men continues to take place. Several residents said that camp 'leaders' associated with the armed forces that had committed abuses against Pashtuns, including cases of sexual violence, remained in the camp and continued to act as representatives of groups of families there." (HRW June 2002, pp. 4-6)

### **Survey reveals Pashtun households in Western Afghanistan are 2-5 times more exposed to abuses than other ethnic groups (April 2002)**

- Findings of the PHR study reveal that abuses were committed on a widespread basis among Pashtun households in Western Afghanistan. Armed militias (primarily Uzbek forces) have used intimidation, extortion and committed abuses against civilians, primarily ethnic Pashtuns, including killings, beatings, shootings, disappearances, and gang rape.
- The abuses among Pashtuns were ~2-5 times the number of reported abuses among other ethnic groups in Shaidayee camp

"The findings of this study indicate that abuses were committed on a widespread basis among Pashtun households in Western Afghanistan. Armed militias (primarily Uzbek forces) have used intimidation, extortion and committed abuses against civilians, primarily ethnic Pashtuns, including killings, beatings, shootings, disappearances, and gang rape. The findings also indicate that despite increased international assistance and humanitarian aid, lack of food distribution and the need for emergency assistance were the main reasons that people in Western Afghanistan left their home villages to go to Shaidayee IDP camp. In a time when reconstruction is the priority in Afghanistan, basic needs such as food, clean water, shelter, and health care services, and security cannot be ignored, without placing many Afghans at further risk for dire health consequences.

The respondents in this study reported that at least one or more abuses had occurred in 8% of all households, 3% of Tajik households and 14% of Pashtun households. Abuses occurred in home villages in 10 districts in Ghor, Baghdis, and Faryab provinces. Sixty-eight percent of the abuses were attributed to Uzbek forces. The abuses among Pashtuns were ~2-5 times the number of reported abuses among other ethnic groups in Shaidayee camp. It is clear that in several instances the abusers were known to the respondents and that the abusers were primarily of Uzbek ethnicity. In one case, an Uzbek commander was involved in extortion from a Pashtun household, creating a question of whether or not other Uzbek commanders are complicit in these abuses." (PHR April 2002)

### **Cluster bombs put IDPs at risk (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)

### Landmines in Afghanistan (August 2002)

- 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

"Afghanistan has experienced dramatic political, military, and humanitarian changes. The cabinet approved Afghanistan's accession to the Mine Ban Treaty on 29 July 2002 and the following day the Minister of Foreign Affairs signed the instrument of accession on behalf of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan.

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.

A funding shortfall for the mine action program in Afghanistan prior to 11 September 2001 had threatened to again curtail mine action operations. But since October 2001, about \$64 million has been pledged to mine action in Afghanistan. By March 2002, mine clearance, mine survey, and mine risk education operations had returned to earlier levels, and have since expanded beyond 2001 levels.

In 2001, mine action NGOs surveyed approximately 14.7 million square meters of mined areas and 80.8 million square meters of former battlefield area, and cleared nearly 15.6 million square meters of mined area and 81.2 million square meters of former battlefields. Nearly 730,000 civilians received mine risk education. A total of 16,147 antipersonnel mines, 1,154 antivehicle mines, and 328,398 UXO were destroyed. In all of these activities, 95 to 99 percent of the actions were completed prior to 11 September 2001.

The ICRC recorded 1,368 new landmine and UXO casualties in Afghanistan in 2001, but that number is not comprehensive.

[...]

The interim administration has identified mine action as a priority area for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Even before the latest conflict, the full extent of the landmine and unexploded ordnance problem in Afghanistan was not determined. In addition, there is limited information available thus far about the UXO contamination caused by the ground battles and aerial bombing (especially of ammunition storage facilities) during the recent military activities.



Despite continued progress made by MAPA and its implementing partners over the past decade, Afghanistan is still believed to be one of the most severely mine- and UXO-affected countries in the world. MAPA continues to discover, at a rate of 12 to 14 million square meters per year, areas that were mined years ago, but remained inaccessible due to armed conflict. Notably, until recently, there was no access to 100 million square meters of former Northern Alliance front lines.

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*



## DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

### General

---

#### Government plans to issue new ID cards as soon as finances are available (March 2003)

- Birth certificate are issued by the hospital where the person is born.
- ID cards are issued when the person turns 7 and replaced when he/she turns 18.
- In Kabul, ID cards are only issued by Ministry of Interior and in the provinces this is done at the governor's office.
- There are reportedly plans to introduce a new system for the issue of national IDcards as soon as finance permits.

"The Minister of the Interior said that a normal birth certificate is issued by the hospital where the person is born. As regards ID-cards (tazkara), such a card with photo attached will be issued when the person turns 7 years. This is because such a card is required in order to be able to start school. The ID-card will be replaced when the holder turns 18.

If a person does not have a birth certificate, an ID-card can be issued if persons certify before the authorities the identity of the person in question.

In Kabul ID-cards are only issued by the Ministry of the Interior. In the provinces, this is done at the governor's office. In the districts, they are issued by the "District Commissioner". ID-cards can also be issued by Afghan embassies abroad.

The ID-cards look the same everywhere in the country. The Ministry of the Interior finally said that the issuing authorities have used up all previous ID-forms. This has been the case since the end of the Taliban period. This is why the authorities are now issuing a form instead of the actual ID-card.

A copy of all ID-cards issued in places other than Kabul must be sent to the Ministry of the Interior in Kabul.

An ID-card must be presented in the following situations:

- when a person is caught breaking Afghan laws
- when applying for a passport
- when a person has problems with authorities
- when a person is applying for a job.

The Minister also said that there are plans to introduce a new system for the issue of national IDcards. However, this system cannot be implemented until the necessary finances are available." (DIS March 2003, p.p. 54-55)

## ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

### General

---

**75% of orphans surveyed in the west express their preference for staying with family instead of being placed in institutions (June 2003)**

- Coping mechanisms of the extended family have weakened and an increasing number of children who have lost one or both parents have been placed in institutions.
- 75% of the children claim they would rather be reunited with their families if they were given economic support.

"War Child UK has carried out a survey of institutions for children deprived of parental care in western Afghanistan at the request of UNICEF. After two decades of war, the coping mechanisms of the extended family have weakened and an increasing number of children who have lost one or both parents have been placed in institutions. Primarily, children are placed in these institutions because of economic reasons, better education and food provision. It is, however, crucial for the healthy development of children and adolescents not to be separated from their families and 75% of the children claim they would rather be reunited with their families if they were given economic support. On the basis of the survey, War Child UK has made recommendations to UNICEF that these institutions be transformed into tracing and counselling centres or transition centres where the children remain for a short period of time before being re-integrated with their families or placed with foster families. Additionally, income generation projects should be developed so that the women are able to support their children financially." (War Child 18 June 2003)

## PROPERTY ISSUES

### General

---

#### 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)

#### **Property dispute resolution mechanism 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 nationwide, 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)

### **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 Gorteepea, 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 Shirkhat 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 Bagرامي 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)

#### **Disputes over land and property ownership proliferate affecting many returnees (June 2003)**

- 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

"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)

## PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

### Return and resettlement movements

---

#### 82,000 IDPs have returned since January 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:

"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

### 300,000 IDPs expected to return during 2003 (January 2003)

- Afghan government and international agencies will facilitate the return of 300,000 IDPs during 2003, with transport assistance, food packages and non-food items.
- Reintegration efforts will be spearheaded by the government with assistance from WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO and UNOPS.
- Shelter assistance will be provided to some 75,000 returnee families and 4,000 wells will be dug in areas of return.
- Government, with assistance from UNHCR, will conduct comprehensive monitoring of the return of displaced people and their initial reintegration.
- UNHCR will attempt to reinforce the rule of law by developing mechanisms to enhance government's capacity.

**"Return:** The Afghan Administration and international agencies intend to facilitate the return of an estimated 1.2 million refugees and 300,000 IDPs. International legal frameworks governing refugee returns will be finalized with the Government of Pakistan, and renewed with the Governments of Iran and other countries of asylum. As in 2002, returnees will be provided with transport assistance, an initial food package and non-food items by UNHCR, IOM and WFP.

**Reintegration:** The Afghan Government with the assistance of various UN agencies will also spearhead intensive reintegration efforts; UNHCR will continue to support the Returnee Reintegration Unit at the Ministry Rural Rehabilitation Development (MRRD); WFP will develop food-for-work initiatives; UNICEF will work on safe water supply and education; FAO on crop production, and UNOPS (UN Office for Project Services) on road repairs. Shelter, water, education, health, community services and cash-for-work initiatives, although nationwide priorities, will feature prominently in reintegration assistance in regions with significant refugee/IDP returns. It is expected that shelter assistance will be provided for approximately 75,000 returnee families while 4,000 wells will be dug in communities with returnee populations. Specific attention also will be paid to vulnerable groups, including female heads-of-households, the elderly and the disabled.

**Protection of Returnee Rights:** Comprehensive monitoring of the return of displaced people and their initial reintegration will be conducted by the Government, with key support from UNHCR's network of field offices. UNHCR will also work to develop mechanisms to enhance the capacity of government and other national institutions to reinforce the rule of law. The work of the Return Commission will continue to be supported." (UNAMA 30 January 2003)

## **More than 70,000 IDPs have left Herat camps between March and July to return home (July 2002)**

- The voluntary repatriation of nearly 7,000 displaced Afghans from the Rawzabagh camp in Herat in the west has been completed.
- Those who remained (some 65 families) did not want to return to their homes and it was still unclear where they would resettle.
- More than 71,000 Afghans have returned to their homes from the IDP camps in Herat in the past four months, leaving an estimated 60,000 IDPs there.

"The voluntary repatriation of nearly 7,000 displaced Afghans from the Rawzabagh camp in Herat in the west has been completed, says the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Jeff McMurdo, IOM programme co-ordinator for Afghanistan, told IRIN on Monday that only 65 families from a total of 7,000 people remained at the camp for internally displaced people (IDPs). Those who remained, he said, did not want to return to their homes and it was still unclear where they would resettle. For now, however, they were still being provided with shelter and food at the camp.

Rawzabagh is one of five IOM co-ordinated IDP camps in Herat, western Afghanistan. According to an IOM statement, more than 71,000 Afghans have returned to their homes from the camps in the past four months - 9,000 of them since the middle of June.

Those who have opted to return to their homes in time for the autumn planting season have been given survival kits including blankets, plastic sheets, some tools and seeds, and wheat to survive for up to three months.

The IOM said in a statement that an estimated 60,000 IDPs remained at the camps they run in Herat. Maslakh, the biggest IDP camp, still had 32,000 people living there, while another, Shaidayee, had 21,000, the organisation said.

## **Return and resettlement programmes**

### **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 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)

### 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 Zarhe 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 Zahre 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 1 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 IQM 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:

- Equip 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)

#### **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)

### Rural integration (March 2003)

- Establishment of MRRD Reintegration Unit to facilitate the potential reintegration dimension of the 5 main programme areas designed to address rural poverty and promote recovery.
- For the year 2003, it is expected that the first phase of reintegration programme in 3 sectors (education, health and water) may result in unmet costs amounting to US\$12 million.
- The Inter-Ministerial Commission for Rural Development will need to address the problem of land allocation and right property issues.
- Government will seek to encourage private investment and the development and re-establishment of an export farming industry.

47. To address rural poverty and promote recovery, MRRD has set five main areas for programming, namely (i) institutional strengthening to support sustainable rural livelihoods, (ii) macro economic regeneration, (iii) community-based development, (iv) protection of lives and livelihoods, and (v) income diversification. Within each programme area, emphasis is to be placed, *inter alia*, on reintegration (returnees, IDPs, ex-combatants), sustainable resource management, and gender equality. Each of the five programme areas has an important potential reintegration dimension to them, which will need to be further detailed. The establishment of the MRRD Reintegration Unit (see paragraph 24) will facilitate this process.

48. The first phase of reintegration may result in additional costs to larger programmes. These can broadly be accounted for in the social sectors; yet more accurate calculations need to be made by taking into account the availability and resources of existing facilities. A rough figure of unmet costs for the 1381/2002 returnees for three sectors (education, health and water) amounts to approximately US\$ 4.5 million. For 1382/2003, this figure could reach up to US\$12 million.

49. To plan appropriate food security interventions, it will be necessary to determine the number of returnee families who own or have access to sufficient land to grow their own food. Also, it is necessary to quantify the number of families who will be able to meet some of their food needs through share cropping and casual labour, and to seek off-farm employment to purchase their food requirements. Investment choices will have to be made between encouraging on-farm livelihood systems (crops and livestock) and other non-farm economic opportunities (labour intensive works programmes); between expanding the cultivable areas (through expanded irrigation infrastructure) or raising agricultural productivity and efficiency on existing land (through extension work, input supplies, improved market access).

50. Land allocation and right property issues will also need to be addressed by the Government as soon as possible. The Inter-Ministerial Commission for Rural Development will need to pursue this matter with all relevant Government entities.

51. In addition, the Government will seek to encourage private investment and the development and re-establishment of an export farming industry. This will be achieved through the development and promotion of markets, the establishment of agricultural credit schemes and incentives to small and medium scale farmers for expansion of activities. Special attention will be paid to the expansion of the export market for fruits and vegetables." (TISA March 2003, pp. 10-11)

### Urban reintegration (April 2003)

- MUDH envisages to relocate urban IDPs, in particular those in Kabul, to a location near Pul-e-Charkhi as a short-term solution.
- There is concern that urban areas cannot absorb the large number of people who have returned during 2002. These concerns have been incorporated by MUDH into the Urban Reconstruction plan.
- In the last years, the focus of humanitarian programmes in urban areas has been on providing relief to the vulnerable. The large number of returnees has now made their reintegration a key issue for urban rehabilitation.
- The degraded and inadequate state and availability of housing in the main cities of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar-I-Sharif and Kunduz is an immediate reintegration challenge for the MUDH. 60,000 owner built units are planned.
- It is expected to increase the capacity of the existing public networks to cover the needs of at least 50% of the urban population.
- MUDH expects to generate at least 50,000 jobs and provide rapid income opportunities to more than 20,000 households.
- A household surveys of returnee dense areas will be commissioned during 2003 to gather more data about urban returnee families, their place of former residence, and their assets.

"The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH) has undertaken efforts to address the immediate problems of urban IDPs, in particular those who live in public premises in Kabul. It is envisaged to relocate these IDPs to a location near Pul-e Charkhi as a shorter-term strategy. Suggestions on longer-term solutions focus on the possibilities of land allocation by the Government or the use of land. Issues such as the urban returns/IDPs should be streamlined in the discussions of the two concerned CG's." (HAAG 22 April 2003)

"52. The large number of returns to Kabul, Jalalabad, and other Afghan cities during 1381/2002 has raised understandable concerns over unmanageable levels of migration to urban areas ill prepared to absorb rapid population growth. As with rural programmes, a key concern for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MUDH), associated ministries, and municipalities during 1382/2003 will be building reintegration concerns into its main programme and planning areas – housing, urban infrastructure, community development, utilities, employment and services. To do this, MUDH has already incorporated into the draft Urban Reconstruction Plan, key elements that address the main priorities of urban returnees and IDPs.

53. Due to security, political, and resource constraints, there has been little rehabilitation assistance or investment in the development of Afghanistan's cities for many years. Even more than in rural areas, the focus of humanitarian assistance programmes in urban areas has been on providing relief to the vulnerable and urban poor. The rapid and large return of returnees to Kabul has made their reintegration a key short and medium term issue for urban rehabilitation in 1381/2002 and 1382/2003.

54. In the urban sector, an immediate reintegration challenge for the MUDH is the degraded and inadequate state and availability of housing in the main cities of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar-I-Sharif and Kunduz. The launching of a housing programme for the cities is an urgent priority. As a part of the Reconstruction Plan 60,000 owner built units are planned plus the upgrading of social services in new and old residential areas.

55. As per in rural areas a second priority in the cities is the access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Through the urban reconstruction plan it is expected to increase the capacity of the existing public networks to cover the needs of at least 50% of the urban population. Reliability on private deep tube wells will be necessary for families with financial capacity. Coordination, water management, site protection, and distribution mechanisms will be also enhanced.

56. Although the urban economies have revived in the last few months, their ability to absorb so many new entrants onto the labour market (youth, the unemployed, returnees, ex-combatants) remains constrained. This will be a key concern for reintegration programmes since the numbers and demography (70% of working age) of returning refugees indicate that they will account for a large proportion of job seekers. The MUDH through reconstruction projects including housing, public works, and city level infrastructure expects to generate at least 50,000 jobs and provide rapid income opportunities to more than 20,000 households.

57. Another important aspect of urban reintegration is the support to establish social and cultural reintegration networks with support from national NGOs and community groups. Particular attention will be provided to mental health, gender equity and reintegration of children into education.

58. As with repatriation to rural areas, the generation of more data about urban returnee families, their place of former residence, and their assets will be important. To that end, household surveys of returnee dense areas will be commissioned during 1382/2003. The information will be collected and analysed systematically and used to guide programme decisions. Agencies such as UNHCR will transfer by the end of 1382/2003 their returnee monitoring capacity and district profiling exercises to the Government." (TISA March 2003, pp. 11-12)

## **Obstacles to return and resettlement**

---

### **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*

### **Presence and influence of abusive commanders in the northwest prevents return (November 2003)**

- 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.
- According to the participants ,the US Coalition's use and support of the commanders and competing factions perpetuated the crimes committed in the north west.
- Forced recruitment and taxation was noted to be widespread in Faryab, Saripul, Jowzjana and Balkh

"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)

### **Integration of IDPs in their area of displacement is constrained by illegal occupation of government 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 Shaydeh 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)

### **Challenges for the implementation of the Refugee and IDP Return program (September 2003)**

- Government hopes that improved capacity and the mainstreaming of reintegration concerns directly impact on the well-being of return communities.
- Challenges to the implementation of the Refugee and IDP Return programme include security, particularly in the south, protection issues and human right violations in the north, and land ownership disputes and availability, which has been constraining reintegration.
- Government will try to ensure that ensure national programmes such as the National Solidarity Programme, the National Emergency Employment Programme and the National Area-Based Development Programme mainstream the reintegration of returnees and IDPs.

#### **"Challenges for Implementation [of the Refugee and IDP Return program]**

Although the implementation of national recovery programmes is underway in a growing list of provinces nationwide, many return communities have yet to feel a significant impact. 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.

**Security:** partners have 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.

**Protection:** issues and rights violations continue to be registered especially in certain areas in the north west of the country, as reported in UNHCR's Returnee Monitoring Report, causing some population displacement and preventing other IDPs and refugees from returning to their areas of origin. The conclusions of the Working Group of the Return Commission, especially relating to the removal of abusive commanders from certain areas of the north-west, have not yet been implemented.

**Land and reintegration:** initial returnee reintegration programmes, and the shelter sector in particular, have been affected by land-issues – both ownership disputes and availability. Only returnee families who either own land or are allocated land by the Government can be provided with shelter. Land entitlement is a problem particularly in the northwest.

Many IDPs remain in the south because of drought (mainly nomads) or because of ongoing factional conflict in the north. The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation is working closely with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development to ensure national programmes such as the National Solidarity Programme, the National Emergency Employment Programme and the National Area-Based Development Programme mainstream the reintegration of returnees and IDPs." (TISA 21 September 2003, pp. 12-13)

### **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 Bamyan 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*

### **Major returns to northeast but few returns to northwest due to persistent tension, lack of long-term assistance (June 2003)**

- 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.
- Security still a major concern in the northwest.
- Situation has stabilised in the northeastern provinces of Takhar, Baghlan and Konduz, where most of the Pashtuns have returned, but few have returned to the northwestern provinces of Faryab, Jowzjan, Sar-e Pol and Badghis.
- Return commission still needs to persuade Pashtun IDPs in the south that conditions are conducive to return in the north.

- Aid workers report gap between the emergency humanitarian assistance delivered and the time of return or immediately after return.
- Land disputes is one of the main problems facing returnees fueling local conflicts.

"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.

In the interim, most of these displaced remain in the camps/settlements in Kandahar and Helmand provinces (Zahre Dasht, Spin Boldak, Panjwai and Mukhtar) and to a lesser extent in Hirat province (primarily Maslakh and Shaydayee). There are also some 20,000 displaced at the border between Spin Boldak and Chaman who are not allowed to enter the refugee camps in Pakistan and, as such, remain in limbo." (Inter-Agency Missions 19 June 2003, pp. 7-8)

"According to UNHCR, by the end of March, about 600,000 Afghan refugees and IDPs, had returned to their homes in the nine northern provinces of Faryab, Jowzjan, Sar-e Pol, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, Konduz, Samangan and Balkh. Of these, some 400,000 refugees came from Iran, Pakistan and the Central Asian republics with UNHCR assistance. While 140,000 IDPs also returned to their villages with the assistance of the refugee agency and other aid organisations, another 60,000 returned spontaneously or without assistance.

[...] fighting between the Taliban and their opponents of the Northern Alliance forced hundreds of thousands to flee northern Afghanistan. Moreover, the worst drought in living memory during the 1990s ruined nomadic pastoralist and agrarian livelihoods and people left their villages.

Following the fall of the Taliban, ethnic Pashtuns in the north were persecuted by ethnic militias and independent commanders and forced to flee. As many members of the Taliban came from among the Pashtun clerics in the south, they were associated with the reclusive movement and subsequently victimised. UNHCR estimates that 60,000 Pashtuns fled the area after the demise of the Taliban in December 2001.

#### *Weak civilian authority in north*

Vicky Tennant, a protection officer with UNHCR in Maza-e Sharif, told IRIN that security remained one of their major concerns. 'In some areas, local commanders still effectively exercise the authority and power,' she told IRIN, noting that civilian authority was weak across northern Afghanistan. The jostling for power between the ethnic Uzbek general, Abdul Rashid Dostum, and the Tajik commander, Mohammad Ata, had resulted in armed clashes and instability across the region.

She maintained that in addition to insecurity, many returnees had problems with shelter, with access to water, they wanted more schools and demanded a clinic closer to their village. 'A majority thinks that they will feel safe after a comprehensive disarmament campaign,' she said.

The refugee agency estimates that 24 percent, or 100,000 returnees over the past year, were Pashtuns. Tennant explained that the process of building up trust and relationships between the Pashtun and other communities who had remained would be a complex and long-term process.

Aid workers believe that the situation has largely stabilised in the northeastern provinces of Takhar, Baghlan and Konduz, where most of the Pashtuns have returned. However, few have returned to the northwestern provinces of Faryab, Jowzjan, Sar-e Pol and Badghis.

#### *Return commission to persuade Pashtuns in south to return*

In March, Rudd Lubbers, head of the UNHCR, inaugurated a return commission comprising representatives from the UN, the central government in Kabul and northern faction leaders. With thousands of Pashtuns living in crowded and squalid displacement camps in southern and western Afghanistan, the return commission has yet to send a working group there to persuade them to return to their ancestral homes. Local observers felt that political rivalries in the north were hindering such initiatives.

However, Tennant maintained that the commission's working group had now completed its initial assessments of the areas in the five northern provinces of Faryab, Samangan, Sar-e Pol, Jowzjan, and Balkh. 'Their reports are extremely comprehensive and forthright in identifying abuses by local commanders as a key issue which must be addressed in order to create the confidence necessary for large-scale returns to the north and northwest,' she said.

#### *Need for more assistance to make returns sustainable*

In addition, they emphasised the need for ongoing assistance from the international aid community towards securing access to shelter, water, livelihoods, health facilities and education.

Making the returns sustainable would need paced, integrated development and reconstruction. But aid workers maintained that there was a gap between the emergency humanitarian assistance delivered and the time of return or immediately after return. Substantial development work such as rebuilding sustainable livelihoods through income generation, infrastructure development and institution building therefore needed to be undertaken. 'The long-term development programmes have yet to kick off,' Tennant said.

Although donors and aid agencies have recognised the problems, and had initiated some projects, the people have far greater needs. Over the past year, UNHCR has built shelters for some 8,000 families; 470 water wells in the communities were dug and 12 schools were established. The agency also established six clinics to improve health conditions. Last winter 100,000 returnees received blankets, stoves, fuel and tents to survive through the harsh weather.

The government had realised such shortcomings, and President Hamid Karzai has repeatedly called for more funding. According to Qaderi of the ministry of refugees and repatriation, the country needed to

rebuild basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity and a telephone system. But the country has a long way to go before it rehabilitates and moves towards self-reliance.

'If there is no improvement in the situation it would certainly have a negative impact on the overall sustainability of the return and the future stability of this country,' he warned.

### *Land disputes*

Some provinces have attracted more returnees than others. Paola Emerson, the area coordinator for relief and reconstruction for the northeast with the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), told IRIN that the perception of Konduz being a rich province was attracting a large number of returnees. UNHCR assisted some 110,000 refugees to return to the fertile agricultural region last year. 'We are concerned over the land-ownership disputes, as land is scarce and there are competing claims,' she said.

In the ethnically heterogeneous north, returning refugees and IDPs find themselves entangled in land disputes as they try to rebuild their shattered lives. 'For a significant number of returning refugees, it is one of the most problematic issues,' Tennant explained.

A recent report by the independent Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) has found that land-ownership disputes are fuelling local conflicts at a time when stability is needed for reconstruction. 'The number-one source of conflict here today is land disputes,' the AREU's director, Andrew Wilder, told IRIN in Kabul.

Tennant added that although UNHCR was working with the traditional dispute-settlement mechanisms such as shuras, or village councils, the rule of law remained the only long-term solution to the issue. 'This is the primary prerequisite, and we encourage that even now by supporting the courts,' she said.

Emerson maintained that reconstruction also required decentralisation, thereby creating opportunities for returnees. 'The provincial authorities also need capacity building,' she said, noting that besides salaries, they did not receive any funds from Kabul. 'How can you be governor and serve the people without a budget?' she asked.

According to Gabriel Frailich, the head of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Faryab, there were still some 50,000 IDPs in the region now after the agency resettled about 150,000 in their villages over the past year. Although the returning refugees and IDPs have similar problems, IDPs in general are poorer. 'Survival is their main problem,' he told IRIN.

Frailich maintained that understanding the situation in depth and addressing it by removing the primary causes of displacement remained the key to success. Recently, in Astana valley in Faryab Province, IOM built one of the first rural water supply schemes, a school was opened with UNHCR support and repairs were made to the access road. 'Life is reverberating in the village that was completely abandoned during the Taliban rule two years earlier,' he said." (IRIN 18 June 2003)

### *See also:*

*"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

"Afghanistan: IDP Returns Outpace Reintegration Assistance", Refugees International, 21 May 2002

### Urban areas' absorption capacity reaching its limit (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)

## 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 pastureland 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*

#### **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)

### **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)

## 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	Disarmament, 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
UNSM	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](http://www.act-intl.org/appeals/appeals_2001/ASAF11Rev1.pdf) , accessed 19 October 2001

**Afghanistan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACAA)**, 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](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.pk/wdww/documents/wdww\\_reports/wdww\\_report4.pdf](http://www.aims.org.pk/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.hic.org.pk/area\\_coordination/coordination\\_issues/strategic\\_coord.pdf](http://www.hic.org.pk/area_coordination/coordination_issues/strategic_coord.pdf) , accessed 24 April 2003

**Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)**, November 2003, Afghan Elections: The Great Gamble

Internet :

<http://www.areu.org.pk/publications/elections%20brief/areu%20elections%20brief.pdf> , accessed 17 December 2003

**Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement (ACTED)**, 2003, Emergency Assistance to IDPs in Baghlan & Takhar

**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

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

British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), 12 August 2002, BAAG Afghanistan Monthly Review Jul 2002  
Internet :  
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/437a83f9fa966c40c12564f2004fde87/e5561d09fe2d8cda85256c1300679362?OpenDocument> , accessed 20 September 2002

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/3a81e21068ec1871c1256633003c1c6f3bf0a9d95c09fal85256c330065b8e??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/efd26a35afd9bda9585256adb00601956?OpenDocument> , accessed 5 October 2001

**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](http://www.careinternational.org.uk/cgi-bin/display_mediarelease.cgi?mr_id=228) , accessed 27 January 2004

**Caritas Network for Afghanistan**, 25 July 2003, "The Killer Wolves of Maiwand"

Internet : <http://www.caritas-network-for-afghanistan.org/story14.htm> , accessed 8 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

**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.childrenin crisis.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

**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/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/6481438aefc82900c1256adc0036348f?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**

**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](http://famine.tufts.edu/pdf/cash_famine.pdf), m , accessed 17 October 2002

**Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, 16 August 2002, **FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Afghanistan**

Internet

<http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/faoinfo/economic/giews/english/alertes/2002/SRAFG702.htm>, accessed 13 September 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

**Government of Japan**, 20 May 2003, **Japan's Support for Afghanistan**

Internet : <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/political/supportforafghanistan.htm>, accessed 18 June 2003

**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](http://www.hrw.org/editorials/2002/afghan_0320.htm#author), accessed 22 March 2002

**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/HumanitarianAffairs%20AG%20Minutes%20\(22.04.03\).doc](http://www.afghanistangov.org/resources/aaca/cg+adf/humanitarian_aff_ag/HumanitarianAffairs%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*

**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)**, 13 March 2002, "Afghanistan: Focus on Spin Boldak IDP camps"  
Internet : <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=24983&SelectRegion=Central Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN> , accessed 21 March 2002

**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: Aid organisations call for strengthened security"

Internet :

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=34822&SelectRegion=Central Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN> , accessed 20 June 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 February 2003, "AFGHANISTAN: Special report on displaced people in the south"

Internet :

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=32391&SelectRegion=Central Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN> , accessed 21 February 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/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/5ddc1c0900b6e8c785256e20006567a8?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

**Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)**, 8 July 2002, "AFGHANISTAN: Herat IDPs head for home"

Internet

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=28688&SelectRegion=Central Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN> , accessed 13 September 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

**Interim Administration of Afghanistan**, April 2002, Decree of the Chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration On Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACAA)

Internet

<http://www.afghanaca.com/documents/AACA%201%20April%20Decree%20v2.pdf> , accessed 18 October 2002

**Interim Administration of Afghanistan**, April 2002, National Development Framework, Second Draft

**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)**, 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://www.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)**, 6 February 2002, "Severe increase in malnutrition in Mazlakh camp, Afghanistan"

Internet : [http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/pr/2002/02-06-2002\\_pf.html](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/pr/2002/02-06-2002_pf.html) , accessed 1 March 2002

**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](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news/2002/afghanistan_4.shtml) , accessed 16 June 2003

**Ministry of Education**, September 2002, Policy for the Rehabilitation and Development of Education in Afghanistan

Internet :  
[http://www.afghanistangov.org/resources/aaca/cg+adf/education\\_vt\\_cg/Education%20CG%20Policy%20Paper.doc](http://www.afghanistangov.org/resources/aaca/cg+adf/education_vt_cg/Education%20CG%20Policy%20Paper.doc) , accessed 17 June 2003

**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](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

**Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**, 2004, "Legal aid for returnees: the NRC programme in 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

**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)**, April 2003, Report on the nutrition situation of refugees and displaced populations, No. 41

Internet : <http://www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/RNIS/rnis%2041.pdf> , accessed 10 June 2003

**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)**, 6 March 2002, Educating Afghans: Formal and Alternative Education Required

Internet : <http://www.refintl.org/cgi-bin/ri/bulletin?bc=00377> , accessed 22 March 2002

**Refugees International (RI)**, 8 January 2002, A Recovery Investment for Afghanistan's Refugees and Displaced People

Internet : <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/cgi-bin/ri/bulletin?bc=00359> , accessed 25 March 2002

**Save the Children Fund (SCF)**, 20 March 2002, Humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan Mar 2002

Internet

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/baa3577c9df372bb85256b8200715876?OpenDocument> , accessed 22 March 2002

**Shelter Now International (SNI)**, 18 December 2000, SNI Afghanistan Situation Report 10

**Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)**, 19 October 2001, "SCA offices in the Taliban controlled Northern Provinces have been closed and at least partially looted by factions within the Taliban"

Internet

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/4232bd4163529da1c1256aea00341258?OpenDocument> , accessed 19 October 2001

**The Guardian**, 24 October 2001, "Routes to riches"

Internet : <http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,579401,00.html> , accessed 29 October 2001

**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](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

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), 10 October 2001, Afghanistan OCHA Situation Report No. 8

Internet

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/a3d63730616ce3aa49256ae200238def?OpenDocument> , accessed 11 October 2001

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 November 2000, UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Afghanistan 2001

Internet

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/Rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/28a0a61c19c10098c125699a004895a4?OpenDocument> , accessed 12 February 2001

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 June 2003, TAPA Appeal January 2003 - March 2004: Mid-Year Review

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2003/files/myr/TAPAmvr03.pdf> , accessed 4 June 2003

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 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), February 2001, Regional Coordination Report, North-Eastern Region, June-December 2000

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), November 1999, 2000 Appeal for Afghanistan

Internet :

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/3a81e21068ec1871c1256633003c1c6f/2fe98cbebd459c125682d004e1f49?OpenDocument> , accessed 9 July 2002

UN Secretary-General, 17 August 2001, 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/55/1028-S/2001/789

Internet : <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/reports/2001/sgrep01.htm> , accessed 14 January 2003

UN Secretary-General, 18 March 2003, 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/57/762-S/2003/333

UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition, November 2003, RNIS 43, Afghanistan  
Internet : [http://www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/RNIS/countries/afghanistan\\_all.htm](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](http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2002/un_afg_21jan.pdf) , accessed 22 January 2002

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 10 July 2002, Afghanistan, ITAP and beyond, update of urgent humanitarian and recovery needs

Internet :

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/38f3f4fa418d5524c1256bf2004ec862?OpenDocument> , accessed 13 September 2002

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 13 March 2003, Afghanistan weekly situation report

Internet :

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/c7ca0eaf6c79faae852567af003c69ca/189867cc67dcf505c1256cec00523ecb?OpenDocument> , accessed 10 June 2003

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 17 October 2002, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Issues in Transition - Implementation Group Meeting

Internet :

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/24245a49a8bb8deb85256c5500662d30?OpenDocument> , accessed 18 October 2002

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)**, 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)**, 15 August 2002, UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Afghanistan Programme Donor Update 15 Aug 2002

Internet :

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/8c218f138498df3c85256c17006c09ad?OpenDocument> , accessed 12 September 2002

**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)**, 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/aca86766bb1c413dc1256a16003a8538?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)**, 24 March 1999, Report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan submitted by Mr. Kamal Hossain, Special Rapporteur in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/70, E/CN.4/1999/40

Internet :

[http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.1999.40.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.1999.40.En?OpenDocument) , accessed 11 February 2000

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, 15 January 2002, Afghanistan: Preliminary Needs Assessment for Recovery and Reconstruction

Internet : <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2002/undp-afg-15jan.pdf> , accessed 18 October 2002

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, 23 January 2003, "UNHCR and UNDP agree to jointly support reintegration and recovery of Afghanistan"

Internet : <http://www.undp.org.af/archive/2003/23jan03.html> , accessed 12 June 2003

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, 8 October 2001, UNDP's human development report office presents new analysis of socio-economic indicators for Afghanistan

Internet :

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/422be85bad8c0e3a85256ae200685b00?OpenDocument> , accessed 12 October 2001

**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/taxis/vtx/news/+YwwBmefSzWCwwwqwwwwwwwwhFqnN0bItFqnDni5zFqnN0bIAFqnN0bIDzmxwwwwwwlFqnN0bl/opendoc.htm> , accessed 17 December 2003

**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/taxis/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/taxis/vtx/home/+wwBmefiqbswwwnwwwwwwwhFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIcFqGwhtrwDe2DxwzoAafy75Dzmxwwwwww/opendoc.htm> , accessed 22 October 2002

**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), 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+tCwwwnwwwwwwwtFqcEhtrwDo5BwDcFqo-uPPyER0MFmqDFqm7y-dFqo2IyP0HEP3zmqwwwwwwGFqmE-H/rsddocview.pdf> , accessed 8 January 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), 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/+NwwBmeJDO0CwwwnwwwwwwwtFqcEhtrwDo5BwDMFmqDFqm7y-dFqt2IygZf3zmnwwwwwwGFqmE-H/rsddocview.pdf> , accessed 8 January 2004

**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://acc.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/RNIS/rnis34.pdf>, accessed 22 October 2001

**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/afghanistan\\_ce\\_sr04\\_fy2003.html](http://www.usaid.gov/ofda/publications/situation_reports/FY2003/afghanistan_ce/afghanistan_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**

**U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), June 2000, World Refugee Survey 2000 (Washington, D.C.)**  
Internet :  
<http://web.archive.org/web/20010413091138/www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/scasia/afghanistan.htm>, accessed 9 July 2002

**U.S. Department of State (U.S. DOS), 6 March 2003, "State Department Supports Refugee, IDP Returnees in Afghanistan"**  
Internet : <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/sasia/afghan/text2003/0312idp.htm>, accessed 16 June 2003

**War Child, 18 June 2003, War Child Newsletter - Jun 2003**  
Internet :  
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/7c195f1f22c1215285256d49006e40ec?OpenDocument>, accessed 20 June 2003

**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

