

Afghanistan: Monitoring Women's Security in Transition

Cycle 3 – May 2014



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Acknowledgements

This is the third monitoring report following the baseline study: “Afghanistan: Monitoring Women’s Security in Transition”, published in April 2013. Monitoring Women’s Security in Transition initiative was conceived by Cordaid, the Afghan Women’s Network (AWN), and Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) and funded by Cordaid to monitor and assess the impact on women of the ongoing security transition from international security forces to their national counterparts. This third monitoring report focuses on how the transition is affecting Afghan women using the proxies of Overall Security, Mobility and Access to Public Life, Access to Services (Health and Education), Access to Justice, Violence Against Women, and Women and Current Affairs.

APPRO is responsible for the research component of this project while AWN and Cordaid conduct outreach and advocacy at the national and international levels based on the findings from this research.

APPRO, AWN and Cordaid wish to express their sincere gratitude to individuals and organizations that continue to offer their time and commitment to this monitoring project. We are particularly indebted to the many members of civil society including school teachers, principals, doctors, midwives, security officials, elders and all the individual women who participated in this study and shared their views and insights about the place and situation of women in the transition process.

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About AWN

The Afghan Women's Network (AWN) is a non-partisan, non-profit network of women that serves as an umbrella organization for 112 NGO members, and 5,000 individual members who are committed to support the women of Afghanistan. AWN has offices in Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad and works through local partners in several Afghan provinces. Primary concerns for AWN are issues related to: gender-based violence, youth empowerment and girl's education. The network also represents and promotes the views of Afghan women in political and social arenas through advocacy and by challenging Afghanistan's leaders to enforce legislative reforms for the protection of women's rights.

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About APPRO

Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) is an independent social research organization with a mandate to promote social and policy learning to benefit development and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and other less developed countries through conducting social scientific research, monitoring and evaluation, and training and mentoring. APPRO is registered with the Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan as a non-profit non-government organization and headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan with satellite offices in Mazar-e Shrif (north), Herat (west), Kandahar (south), and Jalalabad (east). APPRO and its individual researchers have undertaken projects in Central Asia, Pakistan, India, Africa, China, and Turkey.

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About Cordaid

Cordaid, based in the Netherlands, has a focus on international development and collaboration in vulnerable regions and areas of conflict. Its mission is to build flourishing communities in fractured societies. Monitoring the transition in Afghanistan is part of Cordaid's program on Women's Leadership for Peace and Security (WLPS). This program aims to increase the capacity of women's networks, give a voice to women at the local level in processes of peace and security, and promote the women's agenda in national and global arenas.

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APPRO takes full responsibility for all omissions and errors.

List of Abbreviations

AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
ALP	Afghan Local Police (Arbaki)
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AOG	Armed Opposition Groups
APPRO	Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization
AWN	Afghan Women's Network
BSA	Bilateral Security Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women Law
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRU	Family Response Unit
IMF	International Military Forces
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
VTC	Vocational Training Center

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Executive Summary

The release of this 3rd Cycle monitoring report coincides with the completion of the second round of voting for the Presidential Election, held after the first round of presidential and the provincial councils elections on April 5, 2014. An estimated 36 percent of the voters in the first round of elections in 2014 were female. This compares to 44 percent in 2004 and 38 percent in 2009. With the total number of voters in 2014 being exceptionally high, 2014 may well have the highest ever absolute number of women voting in elections in Afghanistan. Regardless of the consequences of the security transition, the high level of participation by women in the elections is a clear sign that Afghan women want to have a say in what will become of their country in the post-transition period.

Given the timing of this latest round of monitoring, from late 2013 to March 2014, the discussions with the many women and men engaged in interviews and focus group discussions for this research inevitably revolved around the elections, the negotiations over the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States, and the negotiation of peace between the Government of Afghanistan and the Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs). As much as possible, attempt has been made to reflect the pertinent points from these discussions in this report.

At the time of writing, May-June 2014, women make up 22 percent of the members of the lower house of parliament (68 women), 17 percent of the upper house (47 women), and are likely to make up 20 percent of the total provincial council members (96 women). Afghanistan has a higher percentage of women in its government than the United States, France, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The key difference between Afghanistan and these countries is, of course, that the high percentage of women in government in Afghanistan has been made possible by a quota system put in place as part of the reconstruction efforts since 2001.

Afghanistan's quota system for women in government has recently come under attack from the more traditionalist / conservative segments in the social and political arenas. The reduction in 2013-2014 of the quota for female provincial council members in Afghanistan from 25 percent to 20 demonstrates the tenuousness of these relatively high numbers of females in different structures of government. Indeed, many have argued that the rapid proliferation of measures soon after 2001 to bring Afghanistan in line with international conventions and charters on women's rights has in fact created a backlash against such measures. The successful attempt by a sizable number of parliamentarians to reduce the quota for women in provincial councils, and attempts by others elsewhere against legal provisions for women's rights, are manifestations of this backlash and polarization.

The Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW), signed into law through a presidential decree, has come under heavy debate in the Parliament since late 2013 with little or no prospect of being approved without major changes being demanded by the traditionalist / conservative factions. Also, since mid-2013, there have been increased pressures by the more conservative members of the Parliament to weaken sections of the Criminal Code deemed inappropriate or inconsistent with strict interpretations of Islam. Some parliamentarians have even asked for bringing back stoning as punishment for adultery. Despite the many accomplishments since 2001, in 2014 Afghanistan remains one of the most dangerous places for women in the world.

A survey conducted by Afghanistan Watch in 2013 reports evenly mixed views regarding security and

governance during and after the 2014 transition. Twenty five percent of those surveyed emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between the public and the government, 22 percent wanted stronger judicial institutions, 22 percent wanted more effort in implementing gender equality policies, 19 percent wanted increased participation of women in Afghan National Army, and 12 percent wanted the continued presence of the international security forces through the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement or other arrangements.

The impacts of the security transition in Afghanistan have not been uniform for women across the 12 provinces monitored for Cycle 3. In some areas, women indicated that their security had worsened. In other provinces women stated that their security situation had improved since the security transition. In areas where the Arbaki (Afghan Local Police – ALP) is active, women complained about increases in criminal activity and deteriorating security. In areas where the security situation has improved, there is higher than expected evidence of willingness and ability of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and communities to cooperate in resolving security and safety issues.

Perspectives on ANSF differed nonetheless. In Kabul, ANSF personnel are considered as respectful towards and protective of women, whereas in Helmand ANSF were viewed as disrespectful and rude toward women. There were also concerns in Helmand about whether ANSF had sufficient facilities and resources to fulfill its role adequately. The main worry for women during the Cycle 3 round of data collection was the lack of economic opportunities for women, particularly since donor aid programming in all transitioned provinces had decreased significantly.

A number of the recommendations below are from the first and second monitoring reports published in April and October 2013, as they remain unaddressed and/or relevant.

Recommendations

Government of Afghanistan:

1. **Commitment to UNSCR 1325 and other international protocols on women:** The Government must fulfill its commitment to women, peace, and security by adopting a comprehensive national action plan for implementing UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan must also remain committed to the implementation of other international laws and protocols for women's empowerment such as CEDAW, ICCPR and CRC.
2. **Afghan Local Police (ALP):** Institutionalize community-based policing approaches involving women in ANSF to improve community-ANP relations and to increase gender sensitive approaches to policing, particularly by ANP. Select ALP commanders and officers in consultation with communities to minimize extortive behavior and intimidation by rogue elements. Incorporate ALP into Afghan National Police, with clear and specific oversight mechanisms, responsibilities and formal uniforms while on duty so that civilians can identify ALP as security personnel. Training for ALP on gender sensitivity and human rights based on national and international laws, and mentoring, need to be designed and conducted in close collaboration and coordination with women's rights organizations.
3. **Institutionalizing gender-based security provision:** Intensify government and donor-aided mentoring and exchange programs within ANSF, including the exchange of ANSF teams with relative success in handling women's rights issues, between provinces as a means for cross-fertilization based on best practices and utilizing lessons learned.

4. **Family Response Units (FRUs):** Provide adequate resources for Family Response Units including qualified and experienced personnel, dedicated spaces, equipment and furniture, daycare facilities, functioning recording and filing systems for cases of violence against women, and trainings for FRU personnel on how to take adequate care of female victims of violence.
5. **Access to justice and violence against women:** Provide adequate institutional and material support, with civil oversight, for women's shelters to increase women's access to justice and protection from violence. The justice system should be made more receptive to women's needs through raising awareness of and knowledge about women's rights among all justice system personnel.
6. **Women in Government:** Continue efforts and plans to increase the number of women in governmental entities such as ANSF, Supreme Court, Judiciary, Local government and foreign ambassadorial posts. These efforts should include increasing the number of qualified women in senior governmental positions, provision of mentoring programs for women and men in all ministries to ensure that there are functioning gender units at every ministry and adequate resources to support them, and creating a social and economic environment conducive to women's participation in government.
7. **Women in public life and economic development:** Maintain and expand employment opportunities for women, design and plan vocational training opportunities for skills development and women's economic empowerment purposes, address societal discrimination and harassment against women through creating mechanisms that encourage, and protect, women that report discrimination and harassment, and support access to and use of safe transport and protected working spaces for women.
8. **Women in community development:** Identify opportunities to involve women and civil society organizations in local governmental discussions and decision on community development issues, with the intent of keeping the gender aspects of development decisions in focus.

NATO and Member States:

9. **ISAF phase-out:** Develop benchmarks and special measures in consultation with women's organizations and women's rights activists to ensure women's security is not negatively affected during this period, particularly in rural Afghanistan. The benchmarks will need to be linked to the accountability mechanism within NATO's chain of command.
10. **Women in ANSF:** In the set-up of the Resolute Support Mission, specific attention needs to be paid to including human rights and women's rights training in the Police Academy and other training facilities of ANSF, increasing the number of women within ANSF, and engaging with communities for trust building purposes and generating support for women in ANSF as a crucial means of protecting women's rights.
11. **Community-based policing:** Support the institutionalization of community-based policing with a gender perspective within ANSF and test such initiatives as Female Engagement Teams, Mixed Engagement Teams (where possible), Mixed Civil / ANSF Cooperation Teams, and Cultural Support Teams.
12. **Gender capacities within NATO and member states:** NATO and member states should create and maintain a pool of international and Afghan gender experts with sufficient support, including budgets, and specific benchmarks to ensure full integration of a gender perspective in programming by NATO and its member states in Afghanistan.
13. **Structural consultation with CSOs:** A structural consultation mechanism with national and international civil society organizations needs to be formally established. The steps taken by NATO to engage CSOs in the development the "Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions" should become common practice

in NATO and other international entities and agencies with mandates on Afghanistan to ensure ongoing input from CSOs.

International Donor Community:

14. **Development programming:** Existing level of financial commitment from the international community needs to be maintained and extended to ensure longer term commitment to Afghanistan beyond 2017. Development programs, especially in health, economic development, education, security, and justice need to be intensified in areas where international security forces are no longer present to ensure that the many gains made for women's empowerment since 2001 are maintained and expanded.
15. **Synergy and Coordination:** Coordinate efforts to advance women's rights and their participation in development, peace processes and discussions with the new elected President and the new government. This should include the provision of assistance to the new Afghan government and CSOs in devising ways in which the objectives of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework on women's rights, the Afghan National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and other relevant policies on women's rights are met through adequate technical capacity and financial support.
16. **Women in governance:** Support implementation of policies such as NAPWA to increase the number, the overall percentage, and the effective functioning of women in governmental entities including ANSF, while maintaining and expanding women-designated spaces within these entities and creating an enabling environment for women's active participation and contribution.
17. **Aid transparency and public accountability mechanism:** Support the Government of Afghanistan in developing a publicly accessible National Aid Information Center while supporting civil society, especially women's organizations, to provide civil oversight to ensure public accountability of the use of development aid funds.
18. **Financial and technical support to women-led and civil society organizations:** Technical and financial support should continue to be provided for women-centered organizations. Such initiatives should include community-based development monitoring systems, organized and run by women at the local community level and in collaboration with national and international civil society organizations.

Further Research:

19. **Gender relations and regional diversity:** Establish, through in-depth assessment, why Laghman and Kandahar have experienced relative improvements after the transition and after a long period of instability, why Samangan has remained unchanged after the transition, and whether there are lessons to be learned from these cases for critical provinces such as Kunduz. (This recommendation will be addressed through in-depth research, the findings from which will be presented as a companion case study for the Monitoring Women's Security in Transition – Cycle 4 report.)
20. **Benchmarking and baseline information:** Prior to any and all interventions on security and service provision in the transitioned provinces, government and international donor programming must be based on situation analyses and baseline assessments with a central focus on gender relations and how the proposed interventions affect, negatively and positively, pre-existing gender relations in the target communities.

1. Introduction

On March 22, 2011, the President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, announced the first tranche of the transition of security responsibilities for Afghanistan from the international to national security forces. The transition is to be completed by the end of 2014. On 18 June 2013, the launch of the fifth and final transition tranche was announced. After 2014, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will have the sole responsibility for Afghanistan's national security. Some assistance will continue to be provided by international security forces including the United States though the exact extent and nature of this assistance has not been fully disclosed in part because the Bilateral Security Agreement proposed by the United States remains unsigned.

In September 2012 Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO), in partnership with Afghan Women's Network (AWN), and funding and other support from Cordaid started a monitoring programme to document and analyze the impacts, both positive and negative, of the transition on Afghan women. Evidence from the first two cycles of this monitoring programme suggests that the overall security conditions continue to evolve in multiple directions. In a number of cases, e.g., Herat, the situation has been deteriorating since the transition while in others, e.g., Aynak (Samangan), there has been no significant change. In yet others, e.g., Laghman, after the initial rapid deterioration following the transition, there were signs of stability and improvement by the time the monitoring data was being collected for this report in February / March 2014. (See Section 4, Findings, below)

The release of this 3rd Cycle monitoring report coincides with the completion of the first round of voting for the Presidential Election, held together with elections for the provincial councils on April 5, 2014. The second round of voting for Presidential Election is scheduled for June 14, 2014. Given the timing of this latest round of monitoring, from late 2013 to March 2014, the discussions with the many women and men who were engaged in interviews and focus group discussions inevitably revolved around the elections, the negotiations over the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States, and negotiation of peace between the Government of Afghanistan and the Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs). As much as possible, attempt has been made to reflect the pertinent points from these discussions in this report.

2. Background

At the time of writing, May 2014, women make up 22 percent of the members of the lower house of parliament (68 women), 17 percent of the upper house (47 women), and are likely to make up 20 percent of the total provincial council members (96 women).¹ Afghanistan has a higher percentage of women in its government than the United States, France, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.² The key difference between Afghanistan and these countries is, of course, that the high percentage of

¹ Afghanistan Watch (2014). Women in 2014 Transition: A report on the concerns and demands of women and civil society organizations in Afghanistan's 34 provinces. (Kabul: Afghanistan Watch), page 15. Available from: www.watchafghanistan.org. Also, Government of Canada (2014). Afghan 2014 Presidential and Provincial Council Elections. Available from: <http://www.international.gc.ca/afghanistan/elections.aspx>

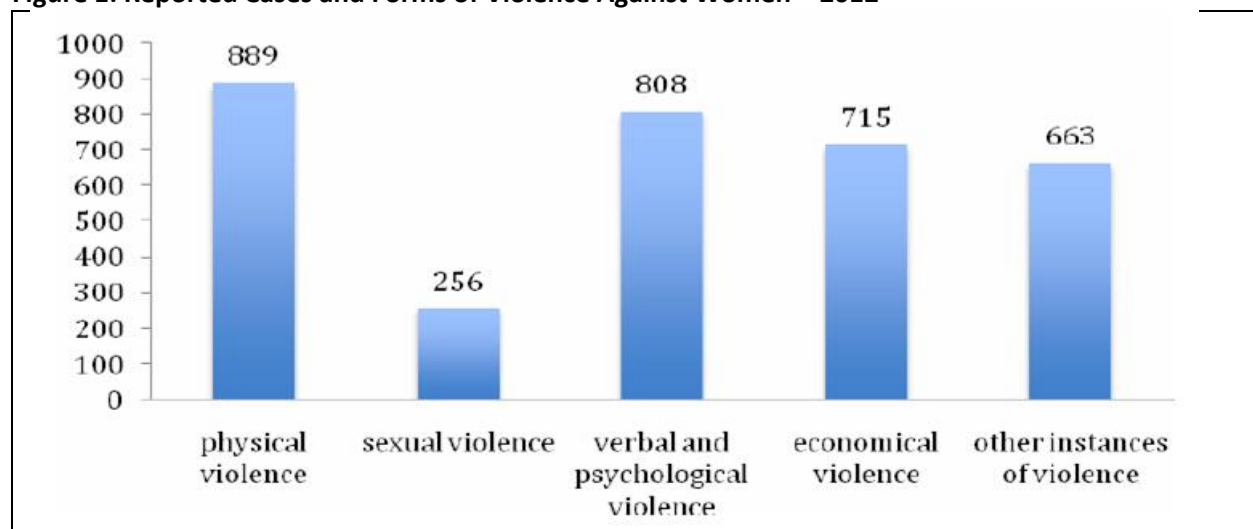
² See: <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/09/27/1137274/-The-Gender-Gap-Percentage-of-Women-in-Government-Worldwide-We-re-Number-One-Right-Not-So-Much#>

women in government in Afghanistan has been made possible by a quota system put in place as part of the reconstruction efforts since 2001.

Afghanistan's quota system for women in government has recently come under attack from the more traditionalist / conservative segments in the social and political arenas. The reduction in 2013-2014 of the quota for female provincial council members in Afghanistan from 25 percent to 20 demonstrates the tenuousness of these relatively high numbers of females in different structures of government. Indeed, many have argued that the rapid proliferation of measures soon after 2001 to bring Afghanistan in line with international conventions and charters on women's rights has in fact created a backlash against such measures. The successful attempt by a sizable number of parliamentarians to reduce the quota for women in provincial councils, and attempts by others elsewhere against legal provisions for women's rights, are manifestations of this backlash and polarization.³

The Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW), signed into law through a presidential decree, has come under heavy debate in the Parliament since late 2013 with little or no prospect of being approved without major changes being demanded by the traditionalist / conservative factions. Also, since mid-2013, there have been increased pressures by the more conservative members of the Parliament to weaken sections of the Criminal Code deemed inappropriate or inconsistent with strict interpretations of Islam. Some parliamentarians have even asked for bringing back stoning as punishment for adultery.⁴ Despite the many accomplishments since 2001, in 2014 Afghanistan remains one of the most dangerous places for women in the world.⁵

Figure 1: Reported Cases and Forms of Violence Against Women – 2012



Source: AIHRC

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) reports increases in violence against

³ See Abirafeh, L. (2009), *Gender and International Aid in Afghanistan: The Politics and Effects of Intervention* (Jefferson: McFarland and Co.), pages 50-52 and Kandiyoti, D. (2007), "Old Dilemmas or New Challenges? The Politics of Gender and Reconstruction in Afghanistan," *Development and Change* 38(2), 169–199, both cited in AREU (2013), "Women's Rights, Gender Equality, and Transition: Securing gains, moving forward", page 12.

⁴ Afghanistan Watch (2014), pages 17-18.

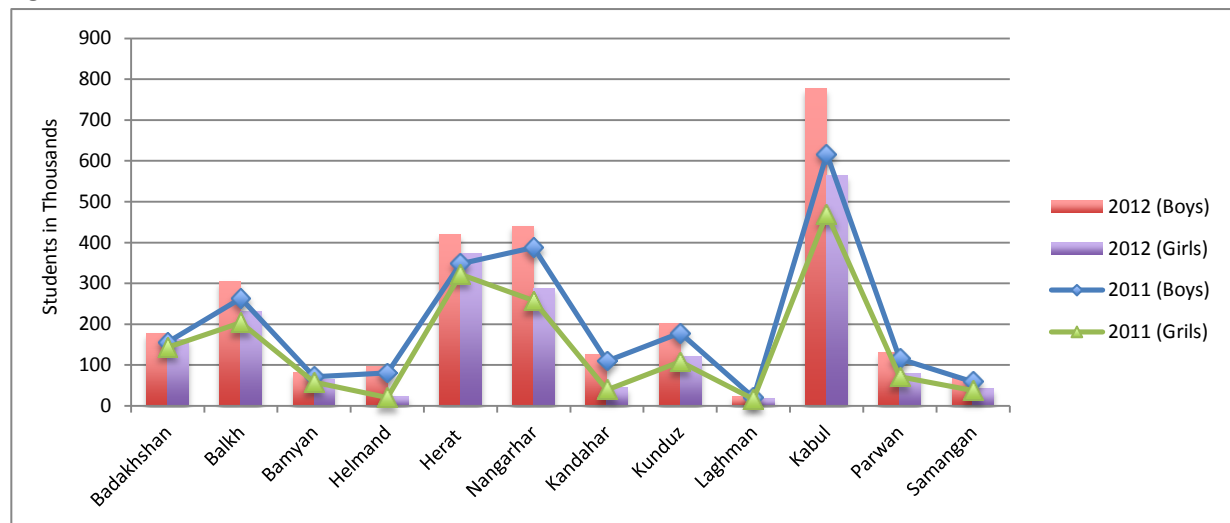
⁵ Deutsche Welle News Agency: Afghanistan, the Most Dangerous Country for Women. Available from: <http://www.dw.de>, cited in Afghanistan Watch (2014), page 18.

women in 2012.⁶ While, arguably, the rise in the number of cases of violence may be attributed to more women willing to register their cases of violence, the fact remains that violence against women continues in many forms (Figure 1).

Despite these challenges numerous gains made by and for women in Afghanistan since 2001 remain. From having the highest number of maternal mortality rate prior to 2001, at 1,600 deaths per 100,000 births, maternal mortality rate in 2013 stood at 400 per 100,000 births.⁷ The percentage of girls in schools, the numbers of schools and clinics and the numbers of teachers and medical personnel have steadily risen though unevenly throughout the country and with major concerns about the quality of educational and health services being provided.⁸ At the formal policy level, the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) of 2008 has committed the Government of Afghanistan to increase the total percentage of women in government from the current 22 percent to 30 percent by 2018.⁹

In the 12 provinces covered under this monitoring exercise, the upward trends in the number of enrollments for girls and boys have continued though there are regional variations (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Students Enrolled in Public Schools, 2011 and 2012



Source: CSO Statistical Yearbooks, 2012 and 2013

Similarly, there are upward trends for the number of male and female teachers but with regional variations (Figure 3).

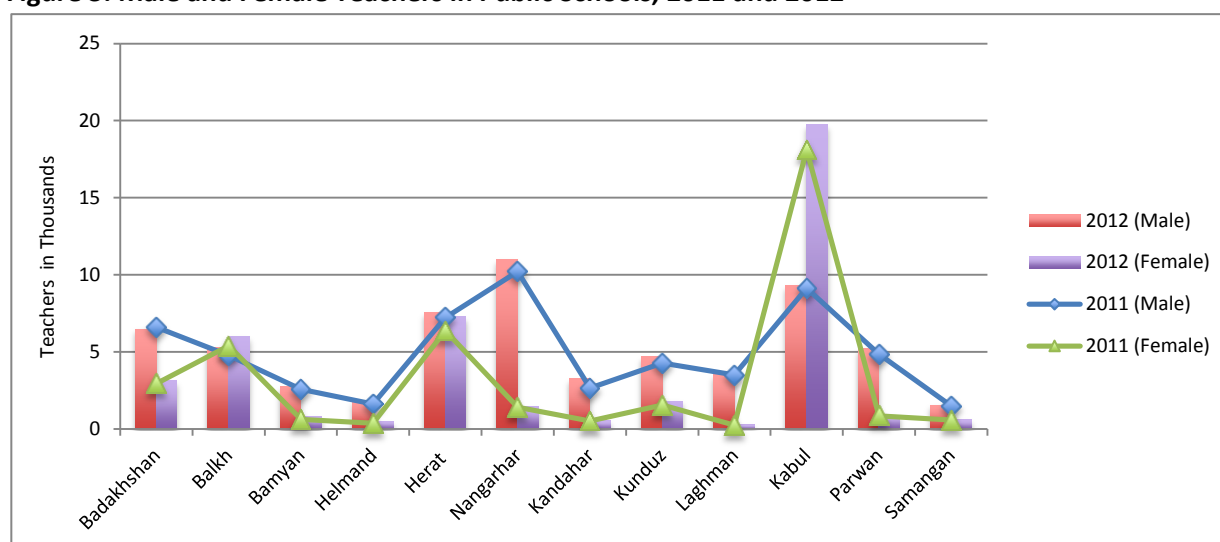
⁶ AIHRC (2012). Violence Against Women in Afghanistan: Biannual Report (Kabul: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission)

⁷ See World Bank: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT>

⁸ See, for example, APPRO (2014), "Implementation of the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan". Available from: <http://appro.org.af/preview/implementation-of-the-national-action-plan-for-women-in-afghanistan/>

⁹ See: <http://mowa.gov.af/fa/page/6814>

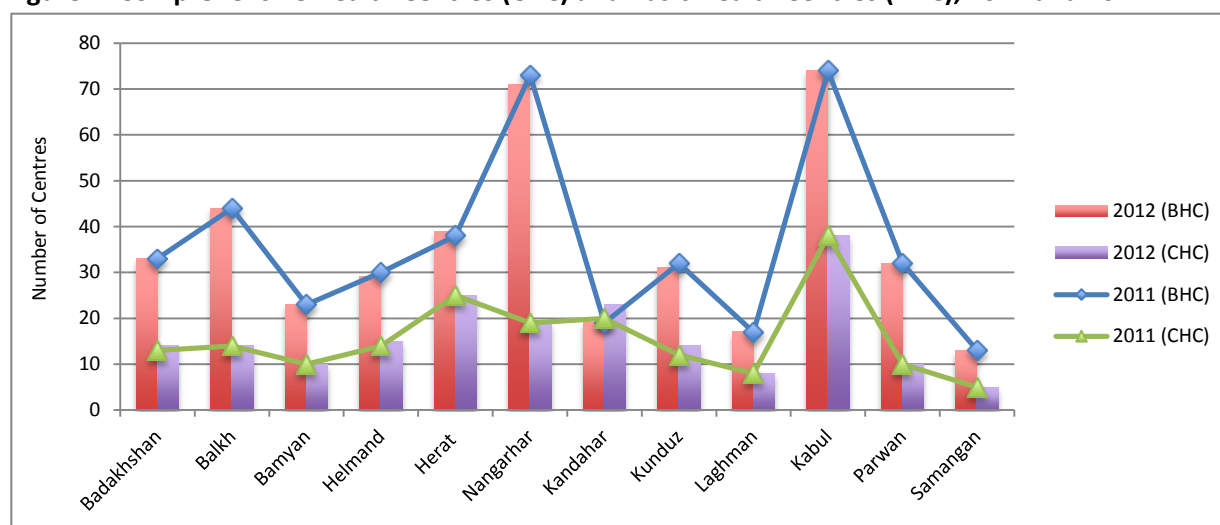
Figure 3: Male and Female Teachers in Public Schools, 2011 and 2012



Source: CSO Statistical Yearbooks, 2012 and 2013

There is little or no change in the number of Comprehensive Health Centres and Basic Health Centres between the years 2011 and 2012 (Figure 4).

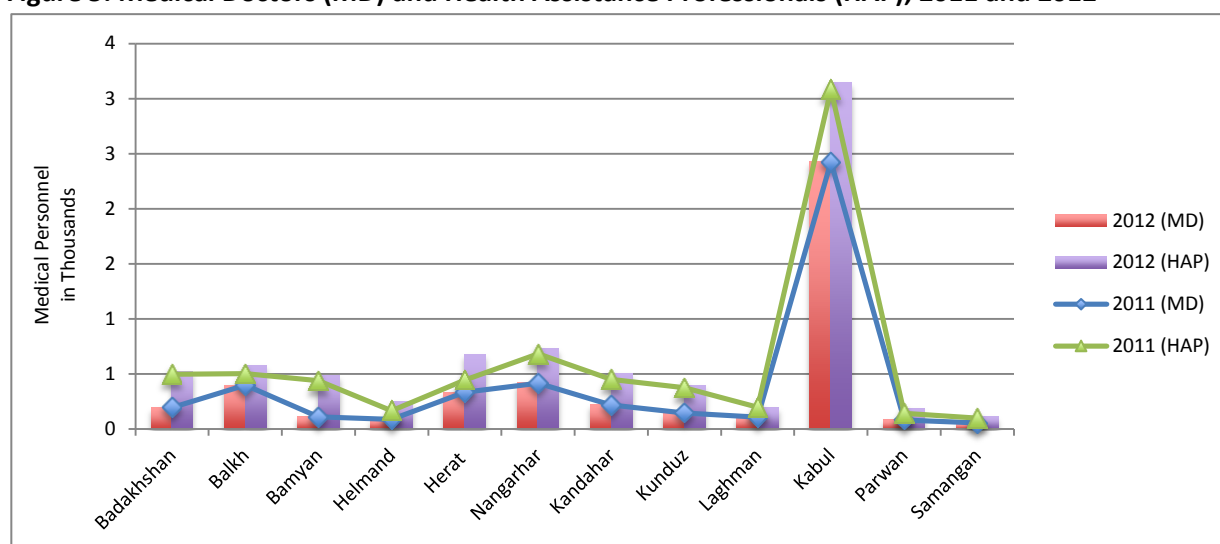
Figure 4: Comprehensive Health Centres (CHC) and Basic Health Centres (BHC), 2011 and 2012



Source: CSO Statistical Yearbooks, 2012 and 2013

Similarly, the numbers for medical doctors and health assistance professionals remain largely unchanged though with slight increases in 2012 compared to 2011 (Figure 5).

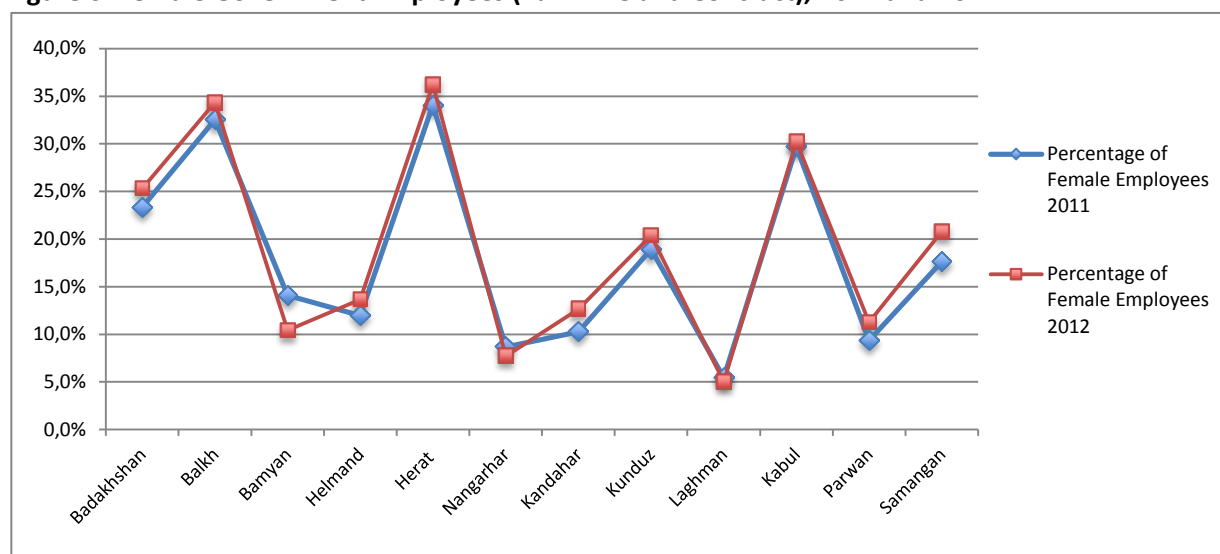
Figure 5: Medical Doctors (MD) and Health Assistance Professionals (HAP), 2011 and 2012



Source: CSO Statistical Yearbooks, 2012 and 2013

There are significant variations in the total numbers of female government employees across provinces. In Badakhshan, Balkh, Helmand, Herat, Kandahar, Kunduz, Parwan, and Samangan there have been increases in the total number of female employees in 2012 compared to 2011. In Bamyan the number of female government employees has dropped from 30 percent in 2011 to around 25 percent in 2012 whereas in Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kabul the number of female government employees have remained the same between 2011 and 2012 (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Female Government Employees (Full Time and Contract), 2011 and 2012



Source: CSO Statistical Yearbooks, 2012 and 2013

A survey conducted by Afghanistan Watch in 2013 reports evenly mixed views regarding security and governance during and after the 2014 transition. Twenty five percent of those surveyed emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between the public and the government, 22 percent wanted stronger judicial institutions, 22 percent wanted more effort in implementing gender equality policies,

19 percent wanted increased participation of women in Afghan National Army, and 12 percent wanted the continued presence of the international security forces through the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement or other arrangements.¹⁰ An estimated 36 percent of the voters in the first round of elections in 2014 were female. This compares to 44 percent in 2004 and 38 percent in 2009. With the total number of voters in 2014 being exceptionally high, 2014 may well have the highest ever absolute number of women voting in elections in Afghanistan.

The purpose of this ongoing monitoring exercise has been to examine whether there are grounds for concern for women's rights in Afghanistan as a consequence of the transition of responsibility for national security from international to national security forces by the end of 2014. The remainder of this report is organized as follows. The next section describes the objectives of this monitoring exercise. Section 4 presents the district by district analysis based on the empirical data collected from the 14 districts monitored. Section 5 provides an analysis of the aggregate quantified data collected in the districts. Section 6 concludes with recommendations.

3. Objectives and Methodology

This third monitoring report sought to assess the likely impact of security transition on the lives of Afghan women based on changes observed in the following proxies:

1. Overall Security
2. Mobility and Access to Public Life
3. Access to Services (Health and Education)
4. Access to Justice
5. Violence Against Women, and
6. Women and Current Affairs (Peace Process, Bilateral Security Agreement, Elections).

The data and other information from secondary sources were used for the overview in the introduction to this report and the generation of graphs in the introduction and analysis sections. The primary data was collected through interviews with 271 individuals (mostly female), 28 focus group discussions with females, and a quantitative survey completed by a total of 390 focus group participants (Table 1).

Table 1: Breakdown of Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Province	District	FGD	Transition Date
Badakhshan	Faiz Abad	2 Female and 1 Elder	27/11/2011
Balkh	Balkh	2 Female and 1 Elder	27/11/2011
	Dawlatabad	2 Female and 1 Elder	
Bamyan	Bamyan	2 Female and 1 Elder	21/03/2011
Helmand	Lashkargah	2 Female and 1 Elder	21/03/2011
Herat	Herat	2 Female and 1 Elder	21/03/2011
Kabul	Paghman	2 Female and 1 Elder	21/03/2011
Kunduz	Kunduz	2 Female and 1 Elder	13/05/2012
Laghman	Mehtarlam	2 Female and 1 Elder	21/03/2011
Nangarhar	Jalalabad	2 Female and 1 Elder	27/11/2011
	Sorkhrod	2 Female and 1 Elder	
Parwan	Charakar	2 Female and 1 Elder	13/05/2012
Kandahar	Kandahar	2 Female and 1 Elder	13/05/2012
Samangan	Aiybak	2 Female and 1 Elder	27/11/2011
12 Provinces	14 Districts	28 Female, 14 male	

¹⁰ Afghanistan Watch (2014), pages 28 – 29.

4. Findings from Cycle 3

Faizabad, Badakhshan Province

Date of Visit:
February 4, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2012

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Women report cases of physical abuse, forced marriages, and exchange of girls and women as a means to settle feuds (KI-F-PW-1). Health clinics and working women state that violence quite common in rural areas (KI-F-Gov-1, KI-F-GHS-1). Throughout the province violence against women is reported to have increased in the aftermath of the transition:

When the foreign troops were in Badakhshan, they would help us with issues regarding women's rights. They would also assist us in our fight against violence against women. But now they are not here and foreign institutions that are supposed to help us with these issues are more concerned with their own security than doing what they are here to do. The transition has led to an increase in violence against women and judicial bodies are weaker than they were prior to the transition. I expect the foreign organizations that are currently active in the area to end their current projects and leave. – KI-M-NGO-3, Faizabad.

Faizabad remains relatively safe though other, particularly rural, districts are described as dangerous and unsafe for women. Outside their homes in Faizabad women feel safe in public spaces whereas movement in and to some districts such as *Jorm, Warduj, Baharak and Keshm* is described as limited and risky (KI-M-NGO-3). The lack of security outside the urban areas has made movement by women very difficult and only in cases of extreme emergency women travel to other districts.

Women in Faizabad appear to be satisfied with ANSF and state the security personnel are respectful to girls and women. Women also state that they feel comfortable in approaching ANSF to seek help (KI-F-Gov-2). This positive view of ANSF is in contrast to how the *Arbaki* are viewed, however:

The creation and presence of *Arbaki* have not led to any positive outcomes yet. During the day the *Arbaki* claim to be on the government's side and at night they operate as thieves and block roads for robberies. Some of them turn into Taliban and distort the security of the region. –KI-M-NGO-3, Faizabad

Or,

We do not have *Arbaki* in the center [Faizabad]. In the districts, where they are active, they are the source of insecurity themselves, because they still serve their former commanders from the war period. – K-F-BW-1, Faizabad

Mobility and Access to Public Life

The transition has affected women's employment and employment opportunities in Badakhshan. With the departure of international security forces, a number of residual jobs have ceased to exist while a number of non-government organizations have scaled down or stopped their activities, particularly in rural areas:

Employment opportunities for women have declined since the transition. If foreigners leave the region entirely, there is a chance that the situation worsens completely. Now, there still are women that are employed. If [for example] the security agreement is not signed the prospects of employment for women will be further weakened. – KI-M-NGO-3, Faizabad.

Also,

After the transition the employment opportunities have declined greatly. Prior to the transition, two thousand people used to work for the PRT, now all these people are unemployed and suffering from it. – KI-M-MED-4, Faizabad.

The situation for women working for governmental entities in Faizabad appears to be unchanged since the transition:

A large number of women work in government organizations or private agencies. Most of them also work as teachers and face no difficulties when commuting to work. – KI-F-Gov-2, Faizabad.

The workshops and awareness raising projects held by the Independent Human Rights Commission and other CSOs in urban areas to teach community members of the rights of women are said to have been successful, particularly with the community elders and religious leaders who stated that they were supportive of women working outside their homes (KI-F-HC-5, KI-F-Gov-1). In rural districts movements by women, including going to work, is affected by concerns about the deterioration of security. Some of the women interviewed from rural areas stated that they had ended their employment due to concern, or uncertainty, about the security conditions (KI-F-Gov-1).

Access to Services (Health and Education)

In addition to providing assistance in emergencies, the PRT personnel also assisted in providing vaccinations and nutritional help to children (KI-M-NGO-3). With the departure of the PRT, there is a much higher level of anxiety by families with small children (KI-F-GHS-3). This is felt much more in rural districts than Faizabad where access to health and other services has not been affected significantly since transition (FGD-WW).

In rural areas access to health and education continue to be adversely affected by poor infrastructure such as roads but also poor or inadequate facilities:

People in this region have a hard time when trying to access health centers because there are no roads. People either bring their ill relatives on a donkey or on their backs to the clinic. We provides services to patients who are in need of gynecological services, suffer from TB or mental illnesses. – KI-M-Med-4, Faizabad.

On access to education, a government employee stated that,

Girls' access to education in Faizabad is good, but in other districts it is hard for girls to go to schools. In some districts the security is bad, women and girls are warned about attending schools or work outside their homes. This used to be the case in only one districts, but now, there are many districts where these things happen. – KI-F-Gov-1, Faizabad.

Another reason for girls' lack of access to education is the limited number of schools in some districts:

People in this region do not have much access to schools. We have thirteen mosques and one school where students from far away places come to follow classes. –KI-M-MED-4, Faizabad.

Lack of a sufficient number of schools and teachers is compounded by conservatism in some districts. For example,

As far as education is concerned, in some districts some girls are forbidden to study beyond the fourth grade because either they live too far away or their parents are concerned that they are taught by male teachers. – KI-F-GHS-3, Faizabad.

In Faizabad, however, access to education is reported to have markedly improved and is enjoying support from within the community:

Religious leaders generally have a positive opinion of girls getting an education and encourage women to seek education. The elders are more supportive of education for women than one year ago and the reason is predominantly more awareness among religious leaders about women's rights. This is the result of many workshops and seminars that have taken place. – KI, KI-F-GHS-2, Faizabad.

Access to Justice

The effects of transition on women's access to justice have been relatively minimal. In the past, foreign troops would provide expertise and services to national CSOs and security and justice officials to prevent violence against women (KI-M-FRU). Although these services not being as widely available as before the transition, women appear to feel that their access to justice is unaffected. The view expressed by one ANP official is also indicative of how officials view justice and women's rights within the justice system:

Now it is not like in the past, when anybody could do anything and physically abuse anyone they wished. Now we detain – and question – them and turn them over to the legal officials. –KI-M-ANP Faizabad.

There are some complaints, however, about the unequal manner in which justice officials treat cases involving women:

There are legal and judicial institutions in our region but their attitude towards women is very bad. Especially, women that have runaway from their homes are treated very badly and as criminals. Also, if you do not have any connections or power, no one would listen to you. –KI-F-GHS-3, Faizabad.

Also:

There are legal aid bureaus available in the urban areas that help women. Judicial institutions are present but they do not deal with women's cases well. They usually ask for material and financial favors in exchange for their services. Women that do not have money cannot get justice. – KI-F-BW-1, Faizabad.

Access to formal justice by women in rural areas remains insufficient and inadequate. Informal justice is served based on customary law which often, though not always, favors men (KI-M-NGO-3). Community elders preside over resolving legal disputes including cases that concern women (KI-M-NGO-3).

The impact of the transition on women's access to justice has been limited though much needs to be done to increase availability, access, and use of formal legal entities.

Violence Against Women

According to the data provided by family response units, the extent of violence against women has increased from eight cases in 2012 to twenty-eight by the end of 2013 (KI-M-FRU). The transition has contributed to the rise in violence against women:

When the foreign troops were in Badakhshan, they would help us with issues regarding women's rights. They would also assist us in our fight against violence against women. But now they are not here and foreign institutions that are supposed to help us with these issues are more concerned with their own security than doing what they are here to do. The transition has led to an increase in violence against women and judicial bodies are weaker than they were prior to the transition. I expect the foreign organizations that are currently active in the area to end their current projects and leave. – KI-M-NGO-3, in Faizabad.

Women state that violence is particularly higher in remote areas, where men are less educated and women are less aware of their rights (KI-M-MED-3, FGD-HW).

Women and Current Affairs

All those interviewed stated their support for the signing of the BSA. For example:

The signing of the BSA is a positive step and shall be enhance women's employment opportunities and reduce the population of the Taliban in the region. If it is not signed, the president Karzai's ten-year achievements for women shall be lost. The signing of the BSA shall be a positive step for women's development. – KI-F-PW-1 in Faizabad

There is a fear that if the security agreement is not signed the achievements that have been made over the last decade will be lost. The signing of the BSA will increase the possibility of a better future:

If the BSA is signed, the security situation for women shall get better and they would be able to safely go to their works. We support the signing of this agreement. – KI-F-BW-2 in Faizabad

According to a prominent woman in Badakhshan, in the central areas women played an active in the elections. Women were reported to have come out in force to vote and participated in awareness raising campaigns to encourage others to vote. However, because of the rugged terrain, many women from rural areas were not able to cast their votes. This problem could have been solved by having mobile voting stations throughout the province (KI-F-PW-1).

Balkh, Balkh Province

Date of Visit:
February 2, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Physical abuse and other crimes against women are said to be on the rise in Balkh. For example:

Violence against women has increased. Three nights ago, for instance, a husband murdered his wife, left his daughters alone with her at home and took his son with him. It is still unknown why he did all this and whether he will be brought to justice. – KI-F-NGO-2, Balkh.

Almost everyone interviewed reported knowing someone in his or her vicinity who was a victim of domestic violence or murder. Many attribute this to the post-transition economic hardship, caused by the departure of international forces and the jobs created by their presence (KI-F-NGO-1). The deteriorating economy and the uncertainties about the future is said to have affected the wellbeing of many women (KI-F-NGO-1).

Women reported that they felt more apprehensive moving around in rural areas. Women from urban areas do not feel as secure as before when traveling to rural areas. For example:

The security of the villages and rural areas has deteriorated drastically over the last six months. Six months ago, we could travel to eighty villages. Today, we can only go to eighteen villages. There are armed men on the way that rob people. It has made travelling very difficult for us. – FGD-WW in Balkh.

The transition has adversely affected the ability of ANP to do its work though ANP and ANA are generally considered as capable, hard working and respectful to women (KI-F-NGO-1). Since the transition, the outskirts of urban centers and the more remote districts do not receive as much attention as before regarding having adequate personnel and equipment to maintain security (KI-F-BW-1). There are concerns regarding some of the members of the Arbaki, however, viewed by many as a source of unrest in some districts of the province (KI-F-GOV-1).

Mobility and Access to Public Life

A group of community elders stated that the risk of “women getting raped by foreigners” had been removed since the departure of international security forces (FGD-CE). There are, however, complaints about harassment of women and girls walking to work or school. Some arrange paid transportation by cutting costs of their other daily needs (KI-F-NGO-3).

Women in the urban districts state that their freedom of movement has increased since the departure of foreign forces. In the rural districts where the Arbaki are active, women report that they not to feel safe outside their homes (KI-F-GOV-1, KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-NGO-2). The departure of international security forces has meant that some community elders and religious leaders are playing a more instrumental role in supporting, or undermining, the presence of women in public life including working and education (KI-F-PW-1, KI-F-FRU).

The transition has especially affected women that depended on projects and funds, no longer available since the transition. An employee of a CSO in Balkh described her work after the transition as follows:

Since we are an NGO, our ability to perform our tasks depends on money from donors and right now we do not have any projects. We help women who approach us just out of our own goodwill. Last year we could travel to farthest places in the district to assist women in need of help. [After the transition] our ability to perform our tasks is very limited since there are no funds. – KI-F-NGO-2 in Balkh.

Access to Services (Health and Education)

In the rural districts access to health clinics and schools has always been a challenge because of general insecurity, cultural conservatism, insufficient facilities, and a general lack of adequate transportation. In urban districts access to services in education does not appear to be a challenge to most women.

We have about 680 students in our school and attract new students every year. We do have students that leave school, but the main reasons for that is either marriage or moving to another location. Our teachers have not resigned [since the transition] either. –KI-F-GHS-1, Balkh.

Access to health and education are supported and being promoted by some of the religious leaders. For example:

I do not have much contact with other imams, but in our area we have two imams who subject women's rights to their sermons and preach about it. Their encouragement has increased compared to six months ago. Even the imams' daughters and daughters in law go to school. – IND-F-PW-1, Balkh.

Similarly, other women in urban centers reported that their local imams incorporate women's education and rights in their discussions and preaching, encouraging girls to go to school (KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-Med-2).

There are no complaints about girls getting threats because of going to school or getting an education. The few concerns that girls' high schools expressed related primarily to the lack of facilities.

Women in the urban centers of Balkh have access to education and health services. Those living in rural areas have difficulty in accessing clinics due mainly to inadequate roads and transportation but also partially due to increased concerns about insecurity (KI-M-ANP, KI-F-PW-1). As far as women's access to education is concerned, the transition seems to have been beneficial. Women, particularly in urban centers, can move around more freely and community elders and religious leaders are supportive of women receiving educational services (KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-GHS-3).

Access to Justice

There are complaints about corruption in the formal justice system including jobs being bought and sold:

...[W]hen we asked the young man why he was prepared to pay such a big amount of money, he said that it was nothing and that he would earn it back in a week. The judicial institutions have turned into shops and people are forced to be corrupt so that they can earn back what they have paid for the position. – KI-F-NGO-3, Balkh.

Two other factors limit women's access to justice in Balkh. First, community members generally are not appreciative of women that approach courts to solve their problems (KI-F-PW-1). Second, less funds from the international donors in transitioned areas has meant that the ability of CSOs that work to enhance women's access to justice has been reduced (KI-F-NGO-1). Before the transition numerous CSOs would go to remote districts to assist women in need to gain access to the formal justice. Such excursions are no longer possible due a combination of shortage of funds and heightened insecurity, perceived or actual.

Women's access to justice in Balkh is limited. There are concerns about corruption in the formal justice system and CSOs are underfunded to provide assistance to women in need of legal services.

Violence Against Women

According to civil society organizations and family response units, physical abuse and other crimes against women are on the rise and common in Balkh (KI-F-CSO-2, KI-M-FRU). Due to the transition, the economic situation has deteriorated and the employment opportunities have declined:

Violence against women has increased. Three nights ago, for instance, a husband murdered his wife, left his daughters alone with her at home and took his son with him. It is still unknown why he did all this. – KI-F-VTC-2, Balkh.

Almost everyone interviewed knows someone in their vicinity who is or has been a victim of severe domestic violence and murder. The deteriorating economy and the uncertainties regarding the future of the women in the region have also affected women's health, according to the CSOs. According to a health clinic, there are more cases of mental illness and high blood pressure that women suffer from due to the bad (economic) situation inside their homes.

Women and Current Affairs

The women expressed strong support for the signing of the BSA since, among other issues, the signing would bring more stability and employment opportunities for women:

People, all of them, wish the BSA to be signed. They ask us what would happen if the BSA is not signed? They feel that the BSA can bring more employment opportunities for men and women in the region. – KI-F-Gov-2, Balkh.

A group of housewives stated that because the BSA had not been signed, prices for goods had risen and living expenses had gone up and there was less willingness to invest and create jobs.

According to a prominent woman in Mazar-e-Sharif the high turnout of women to vote during the elections was in part due to monetary incentives provided to many women, particularly to poor and the illiterate, by some of the candidates. But, at the same time, the campaigns by the presidential and provincial council candidates were much more effective than previous elections. ANSF maintained order and security and this encouraged people, including many women, to come out and cast their votes. There are many reports of family members encouraging each other to participate in the elections, which was particularly encouraging for the women (KI-F-PW-1).

Contrary to Badakhshan, women living in remote areas did have many difficulties to access the voting stations to cast their vote:

In Balkh district I was stationed at a polling station in a very remote area and I saw that a lot of women voted and participated with enthusiasm. All women voted because they were aware of what was at stake and had participated in awareness workshops and seminars. – KI-F-PW-1 Balkh.

Dawlatabad, Balkh Province

Date of Visit:
February 4, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The transition does not appear to be a cause for concern as far as its impact on overall security for women in Dawlatabad. Initially the response following the full transition was hesitance to leave the home. But this changed relatively quickly:

We do not face any problems while traveling to other districts and villages and do so with confidence. Women can freely move around and usually do so alone. The stores are open till late in the evening and women can go outside till relatively late in the evening.—KI-F-Gov-2, Dawlatabad.

ANSF's work is viewed positively by the community, particularly with the knowledge that ANSF's resources have been reduced since the transition:

Our national police are facing difficulties and challenges. The police force does not have the required facilities, nor have they had sufficient training to fulfill their duties professionally. We have national police in this district and despite the many challenges they manage to maintain security. The population is satisfied with our police's work. —KI-F-VTC-2, Dawlatabad.

The elders and other members of the community are said to cooperate with ANP in fighting crime.

Mobility and Access to Public Life

After the initial worries that followed the transition, women are said to have resumed their routines and functions outside the home. Women's access to work has been reduced due mainly to fewer jobs being available as a result of the transition:

Opportunities to find work have decreased over the last six months. Six months ago, there used to be literacy courses and vocational training courses and facilities where women took courses and other women were teachers and trainers. Now many of these facilities no longer exist, eliminating job opportunities for women. — FGD-WW, Dawlatabad.

Women working in crucial services such health have been less susceptible to the lack of funding:

In the last six months, only one female employee was fired and the reason for the firing was corruption and inappropriate behavior with the patients. Women's employment in health is otherwise not threatened. —KI-F-Med-2, Dawlatabad.

Access to Services (Health and Education)

The transition has not affected women's access to healthcare and the number of patients that visit the clinics has not decreased:

The number of women that visit our clinic is particularly high on Mondays and Thursdays because these are market days. Women sometimes come alone, other times they are

accompanied by a male companion. Usually when they come from farther places, they come with a male companion. On average we help about one hundred female patients each day. The number of our patients has not changed since the transition... Women have not been subjected to any torment (by their families or otherwise) when accessing our clinics. – KI-F-Med-2, Dawlatabad.

Women reported that their families are generally very attentive to their needs for medical services.

There have been attacks on schools and killings of teachers in the district. However, these events appear not have had adverse impacts on the access to or availability of education:

Six months ago, three teachers were murdered. This led to a drop in attendance. But now those who were absent have returned to their schools and are following their classes. The security situation has improved too. Those girls who have stopped coming to school have done so because of getting married or moving away with their families.–KI-F-GHS-2, Dawlatabad.

Parents are said to be supportive of education for girls. There is also support from the community for girls going to school.

Access to Justice

Women report that they are taken seriously when they have approach the police with a problem. Women with domestic violence complaints are assisted by female police officers. When female police are not available, members of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission are asked for assistance (FGD-HW).

Violence Against Women

With regards to women's sense of security inside their houses, there is a general consensus among the interviewees that domestic violence has decreased tremendously over the last six months. In 2011, the family response unit in Dawlatabad stated to have fifty-two registered cases in 2011, a year later it had fallen down to twenty-three and by the end of 2013 the number of registered cases were as low as nine. Others in the field have also noticed the decrease in violence against women in Dawlatabad:

We do not know what the statistics are with regards to physical abuse of women. Until six months ago, we would get three to four girls who were victims of domestic violence in our hospitals for treatment. We have not received any in the last number of months. The recent development is that the elders participate in conflict resolution and avoid physical abuse in this manner. – KI-F-Med-1, Balkh.

Women in Dawlatabad stated that forced marriages occur often in Dawlatabad and are a source of violence against women:

One week ago a girl in this district committed suicide. The reason was forced marriage that was planned to take place. One month ago another girl committed suicide and some time before that a girl took too much medication and killed herself. There is a lot of suicide, but not as much domestic violence as six months ago. – KI-F-VTC-2, Dawlatabad.

None of the above mentioned instances and trends seem to have been influenced by the transition.

Women and Current Affairs

The sentiments expressed by the women in Dawlatabad district were identical to those by women in Balkh district, above. The awareness seminars and projects on women's rights and elections appear to have contributed to women's participation in elections (KI-F-PW-1).

Bamyan, Bamyan Province

Date of Visit:
March 9-18, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

In central/urban areas the security situation for women remains unchanged while in rural areas there are reported drops in school attendance of girls due, reportedly, to concerns about lack security.

The women reported that they were more worried about future prospects than immediate security conditions. Workingwomen stated that they knew of no cases of threat against them or their female colleagues. For example,

Bamyan is secure. So far we have not faced any difficulties regarding our security. We even walk to work and not feel any threats or difficulties in doing so. –KI-F-NGO-2, Bamyan

In rare cases of threats against women, the women and their families appear to be confident that they can deal with them. For example:

Last year, I received a phone call with someone telling me that I should not be working and doing business. I gave the caller my address and told him that if he had anything specific to say, he should come to the market and say it to my face. My brother also told me to give him the address and that he would come to the shop and face the person who threatened me. The caller did not show up and I ever got any other threats from anyone. –KI-F-BW-2, Bamyan

Travelling to other provinces is viewed as unsafe, however. This is particularly difficult for businesswomen who need to travel for work to neighboring districts or cities (KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-BW-2). During the presence of foreign troops, AOGs from neighboring provinces would attack the PRTs present in Bamyan (KI-F-GOV-1). Since the transition the military attacks by AOGs have almost completely stopped but theft and robbery have increased, particularly *Kahmard* and *Sayghan* bordering Baghlan province, *Shibar* bordering Parwan and Baghlan provinces, and *Waras* (KI-F-GOV-1, KI-F-BW-2).

ANSF personnel also have a positive view of security in Bamyan:

Bamyan is secured by the local population. The people in this region have suffered greatly during the Taliban and want and value peace very much. For this reason, they have collectively put down their arms and have turned themselves to knowledge, studying and rebuilding their communities. –KI-M-ANP, Bamyan

The security forces are viewed by the community as helpful and cooperative, providing protection for girls attending school and women in public (KI-F-GHS-1).

ANSF is not as present or effective in rural areas but still has the support and trust of the communities. For example:

Whenever we have needed help from the police they have sent people to help us. We are satisfied and the people have expressed their satisfaction with our [national] security forces. But the police do not have the capacity to deal with all the challenges they face. They fewer resources now than before. –KI-F-NGO-1, Bamyan

There are no complaints of corruption within the ANP and the transition has not affected the population's perception of the ANP negatively. Instead, there appears to be more support and sympathy for ANP than before with many expressing concerns that ANP is attending to its security responsibilities but that to do so it would need more resources. For example:

Our security forces have always been very active and the people are generally law abiding. I do not think that our security forces have sufficient level of professionalization and resources to do their job as well as is required. – KI-F-GHS-1, Bamyan

Mobility and Access to Public Life

Women in the central or urban areas of Bamyan have no difficulty going to work or moving around the province with a few exceptions of some districts (FGD-Gov). Traveling by road to other provinces is a challenge due to criminal, rather than political, activity (KI-F-Gov-1, KI-F-BW-2). Despite these threats women still travel to neighboring cities, provinces, and neighboring countries (KI-F-BW-2). Women's presence in public spaces and working women appear to be commonly accepted and deemed as normal:

Religious leaders are clear in their sermons that women have the right to work outside of their homes. We invite imams to our workshops and inform them about the influence of their teaching as appreciation as a way of providing them with feedback. Then we discuss with them how to continue to promote women's rights in their sermons, which they do. – KI-F-FRU, Bamyan.

Before the transition the PRT, a number of businesses providing PRT with services, and a higher number of NGOs provided jobs for women. There has been a significant drop in the number of jobs for women since the transition. For example:

At this moment we have 47 students. When foreigners were here, we had a higher number of students and more teachers, but now we only have one teacher. Many women followed literacy courses in different centers supported by donors. To keep the women interested we also created a daycare center. Now all our teachers work at the daycare and we have changed our premises into a laundry center with warm and cold water. Now women come here to wash their clothes [instead of learning job skills]. – KI-M-VTC-2, Bamyan

Access to Services (Health and Education)

The people of Bamyan, especially those living in urban areas, are generally satisfied with their access to healthcare. In rural areas, however, access to health services has decreased significantly:

When foreigners were here, women had less challenges with regards to their access to healthcare. Women were hired as nurses or midwives who were paid to go to far-away regions and hold visitation hours for women. But now there is no one to do this job and it is hard for women to volunteer and take on such projects.-KI-M-VTC-2, Bamyan

Access to education, even in less secure areas such as Kahmard and Shibar, has not been affected much by the transition. There are no registered cases of school burnings but some reported that there had been cases of poisoning of the water supply in girls' schools (KI-F-BW-2). This was not confirmed by others interviewed, however. Working closely with school councils that include community elders, the

schools are reported to continuously monitor the security situation and advise their students as and when necessary (KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-GHS-3).

While schools have been able to manage reasonably well since the transition, vocational training facilities have suffered greatly from the drop in external funding (KI-M-VTC-2).

Access to Justice

Access to justice and judicial institutions in Bamyan has not changed noticeably since the transition. However, the pace of progress in this sector has slowed down somewhat (KI-M-ANP). Judicial bodies, ANP, and the Family Response Unit are described as accessible in the central areas of the province, while in the rural areas access to these units is more difficult (KI-F-NGO-1). The accessibility of the institutions in rural areas limited by distance and the more conservative values of the rural communities (FGD-WW).

Where there is access to justice institutions, there is less certainty in receiving justice:

Absolutely no attention is being paid [by courts] to the cases that concern women. AIHRC assist the women to make their cases, but the courts do nothing in response. A woman, who has two children, has been going from court to court for two years now to divorce her drug-addict husband. But since she has no money to bribe people, her case does not reach anyone. Another woman was murdered by her sister-in-law. The murdered women's mother did all in her power to gain justice, but since she had no male partner to help her and no money to bribe people, she could not get anywhere.— KI-F-BW-3, Bamyan

Violence Against Women

According to civil society organizations and businesswomen in Bamyan, the sense of insecurity caused by not signing the BSA has delayed investments and caused more poverty (KI-F-NGO-1, KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-BW-2). In central areas the security of women inside their houses is better than in remote areas, where less girls attend school, there are more contentions on inheritance rights and more violence against women and girls (KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-FRU). Physical abuse has decreased significantly over the last number of years due to extensive awareness projects and workshops held by civil society organizations and Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (KI-M-VTC-2). However, according to a civil society organization the worsening of economic situation and lack of employment due to the departure of international forces has led to more violence against women (KI-F-NGO-1). The data on the number of cases of violence against women by the Family Response Unit in Bamyan confirm this trend: “In 2011 we had 29 cases of violence against women, this dropped to twenty-three in 2012 and rose again to thirty-four by the end of 2013”.

Women and Current Affairs

Women in Bamyan are concerned that their conditions will deteriorate further if the BSAs are not signed (KI-F-NGO-2). A close association is made between the signing of the BSA and availability of resources for women-centered programming:

If the security agreement is signed, the security of the women will improve and more women will follow training courses and get employed which will increase stability. Vocational opportunities will increase and people will be able to invest in different professions and sectors. — KI-F-VTC-1 in Bamyan

The head of a girls' high school stated that the uncertainty was keeping girls away from school. More generally, while the women were in favour of the BSA being signed, they were also explicit about the conditions on which the agreement would be based:

Under the current circumstances signing the BSA might not seem to affect the society much. But, in the long run we will need the BSA because it will bring security and economic aid. If the BSA is signed, we also want the security forces to stop searching people's houses by force. ... the values of Afghan culture must be respected and foreigners must not harass people. – FGD-CE in Bamyan

Businesswomen complained about people holding on to their money and delaying investments because of uncertainty.

According to a prominent woman in Bamyan the last two elections in 2004 and 2009 had raised women's awareness about the importance of voting and thus the high number of turn out by women in the elections in 2014:

There are voices that complain about vote rigging and corruption, but its extent is much more limited than the previous elections. The main concern of the people is that the counting of votes and the outcome of the elections might not be as transparent as people hope for. – KI-F-PW-2, Bamyan

Lashkargah, Helmand Province

Date of Visit:
February 2, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2012

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Overall security situation has worsened compared to six months ago. Women express worries about target killings and indiscriminate killings through attacks by AOGs:

Our security situation has worsened in the last six months. Prominent families feel threatened but this level of insecurity affects all of us directly. It discourages women from leaving their homes and working outside the home. Even those who are educated, be it doctors or teachers, do not want to leave their houses. – FGD-WW, Helmand.

The women are appreciative of ANSF's efforts to maintain security but do believe that they have adequate facilities:

We are happy with the way the national police and the army are operating. If they have the right facilities and equipment, they can ensure the safety and the security. So far there have not been any lootings or plundering in our region. – FGD-BW, Helmand

Mobility and Access to Public Life

Women's movement outside the home for work or other reasons has been severely affected in the last 6 months (FGD-HW, KI-F-PW-3). There are fewer opportunities for women to work because of the scaling down of external financial assistance for women-centered programs and projects:

Since the departure of international forces employment opportunities for women have dropped significantly. The handcraft sector in which women were very active has been facing deficiencies because there is no one to buy their products or invest in their craftsmanship. Women's access to trade and business has declined as well. –KI-F-Gov-1, Helmand

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Women's access to health services has declined since the departure of foreign forces due to a number of clinics having closed down due to lack of funding (FGD-HW, FGD-WW). Of those that remain, many complain that they do not have adequate facilities and resources:

Since the transition women's access to services has become much more limited because the quality of everything has deteriorated. Clinics do not have enough medication for their patients and schools do not have teachers. In the cities there are clinics available, but in villages the number of clinics has declined compared to the past. – FGD-HW, Helmand

The deterioration in security has forced many teachers to stay at home while lack resources continues to provide challenges for schools that have remained open:

Girls do not have access to decent educational services. I mean they do not have any means of transportation and come from far away places to this school. They do not have a car and on their way to school they face many problems and often come to classes late. – KI-F-GHS-1, Helmand

Poverty also undermines access to education. Buying books, arranging transportation, and taking the risk of sending girls to distant schools often form the basis for deciding not to send girls to school (KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-GHS-3).

Access to Justice

Compared to six months ago, women's access to formal judicial institutions has declined (FGD-HW, KI-F-PW-3). However, in contrast to other provinces, the cases that go through the formal justice system are, according to some, taken seriously and dealt with adequately:

If a case is reported, it is always taken care of. Women that report their cases are provided a lawyer free of charge and that helps them with their case. Our judicial institutions are also protective of women and deal with their cases swiftly and urgently. – KI-F-VTC-2, Helmand

There are not many complaints about the workings of the police and the legal and judicial institutions.

Violence Against Women

The extent of violence against women in Helmand has increased compared to six months ago, according to working women and housewives:

The extent of domestic violence against women has increased compared to the past. Women who used to work outside their houses in the past and provide their children with food and shelter are now unemployed. This leads to domestic violence, especially if their husbands are addicted to narcotics and asks for money. If the women cannot provide them with money, they get physically abused. – FGD-WW, Helmand.

A part of the reason for unemployment is the departure of international forces and reduction of projects that used to get financed by international donors (KI-F-PW-2, KI-F-Gov-2). Another reason for unemployment of women is the deteriorating security situation in the province, which forces women to stay at home. Data from Family Response Units registration of cases of violence against women confirm the rise in violence against women; in 2011, there were seven cases of violence against women, a year later, the number had gone up to twenty-seven. By the end of 2013, there were twenty-three registered cases of violence against women.

Women and Current Affairs

Women are in favour of the signing of the BSA because they believe the resultant security and stability will lead to improved economic opportunities:

The BSA should be signed. Signing the agreement will re-establish economic support and aid that was provided to us by the international community. This will provide new job opportunities for women and the projects that have now been stopped will start again. Ever since this whole discussion about the signing of the BSA, the prices have skyrocketed and the employment opportunities that were once present for women have disappeared. – KI-F-GHS-2 in Helmand

The women fear that if the agreement is not signed, security will deteriorate and thus undermine their access to work and education.

A prominent woman in Helmand stated that there were three reasons for the high turnout of women during the elections. First, the awareness raising projects and campaigns had been effective and helped

the women in becoming aware of their rights and duties. Second, men had encouraged their female family members to vote. Third, security on the day of voting was adequate and provided assurance for men and women to come out and cast their votes(KI-F-PW-2). There were some concerns about cheating in voting and vote counting, however:

There was not much vote rigging for the presidential election. The provincial councils' elections were filled with corruption, however. The fact that the elections are going to the second round has made our women and youth, who casted their votes with enthusiasm, rather disappointed. – KI-F-PW-1, Helmand

Herat, Herat Province

Date of Visit:
January 26-30, 2014

Transition Period:
March 2011

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Compared to the previous two cycles overall security in Herat has deteriorated. Since the transition, local militia groups have been armed in preparation to defend themselves in case there is conflict (KI-F-NGO-1). Many districts are now out of bounds for people from outside those districts:

... We cannot travel to the districts that we used to travel to. We used to listen to women, make an inventory of their problems, and once we were back to the centre we would call the responsible authorities to take care of the issues. We cannot do this anymore. – KI-F-NGO-1, Herat

While Herat City is relatively safe, the surrounding districts and almost all other districts are deemed as insecure. Women of Herat are not satisfied with ANSF in maintaining security (KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2). The police are not considered as respectful and protective toward women. Allegedly the police are rude to women who have been victims of violence, especially domestic violence.

Mobility and Access to Public Life

Women's access to work in Herat has decreased compared to 6 months ago (KI-F-NGO-1). In part this is due to fewer jobs being available to women because of a reduction in women-centered projects and program funded by external sources:

2013 was a good year for employment and work in Herat. Many new projects started and even illiterate women were given work in different organizations. But, unfortunately, in the last two to three months, due to uncertainties about 2014 many private and public employers closed down their operations and left the province. – KI-F-GHS-1, Herat

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to health and education in Herat remains relatively unchanged compared to 6 months ago. There is strong community support in the urban areas for girls' education:

Women and girls have access health and educations in Herat. In the central areas, women and girls go to schools and universities and are not subjected to harassment. There is a lot of respect for them... but, in the rural areas access to these services is limited. – FGD-CE, Herat

The contrast between urban and rural areas of Herat in terms of access to health and education is particularly sharp in Herat province.

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice in Herat City is much higher than the rural districts (KI-F-NGO-1). In rural areas there are fewer family response units, lawyers, and judicial institutions. In addition, the

deteriorating security situation rights organizations, lawyers, and justice system officials from going to rural districts and assisting women in need of legal services (KI-F-NGO-2).

In the central areas of the province women have much better access to justice though the quality of services provided is considered less than optimal (KI-F-NGO-2, KI-F-NGO-1). The attitude of police and judges towards women is not friendly or helpful but the civil society organizations provide assistance:

... The law preventing violence against women has been implemented most successfully in Herat, this is also shown by a survey done by the UNAMA. However, we have been less successful in applying this law over the last year. The main reason is that the police are not cooperating and the judicial institutions are not following up. The police are rude to women who seek justice. If a woman goes to a police station with a broken arm because of a beating by her husband, the police tell her that she is only reporting on the husband because she now knows about human rights whereas before these things were never a problem. They demand that women who complain must prove that their husbands have done these things to them and if they are not able to prove it in court, they will be sent to prison for three years. – KI-F-NGO-1, Herat

Violence Against Women

According to many of the interviewees, the security situation of women in Herat has deteriorated compared to the previous two cycles (KI-F-NGO-1). Previously, the most common types of violence against women consisted of self-burning, but now, that is in decline (KI-F-NGO-1). The number of suicides, running away from homes and kidnappings has increased; “The extent of abuse against women has increased significantly. The types of abuse consist of beating, murder and kidnappings...” (KI-F-PW-1).

Women of Herat primarily mention two factors as the main sources of this deterioration; first, the fact that international forces are leaving the country in 2014 has generated a lot of uncertainty about the future (KI-F-PW-1). And second, the local military leaders from the past, such as Ismael Khan, have armed many men with weapons (KI-F-NGO-1). According to housewives and a civil society organization, in the last weeks three women in the city have been murdered (FGD-HW, KI-F-NGO-2).

Women and Current Affairs

There is broad support for the signing of the BSA:

... If the security agreement is not signed, the Taliban will return and women will have nothing to do or say anymore. We also worry that if the agreement is not signed, violence against women will increase. – KI-F-PW-2, Herat

The high turnout for the elections was attributed to increased awareness among women:

Women participated because they are aware of what their participation means for them and the future of their children. Another reason for the high level of participation was the fear of what might happen if elections failed or did not take place. Women thought that their vote in the elections was a vote against [armed opposition groups]. – KI-F-PW-2 Herat

Adequate security was cited as another reason for people to come out and vote. However, there are worries about the outcome of the elections and election process. Vote buying and vote rigging were mentioned as risks to the transparency of the election process (KI-F-PW-2).

Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province

Date of Visit:
February 2, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2014

Transition:
To be completed

Overall Security

The security situation of Jalalabad has deteriorated significantly since 6 months ago (KI-F-NGO-6). Women avoid being present in public or move around the city because they fear becoming casualty of terrorist attacks and suicide bombs (KI-F-VTC-1). There is general consensus among the women that despite the threats, Jalalabad is relatively safe:

The security situation Jalalabad is good, but in the rural districts the security is very poor. This is because there are no more aerial bombings by the Americans and the AOGs have found an opportunity to regroup. ... we would like to provide services in rural districts but we have no access to many of them. If security were good, then we would have been able to provide our services there too. –KI-F-FRU, Jalalabad

Women who work as legal advisors or lawyers state that there are many threats of violence against them from the people they are fighting in the court system. While these threats have always existed, the women indicate that in the last few months they have reached their highest point, making it very difficult to continue legal cases representing women (KI-F-NGO-4, KI-F-NGO-5).

Women of Jalalabad consider ANSF as respectful and protective of women. The women also believed that ANSF is capable of ensuring the security of the country, but lack the necessary equipment and training to do so (KI-F-NGO-5, KI-F-PW-3).

Mobility and Access to Public Life

The number of projects for women has been decreasing in the province since the transition process began. The main reason for unemployment among women, however, is stated as inadequate security:

There are very few employment opportunities for women. NGOs do not hire any more people and are actually reducing the number of personnel. The main reason for this is the worsening of the security situation. Some time ago, we had many women who would work in clinics in far away places and districts. But now because the bad security in those districts they are forced to leave their jobs and stay at home. –KI-F-PW-5, Jalalabad

Mobility for the women of Jalalabad is a major challenge due partly to threat of terrorist attacks but also because of there being fewer jobs (KI-F-VTC-1, KI-F-PW-1).

Access to Services (Health and Education)

The main impediment to women's access to services in Jalalabad is security (FGD-HW). However, women continue to use health services and girls continue to attend school:

Women go to clinics, schools and bazaars and they do not face any specific problems for doing so. However, they only go to bazaars if they have to. Girls go to schools and universities without facing any difficulties. They have mobility, but there is also a lot of fear. – KI-F-Gov-3, Jalalabad

There are complaints about the quality of services provided by schools and hospitals, but not their availability (KI-F-Gov-3).

Access to Justice

Legal and judicial institutions in Jalalabad take women's cases seriously and their attitude towards women is reported as professional (FGD-WW, KI-F-NGO-6, KI-F-PW-4). Apparently, the positive attitude of the justice officials toward women is because of a complaint by a girl about two judges who had not given the girl a fair treatment. The girl complained and won, resulting in the firing of the two judges. Since then, all judges are said to be careful when dealing with cases that concern women and girls (KI-F-NGO-6).

Violence Against Women

The security in the city of Jalalabad is good, but in the districts the security is very poor. This is because the president has forbidden the Americans to bomb the enemy and the Taliban have increased their activities and have distorted the security. We have no access to many districts, had the security been good, then we would have been able to provide our services there too. – KI-F-FRU Jalalabad

According to working women, women avoid walking or being outside in the city because of the fear of (suicide) bombs or attacks by armed men (FGD-WW). Civil society organizations state not to be able to access remote areas due to poor security situation (KI-F-NGO-6). The number of registered cases of violence against women, according to the Family Response Unit in Jalalabad in 2011 was fifty-eight, a year later it had increased to eighty-two. By the end of 2013, that number had dropped back to sixty-two registered cases. The decline in the number of registered cases can be explained by the fact that the FRUs do not have access to many districts.

Women and Current Affairs

There is strong support in favour of the signing of the BSA:

The BSA has to be signed. If the BSA is signed, international organizations will increase their projects, which will provide new opportunities for women. It will also improve the security situation. Now that the BSA is not signed, security has deteriorated, the [armed opposition groups] have become more daring and are getting stronger everyday because there they do not feel deterred by anyone anymore. [Some of us] expect them to enter the city soon. – KI-F-PW-4 Jalalabad

According to a prominent woman in Jalalabad, the high turnout for the elections was due to people feeling the need to decide their future and that the security provided by ANSF was adequate. There are concerns about fraud in voting and the counting of the votes, however (KI-F-PW-4).

Sorkhrod, Nangarhar Province

Date of Visit:
February 2, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Overall security has deteriorated since the transition. The main cause of the deterioration is the increase in armed robberies, other criminal activities, and armed violence to settle various forms of conflict (KI-F-PW-1). General violence and criminal activity appear to have replaced threats to security from terrorist attacks (KI-F-VTC-1). The women were unanimous in expressing fear for their safety at home or outside the home.

There is much appreciation for ANSF despite the general view that ANSF is ill-equipped to maintain security and order:

People are generally happy with ANP but ANP cannot provide security. They lack the necessary human resources and weaponry to do so. I have applied for a permit to own a gun for my own protection. –KI-F-VTC-1, Sorkhrod.

The appreciation of ANSF, despite the shortcomings, is in part due to the general disapproval of the presence of international security forces (FGD-CE). Community elders were clear they wanted security provision by Afghan rather than international forces because Afghans would be more respectful of the local customs and traditions:

ANP and ANA are Afghans and serve their own people. The police chief of Sorkhrod district is a very capable man and knows how to distribute the resources given to him to each village effectively. ANA has become much more active since the departure of foreign forces and we are very satisfied with them. We do not have the Arbaki in Sorkhrod. Their services were offered to us, but we refused to have them. – FGD-CE, Sorkhrod

The interviewees made numerous references to incidents involving international security personnel entering people's homes by kicking in their doors and not acknowledging people's privacy and high levels of conservatism about strangers in their homes, especially with women present (FGD-CE).

Mobility and Access to Public Life

The transition has affected women's mobility and access to work (KI-F-PW-1). There are fewer terrorist attacks, but more kidnappings, murders, and AOG movements inside the villages and communities (KI-F-GHS-1). The current security conditions have affected women's mobility while employment opportunities for women have decreased due to reduced external funding for women-centered projects and programs (KI-F-VTC-2). Even when there are jobs for women, many families hesitate in allowing their female relatives to apply for them. The women of Sorkhrod are said to live in constant fear and anxiety:

Fear is everywhere, we are afraid to go out to work. As we go to work, we fear the drivers, we fear those sitting in the car with us and we fear that those around us might be members AOGs or criminals. When our daughters leave home for school, we fear that they might become victims to random violence. –FGD-WW, Sorkhrod

Access to Services (Health and Education)

There is reasonable access to healthcare despite shortages in facilities and human and financial resources:

Most of the areas have their clinics and patients generally manage to access them. If the patients live far away, they either come by cars or take the bus. If there is an emergency we do not have ambulances to help them, but in those cases they almost always manage to find a car and come to us. – KI-F-MED-1, Sorkhrod.

Also,

Women do have access to clinics and there are male and female doctors. In every district there are active clinics or health centers – KI-F-Gov-1, Sorkhrod.

Access to education is also affected by general worries about the current security conditions:

Many of our students come from far away places and in the past they did not experience any problems when coming to school. The number of problems has increased recently. For example, there was a remotely controlled bomb that exploded at a petrol station located near the school. The explosion occurred at eight in the morning and until nine in the morning no one showed up at school. Since then there is constant fear among the students and the teachers alike and the number of our students at higher grades has dropped significantly. Also, in the past, our teachers would volunteer to work for the election commission. This year we received a formal request from the department of education election volunteers and not a single teacher was prepared to volunteer. – KI-F-GHS-2, Sorkhrod.

The awareness programs are said to have been very effective in changing the sentiments of the people about girls getting an education. These programs are especially successful when elders and religious leaders are involved:

Religious leaders have a positive opinion about girls getting an education and claim that educating oneself is the duty of every man and woman. There is also a useful daily morning radio program in which the religious leaders explain these issues to the people. – KI-F-PW-2, Sorkhrod.

Since the transition AOGs have gained more ground in some districts. Initially, they demanded an end to girls going to school. The elders negotiated with AOGs and an agreement was reached that the girls could continue to go to school on the condition that they wore proper hijab on their way to school (KI-F-PW-2).

Access to Justice

Sorkhrod is culturally conservative and, as such, the general preference is to keep family disputes private especially if such disputes involve women:

Here, women are submissive and men have a bad temper especially when men lose their jobs. They not only beat their women, but also children. There is also a lot of physical abuse. – FGD-HW, Sorkhrod

The transition has not made any difference in terms of access to formal justice. Access to formal justice for the majority women is frowned upon and minimal (FGD-HW). There is also a shared belief that the

formal justice system is riddled with corruption and women without money will not be served properly by justice officials (KI-F-VTC-1). The only people whose help is sought by the women are the community elders:

Here, women do not dare to go to the police or provincial offices for help. If they do, people will condemn them for taking their family issues to outsiders instead going to the village elders. – FGD-HW, Sorkhrod.

With no faith in judicial bodies and no incentive to approach them, women in the region tend not to have even general information about the judicial system (KI-F-Gov-1).

Violence Against Women

People of Sorkhrod are generally reserved about what happens behind closed doors. With regards to violence against women, the narrative is that women are being physically abused and the economic hardship, partially caused by the transition, has contributed to the deterioration:

Here, women are submissive and men have a bad temper especially when men lose their jobs. They not only beat their women, but also children. There is a lot of physical abuse, which is creating a lot of problems. – FGD-HW in Sorkhrod

According to health clinics and housewives, most women live in such circumstances with minimal access to justice, which makes them more vulnerable (KI-F-Med-2. FGD-HW). Their only source of help is to approach the elders and hope that they resolve the conflict.

Women and Current Affairs

The people of Sorkhrod are divided about the signing of the BSA. Some say that the BSA should be signed until Afghanistan can support itself:

If [the BSA] is not signed, there is a chance that Americans will leave Afghanistan and public administration would be left to people who would not allow women to work. Also, if the Americans do not support us, we will face tremendous economic challenges and women's access to justice and education might become impossible. –KI-F-GHS-1 in Sorkhrod.

Others are more suspicious of the actions of the foreign countries:

... There is a secret behind every action these days. On the days that the foreign troops were leaving, the number of terror attacks was higher than other days. The foreigners were showing their power in this manner and hoping to put pressure on the government to sign the BSA. – KI-F-VTC-1 Sorkhrod.

There is strong sentiment for conditionalities to accompany the signing of the BSA. Foreign forces “must respect the people of Afghanistan and their culture” (FGD-CE).

Different reasons were given for women's participation in the elections:

Women wanted to vote and choose a leader that could ensure economic growth and access to education for the people. The security forces did a good job in securing the region; there was a member of the security forces in every few meters. Because of the fear of insecurity, women did

not leave their houses until eight in the morning, but once they heard that the security was good, they all informed each other and came and voted. –KI-F-PW-1, Sorkhrod.

According to a prominent woman the main concern about the future of elections in Sorkhrod is fraud (KI-F-PW-1).

Kandahar, Kandahar Province

Date of Visit:
January 29, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2014

Transition:
To be completed

Overall Security

The overall security situation for women outside the home is reported as normal by the majority of the women interviewed. The main change compared to 6 months ago is the change in the nature of the AOG activity in the province. AOGs have reduced the number and the ferocity of their attacks and do not appear to be targeting ASNF. There have been very few terrorist attacks over the last few months (FGD-HW-1, FGD-WW). The decrease in terrorist attacks has been correlated to the departure of international security forces from Kandahar:

When the foreigners were here, we feared them and we feared the Taliban because we were caught in between and many innocent people died. Now that the foreigners are gone, our fear from them is gone and there are no more suicide attacks. When foreigners were here, they would attack people's houses, blindfold the men and release dogs on women. My husband was taken two years ago and I do not know where he is. I think he is still held as a prisoner. – FGD-HW-2, Kandahar

One element of AOGs' new approach to attacks is the increase in the number of assassinations of prominent individuals. This has increased the fear felt by prominent women who are frequently in public spaces (KI-M-FRU). To protect themselves, prominent women have been taking a number of measures including frequent changes of outfit and moving around discreetly in public spaces (KI-F-PW-1). These women also complain that they receive verbal abuse from members of their own communities, some whose members insult the women's husbands on the grounds that they are not "real men" for allowing their wives to come out of the home and be seen in public. In the recent months a female attorney was assassinated and a female MP was kidnapped (FGD-WW).

With the exception of the target killings, the security situation is viewed as having improved significantly since the transition. Women's opinion of ANA and ANP is largely positive with the majority of the women feeling comfortable when approaching a police station and asking police for help (FGD-WW).

There are concerns about ANSF not being adequately equipped, skilled, and resourced for fulfilling its functions. Also, there are some reports of the younger ANSF members harassing women in public spaces or being rude toward them (FGD-HW-1). However, these cases are rare and the majority of the women are satisfied with the manner in which ANP provides assistance.

Mobility and Access to Public Life

The majority of the women interviewed state that they did not fear traveling to and from work. Because of the target killings, the most worried are women working for the government, family response units, or women-related issues (KI-F-Gov-1)

As with all other provinces throughout Afghanistan, there has been a significant reduction in the number of jobs available to women in Kandahar. Fewer jobs for women have meant that fewer women need to appear in public spaces. For those with jobs mobility and access to work is not considered a major challenge (FGD-WW).

Access to Services (Health and Education)

The departure of international forces has had a negative impact on women's access to health and educational services:

After the departure of international forces, medical aid has been stopped completely, schools do not have heating fuel, and the quality of teaching has deteriorated. –KI-F-NGO-1, Kandahar

The number of health facilities has decreased and the quality of the services provided has deteriorated:

In our district, women do not have adequate access to health clinics. They usually cover long distances and when they are here, they complain about the long time of their trips and ask for more medicine than they need because they say they do not want to make the same trip again. – KI-M-Med-1, Kandahar

While access to education in rural areas of Kandahar is limited, there are no concerns about the security of girls attending school:

We do not have any fears about the security of our students on their way to school. Our only fear is that they might become victims of traffic accidents. Our teachers do not face any security challenges either. –KI-F-GHS-1, Kandahar

The main issue with educational service provision in rural areas is the insufficient number of schools, overcrowded school buses, and overcrowded school classrooms but not lack of security:

We do not have any fears about the security of our students on their way to school. Our only fear is that they might become victims of traffic accident. Our teachers do not face any security challenges either. –KI-F-GHS-2, Kandahar

Schools in urban areas report that their number of students has increased because many people have relocated from rural areas to urban areas where schools are more accessible (KI-F-GHS-2).

Access to Justice

Women are appreciative of the presence of female police officers in ANP female police officers (FGD-HW-2). In rural areas the formal justice system, even when present and functioning, is not utilized by women and especially not when the dispute involves male family members (FGD-HW-2). In urban areas, the department of women's affairs and civil society organizations are present and legal services are provided for women (KI-M-FRU). Also, there are complaints about the unhelpful attitude of court officials towards women and allegations of corruption:

There are cases of violence and abuse, but when fathers and brothers rape their daughters and sisters, what can one expect from others? When a man rapes a woman, he gets released in exchange for money and is not charged with any crimes. There was a case when a man raped the newly wed wife of his brother, because the family of the man did not want their family name stained, they kicked the woman out of the house for committing such an act. – FGD-HW-2, Kandahar

Violence Against Women

According to the data from the Family Response Unit in Kandahar, the number of registered cases of violence against women rose from eighty-eight in 2012 to one hundred and eight by the end of 2013.

There are cases of violence and abuse, but when fathers and brothers rape their daughters and sisters, what can one expect from others. When a man rapes a woman, he gets released in exchange for money and is not charged with any crimes. – FGD-HW-2, Kandahar

These cases are more common in the rural areas as the services provided by legal and judicial institutions are not as easily accessible as in the central areas of the province (KI-M-FRU).

In urban areas, however, the department of women's affairs and civil society organizations are more active and, according to a civil society organization, the extent of violence against women has been decreasing over the years. The reason for this decline is mainly more awareness among women and men about human rights and the availability of services (KI-M-FRU).

Women and Current Affairs

There is widespread support for the signing of the BSA:

The signing of the BSA will improve the position of women in Kandahar. It will especially enhance women's access to education and work. Women will be valued more in society... – FGD-HW-1, Kandahar

Another reason for support of the BSA is the expectation that it will improve the capacity and capability of the national army and police.

The main reasons for women's participation in the elections are said to be the security provided by ANSF and increased awareness among women:

Women were motivated to vote and once they realized that the security was good, they informed their neighbours and other women and they all went and voted. – KI-F-PW-2.

The key informants interviewed expressed concern about fraud in the outcome of the elections. There were also concerns among women about their husbands not allowing them to go out and vote a second time (KI-F-PW-2).

Kunduz, Kunduz Province

Date of Visit:
December 27, 2013

Transition Period:
December 2012

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Outside the home the security situation for women has deteriorated compared to six months ago. Prior to the transition the main source of insecurity were attacks against national and international security forces by AOGs. Since the transition there has been a steady rise in criminality sometimes involving members ANSF (KI-F-VTC-1, KI-F-BW-2, KI-F-Gov-2, FGD-WW). Many women stated that they lived in constant fear and anxiety about their personal safety:

What I fear most – and think about – is that four armed men might attack my house at night and kidnap me and take me with them. Every day, my fear becomes more and more that one day, they might block my way and take me with them or kill me. Two months ago, the chairman of the election commission and three teachers of the academy of sciences were murdered. – KI-F-NGO-1, Kunduz

The women believe that ANSF is doing the best it can to maintain order and security, despite being ill-equipped and under resourced. The Arbaki, however, are a source of concern for everyone:

There is a lot of cooperation between the people and the police and the police are doing their work well. They are capable of securing about fifty percent of the province but our police and army have to have better weapons and equipment to do their job well. The Arbaki are a problem. During the day they work for the government, at night they become thieves. Instead of investing in the Arbaki, the resources should be invested in the national police. – KI-F-VTC-1, Kunduz

Mobility and Access to Public Life

The transition and the subsequent departure of foreign troops have led to a decrease in employment opportunities for women. The number of projects for women has declined and the NGOs have decreased their number of employees (KI-F-BW-2).

Corruption and nepotism have increased significantly since the transition and many qualified women applying for jobs fail to secure them because they cannot or do not want to pay to become employed or are not related to the right people. In public spaces women are routinely harassed by men, including some from ANSF (KI-F-BW-2).

Access to Services (Health and Education)

The increase in harassment of women in public spaces has also affected the women's access to services such as clinics and schools:

We do have access to services. We have schools, clinics and can go to bazaars, but are very afraid of the Arbaki. In some districts they have done some bad things, so unless we really have to, we avoid going outside. After four o'clock women cannot leave their homes. A male companion always accompanies girls that go to schools or universities after four o'clock. When we go to work, we go alone. When we go back home, we are either accompanied by a mahram or travel in groups of three or four women – KI-F-WW-2, Kunduz

The Arbaki are generally considered as a source of insecurity in the province.

Access to Justice

There are courts and other judicial institutions in Kunduz but there are complaints about how women are treated by these entities. Corruption within the judicial system deprives many women of access to justice:

Women do have access to courts but the court is corrupt and mistreats women. If a woman approaches them for the Nikah or divorce they either ask money or ask women to do them sexual favors. Sometimes cases stay for years in courts and there is no responsible individual who can ask or explain why these cases are here for such a long time. – FGD-CE, Kunduz

Corruption and the unprofessional behavior of some of the justice officials have damaged the image that people have of the judicial system and limited women's access to justice (FGD-WW). Women who become victims of domestic violence have often nowhere to go (KI-F-Gov-1).

Violence Against Women

Violence against women has increased because many people are unemployed and their economic situation is not good. The main reason for violence is the rise in poverty and illiteracy. The transition has not affected the extent of violence against women much. – KI-F-BW-1, Kunduz

The extent of violence against women in Kunduz has increased in the last six months (KI-F-Gov-2, FGD-WW). Interviewees also stated that the number of girls getting murdered by the men in their family has increased as well. Girls escape forced marriages and, when caught, get killed by their brothers or fathers (KI-F-BW-2, KI-F-NGO-3).

Women and Current Affairs

The support for the signing of the BSA among the interviewees in Kunduz is unanimous. They expect the agreement to improve the security situation, create employment opportunities, and give women more access to justice:

The security agreement should be signed. If it is not signed, the lives of women in the province will deteriorate and their efforts so far to gain their rights will go to waste. Yesterday, a teacher whose village is in the city of Kunduz told me that her village is now in the hands of armed opposition groups. Some days she cannot come to her work because she is afraid. – KI-F-VTC-1, Kunduz

The relatively higher turnout of women to vote during the elections was due to increased awareness among the women because of campaigns in the media and projects led by the civil society organizations. Also, the extensive and media publicized election campaigns encouraged men to allow their female family members to go out and vote, and perhaps help the males' favorite candidate to get more votes. Good security provisions also encouraged people to come out, despite the security threats (KI-F-PW-2).

There are concerns about fraud in the voting process, however:

... Women are worried that they voted despite the difficult cultural and security conditions in Kunduz and, God forbid, their votes might go to waste [because of fraud]. – KI-F-PW-2, Kunduz

Mehtarlam, Laghman Province

Date of Visit:
February 2, 2014

Transition Period:
March 2011

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Six months ago there were many cases of women being murdered because they were suspected of working for the government (FGD-HW). The situation appears to have improved significantly compared to the first and second rounds of monitoring (KI-F-Gov-3). The reasons given for the improvement are closer coordination within ANSF (including with the Arbaki) and collaboration between the communities and ANSF:

Though the national police and army do not have enough facilities and lack the necessary weapons, they are very capable of ensuring security in the region. Six months ago, the security situation was very bad, but now, when the new commander took office and installed local police in the districts, the security situation improved and the police commander himself would participate in operations. –KI-F-Gov-1, Laghman.

Despite the generally positive view of ANSF, there remain some concerns:

There is much corruption among the police in Laghman. In the local police there are too many boys who are too young, too uneducated and too inexperienced to do the work of a police officer. Usually, the appointment of officers happens through connections and the people employed are those that can bring in money. – FGD-HW, Laghman.

Many of the rural communities, displaced because of security tensions, have become more secure with many rural-urban migrants having gone back to their communities, easing the tensions and disorder within Mahtarlam (KI-F-ANP). Awareness raising projects are said to have been effective in protecting women against domestic violence though domestic violence remains as a major issue:

We do not have any major cases that concern women. The most common cases are about women running away from home but these cases have also decreased compared to before.
– KI-M-FRU, Mehtarlam.

The main causes of domestic violence against women are poverty and ignorance and drug addiction among men (KI-M-Med-1).

Mobility and Access to Public Life

The situation for women in Laghman has improved compared to six months ago. Most women working for government organizations are not worried about being in public spaces. Women working for the Ministry of Women's Affairs, on the other hand, are in a higher risk category and fear becoming victims of target killing by AOGs (FGD-HW). There are also fears of becoming victims of terrorist attacks and explosions in public places:

I work for the department of education. My only fear is bomb explosions in the streets. Also, when women visit the Ministry of Women's affairs for workshops, they do so with a lot of fear. That is why many women do not visit the department of women's affairs – it has been a target for AOGs. FGD-WW, Laghman.

The transition has affected women's access to work in a negative way. The departure of international forces has led to a decrease in investment in women's employment opportunities and that has led to a rise in unemployment among women:

A majority of organization in Laghman had different kinds of courses, such as sewing and literacy courses, for women. After the departure of international forces, many these projects suddenly stopped and have not been able to restart (...) there is a lot of unemployment among women, also those who are educated and have graduated from high school sit and home and do not work. – FGD-WW, Laghman.

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Compared to the previous monitoring cycles women's access to health and education in Laghman has improved (FGD-HW). Previously, because of the poor security situation women's access to health clinics and schools was especially limited in *Alinegar* and *Alishang* districts of the province (KI-F-Gov-3). There are no impediments to access in urban areas, however:

Because our clinic is located in a safer place, we have not been affected by insecurity. Our employees have not been threatened or forced to resign from their jobs. As far as harassment of our patients is concerned, we have not had any complaints yet.–KI-M-Med-1, Laghman.

Many women visit health clinics unaccompanied by a male (KI-M-Med-1).

Access to education has also improved in recent months. Usually schoolgirls have contracts with rikshaws that drop them at school in the morning and bring them home in the evenings (FGD-HW). There are no complaints about security or societal factors restricting girls' access to education (KI-F-VTC-1).

Access to Justice

The treatment of women and women's cases by legal and judicial institution has improved compared to six months ago. This is especially the case in urban centers. In some rural areas, where AOGs have strong influence, women are less willing to report their cases to the formal justice authorities (KI-M-NGO-1). The department of women's affairs has become more active during the last six months and provides assistance to women who wish to take their cases to the formal justice authorities (KI-F-Gov-2).

The process of criminal proceedings has also improved compared to six months ago. Family response units, the police office and the department of women's affairs work closely together to make sure that women are safe and justice is served (KI-M-FRU).

Violence Against Women

According to the Department of Women's Affairs, the number of registered cases of violence against women has increased from 512 in 2012 to 648 by the end of 2013. The main causes of violence against women, as explained by a health clinic employee, are poverty, lack of awareness and men's dependence on narcotics (KI-M-NGO-1, KI-M-Med-1).

Despite the increase in number of registered cases, the family response units state that the awareness campaigns have helped and the extent of violence has been decreasing:

We have very few cases that specifically concern women, the only cases that we encounter are about women running away from their houses and these too have decreased significantly compared to the past. – KI-M-FRU, Laghman.

The improvement of the security situation is given as one reason for the decline in the number of cases of violence against women (KI-M-FRU).

Women and Current Affairs

Women of Laghman are generally supportive of the signing of the BSA:

The security agreement should be signed. If it is not signed, war might start again in Afghanistan and armed opposition groups might take power and force all women to stay at home. Also, because the BSA has not been signed, it has affected the economic situation in Afghanistan. Businessmen are not investing their money and people with money are transferring it to foreign countries. – KI-F-Gov-1, Laghman.

The interviewees expect that security and the economy will improve if the BSA is signed. There are fears that if the BSA is not signed, the country might go down a path of war and destruction (FGD-WW, KI-F-ANP).

The main reasons for women's participation in the elections in Laghman were given as good security on election day and the campaigns by the presidential candidates. Women knew what each candidate had to offer and made their choices on the day of the elections.

The main concern is the knowledge that there was much fraud in the voting process and some women are concerned that their votes may have been wasted (KI-F-PW-1). Many view the second round of presidential elections as unnecessary, given the high risks of organizing another national election.

Paghman, Kabul Province

Date of Visit:
February 3, 2014

Transition Period:
March 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Security is said to be improving over time with a sense of order becoming established. The view of ANSF is largely positive though with the usual concerns about misbehavior and corruption by some members of ANSF and the general lack of facilities, equipment, and training (KI-M-Med-1, FGD-WW). ANSF also enjoys the approval of the community elders:

Our national police, despite having limited facilities, are truly delivering good work. They are not like they were in the past, now they professionally secure our district, especially if there are national celebrations or special occasions. They are responsive to the needs of the women. For example, when we need their assistance in cases regarding domestic violence, they help us gain access to justice. This is a sign that the police are protective of women. – KI-F-NGO-1, Paghman

Also,

Our national police and national army can be of great help to our people. They respect women and as a woman I am confident that our police are capable of having positive affects on security.
– FGD-HW, Paghman

Mobility and Access to Public Life

Where there are concerns about harassment, younger women are more affected than older women:

So far, we have not faced any problems in public spaces. On the streets, young men harass young girls, however, and subject them to verbal harassment and insulting remarks. These boys do not dare to harass older women. - FGD, Housewives, Paghman

There has been a reduction in harassment of younger girls, however, and movement in public spaces is not considered a challenge in Paghman (KI-F-FRU). Some women and community elders believe that after the transition, women have been able to move around more freely because they and their families know that there are no foreigners on the streets (FGD-HW). Women generally feel safe on the streets and are able to go on with their daily lives and work without being harassed or feeling endangered:

Women are not being harassed. So far, we have not had any complaints. Women and girls did not get harassed in the past and they do not get harassed now. This is because we have elders in our villages that prevent harassment from happening. Also, the villages are in good contact with each other and people know each other's backgrounds. So if a boy harasses someone, then everyone knows who the boy's family is and it can be prevented from happening again. There are no problems with regards to harassment. – KI-F-FRU, Paghman

The transition has affected the livelihoods of specific groups of women in a negative way:

The transition has affected those women that worked for NGOs, those that were active in the field of human rights and those that worked for Civil Society Organizations. A lot of these women

have lost their jobs and are not able to sustain their livelihoods anymore. –KI-M-Med-1, Paghman

Those that are not affected by the transition express their frustrations with dealings with foreign businesses, funders, and contractors. They feel that the foreign investors in the region are not there to trade with and help Afghan women but help each other which is costing them business and earnings:

Members of the international community say it with their tongues and write it with their pens, but do not put it in practice (...) They give their contracts to those with foreign passports and who can speak a couple of English words (...) Their investments find their way back to foreign countries and never stay in Afghanistan. So how do you expect Afghan women to grow and develop? – KI-F-BW-1, Paghman

There are some concerns about some religious leaders in the community who are calling for more restrictions on women's freedoms in terms of employment and movement in public places (KI-F-NGO-1, KI-F-NGO-2). While by no means a widespread view, some women worry about the prospects of more calls by others for restrictions on women (KI-F-NGO-1).

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Service levels and the number of clinics per household have remained the same since the transition. There are complaints about inadequate or insufficient medication and overcrowded clinics and hospitals:

Women wait for hours [in the clinic] to no avail. In addition, they also do not give enough medication to the patients. Women who take their children to be vaccinated, sometimes go for three or four days before it is their turn to be helped. This single clinic does not suffice four thousand households. – FGD-CE, Paghman

This is confirmed by health officials:

Daily, we receive seventy to eighty women who are either ill or are bringing an ill child to the doctor. There is a lot of congestion in our clinic because it is the central clinic in the district. –KI-M-Med-1, Paghman

The transition has had some minor effects on educational services but the number of girls attending schools has not changed since the departure of foreign troops (KI-F-FRU).

Access to Justice

ANP is reported to cooperate fully in legal cases involving women (KI-F-NGO-2, KI-F-NGO-3). Women threatened or in emergency need of protection are taken in by safe houses until their cases are resolved and they are no longer threatened:

Women in this region have access to safe houses. Women that face serious difficulties and are not accepted by their families or have escaped domestic violence live in safe houses. The law that prevents violence against women has been effective in protecting women. –KI-F-NGO-2, Paghman

The judicial institutions are also aware of women's needs and vulnerabilities and the judges and attorneys seem to deal with their cases professionally:

We have not witnessed any discriminatory behavior towards women within the judicial system in the region. Judges handle women's cases well and, in Kabul, women in need of legal aid are provided a lawyer to represent them, so there are no difficulties in this regard. –KI-F-NGO-2, Paghman

If women cannot afford a lawyer, one is provided to them free of charge by the legal aid bureaus or the CSOs active in the field of human rights (KI-F-NGO-3). As long as women manage to ask for help, which can be a challenge in some cases, then the chances are that the woman would get the help she asked for.

Violence Against Women

According to civil society organizations and family response units in Paghman, the extent of violence against women has remained unchanged over the last year(s), but the services provided to victims have improved (KI-F-NGO-1, KI-F-NGO-2, KI-F-FRU). Women are more aware of their rights, the police and family response units are more active and there is better registration of violence against women:

The number of registered cases of violence against women has increased and different reports on the issue also confirm that, but the reason for this increase in domestic violence is more awareness among women and women do not accept being treated unfairly and approach the responsible law units. Also, women's access to legal aid bureaus has increased. When women become victims they seek help and this has increased over the last years... – KI-F-NGO-2, Paghman

The assumption, among the civil society organizations, is that better registration and reporting account for the increase in number of cases and not the actual rise in violence against women. However, there is violence against women in Paghman and it differs in type:

Cases of violence against women consist primarily of physical abuse, forced and under-aged marriages and rape. The numbers do fluctuate monthly, but over the long run there is relative consistency in the extent to which women are subjected to violence and abuse. –KI-F-NGO-2, Paghman

Women and Current Affairs

Women of Paghman are supportive of signing the BSA but emphasize that its terms and conditions should be negotiated to serve the people of Afghanistan, through their government should have the final say:

If the agreement is signed but its contents not applied, then it will be just as useless as all our other laws and conventions. But if it is based on a concrete plan, and if there is an especially designed institution to report its implementation to the Government of Afghanistan, then it will lead to positive outcomes for the people of Afghanistan. –KI-F-NGO-2, Paghman

The main reason for supporting the signing of the BSA is the insecurity that has emerged since the departure of the foreign forces:

... [R]ight now, there is a lot of unemployment among men. The prices of primary goods have increased and people are facing economic hardship. The reason is the departure of foreign troops. Not signing the BSA will encourage the people to hold on to their capital or take it abroad instead of investing or spending it here.... – FGD-CE, Paghman

Parwan, Parwan Province

Date of Visit:
March 6, 2014

Transition Period:
May 2012

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

In the early months of 2014 reports of worsening general security and kidnappings by criminal elements have increased. ANP is reported to have started a campaign against the criminal gangs responsible but warns that the increase in criminality is a function of high levels of unemployment and idleness and political instability.¹¹ The deterioration in security since the transition is particularly serious in *Siahgard*, *Koh-e- Safi*, *Ghorband* and *Shinwari*(KI-F-BW-1). The provincial center remains stable, however. Most men in Parwan possess weapons. Women report to be taking extra caution such as not going out in late hours but they generally feel safe outside the home (KI-M-Med-1).

The departure of international forces has led to fewer resources for ANSF, encouraging corruption in some cases. The perception of ANP in Parwan has remained generally positive with a few exceptions (KI-F-BW-1). Women are satisfied with the workings of ANA:

The workings and accomplishments of the national army are commendable. They are respectful towards women. The police, however, are immersed in corruption. In the cities, though, they are respectful toward women. Those who drive in Rangers are not only disrespectful to women, but also a source of insecurity and danger for others in traffic. They drive extremely fast and dangerously. The police and the army are not able to ensure our security without any help from the foreigners because they lack essential material, equipment, and funds. Right now, they have not had their salaries for months. – KI-M-NGO-1, Parwan.

There are complaints of harassment and intimidation of women schoolgirls by some members of ANP:

Harassment by the police has increased. When girls are on their way to school, police cars stop in front of them and the occupant tells the girls that he is commander such and such and he would like to take them to the police station. How can we complain from others if the police behave in this manner? Also some time ago, there was a fight in front of my brother's shop. Instead of separating those fighting, the police ran away and left the scene, this is probably how they act on the battlefield. – FGD-HW, Parwan.

Mobility and Access to Public Life

Rural communities of Parwan are generally conservative and do not allow their female family members to work or go to school. For example:

If women choose to work for governmental organizations people would not have much problem with that. But if they work for foreigners and bring home Dollars, our people would be very upset, because according to Islam a woman is like gold and gold should be kept in safety. If a woman works for the government, then she should respect the traditions of Islam and hijab while working there. – FGD-CE, Parwan.

¹¹ From: Hasht-e Sobh, Kabul daily newspaper, May 15, 2014, available from: <http://8am.af/1393/03/04/worry-people-parwan-of-security-threats/>

This view is interpreted by some of the women as follows:

...Imagine a woman leaves her house and goes to work in an organization where not one other woman works. Naturally people will not accept this. These issues are more common in rural areas. Illiterate women in rural areas face a lot of difficulties. There are no work opportunities for them, there are no women's projects, there are no literacy courses and if there are any, women are not allowed to join... - FGD-WW, Parwan.

The departure of international security forces and a number of non-military entities has resulted in fewer jobs for women and created a number of serious social problems:

After the departure of the foreigners, organizations closed and the number of projects for women decreased. Also, when the international forces left Bagram, many became unemployed. Due to this unemployment, many young men and boys became addicted to narcotics.
-KI-F-Gov-3, Parwan

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to health services in the central areas of Parwan is a challenge for women living in rural areas and villages:

Daily we receive up to eighty female patients in our clinic. Their husbands always accompany those who approach us for gynecological services. Others either come with other women from their families or come alone. Men object to women going to clinics alone and ask where are these women and why are they going there alone? People have dark minds and are illiterate and these issues happen more often in villages and rural areas than in urban areas. – KI-F-Med-2, Parwan.

All clinics and hospitals in the provincial center have female doctors dedicated to female patients and there are no complaints about the timeliness of the service being provided by health facilities.

Going to school or working for schools puts some women and girls in risk:

I have been threatened a number of times (...) As I was on my way to visit other schools, they followed me with motorcycles and I thought I was going to get killed (...) later they told me that I should never dare to work again and that schools are not supposed to have female headmasters. Then I talked to the chief of security. The case was forwarded to the ministry of education and it turned out to be an extensive gang with members in Kabul. My husband, armed, would escort me to school and back home. After that, I received some more threats from other groups too. – KI-F-GHS-1, Parwan.

Cultural conservatism, combined with insufficient number of female teachers, often results in girls being deprived of education:

The only problem that we have with girls' education is the lack of female teachers. When girls reach seventh grade we have to forbid them from going to school because they start biology lessons where they debate and discuss about different parts of human body. Female teachers and not young men should teach these lessons to young girls. – FGD-CE, Parwan.

The transition has had a much larger impact on access to education in rural areas:

We do not have many problems in the central areas of the province. In the rural areas, however, there is fighting going on and this creates unrest and inconvenience among our students. There is insecurity in Ghorband and recently in Kunar where 21 members of the national security forces were murdered. This creates anxiety among our students and affects them negatively (...) In the last couple of days, there are rumors going around that more than twenty suicide bombers have entered the province. This creates a sense of horror and anxiety among our students and men and women. – KI-F-GHS-1, Parwan.

Access to Justice

There are complaints about corruption in the legal system:

Compared to previous years, women have more access to legal and judicial institutions, but the progression of a case, be it concerning a man or a woman, depends on money. The system is immersed in corruption. Sixty percent of the process of a legal case would not take place without bribing the officials. –KI-F-BW-1, Parwan.

Having powerful connections is also a main source of concern:

... In Afghanistan, there is corruption everywhere and Parwan is no different. If someone from the provincial council, or anyone with strong connections even commits murder, he will get away with it and walk freely. But someone with no connections can be jailed even if he is innocent. – KI-F-PW-1, Parwan.

Violence Against Women

The Family Response Unit in Parwan stated to have fourteen registered cases of violence against women over 2013. According to many interviewees, the transition in Parwan has led to more unemployment and poverty, which has caused more violence against women (KI-F-PW-1). What makes Parwan somewhat different from other provinces is that the interviewees tell stories of, not just abuse, but also torture:

A woman from our tribe was subjected to intense torture by her husband. She was not allowed to go to her parents' house and, while she was pregnant, every morning he would force her to take a bath in cold water. Until one day he shot her with his gun and she was taken to a hospital where her child was born and they both survived. There are too many armed men in this province, there are also many who are addicted to narcotics. These combined with unemployment and poverty lead to a lot of women being abused in this manner. – KI-F-VTC-1, Parwan.

In Parwan, women do not talk about violence inside their houses with others, not even with the doctors who treat their injuries:

We do not get patients who specifically define their injuries as being caused by domestic violence; the victims tend to keep those a secret. Some who are abused are not allowed to leave the house so they never reach us... – KI-F-Med-2, Parwan.

The secretive nature of domestic violence makes it hard to make any statements about the decline or rise in its extent, the general assumption is that it has increased over the years:

The extent of domestic violence against women has increased; especially physical abuse (and use of firearms) has increased. A woman was shot by her husband and put in the tandoor [an oven as a hole in the ground]. One day later her father found her dead there. Cases as such are reported to- and registered by- us. We do not know why they have increased and cannot ask because it is not our job to ask these questions. – KI-F-Med-2, Parwan.

Women and Current Affairs

Most women in Parwan claimed that they did not know enough about the BSA to comment. Those who knew about the BSA believed that its signing will improve the economy:

Women's access to work has decreased and projects are postponed until the signing of the BSA. Before the transition, a woman would work in an organization and earn up to four hundred dollars per month. But now, they do not have this job and the salary and everyone is worried and waiting for the signing of the BSA. – FGD-WW, Parwan.

Some women stated that increased economic activity, after the signing of the BSA will lead to more employment and decrease poverty, which is usually the main cause of domestic violence against women.

The reason for the high turnout by women to vote was their belief that those who represented them in the past did not pay attention to their needs. Despite the high hopes of electing more caring officials, there were also concerns about widespread ignorance about the election process:

... Those who are literate, which is about five to ten percent of the population, know that if a candidate does not have fifty plus one percent, the elections would go to a second round. For those who are illiterate, it is hard to understand this process and they do not know why they have to vote a second time.– KI-F-PW-1, Parwan

Most are also worried about charges of fraud in the election process (KI-F-PW-1).

Aybak, Samangan Province

Date of Visit:
February 2, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The security situation in Samangan has not changed since six months ago. Women travel freely throughout the province and visit different districts without fears for their safety (KI-F-GHS-1). People are satisfied ANSF. A major concern is the deteriorating economic situation (IND-BW-2).

The appreciation ANSF appears to be unanimous in Samangan. The national army and the police are considered capable of securing the province despite their lack of facilities and equipment:

If we look at the facilities they have, our security and police forces are doing a good job compared to those in other provinces. They are capable of ensuring the security completely. Our districts are all safe. Women are not threatened and feel safe. Sometimes we get some threats from some people because we are dealing with a case against them, but this is natural.
- KI-F-NGO-1, Aybak

Mobility and Access to Public Life

Many projects that provided jobs for women have ended since the transition. Women's mobility and access to work in Samangan are limited by social conservatism. Security is not a major issue for women who work outside the home (KI-F-PW-1).

Access to Services (Health and Education)

The transition has affected women's access to education, particularly older women's access to vocational trainings, due to a decrease in the number of projects.

In urban areas women go freely to clinics and hospitals, and mostly without a male companion (KI-F-GHS-1). In rural areas, distance to the clinics and a shortage of qualified medical staff are major inhibiting factors in access to health services (KI-F-Med-1).

Lack of investment in women-centered projects is of some concern:

I have ten students now. Six months ago, I had more students. We do not have the raw material that enabled us to function. Our projects were funded on six-monthly basis. Now that the last term is over, we are not being funded anymore. -KI-F-VTC-1, Aybak

Girls' schools report that their enrollment levels are rising and girls are not experiencing any difficulties in coming to school (KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2). One factor that persistently affects the quality of education in Samangan is lack of resources and facilities within the schools:

The difficulties that we face are the lack of a learning environment and especially study material. Students have to buy their books themselves and there is a lack of qualified teachers. Some teachers are also too often absent. – FGD-CE, Aybak

Access to Justice

Women are satisfied with their access to formal justice. They are also happy that there are female officers in ANP (FGD-WW). Civil society organizations provide lawyers and other forms of assistance to women who wish to take their cases to formal justice authorities. The transition has not affected women's access to justice in Samangan:

Women's access to police, courts of law and attorney's office is getting better. Judges and attorneys treat those who approach them well. In the last six months, the situation has gotten better. The improvement in the actions and dealing of the police is a direct result of their new training. – KI-F-NGO-3, Aybak

It is especially the presence of female police officers that has made justice accessible to women:

Female police officers are helpful to women who face difficulties. Also in prisons where women are held, female police officers are helpful to those detained. – FGD-CE, Aybak

When women go to the police, their cases are taken seriously. Sometimes the police together with family response units and the department women's affairs mediate between female complainants and their families. Failing mediation, assistance is provided to start criminal proceedings (KI-M-FRU).

Violence Against Women

According to the Family Response Unit in Samangan, the number of registered cases of violence against women went from eighteen in 2011 to twenty-one in 2012 and eighteen again by the end of 2013. According to a civil society organization in Aybak, the awareness projects such as workshops and TV -and radio- campaigns have helped decrease the number of under-aged and forced marriages which, in turn, has decreased the extent of abuse of women, but there is still room for improvement:

Most cases concern harassment of -and bad behavior towards- women by their families. Girls do not have a say in choosing their life partners and women do not have anything to say within their houses. If women request or demand anything from their husbands, they get answered with punches and kicks. There are physical and verbal but also economic violence that women are subjected to. All these are caused by lack of awareness on the women's as well as the men's part. – KI-F-NGO-1, Aybak

Women and Current Affairs

The general sentiment is in favour of the BSA being signed: "if the agreement is signed, there is a good chance that the economy and security improve. If not, the security situation could deteriorate" (KI-M-Med-1). Women are afraid of what might happen if the agreement is not signed:

If the agreement is not signed, some of the religious leaders might have more to say about restrictions on women of Afghanistan. Women will come under a lot of pressure in general and will end up staying in their homes. – KI-M-Med-2, Aybak

The number of women who turned out to vote was higher than expected:

A large number of women participated and voted. We did not expect so many of them to come and vote, since people feared suicide attacks. I went to a girls' school to vote and there were so many women that there was not enough space for the line to form. Most of the women voted, but the polling station ran out of ballots and the women were asked to go to other polling

stations. But, by the time people got to the next polling station, it was too late and the polling station closed. – KI-F-PW-1, Samangan

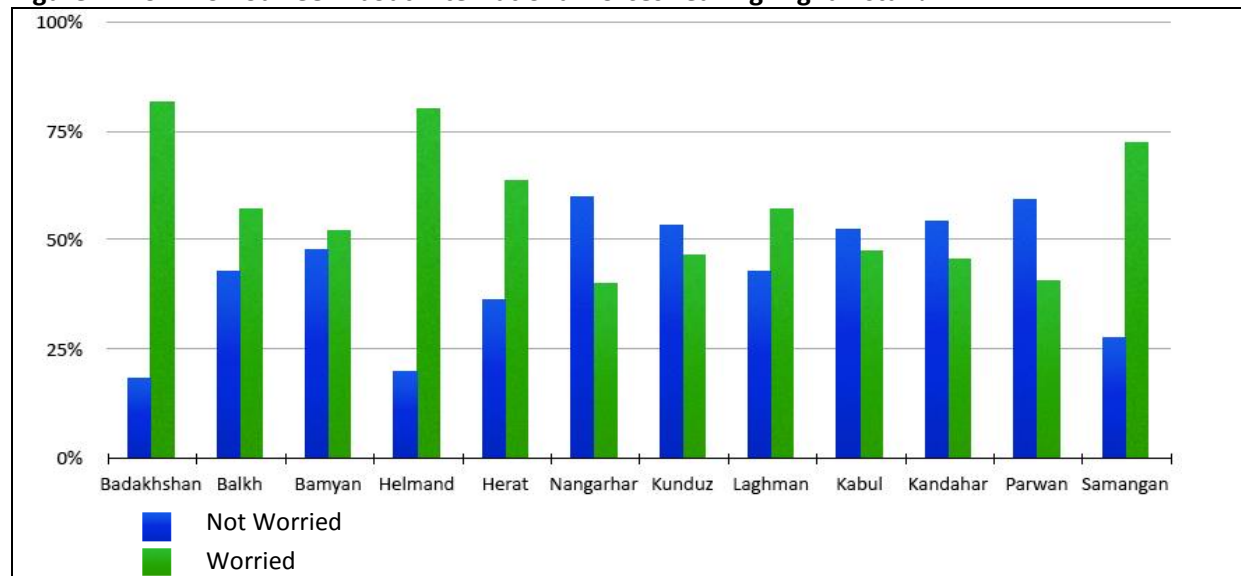
The large turnout is attributed to increased awareness among women and the understanding that their vote is decisive for their own future and the future of the country. Good security provisions on election day also encouraged the high turnout by men and women (KI-F-PW-1).

There are worries about fraud and vote rigging. According to a key informant people think that the followers of some candidates are armed and ready to start armed conflict if their candidate of choice is not elected.

5. Analysis of Aggregate Survey Data

There are general worries about international forces leaving Afghanistan. However, the worries appear to be more a function of future uncertainty and less because of a void of security. In the cases of Nangarhar, Kunduz, Kabul, Kandahar, and Parwan the number of those not worried actually exceeds those that are worried (Figure 7).

Figure 7: How Do You Feel About International Forces Leaving Afghanistan?

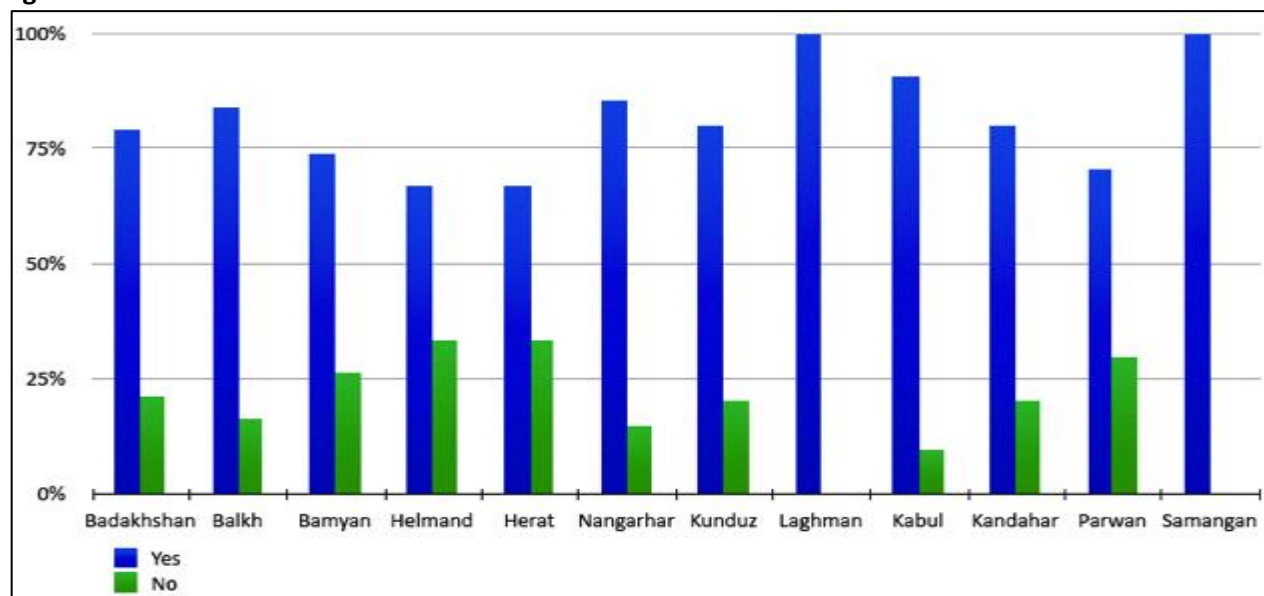


n =390

Despite worries about security in the post-transition period, the level of confidence in ANA and ANP to provide security is significantly high (Figure 8). Of note in Figure 2 are Laghman and Samangan that show full confidence in ANA and ANP while in other provinces such as Balkh, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Kabul, and Kandahar the levels of confidence are around 80 percent. The situation in Laghman warrants particularly close examination in the future rounds of monitoring since these most recent findings suggest a complete reversal of the critical conditions recorded for the first two rounds of monitoring.

There are concerns that ANP and ANA, despite their apparent intention to maintain security and order, do not have adequate facilities, equipment, or training to do so effectively. The survey results show, however, that the overwhelming majority of the women are happy that the foreign troops are leaving Afghanistan and that the responsibility is transferred to ANP and ANA.

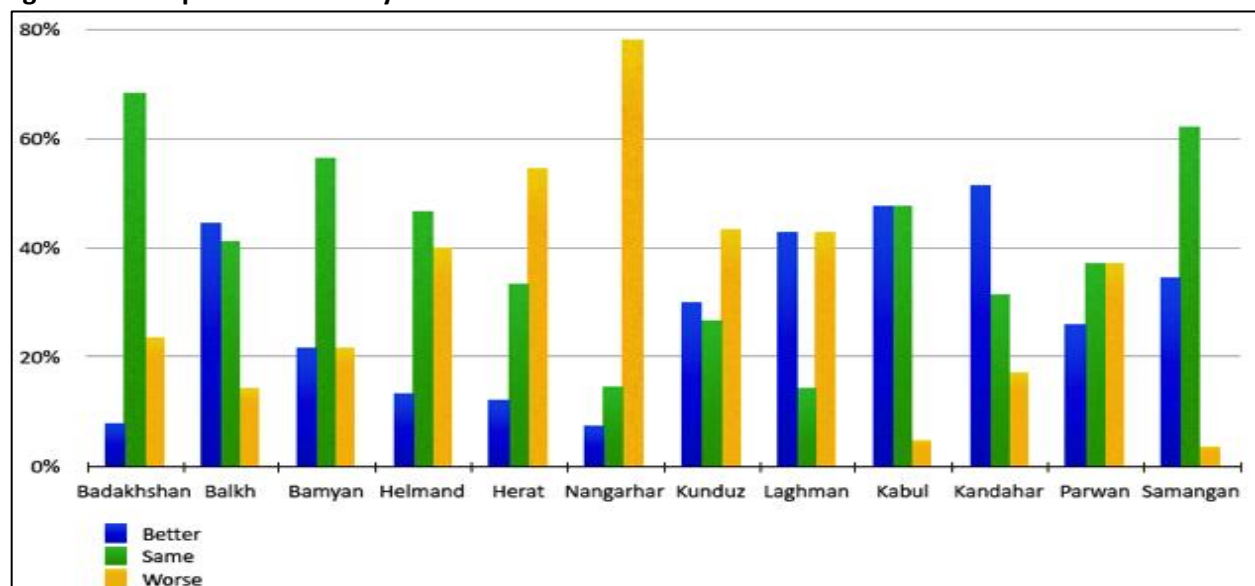
Figure 8: Can ANP and ANA Protect Women?



n =390

Perceptions of personal security in public spaces appear to have worsened in Herat, Nangarhar, Kunduz, and Laghman while reported as mostly unchanged in Badakhshan, Bamyan, Helmand, and Samangan (Figure 3). The only two provinces that report perceived improvements are Balkh and Kandahar. Also, in the cases of Balkh, Laghman, Kabul, and Kandahar a significant number of women perceived their personal security outside the home as better than before (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Perceptions of Security Outside the Home

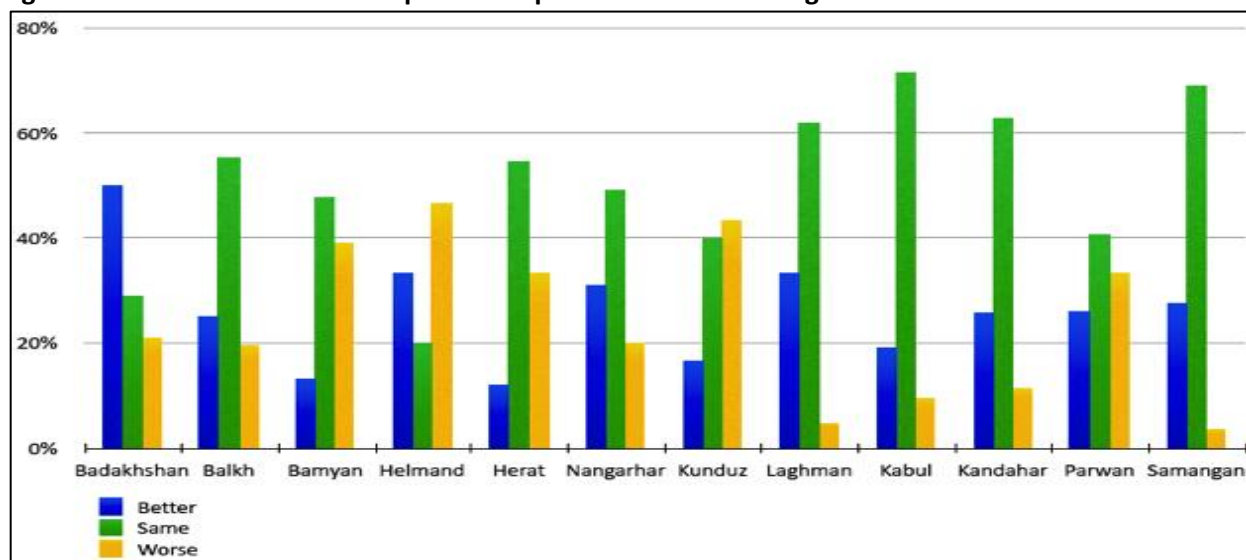


n =390

ANP and ANA are reported as being more effective than 6 months ago in deterring harassment risks toward women in public spaces (Figure 10). An additional aspect to be considered in terms of

harassment in public spaces is the role of the Arbaki who appear to play a mixed role across the provinces (Figure 11).

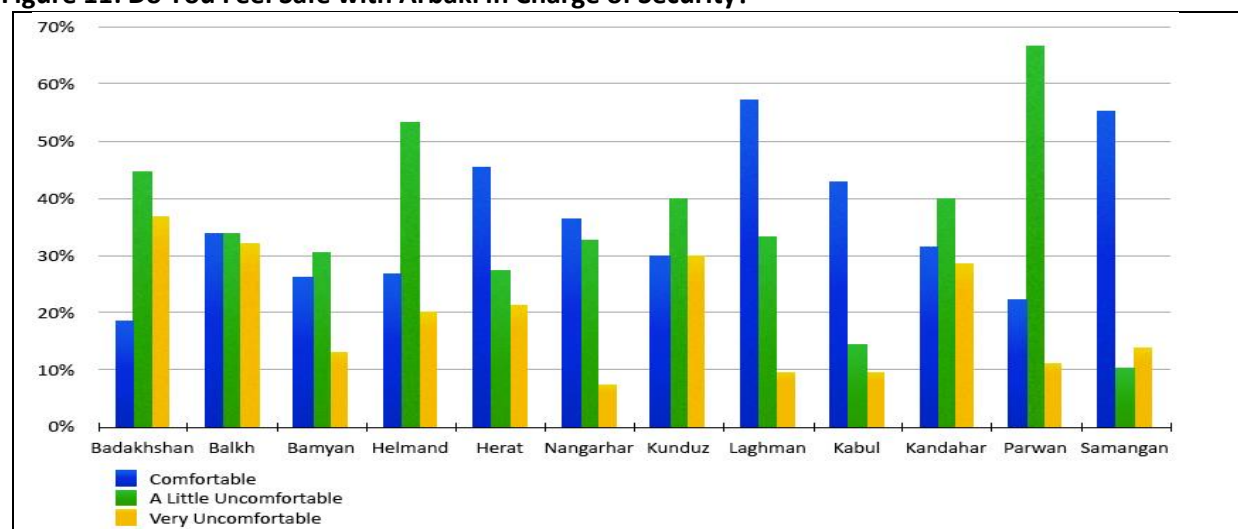
Figure 10: Harassment in Public Spaces Compared to Six Months Ago



n =390

In some provinces such as Kunduz the Arbaki is blamed as a source of harassment and discomfort for women. In contrast, the Arbaki in Laghman are reported as having played a significant role in establishing order in public spaces and deterring harassment toward women. It should be noted also that the general conditions in Laghman during the first and second cycles of monitoring had been reported as critical and deteriorating. It will be important to establish how the combined forces of ANA, ANP, and the Arbaki have managed to be successful in increasing security in Laghman but not in other provinces.

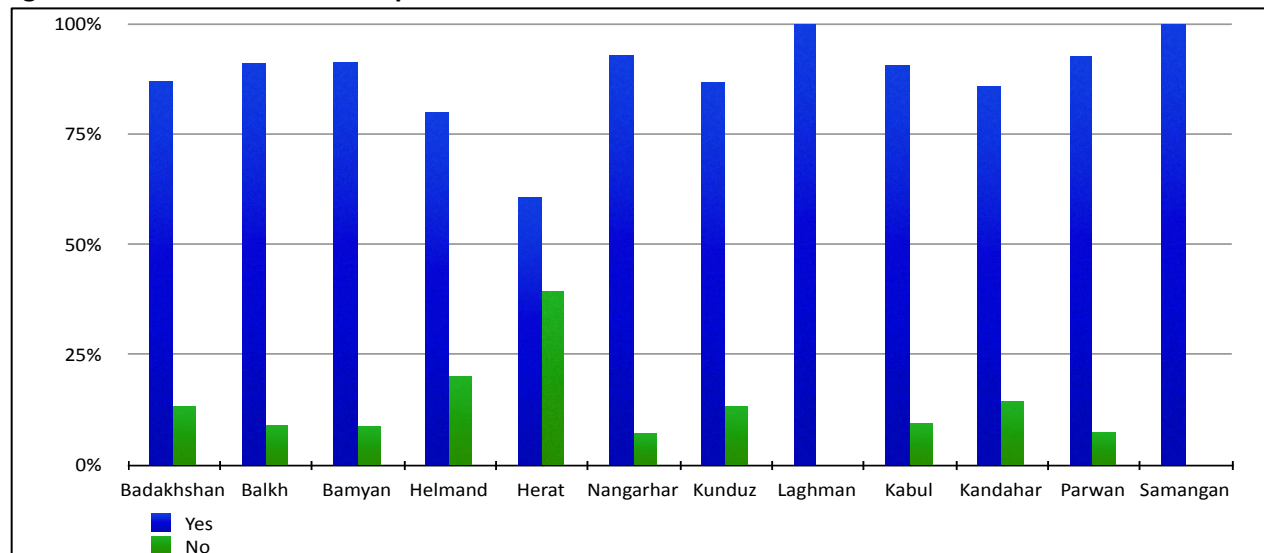
Figure 11: Do You Feel Safe with Arbaki in Charge of Security?



n =390

A very high number of women across the provinces report that ANA and ANP are respectful toward women (Figure 11). Of note in Figure 6 is the exception of Herat, where around 40 percent of the women report that ANA and ANP are not respectful toward women. The situation in Herat warrants closer examination in the next rounds of monitoring to establish the reason for this significant difference and whether or not the situation improves or worsens over time, and why. Badakhshan, Helmand, Kunduz, and Nangarhar also stand out as provinces where a significant number of the women report dissatisfaction with the respect they receive from ANA and ANP. Similar attention will need to be paid to these provinces in the future rounds of monitoring.

Figure 12: Are ANA and ANP Respectful Toward Women?



n =390

As Figures 13a and 13b show, the general perception is that with the departure of foreign troops there are fewer jobs for women and thus the number of women working outside the home has decreased. There are some notable exceptions, however.

Figure 13a: More or Fewer Women Working Outside the Home Compared to Six Months Ago

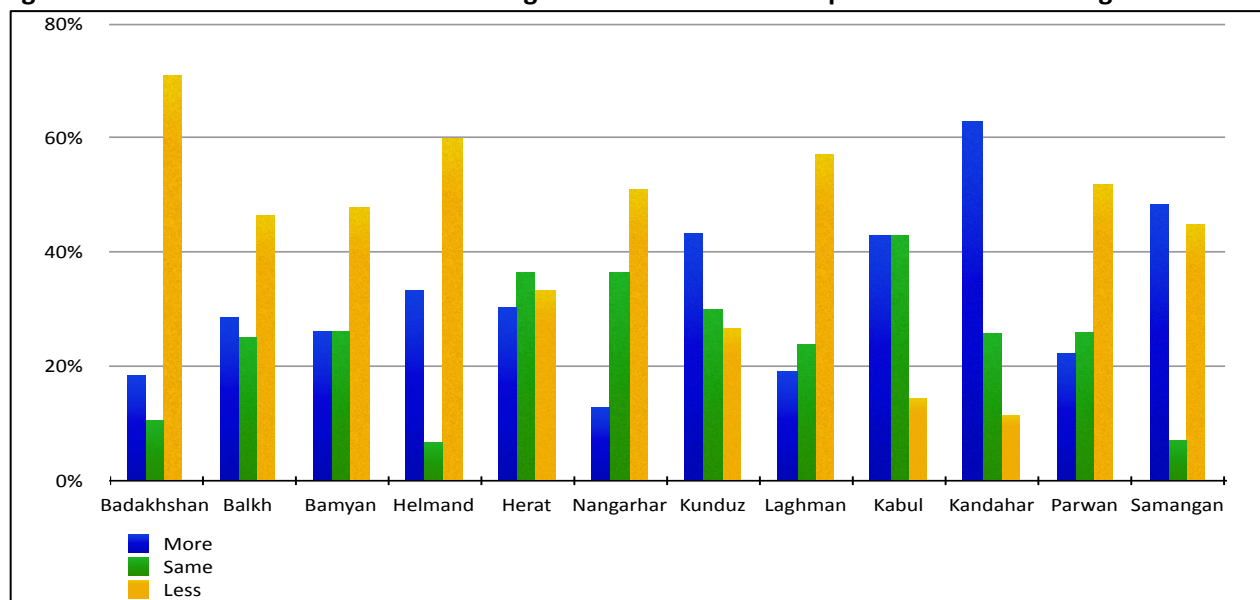
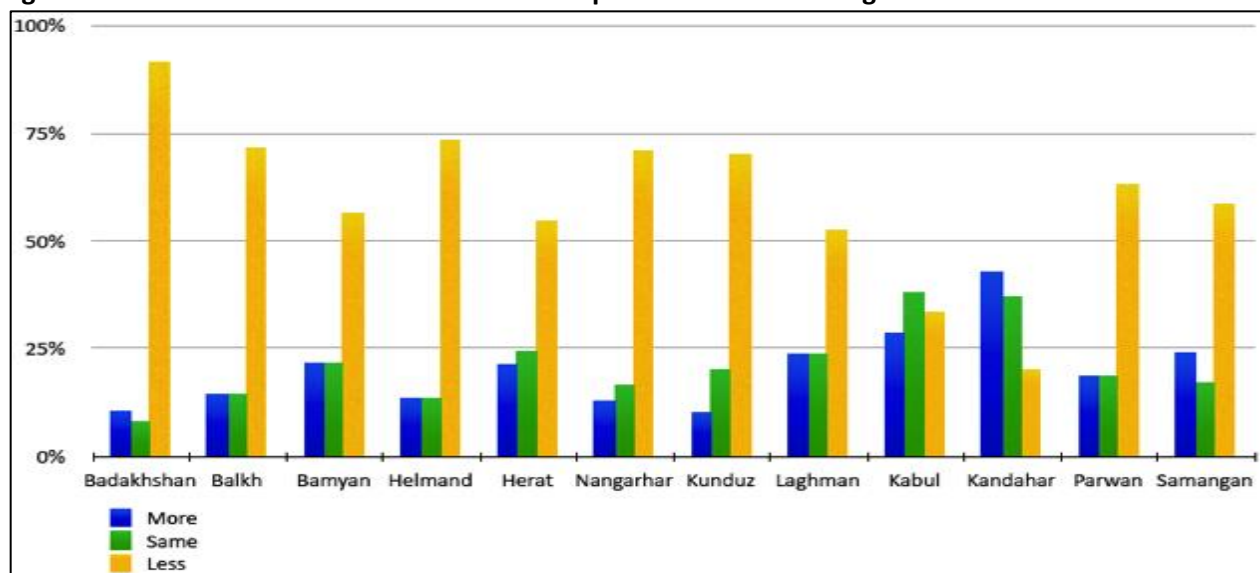


Figure 13b: More or Fewer Jobs for Women Compared to Six Months Ago



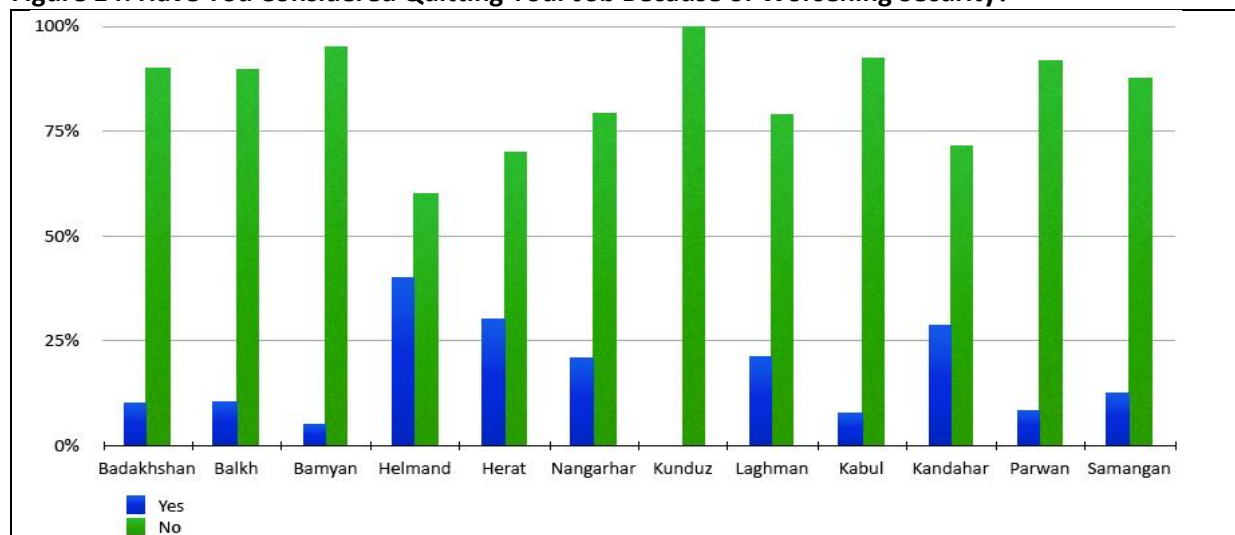
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In Badakhshan, Balkh, Helmand, Kunduz, Kandahar, and Samangan there are thought to be a higher number of women working outside home than before the transition (Figure 13a). Since Figure 13a is based only on the perceptions of the women surveyed, it will be important to establish in actual terms whether or not the number of women working outside home has increased and, if so, the reasons for the increases. However, regardless of the actual numbers of women working outside the home, it is significant that those surveyed perceive these numbers higher than before.

Despite reports of a general reduction in the number of jobs since the transition in many communities, the responses from the women surveyed in Kandahar show that 40 percent of the respondents felt that there were a higher number of jobs for women now compared to 6 months ago. This perception (Figure

13b) correlates positively with higher than before number of jobs for women in Kandahar (Figure 13a) and requires further examination for the next rounds of monitoring.

Figure 14: Have You Considered Quitting Your Job Because of Worsening Security?

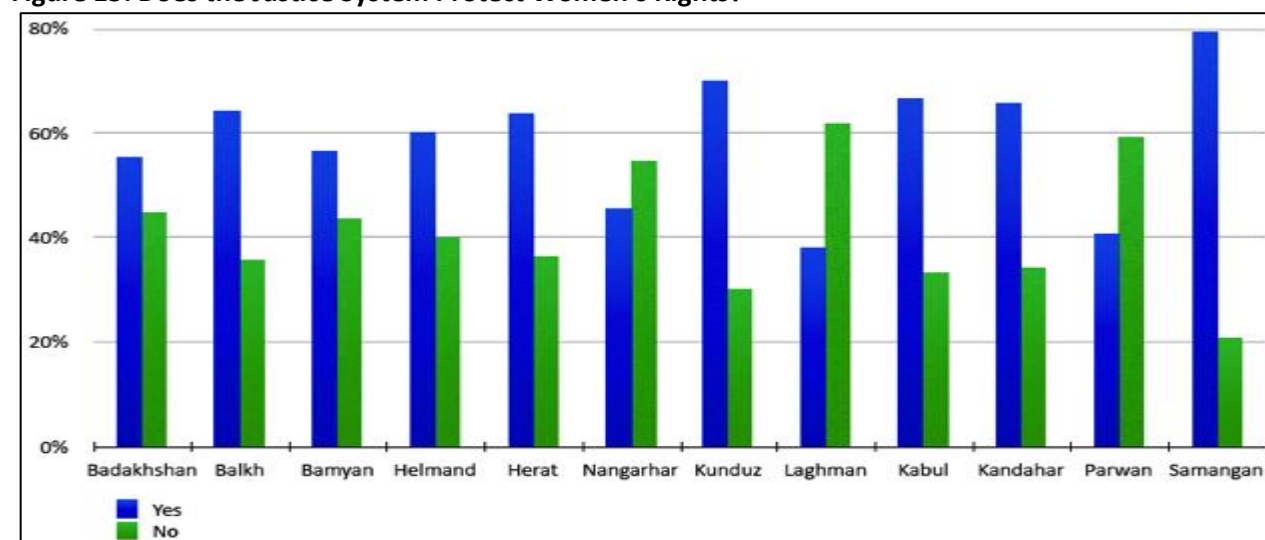


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It is also significant that the vast majority of those surveyed stated that they had not considered quitting their jobs on the account of worsening security conditions (Figure 14). This may be attributed to the fact that most working women are most likely the main income earners for their households and that there is a much higher level of confidence in ANSF by the women in maintaining order and security than generally thought.

In terms of access to justice there has not been a significant change in the perception of the women compared to the previous rounds of monitoring. The perception of the justice system is largely positive though there are some notable exceptions (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Does the Justice System Protect Women's Rights?

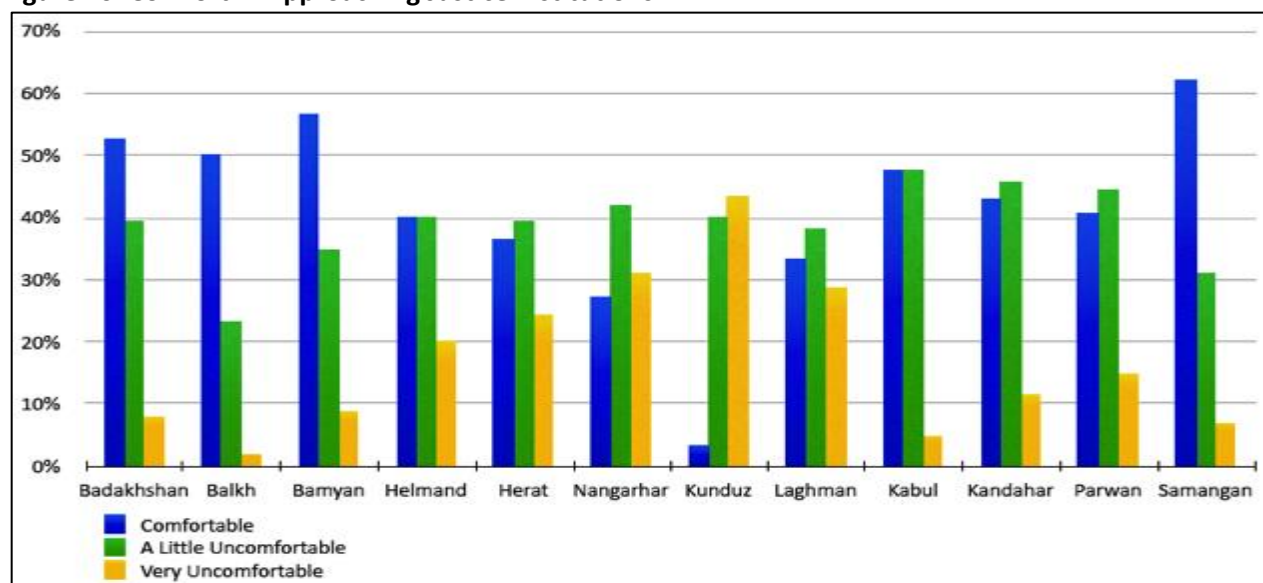


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In Nangarhar, Laghman, and Parwan significant numbers of those surveyed did not feel that the justice system provides adequate protection of their rights. In Laghman the percentage of women who do not think the justice system provides adequate legal protection is over 60 percent and stands in direct contrast to the level of confidence felt by the same respondents toward ANA, ANP and the Arbaki (Figures 7 – 13).

In Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, and Samangan over 50 percent of the respondents stated that they were comfortable with approaching judicial institutions (Figure 16) with less than 10 percent stating that they were uncomfortable. In Helmand, Herat, Nangarhar, Kunduz, and Laghman over 20 percent of the respondents stated that they were uncomfortable in approaching the justice system. These percentages are particularly high in Nangarhar, Kunduz, and Laghman (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Comfort in Approaching Justice Institutions

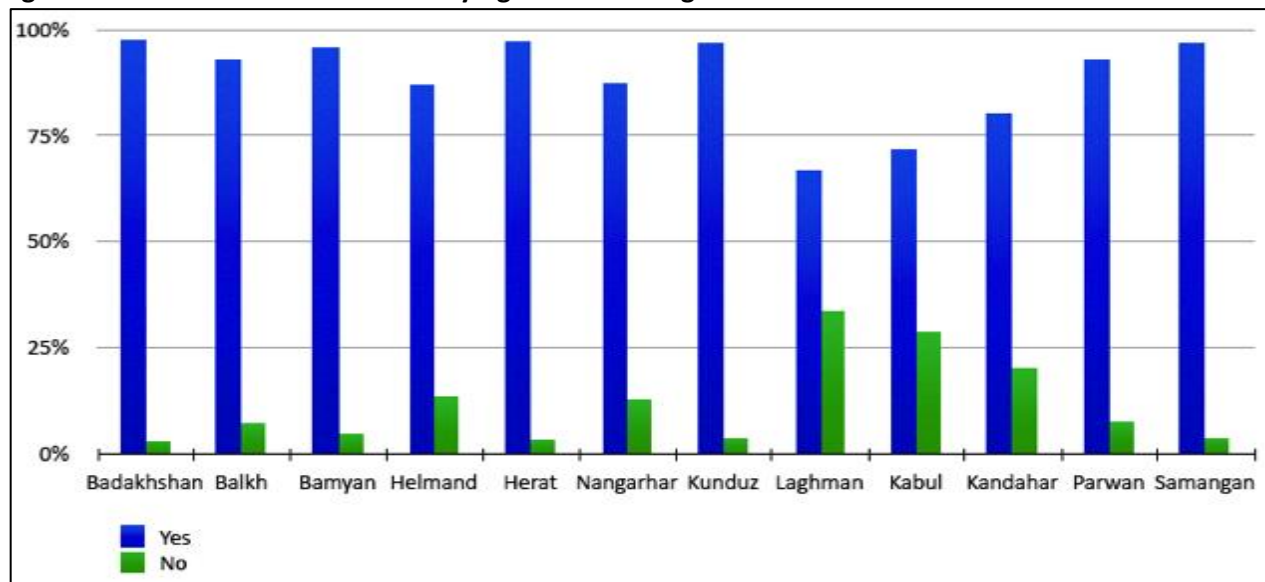


n =390

The signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement between Afghanistan and the United States is viewed by many of those surveyed as crucial to general security, stability, and economic prospects (Figure 17). The high level of support for the signing of the Agreement is based on two assumptions. First, the signing of the Agreement will ensure continued support for ANSF by international experts who will provide training and equipment and, second, the presence of international security advisors will have positive spillover effects in terms of development projects and jobs for women and men.

Also of note in Figure 17 are the higher than average number of women who oppose the signing. This is particularly pronounced in Nangarhar, Kabul, Laghman, and Kandahar. It is very likely that this level of opposition is the result of a general fatigue in some communities where the physical presence of international security forces has been particularly strong.

Figure 17: Should the Bilateral Security Agreement Be Signed?



n = 390

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The impacts of the security transition in Afghanistan have not been uniform for women across the 12 researched provinces during Cycle 3. In some areas, women indicated their security has worsened. In other places women said their security situation has improved since the security transition.

In areas where the Arbaki (ALP) is active, women complained about increased criminal activity and deteriorating security. In contrast, in areas where the security situation has improved, respondents reported increased willingness and ability by the Afghan National Security Forces and communities to cooperate.

Perspectives on ANSF differed nonetheless. In Kabul, ANSF personnel are considered as respectful towards and protective of women, whereas in Helmand ANSF were view as rude and disrespectful toward women. There were also concerns that ANSF did not have sufficient facilities and resources to fulfill its role adequately.

The main worry expressed by the women is the lack of economic opportunities for women, particularly since donor aid programming in all transitioned provinces has decreased significantly.

Regardless of the consequences of the security transition, the high turnout of women for the elections is a clear sign that Afghan women want to have a say in what will become of their country in the post-transition period.

This remainder of this section summarizes the key findings for each province, followed by a separate subsection of recommendations.

Badakhshan

Women feel safe and secure in public spaces in urban areas. Women working at governmental offices in urban areas do not face difficulties in commuting to work. ANSF is viewed positively, particularly in urban areas. Traveling to and from rural areas is of some concern, however, due to lack of adequate security. The districts of Jorm, Warduj, Baharak, and Keshm are deemed out of bounds for women while the role of the Arbaki is a source of concern.

The number of jobs for women has decreased since the transition. Healthcare service provision has been adversely affected particularly in such areas as vaccinations and emergency healthcare provision. Access to education for girls and women in urban areas remains the same as before the transition but rural areas face many challenges including a lack of security, lack of infrastructure, and more restrictive cultural norms on education for girls and women.

Many women claim that the workshops and seminars provided by the civil society organizations over the years have increased general awareness about women's rights and the importance of education for women. In urban areas religious leaders and community elders are supportive of education for women and girls.

Access to justice has not been affected by the transition. ANP appears to have become more responsive to women's legal needs, particularly in the urban areas. There is concern, however, about corruption by some officials in the formal justice system and the fact that women are less likely to be attended to due to their inability to pay bribes.

Balkh

There are major concerns about security in the post-transition period though this is not viewed as a direct result of the transition. People generally express their satisfaction with ANSF. In the areas where the Arbaki is active, there are complaints about their lack of professional conduct, accusations of criminal activity, and inappropriate behavior toward women.

There are fewer jobs and vocational training opportunities for women than before the transition. Community elders and religious leaders are more approving of women in the public sphere now compared to before the transition. In the rural areas security remains a major concern and many women do not leave their homes. This is especially the case in areas where the Arbaki has been deployed.

Access to health services has not changed since the transition in urban areas. There are reports of less access to health services in rural areas now compared to before the transition.

Access to school for girls, and attendance levels, remain unchanged. Women's access to justice continues to be limited while the formal judiciary system is viewed by many women in Balkh district as being corrupt. This negative view of the justice system is in direct contrast to the view in Dawlatabad, where women are very positive about the justices system. The funding for CSOs that provide legal assistance to women has been reduced since transition, adversely affecting women particularly in rural areas.

Bamyan

Women feel generally safe outside their homes, particularly in urban areas. A significant number of religious figures, particularly in urban centers, openly promote the rights of women. Districts bordering and roads to other provinces are generally considered as unsafe due mainly to indiscriminate criminal activity. ANSF are viewed as cooperative, protective and respectful. They also enjoy some degree of sympathy among the population because of their efforts to maintain order and security despite the lack of resources.

The transition has resulted in a reduction in the number of jobs for women. Also, vocational training programming has been reduced since the transition. Women's access to services is satisfactory but in need of expansion and improvements. Access to education has not been affected noticeably by the transition.

Access to justice and judicial institutions in Bamyan has remained the same as before the transition. ANSF is supportive of women in need of legal services though the justice system is said to be unresponsive to legal cases brought forth by women.

Helmand

Women's movement outside the home has been severely limited by the deteriorating security situation since the transition. Women feel threatened and unsafe outside their homes and thus minimize their presence in public.

Unemployment in general and for women in particular has increased since the transition. Women in economic hardship with drug-addicted husbands particularly suffer from increased domestic violence. There is general satisfaction with ANSF and the formal justice system. But there is also concern about lack facilities and resources for ANSF to fulfill its role adequately.

Decreases in funding for health and educational services, combined with widespread general poverty, have reduced access to health and education compared to 6 months ago.

Herat

Security in Herat has deteriorated in the last six months. The number of killings arising from personal conflicts is said to be increasing with repeated references to a general air of lawlessness descending in Herat and surrounding areas. Travelling to other districts and mobility in general is a challenge, particularly in rural districts. Women find ANSF unhelpful, unfriendly, and rude.

There are fewer jobs for women. Lower levels of funding combined with deteriorating security have resulted in many private and public entities leaving the province, reducing the number of employment opportunities for women.

Women's access to health and education services has remained relatively unchanged in Herat City but drastically reduced in rural districts. Similarly, access to justice is significantly less in rural areas. In both rural and urban districts, there are complaints by women that even when their complaints are heard in the formal justice system, they are not treated seriously and are often dismissed.

Nangarhar

Security has deteriorated steadily since the first monitoring report in early 2013. The main cause of this deterioration is the ability of AOGs to regroup in the more remote areas of the province. There is shared concern that AOGs may soon be able to overrun Jalalabad. In Surkhrod women are fearful of becoming victims of armed conflict instigated by criminals whose activities have significantly since the transition.

Women in Jalalabad have maintained their presence in public spheres. However, there are fewer job opportunities for women because the number of projects and programs for women has decreased since the transition. The situation for women in rural districts is much more severe than in Jalalabad. In both Jalalabad and Surkhrod ANSF are viewed as capable of maintaining security, especially if they are better equipped and trained.

There is reasonable access to health and educational services in Jalalabad but there has been a significant reduction in access to these services in rural areas. Similarly, in Surkhrod access to health and educational services has not been affected by the transition. The elders have been supportive of girls going to school and, in some instances, have even negotiated with the ultra-conservative AOGs to ensure girls' continued access to education.

Kandahar

The security situation has improved in Kandahar since the transition due to a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks by AOGs. Prominent women and men continue to be targeted by AOGs, however, and there have been a number of assassinations and kidnappings in the last few months.

Women are generally satisfied with ANP and feel comfortable when approaching a police officer. Others complain that some members of ANP harass and are disrespectful toward women. Mobility and access to work and public life are not considered as challenges by most women, particularly in urban areas. There are safety concerns by prominent women and women working for governmental organizations due to target killings and kidnappings by AOGs.

The transition has had a negative effect on women's access to health and education due to reduced funding. There is access to formal justice though this access is not widely utilized by women and there are allegations of corruption and a bias against women in the formal justice system.

Kunduz

The security situation has deteriorated significantly since the transition. Harassment and violence against women have increased since 6 months ago. There are concerns about criminal activities by some Arbaki members and a weak formal justice system. Many women have minimized their movements outside the home, or take precautions such as moving in groups or with male relatives. ANSF is said to be doing its best to maintain order and security despite the lack of resources and insufficient personnel.

The number of jobs for women has decreased and qualified women are refused jobs in favor of men. There are no complaints about the number of available clinics or schools. Access to and use of these services are, however, hampered by concerns about the safety and security of women in public spaces.

Laghman

Security has improved significantly compared to the previous monitoring cycles. Cases of violence against women have decreased and there is general satisfaction with ANSF. There are still threats against women by AOGs and fear by women of becoming victims of terrorist attacks, such as bombs, in public spaces.

Access to health and education in urban areas has improved and women and girls utilize these services freely, particularly in urban areas. Despite some persistent challenges in areas where AOGs are active, women of Laghman generally have access to justice and the legal and judicial institutions. Department of women's affairs is more active than it was six months ago and it works with women who wish to take their cases to formal justice authorities.

Kabul

The number of registered cases of domestic violence has increased, but this rise is partially due to better registration and more reporting, as women are more aware of their rights. Outside the home, older women state that they feel safe. Younger women are sometimes harassed on the streets, but this harassment has declined over time. ANSF's role is broadly appreciated, despite the general lack of facilities. ANSF personnel are considered as respectful towards and protective of women.

Women do not feel threatened when they are in public spaces. There are some concerns about the insufficient number of jobs for women and how women are marginalized in the job market, however. Services are accessed freely and without worries about harassment, mistreatment, or security. There are concerns about insufficiency and inadequacy of service, particularly in healthcare. There is access to justice and women wishing to utilize it have the support of ANP and women's rights organizations to do so.

Parwan

Outside their homes women feel safe and are able to move around freely, particularly in the provincial center. There are very few AOG attacks but there is a high rate of criminal activity. ANP is not respected by many women because of corruption and anti-social behavior including harassment of women and girls.

Despite the relatively high degree of cultural conservatism, women and girls have access to health and educational services. The situation is much more challenging in rural areas, however. Corruption is a major source of complaints about the formal justice system.

Samangan

The security situation not changed in the last 6 months. Women move freely outside the home and throughout the province but their mobility and access to work is affected by a high degree of social conservatism. ANSF is appreciated by the communities and is respectful to women. ANSF also works closely with legal authorities and the department of women's affairs to resolve legal complaints by women.

The departure of international security forces has resulted in fewer jobs being available to women. Access to health and educational services is good though geographical distance and rough terrain are major impediments to access for many rural communities. Access to justice is also good and there is close collaboration between the formal justice system, the police, and civil society organizations to attend to women's legal issues.

Recommendations

A number of the recommendations below are from the first and second monitoring report published in April and October 2013 as they remain unaddressed and/or relevant.

Government of Afghanistan:

1. **Commitment to UNSCR 1325 and other international protocols on women:** The Government must fulfill its commitment to women, peace, and security by adopting a comprehensive national action plan for implementing UNSCR 1325 in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan must also remain committed to the implementation of other international laws and protocols for women's empowerment such as CEDAW, ICCPR and CRC.
2. **Afghan Local Police (ALP):** Institutionalize community-based policing approaches involving women in ANSF to improve community-ANP relations and to increase gender sensitive approaches to policing, particularly by ANP. Select ALP commanders and officers in consultation with communities to minimize extortive behavior and intimidation by rogue elements. Incorporate ALP into Afghan National Police, with clear and specific oversight mechanisms, responsibilities and formal uniforms while on duty so that civilians can identify ALP as security personnel. Training for ALP on gender sensitivity and human rights based on national and international laws, and mentoring, need to be designed and conducted in close collaboration and coordination with women's rights organizations.
3. **Institutionalizing gender-based security provision:** Intensify government and donor-aided mentoring and exchange programs within ANSF, including the exchange of ANSF teams with relative success in handling women's rights issues, between provinces as a means for cross-fertilization based on best practices and utilizing lessons learned.
4. **Family Response Units (FRUs):** Provide adequate resources for Family Response Units including qualified and experienced personnel, dedicated spaces, equipment and furniture, daycare facilities, functioning recording and filing systems for cases of violence against women, and trainings for FRU personnel on how to take adequate care of female victims of violence.
5. **Access to justice and violence against women:** Provide adequate institutional and material support, with civil oversight, for women's shelters to increase women's access to justice and protection from violence. The justice system should be made more receptive to women's needs through raising awareness of and knowledge about women's rights among all justice system personnel.

6. **Women in Government:** Continue efforts and plans to increase the number of women in governmental entities such as ANSF, Supreme Court, Judiciary, Local government and foreign ambassadorial posts. These efforts should include increasing the number of qualified women in senior governmental positions, provision of mentoring programs for women and men in all ministries to ensure that there are functioning gender units at every ministry and adequate resources to support them, and creating a social and economic environment conducive to women's participation in government.
7. **Women in public life and economic development:** Maintain and expand employment opportunities for women, design and plan vocational training opportunities for skills development and women's economic empowerment purposes, address societal discrimination and harassment against women through creating mechanisms that encourage, and protect, women that report discrimination and harassment, and support access to and use of safe transport and protected working spaces for women.
8. **Women in community development:** Identify opportunities to involve women and civil society organizations in local governmental discussions and decision on community development issues, with the intent of keeping the gender aspects of development decisions in focus.

NATO and Member States:

9. **ISAF phase-out:** Develop benchmarks and special measures in consultation with women's organizations and women's rights activists to ensure women's security is not negatively affected during this period, particularly in rural Afghanistan. The benchmarks will need to be linked to the accountability mechanism within NATO's chain of command.
10. **Women in ANSF:** In the set-up of the Resolute Support Mission, specific attention needs to be paid to including human rights and women's rights training in the Police Academy and other training facilities of ANSF, increasing the number of women within ANSF, and engaging with communities for trust building purposes and generating support for women in ANSF as a crucial means of protecting women's rights.
11. **Community-based policing:** Support the institutionalization of community-based policing with a gender perspective within ANSF and test such initiatives as Female Engagement Teams, Mixed Engagement Teams (where possible), Mixed Civil / ANSF Cooperation Teams, and Cultural Support Teams.

12. **Gender capacities within NATO and member states:** NATO and member states should create and maintain a pool of international and Afghan gender experts with sufficient support, including budgets, and specific benchmarks to ensure full integration of a gender perspective in programming by NATO and its member states in Afghanistan.
13. **Structural consultation with CSOs:** A structural consultation mechanism with national and international civil society organizations needs to be formally established. The steps taken by NATO to engage CSOs in the development the “Review of the Practical Implications of UNSCR 1325 for the Conduct of NATO-led Operations and Missions” should become common practice in NATO and other international entities and agencies with mandates on Afghanistan to ensure ongoing input from CSOs.

International Donor Community:

14. **Development programming:** Existing level of financial commitment from the international community needs to be maintained and extended to ensure longer term commitment to Afghanistan beyond 2017. Development programs, especially in health, economic development, education, security, and justice need to be intensified in areas where international security forces are no longer present to ensure that the many gains made for women’s empowerment since 2001 are maintained and expanded.
15. **Synergy and Coordination:** Coordinate efforts to advance women’s rights and their participation in development, peace processes and discussions with the new elected President and the new government. This should include the provision of assistance to the new Afghan government and CSOs in devising ways in which the objectives of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework on women’s rights, the Afghan National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and other relevant policies on women’s rights are met through adequate technical capacity and financial support.
16. **Women in governance:** Support implementation of policies such as NAPWA to increase the number, the overall percentage, and the effective functioning of women in governmental entities including ANSF, while maintaining and expanding women-designated spaces within these entities and creating an enabling environment for women’s active participation and contribution.
17. **Aid transparency and public accountability mechanism:** Support the Government of Afghanistan in developing a publicly accessible National Aid Information Center while supporting

civil society, especially women's organizations, to provide civil oversight to ensure public accountability of the use of development aid funds.

18. **Financial and technical support to women-led and civil society organizations:** Technical and financial support should continue to be provided for women-centered organizations. Such initiatives should include community-based development monitoring systems, organized and run by women at the local community level and in collaboration with national and international civil society organizations.

Further Research:

19. **Gender relations and regional diversity:** Establish, through in-depth assessment, why Laghman and Kandahar have experienced relative improvements after the transition and after a long period of instability, why Samangan has remained unchanged after the transition, and whether there are lessons to be learned from these cases for critical provinces such as Kunduz. (This recommendation will be addressed through in-depth research, the findings from which will be presented as a companion case study for the Monitoring Women's Security in Transition – Cycle 4 report.)
20. **Benchmarking and baseline information:** Prior to any and all interventions on security and service provision in the transitioned provinces, government and international donor programming must be based on situation analyses and baseline assessments with a central focus on gender relations and how the proposed interventions affect, negatively and positively, pre-existing gender relations in the target communities.

Appendix 1: Interviewee and Focus Group Discussion Codes

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Badakhshan

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-M-NGO-3	Manager
2	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager for rights and protection of women
3	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager
4	KI-M-ANP	Manager of Criminal Department
5	KI-M-ANP-2	Manager of Human Right Department
6	KI-F-ANP-1	Employ of Human Right Department
7	KI-M-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
8	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
9	KI-F-PW-2	Member of Provincial Council
10	KI-F-PW-3	Member of Provincial Council
11	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
12	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
13	KI-F-VTC-4	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
14	KI-M-VTC-3	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
15	KI-F-VTC-2	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
17	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
18	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
19	KI-M-MED-5	Director of Health Clinic
20	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
21	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
22	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
23	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
24	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
25	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
26	KI-M-MED-4	Director of Health Clinic
27	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
28	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women
29	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
30	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Balkh

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-NGO-2	Representative of an NGO
2	KI-F-NGO-3	Representative of an NGO
3	KI-F-NGO-1	Representative of an NGO
4	KI-F-NGO-4	Representative of an NGO
5	KI-F-NGO-5	Representative of an NGO
6	KI-F-NGO-6	Representative of an NGO
7	KI-F-PW-1	Head of Solidarity Council
8	KI-F-PW-2	Head of Development Council
9	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher at a Vocational Training Center
10	KI-F-VTC-3	Teacher at a Vocational Training Center
11	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher at a Vocational Training Center
12	KI-F-BW-3	Business Woman
13	KI-F-Gov-2	Business Woman
14	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
15	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
16	KI-F-Gov-1	Business Woman
16	KI-M-ANP	Administrative Manager
17	KI-F-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
18	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
19	KI-M-FRU	Head of Family Response Unite
20	KI-F-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
21	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
22	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
23	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
24	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
25	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
26	IND-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
27	KI-F-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
28	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
29	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
30	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
31	KI-M-ANP	Manager of Criminal Department
32	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
33	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
34	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
35	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
36	KI-F-PW-2	Member of Provincial Council
37	KI-F-PW-3	Member of Provincial Council
38	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders (B)
39	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders (D)
40	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders (M)
41	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives (B-D)
42	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women (B-D)
43	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives (M)
44	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women (M)

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Bamyan

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager for rights and protection of women
2	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
3	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
4	KI-M-ANP	Director of Human Rights
5	KI-F-PW-3	Member of Provincial Council
6	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
7	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
8	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
9	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
10	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
11	KI-F-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
12	KI-F-PW-1	Deputy Director of DDA
13	KI-F-NGO-1	Representative of an NGO
14	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
15	KI-M-VTC-2	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
16	KI-F-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
17	KI-F-PW-2	Prominent Women
18	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
19	KI-F-BW-3	Business Woman
20	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
21	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
22	KI-F-VTC-3	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
23	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders
24	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
25	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Helmand

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager for rights and protection of women
2	KI-F-NGO-2	Representative of an NGO
3	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
4	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
5	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
6	KI-F-PW-3	Member of Provincial Council
7	KI-F-PW-2	Member of Provincial Council
8	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
9	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
10	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
11	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
12	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
13	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
14	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
15	KI-M-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
16	KI-F-ANP	Manager of Criminal Department
17	KI-M-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
18	KI-F-VTC-2	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
19	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
20	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
21	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders
22	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women
23	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Herat

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-PW-1	Prominent Women
2	KI-F-PW-2	Prominent Women
3	KI-F-PW-3	Prominent Women
4	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
5	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
6	KI-F-FRU-2	Director of Family Response Unite
7	KI-M-FRU-1	Manager of Family Response Unite
8	KI-F-ANP	Member of Directorate of Women
9	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
10	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
11	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
12	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager
13	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager for rights and protection of women
14	KI-F-NGO-3	Manager
15	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
16	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
17	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
18	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
19	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
20	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
21	KI-F-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
22	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher of VTC
23	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders
24	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
25	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women
26	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Nangarhar

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-PW-2	Member of Provincial Council
2	KI-F-PW-4	Member of Provincial Council
3	KI-F-PW-3	Member of Provincial Council
4	KI-F-PW-5	Member of Provincial Council
5	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
6	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
7	KI-F-BW-3	Business Woman
8	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager
9	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager for rights and protection of women
10	KI-F-NGO-4	Manager
11	KI-F-NGO-5	Manager
12	KI-F-NGO-6	Manager
13	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher of VTC
14	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
15	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
16	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
17	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
18	KI-F-FRU	Member of Family Response Unite
19	KI-M-ANP	Director of Family Response Unite
20	KI-F-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
21	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
22	KI-F-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
23	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
24	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
25	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
26	KI-F-PW-1	Prominent Women
27	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
28	KI-F-VTC-1	Manager
29	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher of VTC
30	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
31	KI-F-ANP	Head of Human Right Department
32	KI-M-FRU	Manager of Criminal Department
33	KI-F-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
34	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
35	KI-F-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
36	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women (S)
37	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives (S)
38	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders (S)
39	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women (J)
40	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives (J)
41	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders (J)

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Kandahar

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager
2	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager for rights and protection of women
3	KI-M-FRU	Manager of Criminal Department
4	KI-M-ANP	Manager of Human Right Department
5	KI-F-PW-1	Prominent Women
6	KI-F-PW-2	Prominent Women
7	KI-F-PW-3	Prominent Women
8	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
9	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
10	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
11	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher of VTC
12	KI-M-VTC-3	Teacher of VTC
13	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
14	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
15	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
17	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
18	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
19	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
20	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
21	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
22	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women
23	FGD-HW-1	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
24	FGD-HW-2	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
25	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Kunduz

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-ANP	Member of Human Right Department
2	KI-M-FRU	Manager of Criminal Department
3	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
4	KI-F-PW-2	Prominent Women
5	KI-F-PW-3	Prominent Women
6	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
7	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
8	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
9	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
10	KI-F-NGO-1	Trainer
11	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager
12	KI-F-NGO-3	Manager for rights and protection of women
13	KI-F-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
14	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
15	KI-F-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
16	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
17	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
18	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
19	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
20	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women
21	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
22	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Laghman

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-PW-1	Prominent Women
2	KI-F-PW-2	Prominent Women
3	KI-M-INGO-1	INGO Manager
4	KI-F-VTC-2	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
5	KI-M-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
6	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
7	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
8	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
9	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
10	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
11	KI-M-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
12	KI-F-ANP	Manager of Human Right
13	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
14	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
15	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
16	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women
17	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
18	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Paghman

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-ANP	Manager of Criminal Department
2	KI-F-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
3	KI-M-MED-4	Director of Health Clinic
4	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager
5	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager for rights and protection of women
6	KI-F-NGO-3	Manager
7	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
8	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
9	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
10	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
11	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
12	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
13	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders
14	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
15	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Parwan

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
2	KI-M-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
3	KI-M-PW-1	Director of Human Rights
4	KI-M-NGO-1	Manager
6	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
7	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
8	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
9	KI-F-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
10	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
11	KI-F-VTC-2	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
12	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
13	KI-F-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
14	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
15	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
16	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
17	KI-F-PW-2	Member of Provincial Council
18	KI-F-NGO-2	Representative of an NGO
19	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders
20	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women
21	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives

Key Informants and Focus Groups: Samangan

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-PW-1	Prominent Women
2	KI-F-PW-2	Prominent Women
3	KI-F-PW-3	Prominent Women
4	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager
5	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager
6	KI-F-NGO-3	Manager
7	KI-F-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
8	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher of VTC
9	KI-F-VTC-3	Teacher of VTC
10	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
11	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
12	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
13	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
14	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
15	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
16	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
17	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
18	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
19	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
20	KI-M-FRU	Manager of Family Response Unit
21	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders
22	FGD-HW	Focus Group Consisted of Housewives
23	FGD-WW	The Member of FGD was Working Women