

Afghanistan: Monitoring Women's Security in Transition

Cycle 4 – October 2014



موسسه مطالعات عامه
افغانستان



د افغانستان
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Acknowledgements

This is the fourth monitoring report following the baseline study: “Afghanistan: Monitoring Women’s Security in Transition”, published in May 2014. 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 monitoring report focuses on how the transition is affecting Afghan women using the proxy indicators 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 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 Sharif (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 AWN

The Afghan Women's Network (AWN) is a non-partisan, non-profit network of women that serves as an umbrella organization for 123 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 provinces of Afghanistan. Primary concerns for AWN are issues related to: gender-based violence, youth empowerment and girls' education. The Network also represents and promotes the views of Afghan women in political and social arenas through advocacy for legislative enforcement and reform for the protection of women's rights.

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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.

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
AOG	Armed Opposition Group
APPRO	Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization
AWN	Afghan Women's Network
BSA	Bilateral Security Agreement
CE	Community Elders
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
GHS	Girl High School
GOV	Government Employee
HC	Health Clinic
IEC	Independent Elections Commission
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IMF	International Military Forces
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KI	Key Informant
LIT	Literacy Training Center
Mol	Ministry of Interior Affairs
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PW	Prominent Women
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
VAW	Violence Against Women
VTC	Vocational Training Center
WIT	Monitoring Women's Security in Transition project
WW	Working Women

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Executive Summary

The year 2014 has also been marked as the year Afghanistan underwent its first democratic transition of national government, despite the long period of uncertainty following the two inconclusive rounds of presidential elections. The data for this monitoring report were collected from May 2014 to August 2014, coinciding with the period following the first round of presidential (and provincial council) elections and during the second round of presidential elections. The concerns about the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) not having been signed and worries about the looming presidential elections, reported in Cycle 3, continued during this fourth round of monitoring, and were compounded by the added uncertainty caused by the inconclusive outcome of the second round of presidential elections.

The debates around the outcome of the second round of presidential elections were peacefully concluded in mid-September 2014 and were followed by the immediate signing of BSA by the new Afghan government, ending a relatively long period of anxiety among Afghans and their international allies. However, the combined impact of the uncertainties about the security transition, presidential elections, and the signing of BSA, was strongly evident throughout the data collection period for this monitoring report based on data collected from May 2014 to August 2014. The implications for the conditions of Afghan women of the peaceful resolution of the dispute about the outcome of the presidential elections, the signing of BSA, and the completion of the security transition will be documented in the monitoring report for Cycle 5, due to be released toward the end of January 2015.

Since this monitoring process began in September 2012, the continuing loss of employment opportunities for women and men has been a major concern for all concerned. It is by now clear that numerous aid programs, operating under the perceived or actual security provided by the presence of international security forces, have ceased to operate largely due to the transition but also because of reduced aid funding from international donors. The departure of international security forces has resulted in the loss of the many auxiliary local businesses and services that emerged since 2001 and served the international security force bases throughout the country. Many of the thousands of women who worked for the international security forces, auxiliary businesses serving international security forces, or numerous humanitarian and other NGOs have lost their jobs due to the negative economic impact of the transition.

For many of the women engaged for the data collection during May-August 2014 the instability and uncertainty caused by the transition, the subsequent decline in the number of women-centered programs, and increased unemployment among women and men are among the key contextual factors for increased domestic violence against women. More than all previous cycles of monitoring, in Cycle 4 women attribute the increase in violence against women to poverty, increased unemployment, and drug addiction.

Access to education, health, and justice by women has been affected more by the uncertainty following the transition than by the transition itself. In fact, a number of provinces reported improvements in social and political arenas immediately after the transition. The added instability and uncertainty following the elections appear to have negatively affected even provinces such as Laghman, Nangarhar, and Samangan that had shown some improvements after the transition. Because of the continuing uncertainty and heightened criminal and AOG activity following the presidential elections, access to services, particularly for women, has been negatively affected in all provinces.

The widespread participation of women in the elections, especially during the first round in April 2014 was significant in many ways. At around 38%, the estimated percentage of female voters in the first round of 2014 presidential elections was lower than the first and second presidential elections in 2004 and 2009. But, in absolute terms the turnout by women to vote in the presidential elections of 2014 was the highest ever throughout Afghanistan's history. Even if this number is discounted for questionable or fraudulent votes, the number remains very significant.

Despite the irregularities and numerous allegations of fraud in the voting process, the overwhelming majority of the women and men voting in the 2014 presidential elections appear to have voted mainly to exercise their democratic right to vote, rather than choose a president. Having risked voting despite serious security threats, there followed much admiration for and pride about ANSF in having maintained order and safety of voters to cast their votes. However, the initial sense of enthusiasm about participation in the elections and increased trust in ANSF soon gave way to despair and disenchantment because of the inconclusive result from the first round of voting.

Regardless of the political rationale for the delayed outcome of the elections, and the dynamics of the negotiations between the disputing presidential candidates and Afghanistan's international allies, to many ordinary Afghan women and men the lack of a clear outcome from the elections meant that their brave effort to vote had been in vain. A strong theme that overshadows the findings in this report from Cycle 4 is the sense of demoralization, despair, and worry about the future, and the increased lawlessness that set in soon after the first round of presidential elections. With the dispute about the presidency having been resolved, and the upcoming District and Parliamentary elections scheduled for 2015, there is now increased urgency for efforts to protect the many gains made by and for women since 2001.

Recommendations

Many of the recommendations below are from the previous rounds of monitoring. They remain as recommendations for this report since, to date, they have not been addressed. Also, given the period of inactivity from April 2014 elections until September 2014 presidential inauguration, all these recommendations should be revisited in the context of a newly transitioned government in Afghanistan and the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Government of Afghanistan:

Government

1. Remain committed to implementing Afghanistan's Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, drafted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with cooperation from AWN and UN Women.
2. Set up a monitoring mechanism involving Afghan civil society organizations to monitor the implementation of UNSCR 1325 with regular reports to, and consultation with, the government.
3. Honor Afghanistan's ratification of, and commitment to, all international protocols on women's rights.

Afghan Local Police (ALP)

4. Continue efforts to institutionalize community-based policing by involving women in ANSF to improve community-ANP relations.

5. Sustain and increase gender sensitive approaches in ANSF by appointing qualified female personnel to senior positions including Gender Units in military and civilian sections of ANSF.
6. Train ALP, ANA and ANP in human and women's rights, from the lowest to the highest ranks.

Gender-based Security Provision

7. Intensify government and donor-aided mentoring and exchange programs within ANSF and between provinces as a means for cross-learning from best practices of gender-based security provision in Afghanistan.

Family Response Units (FRUs)

8. Increase resources for family response units, including experienced female personnel, adequate infrastructure for handling cases of violence against women, documenting violence cases, and accompanying abused women to hospitals and courts.

Access to Justice and Violence Against Women

9. Provide adequate institutional and financial support, with civil oversight, for currently existing women's shelters and increase the number of women's shelters throughout the country.
10. Facilitate pro-bono consultations by newly trained lawyers and law students for women subjected to violence.
11. Increase women's access to legal advice supporting newly trained lawyers to work in the more remote districts throughout the country.

Women in Government

12. Increase the number of women in decision making roles in the ANSF, formal justice system including the Supreme Court, and foreign services.
13. Mainstream, through empowerment, gender units and gender focal points at all ministries and provide adequate resources and additional training on gender issues involving male co-workers.
14. Enable, empower, and support the Ministry of Women's Affairs to play a leading role in institutionalizing gender-based policy making at all ministries, working closely with each ministry's gender unit and gender focal point.

Women in Public Life and Economic Development

15. Protect public spaces for women by maintaining and expanding vocational, skills development, and business development programs for women.
16. Ensure that programs and projects under PROMOTE, the USAID multi-year strategic funding stream to support Afghan women, pay sufficient attention to outputs and outcomes of their interventions and account to the government and civil society in an ongoing basis on how the interventions are meeting PROMOTE's objectives. As much as possible, PROMOTE programming should be linked to the objectives and priorities of the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA).

Women in Community Development

17. Support and expand the involvement of women's rights and other civil society organizations in local governance.

NATO / ISAF:

NATO / ISAF Draw Down

18. Fears of a complete withdrawal of the international security forces from Afghanistan, looming during Cycles 3 and 4 of this monitoring program, are mostly alleviated with the signing of BSA. However:
 - Benchmarks should be developed in consultation with women’s rights and civil society organizations to ensure women’s security is not negatively affected in the post-2014 transition period.
 - The benchmarks should be linked to pre-existing policies and commitments such as UNSCR 1325, Afghanistan’s National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, and NAPWA.

Women in ANSF

19. Integrate women’s rights and human rights contents in all training modules for ANSF and at the Police Academy.
20. Continue and intensify efforts to increase the number of women in ANSF and engage with communities to build trust and generate support for women in ANSF.
21. Institutionalize gender-sensitive community-based policing within ANSF through such initiatives as Female Engagement Teams, Mixed Engagement Teams where feasible, and Mixed Civilian/ANSF Engagement Teams in full cooperation Afghan cultural support teams.

Gender Capacity within NATO and Member States

22. Maintain the pool of experienced international and Afghan male and female gender experts with sufficient support, including budget and specific benchmarks, to ensure the full integration of a gender perspective in programming by NATO and member states in Afghanistan.

Structural Consultation with Civil Society Organizations

23. Continue and intensify engagement with national civil society and women’s rights organizations in the development of the “Review of the practical implications of UNSCR 1325 for the conduct of NATO-led operation and Mission”.

International Donors:

Development Programming

24. Maintain existing levels of funding on women-centered programming in Afghanistan as a means to strengthen the gains already made and to ensure longer term sustainability.
25. Incorporate monitoring and periodic evaluations of multi-year women-centered programming in such initiatives as USAID’s PROMOTE.
26. Continue women-centered economic development programming to provide employment and income generating opportunities for women as means for women to remain in public spaces.
27. Coordinate efforts to mainstream women and women’s rights in development programming, the peace process, and the inauguration and establishment of the new government in Afghanistan.

28. Continue efforts to work through the Tokyo Accountability Framework provisions on women's rights, Afghanistan's National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and other relevant policies on women's rights.

Aid Transparency and Public Accountability Mechanisms

29. Support the Government of Afghanistan in developing a publicly accessible National Aid Information Center.
30. Support civil society and women's rights organizations in assuming monitoring and oversight roles in the allocation and use of development funds in Afghanistan.

Financial and Technical Support for Women-led and Civil Society Organizations

31. Maintain the provision of financial and technical support for women's rights and women-centered organizations.
32. Support the creation of community-based monitoring mechanisms involving human and women's rights organizations and traditional, locally-based, community associations.

Further Research:

33. **Gender relations and regional diversity:** Establish, through in-depth assessment, why the outcome of the security transition in some provinces has been more positive than other provinces, why some provinces have experienced little or no change after the transition, and whether there are lessons to be learned from these cases for critical provinces such as Kunduz.
34. **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

Amid much concern about the consequences, a transition process was set in motion in 2011 to transfer the responsibility for national security in Afghanistan from international security forces to the Afghan national counterpart, Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF). By December 2014 the transition will be complete and ANSF will assume full charge for national security, with ongoing assistance from international military and security specialists beyond 2014.

The year 2014 has also been marked as the year Afghanistan underwent its first democratic transition of national government, despite the long period of uncertainty following the two inconclusive rounds of presidential elections. The data for this monitoring report were collected from May 2014 to August 2014, coinciding with the period following the first round of presidential (and provincial council) elections and during the second round of presidential elections. The concerns about the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) not having been signed and worries about the looming presidential elections, reported in Cycle 3, continued during this fourth round of monitoring, and were compounded by the added uncertainty caused by the inconclusive outcome of the second round of presidential elections.

The debates around the outcome of the second round of presidential elections were peacefully concluded in mid-September 2014 and were followed by the immediate signing of BSA by the new Afghan government, ending a relatively long period of anxiety among Afghans and their international allies. However, the combined impact of the uncertainties about the security transition, presidential elections, and the signing of BSA, was strongly evident throughout the data collection period for this monitoring report based on data collected from May 2014 to August 2014. The implications for the conditions of Afghan women of the peaceful resolution of the dispute about the outcome of the presidential elections, the signing of BSA, and the completion of the security transition will be documented in the monitoring report for Cycle 5, due to be released toward the end of January 2015.

Since this monitoring process began in September 2012, the continuing loss of employment opportunities for women and men has been a major concern for all concerned. It is by now clear that numerous aid programs, operating under the perceived or actual security provided by the presence of international security forces, have ceased to operate largely due to the transition but also because of reduced aid funding from international donors. The departure of international security forces has resulted in the loss of the many auxiliary local businesses and services that emerged since 2001 and served the international security force bases throughout the country. Many of the thousands of women who worked for the international security forces, auxiliary businesses serving international security forces, or numerous humanitarian and other NGOs have lost their jobs due to the negative economic impact of the transition.

This economic decline was compounded by the uncertainty of BSA not being signed and the setting in of widespread despair and uncertainty among Afghans about the future. A key economic impact of this uncertainty was a loss of confidence among national and international investors. As with Cycle 3, the findings from Cycle 4 in this report also point to how political uncertainty has been affecting economic activity and its negative impact on women around the country. Women in all but two provinces, Samangan and Laghman, complained of the rise in unemployment, ascribed to the inconclusive outcome of the presidential elections and BSA not being signed.

For many of the women engaged for the data collection during May-August 2014 the instability and uncertainty caused by the transition, the subsequent decline in the number of women-centered programs, and increased unemployment among women and men are among the key contextual factors for increased domestic violence against women. More than all previous cycles of monitoring, in Cycle 4 women attribute the increase in violence against women to poverty, increased unemployment, and drug addiction.

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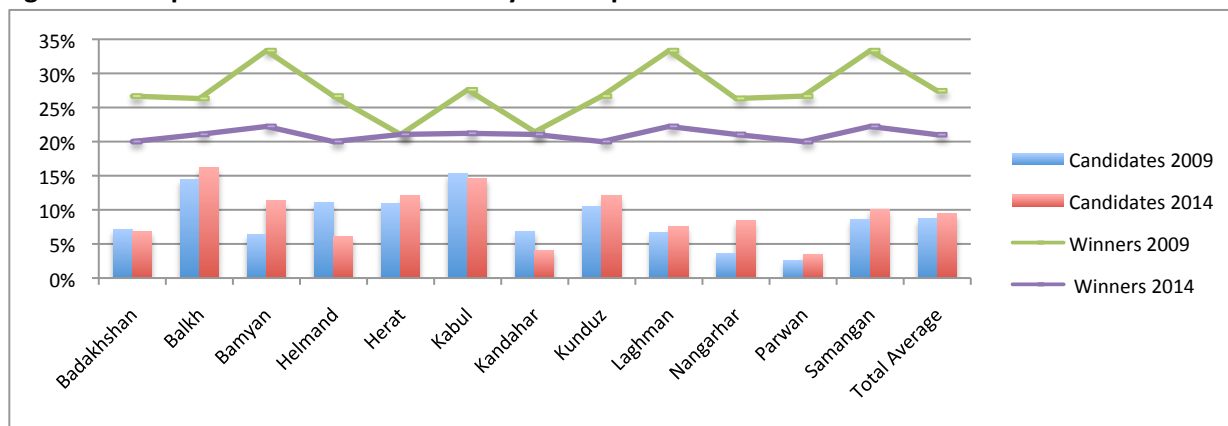
Regardless of the political rationale for the delayed outcome of the elections, and the dynamics of the negotiations between the disputing presidential candidates and Afghanistan's international allies, to many ordinary Afghan women and men the lack of a clear outcome from the elections meant that their brave effort to vote had been in vain. A strong theme that overshadows the findings in this report from Cycle 4 is the sense of demoralization, despair, and worry about the future, and the increased lawlessness that set in soon after the first round of presidential elections.

With the dispute about the presidency having been resolved, and the upcoming District and Parliamentary elections scheduled for 2015, there is now increased urgency for efforts to protect the many gains made by and for women since 2001.

In the remainder of this section, overviews are provided on women's participation in the electoral process, employment in governmental positions, access to and utilization of services in health, education, and formal justice, and violence against women. These overviews are intended to set the context for the findings reported in sections 3 and 4 of this report.

Electoral Process: During the 2014 Provincial Council Elections, in the 12 provinces monitored, there were a total of 1,603 candidates of whom 154 were female. This compares to 1,795 candidates in total in 2009 of whom 179 were female.¹ The percentage of female candidacy remains unchanged between 2009 and 2014 at around nine percent. The reduction in the female quota from 25 to 20 percent, however, has reduced the percentage of female provincial council representatives from 27 to 21 percent (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Comparison of Female Candidacy and Representation in Provincial Councils 2009 and 2014



Source: IEC

The initial draft of the new Elections Law proposed in 2013 lowered the female representation quota to zero. However, the efforts made by women’s rights advocates ensured that there was a 20 percent quota. The reduction of the quota for female representation in provincial council demonstrates the tenuousness of these relatively high numbers of females in different structures of government. A key recommendation regarding women’s rights in the electoral process is, therefore, to ensure that the quotas are protected and expanded with advocacy from women’s and civil society organizations and support from the new government.

Women in Government: Relative to many other countries, and despite the many challenges faced by Afghan women, Afghanistan has one of the highest percentages for the number of women in governmental positions, even compared to some western countries.² In 2012/2013 there were increases in the percentages of women working in governmental positions in Badakhshan, Balkh, Helmand, Herat, Kandahar, Kunduz, Parwan, and Samangan. However, this increase appears to have been temporary in almost all these provinces except Samangan and Parwan. By 2013/2014 all the other provinces showed a drop in the number of female government employees to the 2011/2012 levels (Figure 2).³ The average

¹ Pajhwak (2014), Biographies of the members of the previous provincial council can be found at: <http://www.elections.pajhwok.com/en/content/biographies-kunduz-provincial-council-members>. Retrieved on (10-27-2014)

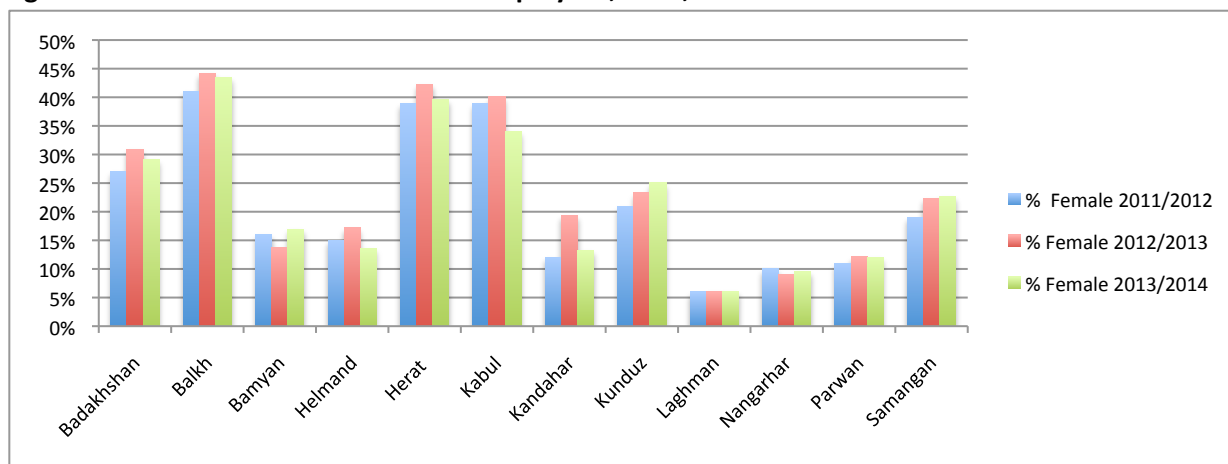
IEC (2014), The Independent Election Commission provides the names of the candidates along with the number of votes that they have won during the 2014 Provincial Council Elections at: http://results.iec.org.af/en/elections/get_preview_elected (10-27-2014)

² See the monitoring report for Cycle 3, available from: <http://appro.org.af/preview/women-in-transition-cycle-3-findings/>

³ CSO (2014). Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011-2012 (pages 17-18). Currently there are 70,634 female government officials working in these 12 provinces, constituting 22 percent of the total number of all government officials.

percentage of female employees in government has remained at around 22 percent, however, with a commitment by the Government of Afghanistan to reach 30 percent by 2018.⁴

Figure 2: Fulltime Female Government Employees, 2011, 2012 and 2013



Source: CSO Statistical Yearbooks, 2011, 2012 and 2013

No direct concerns were expressed during the Cycle 4 monitoring about loss of governmental jobs by women. There were, however, numerous references to loss of jobs with NGOs and in development projects for women due to less activity by humanitarian and aid organizations in the aftermath of the transition.

Access to Services (Health and Education): A recurring concern for women, particularly in more remote areas, has been reduced access to health services due to a general deterioration of security. While these concerns are also evident in Cycle 4 and are likely to remain, it is important to note that indicative aggregate trends, based on official data, suggest continuing improvements in the conditions of women in terms of health care (Figure 3). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) maternal mortality rates (MMR) and portion of deaths of women of reproductive age due to maternal causes (PM) have declined significantly since the peak year in 2000.⁵ From having the highest number of maternal mortality rate prior to 2000, at 1,100 deaths per 100,000 births, maternal mortality rate in 2013 stood at 400 per 100,000 births.

The percentage of female teachers and girls in schools has not changed significantly over the past four months.⁶ The traditional limiting factors such as marriage, traditional conservatism, and insecurity still persist in many provinces. However, the transition and its aftermath appear to have had a significant negative impact on access to education for girls for two related reasons. First, with perceived or actual deterioration in security conditions many families, and older girls themselves, are hesitant to risk traveling from home to school due to fears of harassment, sexual violence, and kidnapping. Second, the

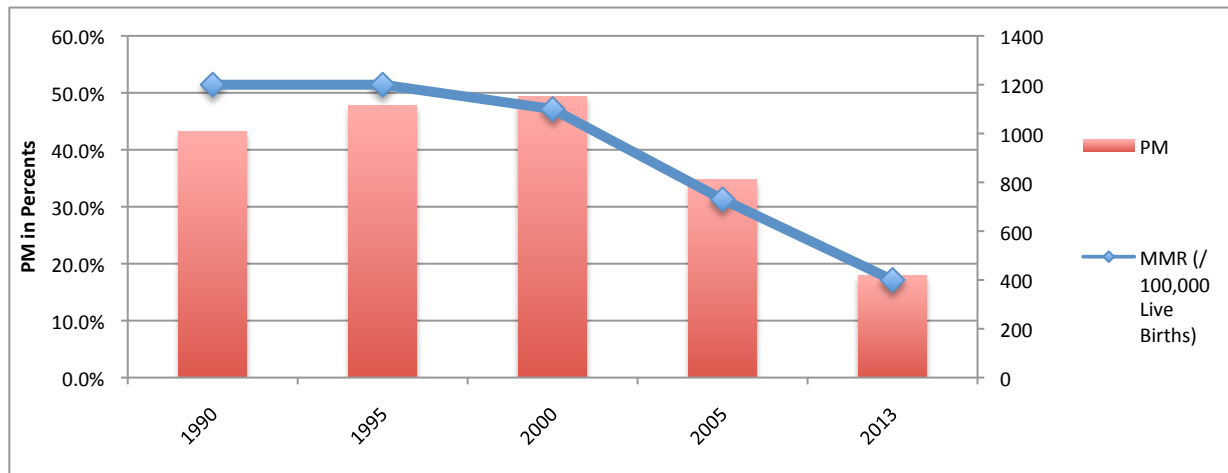
⁴ See: <http://mowa.gov.af/fa/page/6814>

⁵ WHO (2013), Maternal mortality in 1990-2013 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, The World Bank, and United Nations Population Division Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group Afghanistan. Available from: http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/afg.pdf?ua=1, accessed October 27, 2014.

⁶ CSO (2014). Afghanistan Statistical Yearbook 2011-2012 (pages 74-78). In the 12 provinces monitored there are around 46,000 female teachers and 641,000 female students, constituting 29 percent of all the teachers and 40 percent of all students, respectively.

departure of international security forces and the drawing down of numerous aid projects have resulted in fewer job opportunities for many families who may view the cost of sending girls to school as not the most effective way of using their limited financial resources.

Figure 3: MMR and PM Between 1990 and 2013 in Afghanistan



Source: WHO

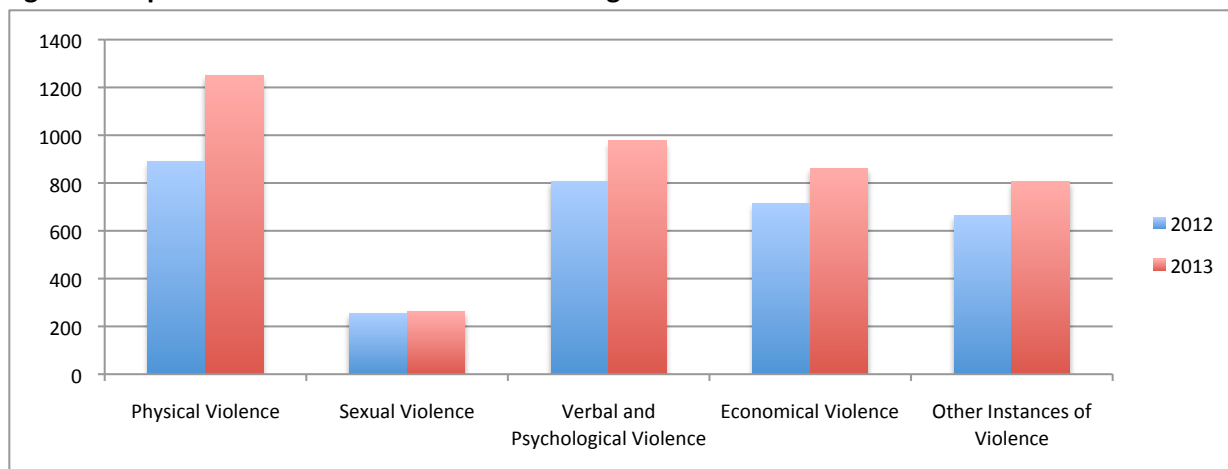
Even without the risks to girls attending school, there has been a persistent trend of dropping out of school for girls and boys since intensified programming in education started shortly after 2001. The dropout rates for students by grade 6 are estimated at just less than 70 percent. For girls the estimated percentage is over 80.⁷ While it is important to acknowledge the gains made in the education sector with significant increases in the numbers of schools, teachers, and students, emphasis in the post-2014 will need to be placed on retaining students, particularly girls, in the school system and the quality of the education being offered.

Violence Against Women: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) reports an increase in violence in 2013, compared to 2012 (Figure 4).⁸ This increase in the number of reported cases may in part be attributed to a higher degree of willingness and courage by the victims to report cases of violence. However, while the increase in the number of reported cases does not necessarily mean an increase in the total number of violence cases against women, the fact remains that the issue of violence against women has only recently entered the mainstream public discourse as a key policy and development programming challenge in Afghanistan.

⁷ See, for example, CARE International (2011), High Stakes: Girls’ Education in Afghanistan, available from: http://www.care-international.org/uploaddocument/news/publications/reports%20and%20issue%20briefs/english/afghanistan_joint%20report_girls%20education_240211.pdf

⁸ AIHRC (2012), Violence Against Women in Afghanistan: Biannual Report (Kabul: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission) and AIHRC (2013), Violence Against Women in Afghanistan: Biannual Report (Kabul: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission).

Figure 4: Reported Cases and Forms of Violence Against Women in 2012 and 2013



Source: AIHRC

Except for Bamyan, Herat, and Laghman, the women from the other nine provinces reported a deterioration of the overall security situation. Three sources of insecurity were identified during Cycle 4. First, there was heightened AOG activity including terrorist attacks and high profile killings particularly in Helmand, Kandahar, and Nangarhar. Second, there was heightened criminal activity including murders, thefts, and kidnappings particularly in Kabul and Parwan. Third, the protest demonstrations that followed the second round of presidential elections led to instability and unrest in some provinces such as Samangan, which had been the most stable province in all three previous rounds of monitoring. In Badakhshan, Balkh, and Kunduz women felt less secure compared to two years ago and expressed concerns about the high levels of criminal and AOG activity.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. The next section describes the objectives and methodology of this monitoring exercise. Section 3 presents the district-by-district situation based on the analysis of the qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions. Section 4 presents the findings from a quantitative survey of all the men and women who were engaged during the field visits. Section 5 concludes with recommendations.

2. Objectives and Methodology

This fourth 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).

Data and other information from secondary sources were used for the overview in the introduction to this report. Primary data were collected during May-August 2014 in 12 provinces (Appendix 1) through interviews with 202 women and 56 men, focus group discussions with 28 groups of women and 24

groups of men, and a survey of 625 individuals consisting of 471 women and 154 men. The sources for all the quotes and points made by the participants are coded and footnoted in the text. All the codes in the footnotes are described in full in Appendix 2.

3. Findings From Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Faizabad, Badakhshan Province

Date of Visit:
May 24, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2012

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The overall security situation in Badakhshan province has deteriorated compared to the previous cycles. Higher unemployment, poverty, drug addiction, and corruption are stated as the driving forces behind the rise in insecurity. There are also concerns about heightened criminal activity, higher levels of AOG presence in the districts, and the unhelpful attitude of local Afghan National Police personnel.

Crimes including assault, abduction, and homicide have risen in the last few months.⁹ For example,

...There are no AOGs in Faizabad but we have stabbings and shootings by criminals. These incidents cause the feeling of insecurity that people have. The offenders are rarely arrested. If they are jailed, it is only for a month to let people forget the incident ... There is theft, which is mainly done by drug addicts. The boys that commit murders and robberies in districts join AOGs to avoid being caught by the police. Unemployment and poverty cause young men to become criminals and consequently join AOGs.¹⁰

In February / March 2014 the districts of Jurm, Warduj, Baharak and Keshm were considered unsafe by the respondents. During the last round of data collection in August / September 2014, some of these same districts such as Jurm and Warduj and Yamagan are described as dangerous and unsafe for women to live in or travel to because of increased AOG presence and activity.¹¹

Women are divided in their perception of Afghan National Security Force (ANSF). Higher AOG activity in the districts has affected people's perception of ANSF in a negative way. Some view ANSF, particularly the police, as being insufficiently professional.¹² Others are satisfied with the police and feel that the presence of the Afghan National Police (ANP) in their communities provides for a sense of security and confidence in their daily lives.¹³

Women's perception of the Afghan Local Police (ALP), or the Arbaki, is overwhelmingly negative and detrimental to security. Of those interviewed only a few male interviewees found the presence of Arbaki helpful and necessary.¹⁴

⁹ FGD-WW, KI-F-VTC-1

¹⁰ KI-F-GOV-3

¹¹ KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-BW-2, KI-M-MED-1, KI-F-GOV-3

¹² KI-F-PW-2

¹³ FGD-HW, KI-F-BW-1, KI-M-MED-2, KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-NGO-3, KI-M-MED-2

¹⁴ FGD-CE, KI-M-MED-3

Access to Work and Public Life

Access to work and public life has deteriorated over the last four months. Employment opportunities are fewer than before due to a drop in development aid activity since the departure of the international security forces. Increased insecurity combined with fewer employment opportunities have resulted in fewer women having access to jobs and fewer women feeling safe outside the home. Some workingwomen complained about mistreatment or harassment at work.

Relative to the rural districts, the attitude toward women in public life and work is more positive in Faizabad:

Religious leaders play an active role in encouraging women to work and get an education. Even members of their own families are female teachers, headmasters, and their girls attend schools.¹⁵

Working in and travelling to other districts, particularly Jurm, Warduj and Yamagan has become increasingly difficult since February / March 2014. For example:

Our access to districts is more limited now than it was four months ago. We need to be aware of our constituencies' needs and concerns, they have voted for us. But unfortunately, because of the security difficulties, we cannot go and meet them personally and evaluate their concerns and problems. These problems have increased compared to four months ago.¹⁶

A general reduction in the total amount of development aid funding for Badakhshan and the uncertainty following the presidential elections have resulted in fewer jobs for women with I/NGOs and temporary unemployment for women who work for the organizations whose funds were frozen until the debates about the outcome of the presidential elections had been resolved. For example:

Last year, because we received more aid from WFP, we had five trainers working for us. This year, due to uncertainties cause by the elections, we receive fewer funds, so we have two teachers. To keep the sewing section of our centre alive, we offer our trainings for free. We neither have salaries, nor the required materials. Our headquarters have promised us new projects once the new president is installed.¹⁷

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Women's access to health and education is limited by insufficient numbers of health and education facilities. There are reports of restrictions on mobility due to insecurity. Some districts do not have sufficient numbers of clinics and schools or when there are schools and clinics, they are not adequately provisioned for and are overcrowded. For example:

Our patients need more than we can provide. We do not have a laboratory, all we have is some medication and that is it. When we get patients that need more attention, we send them to Faizabad.¹⁸

¹⁵ KI-F-MED-1

¹⁶ KI-F-PW-1, KI-F-NGO-2

¹⁷ KI-F-VTC-1

¹⁸ KI-M-MED-2

Being sent to health centers outside their own districts is logistically challenging for women. Having to travel outside the district requires having a male companion as a *mahram* and someone who can help with crossing the bad terrain or provide protection against insecurity:

... Women from remote districts always come with a mahram. They usually make the trip on a donkey and a sick woman cannot make such long trips alone ... Especially in winter women's access to clinics is very limited.¹⁹

Though there are complaints about social conservatism limiting girls' access to education in some districts, the decisive limiting factor is considered to be insecurity, particularly in more remote areas:

Women cannot leave their homes as easily as they did four months ago because of the worsening security situation, especially in the rural districts where parents do not want their girls to risk their safety by attending school. In Jurm district all girls' schools in villages have been closed [because] threat letters were distributed in the centre of the districts ...²⁰

Or

... In the central areas, most religious leaders do not have a negative opinion of women working or following an education. In the districts and rural areas, however, girls are not even allowed to attend schools. There are also not enough of female teachers...²¹

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice remains limited though unchanged compared to four months ago. In rural and remote areas women have less access to justice than in Faizabad. There are complaints about the way in which justice officials treat cases involving women.

In rural areas the lack of awareness among women and insufficient number of judicial institutions, combined with social conservatism limit women's access to justice:

Women do have access to justice in the city of Faizabad and neighboring districts. In remote areas of the province women are not aware of their rights and have no access to justice. We do have a Department of Women's Affairs in Faizabad, but the department does not have offices in many of the districts.²²

In Faizabad there are complaints about the formal justice system:

Judges and attorneys threaten women. They tell women to be ashamed of themselves for what they are doing to their families [by complaining]. Women that come to court [are thought of as having] no honor ... A woman I know was being severely abused by her husband. So bad that he would cut her face with razors. After years of abuse, she went to the court to get a divorce and the judge asked her for 50,000 Afghanis. She had no money, how could she? We all helped and manage to collect 40,000 Afghanis and begged the judge for justice. The judge ruled in her favor, but he did not allow her to collect any of her possessions from her husband's house...²³

¹⁹ KI-M-MED-3

²⁰ KI-F-GOV-3

²¹ FGD-WW

²² KI-F-PW-2

²³ KI-F-GOV-3

A strong link was made by some of the interviewees between access to formal justice and corruption:

The government is drenched in corruption, whenever it is purged of corruption, then people will have access to justice. The judges and attorneys have the highest salaries and still they are corrupt... I know cases where women have spent years in prison just because the judges refused to take woman's files out of their drawers and reach a verdict.²⁴

Violence Against Women

Compared to the previous monitoring cycle, no significant changes have occurred regarding the extent and types of violence against women. The main causes of violence against women are said to be forced marriages, generally high levels of unemployment and poverty, or a combination of all these factors. Women, more than men, suffer from psychological traumas such as extreme anxiety and depression.

The types of violence against women include physical, verbal, and psychological abuse of women by their husbands and other members of the man's family. For example:

We have cases of beatings, violence within the family [including by in-laws], and divorces. These three are most common types of violence against women. Escaping from home and rapes do occur, but luckily those are very rare in Badakhshan. We had one case of suicide in the province last month...²⁵

Lack of security, ongoing conflict, and domestic violence combined with poverty have led to reports of women suffering from psychological ailments. A higher number of women were reported to have suffered from mental disorders compared to the last round of monitoring.²⁶

Some men recognize and discuss violence against women.²⁷ Others trivialize or dismiss its extent and causes. For example:

There are cases of violence within families, but it is not something to be concerned about, these things happen in all families. In the last year we had one case of suicide in Jurm district, there are no cases of threats against women. ... There used to be more incidents of stabbings, but our commander is very serious about these cases and the offenders are punished harshly, which has led to a decrease in number of stabbings.²⁸

Or

Women watch TV and want to have the same lives as those women on TV. The Ministry of Information and Culture has no eye for the problems these cause for the people and do not censor these TV shows... There is violence by women against men. When women see [how women on TV treat men], they want to copy them, wear the same clothes, and have the same lives as the women on TV. The nature of domestic violence has changed over the last four years. Now there is violence against men...²⁹

²⁴ FGD-CE

²⁵ KI-F-FRU

²⁶ KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-MED-3

²⁷ KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2, KI-M-MED-3

²⁸ KI-M-ANP

²⁹ FGD-CE

Women and Current Affairs

Women's participation was high in the elections of 2014 and enjoyed support from their communities. There remain a number of challenges for women participating in current affairs. For example:

Women can be more effective than men in achieving peace because women are honest do not cut corrupt deals. [But], competent women [are not] selected for the job...³⁰

Though the number of female provincial council members has remained unchanged, at three out of fifteen, the number of female candidates increased in the provincial council elections in 2014:

... Years ago we had six to eight female candidates for the provincial council elections. This year, we had twelve to thirteen candidates. The reason for more active participation is that women have become more active and are more aware...³¹

And

More than forty four percent of women in Badakhshan voted during the last elections and we are leading the nation when it comes to gender equality. Compared to the past, we had more female candidates and we even have one female representative in the senate...³²

Some women complained that there were limited opportunities for them to participate in the peace process. For example:

I have participated in advisory assembly on peace in Kabul. ... I have been awarded a medal for my contribution. I applied to work for the Provincial Peace Council as a volunteer to contribute to peace. I was told that there are already two women on the council...and that they could not have additional female members...³³

³⁰ FGD-CE

³¹ KI-F-VTC-1

³² FGD-WW

³³ KI-F-VTC-3

Balkh, Balkh Province

Date of Visit:
July 12, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Overall security in Balkh has deteriorated compared to the previous monitoring cycle. There have been a higher number of terrorist attacks and more criminal activity. Women report that there is general satisfaction with the attitude of the police and ANSF. Views on ALP are divided, however. Some think ALP plays a positive role while others view ALP as the rank and file of powerful individuals being armed.

The main cause of insecurity in the province is said to have been the elections. Rivalries between supporters of different candidates have resulted in killings and hostility, while at the same time AOG activity has increased.³⁴ Because of the uncertainties and hostilities related to the elections some said that they started to relive the fears and traumas from the past:

Last week an explosion took place in the middle of the market. In the last four months, a number of explosions have occurred. We live in fear. We are worried until our children come back from school. ...Yesterday, I saw some tanks coming down the hill and I was very afraid that a war might break out. Had I been alone, then I would not have been that afraid but I had five of my grandchildren with me. Yesterday, in the afternoon, a man was murdered, no one knows who killed him and why. In the last four months killings and bloodshed have increased. The elections were inconclusive, the ruler is not known, and no one agrees on whom it should be. We are all uncertain and fearful of what might happen to our children.³⁵

Or

Security has worsened over the last four months. There is hostility and bloodshed, especially among the youth. ...Who supports which candidate has been the main source of killings among the youth. It is because of the elections and I am not only saying this, I also hear this on the news. There are also incidental mass brawls in the markets, which have led to many people getting wounded.³⁶

There are some who state that the security situation has not changed significantly compared to four months ago, however.³⁷

The interviewees are unanimous on their views about ANSF. All interviewees stated the national security forces were respectful and professional towards women. There were, in addition, positive views about ALP by some of the women.³⁸

³⁴ KI-F-GHS-2

³⁵ FGD-HW

³⁶ KI-F-VTC-1

³⁷ FGD-CE, KI-M-MED-1, FGD-HW, KI-FNGO-3, FGD-WW

³⁸ FGD-CE, KI-F-NGO-3, KI-F-PW-2

Access to Work Public Life

Employment opportunities for women have declined. There are no complaints of harassment outside the home. Opinions on what society thinks of workingwomen differ. Women who work with men are generally satisfied with the attitude of their male colleagues. Religious leaders are generally considered supportive of women in urban areas while in some rural districts there are complaints about traditional conservatism.

Some feel that the delay in resolving the dispute between the two presidential candidates and the bilateral security agreement not being signed in a timely manner were major causes of economic decline and loss of jobs:

Over the last four months, there has been practically no work and no new projects for people. The reason is the elections, because people do not invest. The fact that the bilateral security agreement has not been signed, causes uncertainty.³⁹

Or

There is a lot of unemployment, especially since the elections. People are waiting to see what happens to their country before they can invest. Many high school graduates are sitting unemployed at home. My son has a bachelor's degree in economics and he cannot find work either. ...There are no projects in NGOs and in governmental organizations, and if there are any, then the employers give those jobs to their friends and relatives.⁴⁰

All female and male interviewees described the attitude of men towards their female colleagues as respectful, helpful and professional. Religious leaders generally do not make negative comments about women working outside the home though this is more true of urban centers than rural districts.⁴¹

No cases of personal harassment were reported by the women and men interviewed. If there are cases of harassment, the community elders together with the police talk to the harassers and their families to ensure that harassments are stopped.⁴²

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Girls' access to education has remained the same compared to four months ago. Communities are generally supportive of women becoming educated. In many cases, particularly in urban centers, women are not required to have a mahram while visiting health centers.

Because of insufficient number of high schools for girls in rural areas, girls can only go to school up to the ninth grade.⁴³ More generally, the rate of dropouts increases for girls at higher grades for a variety of reasons:

The reason for girls dropping out of schools is marriage. In the city, for a married young girl to continue her education is very hard. But now there are some small improvements as people are

³⁹ FGD-CE

⁴⁰ KI-F-GOV-3

⁴¹ KI-F-NGO-3, KI-F-GHS-3, FGD-WW

⁴² FGD-CE, KI-M-ANP

⁴³ FGD-CE, KI-F-PW-1

insisting that their girls continue their education after marriage... there are also others who have to work instead of coming to school because they are very poor. Some are orphans and have to help their mothers feed the family. Others just live too far away to come to school.⁴⁴

Access to health clinics in rural areas during the winter months remains severely affected due to bad weather conditions and rough terrain:

Maternal fatalities are more common in winter because most roads are unpaved and they freeze. It is very hard for people to get to the hospitals on time.⁴⁵

The quality of healthcare provided is inadequate due to a severe lack of medicines, qualified health staff including doctors, and low or irregularly paid salaries:

There are clinics and hospitals, but in the last four months, they have had no medicines to give to their patients. The times that they do prescribe medication, they generally give tablets that have no potency. People complain about how badly some healthcare staff members treat women. They ask for money when a child is born. For example, there is one midwife who asks for one thousand Afghanis if a woman gives birth to a son.⁴⁶

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice has not changed over the last four months. There are many complaints about the quality of services for men and women. The behavior and the attitude of judicial institutions as well as the police are described as very bad, especially towards women seeking justice:

The court personnel, the judges, the police and the prosecutors [do not listen to women] ...and ignore them completely. If you put offer some money they do their work, otherwise they simply say: *'Get out of here, I do not know you'*. They make women suffer by prolonging their cases. ... A woman who is claiming her inheritance from a wealthy brother can never have a chance to win the case. Most women have no money and do not know powerful people to help them.⁴⁷

Because of mistreatment by the formal justice officials, and to avoid publicizing domestic issues, some women prefer resolving their issues through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms such as appealing to community elders.⁴⁸

Others state that women do not seek help from the police or the judiciary because their husbands get arrested and detained for a number of days and then freed, which often results in revenge being sought by the husband against the female complainant.⁴⁹

Violence Against Women

Violence against women has increased compared to the previous cycle. Though the types of violence against women in Balkh are similar to those in many other provinces in Afghanistan, in Balkh the added

⁴⁴ KI-F-GHS-2

⁴⁵ FGD-WW

⁴⁶ FGD-WW

⁴⁷ FGD-WW

⁴⁸ KI-F-GOV-3, FGD-M-LIT, FGD-WW, KI-F-NGO-1

⁴⁹ KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-GOV-3, FGD-M-LIT, FGD-WW, FGD-HW

factor is the unequal treatment of women by the judiciary which, in effect, protects the men committing the violence. According to one respondent,

The main type of violence during the last four months has been physical abuse. ... The main reason for the increase in violence against women has been increased poverty and lack of economic opportunities for men and women. Because young people cannot afford a wedding, they annul their engagements, or run away from home with the person they want to marry. ... Over the last four months we have had thirty cases violence against women that needed legal advice. Out of the thirty, eight were resolved in the court system and four were resolved through mediation.⁵⁰

Escaping from home is particularly dangerous for women. For example:

Some days ago, a girl had escaped her home and gone to the boy's house with whom she wanted to marry. Once the family members of the girl found out where she was. They went to the boy's house and took the boy's sister in retaliation. ... Now, the girl who escaped home will have to live with the shame of escaping and causing shame for the in-laws. The girl who was taken in retaliation will live her entire life in abuse and suffering...⁵¹

Suicide is common among women subjected to extreme violence. These can be women who escape home and are then subjected to torture by their own families, or women who are taken to settle feuds or disagreements.⁵²

The number of forced marriages has declined compared to four months ago. Some think that this decrease is due to raised awareness within communities and including community elders.⁵³

Women and Current Affairs

There is consensus among the women in Balkh that they should participate in peace process, on the condition that the participating women are qualified and capable.⁵⁴ There are also fears among the women about what peace with AOGs might mean for women's freedoms and rights.⁵⁵

Participation of women in Balkh, as elsewhere in Afghanistan, was lower in the second round compared to the first. One of the reasons for this decline was given as the Provincial Council elections, which were held at the same time as the first round of presidential elections. A second reason given was the general dissatisfaction with the lack of a clear outcome from the first round.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ KI-M-NGO-3

⁵¹ KI-F-PW-1

⁵² KI-M-MED-2, FGD-LIT, KI-F-GHS-3

⁵³ FGD-LIT, KI-F-NGO-1

⁵⁴ KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-NGO-3, KI-F-GHS-2, FGD-WW, KI-F-MED-1

⁵⁵ KI-F-GHS-1

⁵⁶ KI-F-NGO-1, FGD-CE, KI-F-MED-2, KI-F-GHS-3, FGD-WW

Dawlatabad, Balkh Province

Date of Visit:
August 12, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The security situation has deteriorated compared to the previous cycle. There is increased AOG activity and more crime. For example,

Explosions and mines are the main fears of our female students on their way to school. Two weeks ago an explosion occurred in the market close to our school. It was a remote controlled bomb placed on a motorcycle. Luckily for us, there were no fatal casualties, but the fear is there.⁵⁷

And,

Four months ago the security was relatively good. People could easily travel to other districts, also during the night. But now people cannot travel to the districts during the day, let alone during the night. People get robbed of their belongings, even their cars. Some time ago, the opposition groups attacked the city council. These all show that the security situation is worse than before and deteriorating.⁵⁸

The main cause of the insecurity is said to be the uncertainties and irregularities caused by the elections, which has distracted the security forces as well as the leadership of the province.⁵⁹

Views on ANP are divided, some state that they are satisfied with ANP while others express discontentment.⁶⁰ The views on Arbaki are overwhelmingly negative. All the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the Arbaki and found them a major source of unrest and insecurity, especially in eastern villages.⁶¹

Access to Work and Public Life

Compared to the previous cycle, the employment opportunities for women in Dawlatabad have declined. The security situation has not only limited the amount of funds and the number of projects, but also affected women's mobility and access to public life. There are fewer jobs for both men and women. The general opinion about women working outside the home is said to be slowly turning negative.⁶² However, women working as vocational trainers, teachers, or health employees are still accepted.⁶³

One of the main causes of the decrease in employment opportunities for men and women in the district is the deteriorating security:

⁵⁷ KI-F-GHS-1

⁵⁸ KI-M-MED-1

⁵⁹ FGD-CE, FGD-WW, FGD-LIT, KI-M-GHS-1

⁶⁰ KI-M-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2

⁶¹ KI-M-ANP, KI-M-MED-1, FGD-CE, FGD-LIT

⁶² KI-M-FRU

⁶³ KI-F-VTC-1, KI-F-GHS-1

In the past four months, we have fallen behind in our work because of insecurity. We could not implement our project plans. ...There are fewer projects and finding work has become much harder. Many women are unemployed because of this. University students or recent graduates are unemployed too.⁶⁴

All interviewees stated that travelling to and from districts or remote areas is practically impossible because of the lack of security.⁶⁵ The fact that people cannot travel to districts has led to a decline in projects and funds for more remote areas, causing unemployment and potentially leading to more insecurity.

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to health and education has not changed compared to the previous cycle. As before, the limited number of schools, security concerns, harassment of schoolgirls, and traditionalism are the impeding factors to girls' access to education. Access to health remains unchanged compared to the last cycle.

Different factors contribute to the limited access to education:

There are schools and some girls do have access to it. But in rural areas and remote villages there are no schools. Students in those villages do not travel to other areas to get an education because of the bad security situation. Another thing is that many girls have to leave school because of forced marriage. Though because of the awareness campaigns, the extent of forced and underage marriages have declined.⁶⁶

The quality of education remains poor:

A class is thirty-five minutes long. ... There are fifty students in one classroom. Those sitting at the back of the class do not hear the teacher's voice. The number of schools is very limited too.⁶⁷

There is insufficient number of schools for girls. There are also concerns about increased harassment of older schoolgirls.⁶⁸

Access to health for women has not changed compared to the previous cycle:

People have access to health centers. The mosques in the villages monitor issues such as the vaccination of young children. [Health centers] announce when and where women can vaccinate their children. Women do go to clinics and there are usually midwives and doctors that can help them and give them medication. The biggest problem ...is that [medical] personnel are underpaid and the payments are never done on time. If that is taken care of, then the health employees could provide much better services.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ KI-F-NGO-2

⁶⁵ FGD-CE, KI-M-FRU, KI-F-GOV-3

⁶⁶ KI-F-PW-1

⁶⁷ KI-F-BW-2

⁶⁸ KI-M-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2, FGD-CE

⁶⁹ KI-F-PW-1

The quality of health services, however, is said to have declined since the last round of monitoring in February / March 2014:

The health clinic has a gynecology department and a laboratory where they carry out blood tests. The attitude of doctors and nurses towards patients is good. But overall, people are not happy with the health centers. I am health worker myself and for the last six months, our share of medication has declined significantly. Some types of medication are not delivered at all. It is because [a private sector organization] has taken over the responsibility and their resources are very limited. The quality of health has worsened and not improved.⁷⁰

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice has not changed compared to the last round of monitoring. Lack of security, poverty, fear of retaliation, and societal conservatism are some of the factors that constrain women's access to justice:

Because of the bad security situation, women do not access legal or judicial organs. There are a number of places, such as legal organizations, the Provincial Council, Department of Women's Affairs and judicial organs, where they can seek help. But they do not seek help, because they are afraid. The security situation is very bad and anything can happen to them on the way. They are also afraid of retaliation... Also the fact that their cases take too long to be finalized deters them from seeking formal help.⁷¹

There continue to be complaints about the negative attitude of justice officials toward women's cases and corruption within the judiciary. As a result, women do not approach judiciary unless the crime committed is very serious.

The awareness trainings by legal organizations have helped some women not only to become more aware of their rights, but also of the judicial process:

Last year and the year before that, women would go to the police to seek help. Now, they usually go directly to the Women's Council and Human Rights Commission. Many of them even go directly to the courts or the prosecutor's office. They are more aware now and know that going to the police may cost them an extra seventy-two hours of waiting but that these organs can help them more adequately.⁷²

There are no complaints about the way the police and the Family Response Unit handle women's cases. But, there are many complaints about the way the judiciary and the prosecutor's office treat women and women's cases:

The behavior of the police towards women seeking justice is good. But the prosecutors and judges treat women very badly. They never cooperate with women and their attitude has worsened in the last four months. Because of that, many women do not turn to the judiciary. Instead they go to their community elders for help, who make decisions that serve the community and not necessarily the victim.⁷³

There are also complaints of corruption:

⁷⁰ KI-M-MED-1, FGD-WW, FGD-HW, FGD-WW

⁷¹ KI-F-PW-1

⁷² KI-F-FRU

⁷³ KI-M-ANP

Those who have problems can access the judiciary, but they usually do not do so because the judiciary is very corrupt and treat people badly.⁷⁴

Or,

We are absolutely not happy with the behavior of the judges. When a criminal pays five thousand Afghanis to the judges he is freed and the innocent who does not pay bribes is sent to jail.⁷⁵

And,

Judicial institutions, just like the past, only serve the interests of those who they know, those with money or those with powerful go-betweens. Now it is worse than in the past because of all the confusion caused by the elections. There is more corruption and more neglect... Because people are poor and cannot pay for their cases, their cases are left to pile up. When you don't pay them, they behave more aggressively and angrily. And yes, their attitude and behavior has worsened a lot over the last four months.⁷⁶

Community elders are seen by many as the main source of justice. However, the way they solve the disputes is unorthodox and does not always serve the victim.⁷⁷

Violence Against Women

Compared to the previous cycle violence against women has increased. The most common types of violence are physical and mental violence, suicides (self-immolation, suicide, hanging), murder, and forced and underage marriages.⁷⁸ The violence and abuse experienced by the women has led to more cases of mental and psychological disorders among women.⁷⁹ The main causes given for violence against women are lack of security, poverty, unemployment and drug addiction.⁸⁰

Apart from girls and young women fleeing unhappy (potential) marriages and exposing themselves to many risks, many women who are unhappy with their spouse also suffer from poverty and in some cases drug abuse by their husbands:

The number of drug addicts has increased significantly. Security organs are aware of the problem, but cannot do anything. Even children are addicted to narcotics. During the night the drug addicts beg for money and during the day, they get high on heroin... There are many cases of domestic violence [because of this].⁸¹

Inadequate access to justice for women makes it very easy for perpetrators of violence to get away with their crimes.⁸²

⁷⁴ FGD-CE

⁷⁵ FGD-HW

⁷⁶ KI-F-NGO-3

⁷⁷ KI-M-ANP, KI-F-FRU

⁷⁸ KI-M-FRU, KI-F-BW-2, KI-F-BW-1

⁷⁹ KI-F-NGO-1

⁸⁰ KI-F-PW-1

⁸¹ KI-F-PW-1

⁸² KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-PW-2, KI-F-GHS-1

Women and Current Affairs

Some women offer innovative ideas about how to get more involved in the peace process:

Women could go and visit the houses of AOGs and talk to their wives as friends and tell them about the importance of peace and convince them not to fight anymore.⁸³

The preoccupation and priority for some of the women is awareness about the importance of involvement in the peace process and learning how to convince others including through advocacy.⁸⁴ Others feel that peace with the AOGs might not be in women's best interest:

Women do fear the consequences of a potential peace with the Taliban. ... if the Constitution of this country is not accepted as legitimate, then peace will be of no use for women.⁸⁵

Or

Women that work outside the home fear that a peace deal with AOGs might lead to a change in their situation, because they risk losing their freedoms and the right to work. Women that do not work and stay at home are not worried about anything. They are not even aware of what is going on.⁸⁶

Women's active and passive participation in politics is described as extensive in the run-up, during and after the elections.⁸⁷ Some even suggest that women's participation during the elections was as high as fifty percent in their area.⁸⁸ The main driver for the extensive participation in the elections is said to be heightened awareness about the electoral process among men and women.⁸⁹

⁸³ KI-F-NGO-1

⁸⁴ KI-F-PW-1

⁸⁵ KI-F-PW-2

⁸⁶ FGD-CE

⁸⁷ KI-F-PW-1, KI-F-PW-2, KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-BW-2, FGD-CE, KI-F-NGO-1, KI-M-GHS-1

⁸⁸ KI-F-PW-1, FGD-HW, FGD-WW

⁸⁹ KI-F-PW-1

Bamyan, Bamyan Province

Date of Visit:
July 3, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The overall security situation in Bamyan has not changed in the last four months except for one explosion in Bamyan center during the elections:

The security situation in Bamyan has been good in the past and it still is good. In some districts, such as Sayghan and Kahmard, the security situation is not good. Especially close to Ghorband, the roads are very unsafe, but it is improving because the police are setting up checkpoints. I travel there regularly and see the improvements.⁹⁰

During the previous cycle, women complained about the bad security in Kahmard, Sayghan and Shibar districts and stated that the road between Kabul and Bamyan was not safe to travel and that the situation had not improved:

During and after the elections, the security situation deteriorated. Our trips to and from Kabul were filled with fear. We know that the security in Shibar and Waras and Sayghan is not good either. There are suicide attacks on the road to these districts and drivers as well as passengers take the journey in fear.⁹¹

All the interviewees said that ANP was helpful and respectful towards women.⁹² ALP is not active in Bamyan.

Access to Work and Public Life

The transition and the subsequent withdrawal of some project funds as well as the uncertainties caused by the elections are described as the main reasons for the decline in employment opportunities for women.⁹³ No cases of harassment are reported by the women:

Women in Bamyan feel comfortable in public. In Kabul, when a woman travels from one place to another, they get harassed, verbally or physically or sometimes, they are just looked at in a way that is harassing. But Bamyan is not like this. Men do not harass women.⁹⁴

Some women complained about the attitude of their male colleagues and stated that they were seen as not sufficiently competent by their male colleagues. There are also complaints about women not having the same privileges as their male colleagues'.⁹⁵ Religious leaders differ in their opinion about women working outside their houses. Some are against it, while many others state to support women working outside their houses:

⁹⁰ KI-M-MED-2

⁹¹ KI-F-GOV-1

⁹² KI-F-GOV-1, KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2, KI-M-MED-3, KI-F-VTC-1, KI-F-BW-2, FGD-HW

⁹³ FGD-LIT, KI-F-BW-3

⁹⁴ KI-M-MED-1

⁹⁵ KI-F-FRU, KI-F-GOV-1

Opinions of religious leaders differ. Some of them say that for women to work together with men is a sin. But many others say that women should at least enjoy the rights that are given to them by God, which means that both men and women have the right to work and get an education. A woman is allowed to talk and walk and doing that is not a sin. Most religious leaders are of the opinion that women should at least have the rights that are given to them by God.⁹⁶

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to health remains limited, particularly in rural areas, because of the long distances. There is insufficient number of female doctors in the center and rural districts:

So far, we do not have many problems. We have the medicines that we need and we have most of our personnel. The main challenge that we are facing right now is the lack of female doctors and midwives... Female patients that come from afar complain about the lack of transportation to and from the clinics. ... In the winter it is very hard for them to come and visit our clinic... We have had two cases of deaths this year and in both cases, the patients came from far districts and got to the hospital very late.⁹⁷

There are essentially no complaints about women or girls getting an education in Bamyan, despite the fact that many girls walk for up to two hours to get to school, and an even longer during the winter months.⁹⁸ The main factor limiting girls' access to education appears to be marriage, which usually results in not continuing education.⁹⁹

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice in Bamyan has not changed compared to the previous cycle and is still very limited. The judiciary is described as not helpful and in many cases corrupt. The police are described as generally helpful to women. The main factors that limit women's access to justice are a general lack of awareness about the right to use the judicial system, the long process of legal proceedings, and outcomes unfavorable to women:

Women say that if we go to the prosecutor's office, they will not follow our case. Women get physically abused, to the extent that they end up with broken multiple bones. If they seek help from courts, some judges force them to go and live with the abusive husbands. Women are told to either live with their husbands or get a divorce. If women have children, they can never get a divorce because they will lose their children.¹⁰⁰

Or

At the police station or the prosecutor's office, they behave the same way as they did in the past. They never accept anyone questioning them. ... Women are rarely listened to and the judges talk about laws and articles of the laws, which is hard to understand for a poor, illiterate woman seeking justice. This places the women in a weak position and makes it impossible for them to defend themselves.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ KI-F-GOV-1

⁹⁷ KI-M-MED-1

⁹⁸ KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-GHS-3

⁹⁹ KI-F-BW-1

¹⁰⁰ KI-F-GOV-1

¹⁰¹ KI-F-BW-1

Societal conservatism also limits women's access to justice:

In Afghanistan people condemn a woman who has a legal complaint even before the trial begins. And the fact that they seek help from legal and judicial institutions only makes it worse because she then brings shame to herself, her family and her husband's family.¹⁰²

Violence Against Women

Violence against women in Bamyan has not changed compared to the previous cycle. Almost all violence involving women is of a domestic nature. The most common types of violence against women are cases of physical abuse and forced marriages, which in turn lead to other types of hardship such as escaping from home and the subsequent stigmatization. No cases of underage marriages were reported.

Physical abuse is mentioned as the most common type of violence against women.¹⁰³ Forced marriages are stated as one of the main causes of different types violence against women.¹⁰⁴

It is not only forced marriages that are leading to girls escaping homes. The high and unrealistic financial demands that the girls' families make to the groom's family (*toyana*), make it almost impossible for some young couples to get married and not incur large debts or other obligations. Some choose to escape from their homes and get married elsewhere or, if trapped in traditional obligations, even commit suicide.¹⁰⁵

Women and Current Affairs

Despite worries about the potentially negative consequences of peace, people are generally optimistic about women's contribution to the peace process. There are complaints that women are not adequately represented in the formal peace process.

There is a sense of fear among the women of Bamyan that if peace with AOGs is made, many of the gains made since 2001 will be lost:

Women are concerned about the consequences of peace. They are worried that they might have to deal with a more conservative and authoritarian government.¹⁰⁶

Or

Women want peace, but they are afraid that they might be forbidden to work or get an education again. They fear that they might be forced to stay at home...¹⁰⁷

Despite these fears, people do believe that women can contribute to the peace process if given the opportunity:

Women can play a more effective and better role than men in the peace process. They are mothers and wives and could convince their sons and husbands to pursue peaceful means and

¹⁰² KI-F-NGO-2

¹⁰³ KI-F-NGO-1, KI-F-NGO-2, KI-F-GOV-1, KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-VTC-1

¹⁰⁴ KI-M-MED-2

¹⁰⁵ KI-F-NGO-2, KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2

¹⁰⁶ KI-F-VTC-2

¹⁰⁷ KI-F-NGO-2

not wage wars. Women should be given an opportunity to participate in the formal peace process. This will increase AOGs' sensitivity towards women and in the long run AOGs will have to engage with women.¹⁰⁸

All interviewees enthusiastically described the widespread participation of women in the first round of elections. Even in unsafe districts, women went and voted. It was reported that in Sayghan district some women cleaned the ink off their fingernails with acid for fear of being targeted by AOGs.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ KI-F-NGO-1

¹⁰⁹ FGD-WW

Lashkargah, Helmand Province

Date of Visit:
August 9, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2012

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The overall security in Helmand has deteriorated compared to the previous cycle. The main reason for the deterioration is the heightened AOG activity. Travelling to districts is much more limited than in the past:

The security situation has deteriorated because there are a number of AOGs operating in the province. Some are local, some are foreign. The Helmand border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is very porous and anyone can come and go.¹¹⁰

Or

Those working for the government or NGOs get threatened first to stop working and if they continue they are targeted to be killed. I have witnessed many men in our village getting killed. Prominent people and community elders get killed regularly.¹¹¹

The heightened AOG activity has made travelling to districts practically impossible for those working for the government and NGOs, this is especially hard for prominent individuals:

I was on my way to Grishk district, unknown individuals, presumably Taliban, stopped our car and asked my name and where we were going. I was suspicious so I gave them the wrong name. They said that they were looking for a prominent woman who was on her way there. I told them that she must be driving right behind us and should get here soon, so they let me go. Luckily, they did not know it was me they were looking for. I went to the district, asked the government for help, but they could not help me, so I asked my family and network to get me out of the province. In the past, I could visit these districts. Now it is impossible.¹¹²

Women in Helmand are generally satisfied with ANSF and consider them cooperative and helpful.¹¹³ The positive view of ANP is attributed to the new wave of police officers who are better trained and educated than their predecessors:

In the past, our police were illiterate. They did not know what the law meant and what justice is. Now they are literate and trained properly in the academy. They are generally very good. But, if they do anything wrong, we ask the police office and the person in question gets removed from the area.¹¹⁴

The new police chief is accredited for the positive changes in ANP.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ FGD-WW

¹¹¹ FGD-CE

¹¹² KI-F-PW-3

¹¹³ KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2, KI-M-MED3, KI-M-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2, KI-M-GHS-3

¹¹⁴ FGD-CE

¹¹⁵ KI-M-GHS-3, FGD-CE

Access to Work and Public Life

Different factors have affected women's employment opportunities negatively. A reason mentioned by many is the impact of the transition on the province's economy:

I have my job, but women's access to work has decreased a lot. In the past, when foreign forces were here, they would start some of the projects themselves. They would do things like setting up chicken farms and embroidery and sewing projects. Women would work and sell their products to the foreign forces who would then take them to foreign countries. Now, all these projects, markets and customers have ceased to exist.¹¹⁶

The majority of the lost jobs because of the transition were those filled by the poorer women who depended on the employees of the international forces as their customers.¹¹⁷

The deteriorating security situation and the uncertainties caused by the elections have also affected women's access to work:

The fact that the election process has taken so long has affected employment opportunities very negatively. ... There is less money being invested in Helmand, because everyone is waiting for the outcome of the elections. Had I known that the elections would have taken this long and affected people's lives this negatively, as an Afghan, I would not have participated.¹¹⁸

Or

The worsening security situation has made it hard for women travel to and from the districts to sell their products. It has also made it hard for women working in urban regions to travel to and visit the districts for their work.¹¹⁹

Interviewees share the opinion that the bad security situation, which is exacerbated by the uncertainties of the elections, has limited women's employment opportunities.¹²⁰

There are complaints that the government is not paying attention to women in Helmand. In the past foreign forces would provide subsidized jobs. Those jobs no longer exist because of the transition and government institutions are not able or do not give women many opportunities to work for them.¹²¹

Some of the women are satisfied with their male colleagues' attitudes, described as cooperative and professional.¹²² Others, however, express dissatisfaction:

A man would never be satisfied with a woman doing the same work as he does. There is a culture of not accepting a woman in a leading position or being equal to a man. They would rather have a friend or another man as their colleague or boss.¹²³

¹¹⁶ KI-F-GOV-1

¹¹⁷ KI-F-BW-1, FGD-HW

¹¹⁸ KI-M-MED-2

¹¹⁹ KI-F-PW-2

¹²⁰ FGD-CE, KI-F-BW-1

¹²¹ FGD-CE, FGD-WW

¹²² FGD-WW

¹²³ KI-F-GOV-3

Religious leaders are supportive of women working in health and education.¹²⁴ Working in other sectors is not as acceptable, however.¹²⁵ Since men in Helmand take the sermons of religious leaders seriously, more attention should be paid to involving religious leaders in promoting women's rights:

Religious leaders and their sermons are very important. When my husband goes to the mosque for Friday prayers and the imam preaches against women, he comes home with a very different attitude towards me, than when the imam preaches in support of women's rights.¹²⁶

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Girls' access to education remains very limited in Helmand. The main reason is stated as a general lack of security.¹²⁷ Vocational training centers for women are still active but there are concerns about future prospects as funding draws down.¹²⁸

The number of clinics serving women remains insufficient:

There are too many female patients. The city of Lashkargah has four clinics, three of which are comprehensive health centers. Each one of these has the capacity to treat 80 patients a day, but we receive more than 250 patients daily. We do our best to serve them the best we can but given our resources we will never be able to help that many people in one day.¹²⁹

Or

Some clinics are too far for us to reach and too crowded. The clinic is suitable for a village with 5,000 houses, but we have more than 50,000 houses in our district. The resources are not enough and after having covered long distances, we do not even get our turn and go home without being treated. ... When see the doctor many hours after we arrive and if it is late in the day, the doctor is left with no medicine to prescribe and we would have to find other ways to get the medicines.¹³⁰

Access to Justice

Fewer women are said to approach the formal legal system than four months ago. The more common way of approaching the formal legal system now is through the male family members (brothers, fathers or sons) who make the approach on a woman's behalf.¹³¹

There is a consensus among the interviewees that judicial bodies (only available in urban areas) are responsive to women's needs and handle their cases swiftly.¹³² There are, however, no legal or judicial institutions in most districts.

¹²⁴ FGD-CE

¹²⁵ KI-F-PW-2

¹²⁶ KI-F-GOV-2

¹²⁷ KI-F-GHS-2

¹²⁸ KI-M-VTC-1

¹²⁹ KI-M-MED-1

¹³⁰ FGD-HW

¹³¹ KI-F-GOV-1

¹³² FGD-CE, KI-F-NGO-1, FGD-WW

Violence Against Women

Violence against women has increased compared to four months ago. The number of women escaping from home has increased significantly in the last few months.¹³³ In addition to suffering from different forms of domestic physical and mental violence, in some cases women are used as offerings to settle familial or tribal disputes:

Women and girls are sometimes used to settle feuds or as retaliation prizes. Once these women leave their homes and are handed over to the opponent's families, the girl gets subjected to severe physical, verbal and mental abuse, because she is there as revenge.¹³⁴

Other factors contributing to the rise in violence against women are unemployment, poverty and drug addiction:

When foreign troops were here, there were projects for women and these gave women an opportunity to work and feed their families. This was especially helpful for women whose husbands were drug addicts and could not sustain the family. Now that these projects have ceased to exist, these women are unemployed. Their addicted husbands ask them for money and when they cannot provide, they get subjected to severe violence.¹³⁵

Many legal organizations left Helmand together with the foreign forces. These organizations would help women in need, but also hold awareness projects. After their departure, there has been to a rise in cases of violence against women.¹³⁶

Women and Current Affairs

Some of the interviewees felt strongly that women should be more involved in the peace process.¹³⁷ The participation of women in the two rounds of elections was seen as significant but there were concerns about the drop in the number of voters for the second round.¹³⁸

¹³³ KI-F-FRU, FGD-WW

¹³⁴ FGD-HW. Similar comments were in FGD-CE

¹³⁵ KI-F-GOV-2

¹³⁶ KI-F-NGO-1

¹³⁷ FGD-CE, FGD-HW, FGD-WW, KI-F-PW-2

¹³⁸ FGD-WW, KI-F-NGO-1, FGD-HW, KI-F-GOV-1, KI-M-MED-2, KI-M-ANP

Herat, Herat Province

Date of Visit:
May 9, 2014

Transition Period:
March 2011

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The security situation in Herat has improved compared to the previous cycle. However, people are still concerned about (high profile) killings and the extent of harassment:

The security is much better [than four months ago]. In the past we had a lot of fears and expected attacks on us from all directions, but it is not like that anymore. Especially after we saw how good the security was managed on the Election day. There are fewer high profile killings of men and women, though it still does happen. Two months ago a man who worked for ANSF was murdered, a prosecutor was murdered too.¹³⁹

Or

The security situation is better than months ago. In the last four months, there have been fewer kidnappings and suicide attacks, but the number of targeted killings has remained the same.¹⁴⁰

People's perceptions of ANSF are largely positive with much praise for the ANSF in maintaining security during the elections. The views of ALP are mixed, however. For example:

I come from Oba district and we have local police [ALP] there and we are satisfied with them. But I know in other places there are many complaints about ALP using their right to possess a weapon to steal and murder people.¹⁴¹

Or

Our national police are 100 percent capable of ensuring order in Afghanistan. People's representatives are happy with them and they are respectful towards women. We do not have [ALP] in our district. They are active in Pashtun Zarghun district and people are happy with them. Five months ago, many people could not visit those districts, but now, thanks to the local police, people are satisfied and doctors can go to their clinics.¹⁴²

Access to Work and Public Life

Women's access to public life in Herat has improved due to better security. The women stated that they felt more comfortable in public spaces than four months ago because of the relative decline in harassment:

In the past, I would only go to the city with my husband, but now, I go to the city alone without any worries. But, there are not many employment opportunities for the women of Herat. In our family, we have many educated girls who sit at home all day because they do not have work. Employment opportunities for women are significantly fewer than a couple of months ago.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ KI-F-PW-1

¹⁴⁰ KI-F-GOV-2

¹⁴¹ KI-F-BW-1

¹⁴² KI-M-MED-2

¹⁴³ FGD-HW

All those questioned stated that though women are afraid, there is less harassment of girls and women on the streets:

There is harassment of women on the streets, just like in the past, only now it occurs less than in the past. Some women are still afraid of what might happen to their daughters on their way to school.¹⁴⁴

In the previous cycle, people complained about a lack of job creating projects as a consequence of the security transition. The uncertainties that set in after the two inconclusive rounds of presidential elections have generated much uncertainty about the future and a general lack of willingness to invest, at least until the dispute about presidency has been resolved:

The one thing that has negatively affected the people of Herat has been the elections. All projects are on hold. Because people do not have jobs, there is no spending and everyone is suffering.¹⁴⁵

Religious leaders remain supportive of women working outside their house.¹⁴⁶ There are no complaints of men treating their female colleagues badly or inappropriately. To the contrary, women describe male colleagues as cooperative and cordial.¹⁴⁷

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Most girls' high schools state increases in the numbers of students compared to four months ago.¹⁴⁸ The reduction of the number of girls at many schools is attributed to there being more schools for girls to choose from than before:

Because there are more public and private schools, it is possible that the number of our students have declined compared to last year. But the decline is not because our students have dropped out of schools or education and are staying at home. It is also not because our students face fears for attending school or getting an education.¹⁴⁹

Vocational training centers also report increases in the number of students.¹⁵⁰

There are no complaints about access to health.¹⁵¹ Most women visit, particularly in urban areas, visit clinics without having to be accompanied by men. Access to health clinics from remote areas is not viewed as a logistical challenge:

Daily, we get between 400 and 500 female patients in our clinic. Besides other treatments, they also come for things like vaccinating their children. About 90 percent of our female patients

¹⁴⁴ KI-F-GHS-1

¹⁴⁵ KI-F-GHS-1

¹⁴⁶ KI-F-PW-1, KI-F-VTC-2, KI-M-MED-2, KI-F-NGO-3

¹⁴⁷ KI-F-GOV-2

¹⁴⁸ KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-GHS-3

¹⁴⁹ KI-F-GHS-1

¹⁵⁰ KI-F-VTC-1

¹⁵¹ KI-M-MED-1

come without a mahram. People have access to clinics, it is only in Injil district where we have a shortage of doctors. Some of their patients come to us for help.¹⁵²

Access to Justice

There has been no significant change in women's access to justice though there are a number of ongoing challenges, including insufficient number of female justice officials. Most women, particularly in rural areas, would not approach male officials to complain about domestic or other forms of violence.¹⁵³

There are complaints that male judges or prosecutors do not treat women fairly and that there is widespread corruption in the formal justice system. For example:

I know of a case where a woman was beaten into a coma by her drug-addicted husband. At first, the husband paid the judges to win the case. Then her family offered bribes. The judges asked the man for more money and the father of the woman had to sell their house to pay for the bribes. Even then, the woman was not even allowed to see her children once a month.¹⁵⁴

The police are considered unhelpful toward women wishing to use the formal justice system. In many cases women's complaints are not taken seriously and the women are told to go back home and work out their own problems.¹⁵⁵

Violence Against Women

Compared to the previous cycles violence against women in Herat has increased and more cases of suicide by women are reported. There are increases in the numbers of murders and suicides, with allegations that many of the murders are disguised as suicides.¹⁵⁶ The most common types of violence against women are physical violence and mental abuse, which are rarely reported because of threats or the shame that it might bring to the family:

... Yesterday we had a female patient who was beaten up and her arm was broken. I wanted to refer her to the central hospital, but she refused because she feared her husband and her family would kill her if they found out that she had been to the hospital. She trusted us because she knew that our clinic does not report these cases to the police. Many of these patients come to us and request us not to tell anybody that they have visited.¹⁵⁷

Societal conservatism, poverty, lack of awareness and drug addiction are described as the main reasons for violence against women.¹⁵⁸

Women and Current Affairs

The women expressed their satisfaction with the extent of active female participation during the elections:

¹⁵² KI-M-MED-2

¹⁵³ KI-F-GOV-2

¹⁵⁴ KI-F-NGO-3

¹⁵⁵ KI-F-NGO-2, KI-F-GOV-2, KI-F-NGO-3

¹⁵⁶ KI-F-NGO-3

¹⁵⁷ KI-M-MED-2

¹⁵⁸ KI-F-NGO-3

Women's participation in the elections was very impressive, even women living in rural districts participated. The most important thing about this participation was that women were very well informed and knew whom to vote for and why, which showed that women had knowledge of politics. This awareness comes from the campaigns held by different organizations and in the media.¹⁵⁹

Most people are not aware of the role that women play within the provincial peace council.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ KI-F-NGO-3

¹⁶⁰ FGD-WW, KI-F-BW-1, FGD-HW

Paghman, Kabul Province

Date of Visit:
August 20, 2014

Transition Period:
March 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The overall security in Paghman has become worse compared to the previous cycle. The main source of insecurity is the increasing crime rates such as armed burglaries, robberies and theft:

There have been a lot of burglaries and theft recently. Only a few days ago, a house close to Khawaja Musafar School was robbed for the third time. Only this time, it was not a random burglar, but 30 men in police uniforms. Cars entered the house and robbed everything on gunpoint. All their money, the gold, even the wedding dresses were taken...¹⁶¹

There is a consensus among the interviewees that the uncertainties caused by the elections have worsened the security situation and created opportunities for criminal elements.¹⁶² Some of the women stated that there had been similar incidents where men in police uniforms had robbed homes.¹⁶³ The suspicion of powerful individuals being involved keeps people from discussing these incidents openly and in public.¹⁶⁴

Though burglaries by groups of men in police uniform has made people suspicious of the intentions of the police, there is a sense of satisfaction with ANP's attitude towards women.¹⁶⁵ The satisfaction is more with the way the police interact with people in public.

Access to Work and Public Life

The women state that they have had fewer employment opportunities in the last several months. The interviewees were unanimous about the negative effects of the elections and the uncertain aftermath on employment opportunities for men and women. There is, in addition, concern that there is likely to be less funds available for job creating projects.¹⁶⁶

Generally, the community and religious leaders are supportive of women working in health and education sectors, but not for NGOs. Not many women work together with men, but the ones that do state that their male colleagues are helpful and professional. For example:

I work for an NGO and give training to women about their access to leadership positions and formal justice. I am always fearful when I go to people's homes or when I am on my way to work, because people have a very bad opinion of women who work for NGOs. Some people accuse us of wrongdoing by working with foreigners... Since the elections, my fears have increased.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶¹ FGD-HW

¹⁶² FGD-WW

¹⁶³ KI-F-PW-1

¹⁶⁴ FGD-CE

¹⁶⁵ FGD-HW

¹⁶⁶ KI-F-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2, KI-F-PW-1, FGD-CE, FGD-HW

¹⁶⁷ KI-F-PW-1

The lack of security has affected women's access to public life negatively. Almost all interviewees stated being fearful when alone outside their homes.¹⁶⁸

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Compared to the previous cycle, women's access to health and education has remained the same. There continues to be much dissatisfaction about the quality of health services provided by health centers. This is attributed to a general lack of qualified personnel and medicines, and overcrowded clinics.

Access to education continues to be limited for older girls:

Many girls are forced by their families to drop out of schools as soon as they reach the tenth grade (17 years old). Or they are married off at a young age, which leads to dropping out of school. There is also fear by many families that something might happen to their older daughters on their way to school, that they could get harassed by young men or kidnapped. There are many dangers.¹⁶⁹

The women are not happy with the state of the health care system:

People do go to clinics and vaccinate their children, but health clinics do not have sufficient medicine. They do not have specialized and qualified personnel. There are a few doctors and midwives available during the morning and afternoon, but at nights their doors are closed. I had to take one of my sick family members to Kabul city at night once, because everything was closed in our neighborhood.¹⁷⁰

Or

Women come to clinics from very remote areas, but the attitude of doctors is not good and friendly towards them. Their manners are not appropriate and hygienic principles are not always observed. They do not have the required resources and lack the basic facilities that a health clinic needs. They are overcrowded and they do not give proper medication.¹⁷¹

According to some, one reason that the health services in Paghman have deteriorated is that large numbers of incoming displaced families, or economic refugees from nearby provinces such as Maydan Wardak.¹⁷²

Access to Justice

Access to justice has not changed compared to the previous cycle. Women generally do not seek help from the formal justice system in cases of domestic violence. Most cases are decided through community elders or family members. There are no reports of women seeking justice at the police station.

¹⁶⁸ KI-F-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2, KI-F-PW-1, FGD-CE, FGD-HW

¹⁶⁹ KI-F-PW-1

¹⁷⁰ KI-F-PW-2

¹⁷¹ FGD-HW

¹⁷² FGD-CE, FGD-HW

Women of Paghman are satisfied with the way police handles their cases, but unhappy with the judiciary.¹⁷³ For example:

From our district no woman has been gone to the court to complain about domestic violence. There have been women who have gone to courts for their inheritance rights. They first go to the police. If their case is not solved there, they then go to the district court, if they can't help them either, they then go to Kabul. The police's attitude towards women is good.¹⁷⁴

In most cases, however, the community elders act as mediators in conflicts:

Women who are subjected to violence or are physically abused do not dare to raise their voices or go to courts. Community elders decide about their fate and rights and duties. Women have very little access to formal justice on domestic violence issues.¹⁷⁵

Traditional justice is commonly practiced in Paghman, with the formal legal and judicial institutions acknowledging the legitimacy of the traditional justice forums:

In Paghman district, the tribal council has around 120 to 170 members, who are all men. They resolve all the cases and so far we have not faced any challenges and problems with the process of resolution and mediation. These cases usually concern disagreements on water rights, inheritance rights and land rights. Few cases that concern women's rights come to them.¹⁷⁶

Violence Against Women

The level of violence against women has remained unchanged since the previous cycle. The most common types of violence against women are verbal and physical abuse and economic injustice (for example, not receiving alimony or inheritance).¹⁷⁷ One of the main causes of violence against women in Paghman is stated as poverty.¹⁷⁸

Health clinics reported no cases of severe physical violence against women. However, most agree that victims of domestic physical violence often do not seek medical help because they fear the consequence of further punishment by the perpetrators.¹⁷⁹ There is some consensus that the increased awareness among men and women is yielding some positive results and may, in the longer term, decrease the level of violence against women.¹⁸⁰

Women and Current Affairs

The participation in the elections by the women in was very high in the first round of the elections but there is general disappointment about the uncertain aftermath that followed the second round of

¹⁷³ KI-F-NGO-1, KI-F-NGO-2, FGD-HW, FGD-WW

¹⁷⁴ FGD-HW

¹⁷⁵ FGD-WW

¹⁷⁶ KI-M-ANP

¹⁷⁷ KI-F-BW-1, FGD-HW, KI-M-FRU, KI-F-NGO-2

¹⁷⁸ FGD-LIT

¹⁷⁹ KI-F-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2

¹⁸⁰ FGD-WW, FGD-HW, FGD-LIT

elections.¹⁸¹ Apart from the elections, the women in Paghman are said to be minimally active in political issues.¹⁸²

Women show a strong desire for peace, but not under any condition. To some of the women badly negotiated peace can be as damaging as war:

There are some women active at the Higher Peace Council in Kabul. Their efforts are mainly to make sure that women's voice is heard at the peace talks. To women, peace can be just as harsh as war. If the opposition chooses for peace and joins the government, then they get their wishes of limiting women's rights and freedoms. If there is no peace, then again, it is the women who see their sons and husbands get killed.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ KI-F-NGO-2, FGD-HW

¹⁸² KI-M-GHS-3

¹⁸³ FGD-LIT

Kandahar, Kandahar Province

Date of Visit:
August 18, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2014

Transition:
To be completed

Overall Security

Overall security has improved in the centre compared to four months ago, though during the month of Ramadan, there were more attacks in the provincial capital:

There number of assassinations increased during the month of Ramadan. There has also been criminal activity, such as people being robbed of their vehicles. There were muggings and robberies.¹⁸⁴

In the districts AOGs are very active. In the centre the attacks by the AOG are not as many but the provincial office and the Police Chief's office have been attacked and prominent people have been murdered.¹⁸⁵

During the elections, some were concerned about the tough approach adopted by the police, which in some cases led to fights and quarrels between the public and the police.¹⁸⁶ More generally there is satisfaction with interactions with ANP. Similarly, there is broad support for the role of ALP but there are also concerns by some women about how ALP members handle themselves with the public, with allegations of robbing and kidnapping by ALP members.¹⁸⁷

Access to Work and Public Life

Access to work, i.e., travelling to and from work has not changed compared to the previous cycle. The public opinion about working women is divided, however. Some religious leaders are openly against women working outside the home while others remain indifferent.¹⁸⁸ There were no complaints about women being harassed outside the home.

Since the transition the number of jobs for women has been declining. In the recent months this has been attributed mainly to the uncertainty following the elections.¹⁸⁹

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to health and education in the centre of the province has not changed compared to the previous cycles.¹⁹⁰ In the other districts, however, girls' access to education is less than before the transition.

The transition has affected women's access to health in the outlying districts but not in Kandahar city.¹⁹¹ In the rural districts, access to health has been severely affected by heightened AOG activity, making it difficult for doctors to travel to and from the affected districts.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁴ KI-F-BW-3

¹⁸⁵ KI-F-VTC-1, KI-F-VTC-2, KI-F-PW-3, FGD-CE

¹⁸⁶ KI-F-GOV-1

¹⁸⁷ KI-F-PW-1

¹⁸⁸ KI-F-NGO-1, KI-F-NGO-2, KI-F-PW-3, FGD-CE

¹⁸⁹ KI-F-VTC-1, KI-F-VTC-2, KI-F-VTC-3, FGD-CE

¹⁹⁰ FGD-HW

Access to primary education remains limited in the rural districts and almost no girls have access to higher education:

In Arghandab district, there are no girls' schools. There is only one mixed school that teaches till the sixth grade. After that, girls grow up and their parents do not allow them to go to school because the teachers are men and the schools do not have special girls-only classrooms. The very few girls whose families want them to continue education are sent to the city to study.¹⁹³

Access to Justice

Access to justice remains poor but has not changed compared to the previous cycle. The women continue to express dissatisfaction about the attitude of judicial organizations towards them:

Women's access to justice has neither changed for the better nor for the worse. In the past the courts and the prosecutors would treat women unfairly and they continue to treat women badly today. They are rude to women and insult them. They tell women to settle their issues with their husbands, even if the women have been subjected to violence. No matter how much a woman suffers, the legal system forces her to stay with her husband.¹⁹⁴

There are also a number of outstanding complaints about the formal legal system including the lengthy process, unfavorable treatment of female complainants, and the insistence of legal officials that women's domestic problems should be dealt with at home.¹⁹⁵

There are no complaints about the police's behavior towards women who seek help. To the contrary, the police's attitude towards women is often praised.¹⁹⁶

Violence Against Women

There is consensus that registered cases of violence against women in Kandahar, especially in urban areas, has increased compared to the past. This increase is attributed by some to the fact that in urban areas women appear to be more prepared to register their complaints through the formal legal system.¹⁹⁷

The women suggested that violence against women would be higher in rural districts than Kandahar city due to lower awareness among both men and women, and perhaps the scarcity of formal legal entities in rural areas.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹¹ KI-F-VTC-1

¹⁹² KI-M-NGO-3

¹⁹³ KI-F-BW-1

¹⁹⁴ KI-F-PW-1

¹⁹⁵ FGD-CE

¹⁹⁶ FGD-CE, KI-F-BW-3

¹⁹⁷ KI-F-GOV-2, KI-F-NGO-1, KI-F-NGO-2, KI-F-VTC-1, KI-F-VTC-2, KI-F-PW-3, KI-F-PW-1, FGD-HW, FGD-WW

¹⁹⁸ KI-F-BW-3

Women and Current Affairs

There is a sense of optimism about the potential role for women in the peace process. However, the bureaucratic structures limit women's participation:

Women in Kandahar ... have the capacity and the ability to participate in the peace process and talks. But the Provincial Peace Council in Kandahar does not have any time for women and does not allow women to participate in peace talks. The role [assumed] for women in the peace talks is so far limited to convincing their fathers, brothers, and sons not to wage wars and to join the government and the peace talks. This can be very effective. But, if women were also involved in the Peace Council, they could talk to the families of AOG fighters and give them awareness about peace.¹⁹⁹

Women's participation during the first round of the elections was much higher than during the second round of the elections, for different reasons:

The reason [for the drop in the number of female voters in the second round of elections] was the disappointing turn of events after the first round. Another reason was that during the first round, presidential and provincial council elections were held together. The campaigns held for the provincial council elections were very extensive and mobilized many people.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ KI-F-PW-1

²⁰⁰ KI-F-GOV-1

Kunduz, Kunduz Province

Date of Visit:
May 18, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2012

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The overall security situation in Kunduz has deteriorated compared to the previous cycle. There are more crimes and heightened AOG activity. The views on ANSF are divided. Some view the ability of the national security forces to provide security during the elections as proof of capability.²⁰¹ Others point to the deterioration of security after the elections as proof that ANSF, including ALP, are unwilling or incapable of providing security.²⁰²

The main sources of concern and fear among women in Kunduz are the increasing cases of kidnapping, murder, grievous bodily harm such as stabbing, and terrorist attacks by AOGs:

Everyday new bodies are found, children get kidnapped, and people get murdered. The reason is the inability of the police to ensure security outside the city. People cannot travel to Takhar province [because of bad security].²⁰³

Or

Yesterday a traffic guard was murdered. Last night in Kunduz a 24-year old boy was killed. He was sitting at home working on his computer and they shot from outside his house (over the wall) and killed him in his room. AOGs control districts that are only 20 minutes away from Kunduz. This means that they control the surroundings of the city and are active inside the city at night... Last night we had no fuel, but chose to sit in the dark because it is better than getting killed.²⁰⁴

While the number of attacks on individuals has increased, there appears to be no hostility toward women's organizations:

Our agency has not been threatened directly and I do not know of other organizations that have been threatened. However, improvised explosive devices can hit anybody. Therefore we limit our travelling and try to keep our gatherings small to avoid attracting attention.²⁰⁵

ALP is considered as necessary for security, despite serious concerns about ALP members' commitment to stand with ANSF.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ KI-F-PW-3

²⁰² KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-GOV-1

²⁰³ KI-F-NGO-1

²⁰⁴ KI-F-VTC-1

²⁰⁵ KI-F-PW-2

²⁰⁶ KI-M-MED-1, KI-F-GOV-1, KI-F-GOV-2, KI-F-NGO-1, FGD-CE

Access to Work and Public Life

There are fewer employment opportunities for women in Kunduz since the previous cycle.²⁰⁷ The ability of women to travel to and from work is more limited than the last cycle due to worsening security increased harassment in public spaces.

Views of religious leaders on working women range from overwhelmingly positive to very negative.²⁰⁸ There are no complaints about how the way men interact with their female colleagues.²⁰⁹

Despite the increased level of harassment on the streets, some have taken initiatives to fight it:

There is harassment, but people have found ways to avoid that. Our teachers come to schools in groups, parents walk their children to schools and those who cannot find company, bring their mobile phones and keep others informed of their whereabouts...²¹⁰

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to health and education has remained largely the same since the previous cycle.²¹¹ The main hindrances to girls' access to education are criminality and harassment.²¹² More families are said to choose early marriage for their daughters as a means to provide protection against common elements and in public.²¹³

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice in Kunduz has not changed compared to the previous cycles. Those living in rural or remote areas have little or no access to formal justice.²¹⁴ Those living in urban areas have access, but complain about the unfair treatment of women in the formal legal system. For example:

Just like men inside their houses, the judicial institutions think they can dictate women's lives or control them. There are instances where a case was decided against a woman who had clearly been beaten by her man. The judge told the woman that this is your husband and go and make your life with him. Obviously when that woman gets home, she gets ten times the beatings she got before, only this time it is not only the man but also the man's family.²¹⁵

Some acknowledge the problems, but are optimistic about the new generation of younger legal officials:

There are legal and judicial institutions, but just like the past, those are drenched in corruption. Some of our judges are good ... These are mainly the young judges who treat women with respect and take their cases seriously.²¹⁶

²⁰⁷ FGD-WW, KI-F-GOV-2

²⁰⁸ KI-F-PW-1, KI-F-GOV-3, FGD-HW, KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-3, KI-M-MED-1, KI-F-NGO-1

²⁰⁹ KI-F-GOV-2, KI-F-GOV-3, KI-F-GOV-1, KI-F-PW-1, KI-F-BW-2, KI-F-GOV-2

²¹⁰ KI-F-GHS-3

²¹¹ KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2

²¹² KI-F-GHS-2

²¹³ KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-GHS-3

²¹⁴ FGD-WW

²¹⁵ KI-F-PW-1

²¹⁶ FGD-CE

The views on the workings of the ANP or the FRU are positive:

Our police are good. We cannot blame them for things that go wrong. When they get a case, they send it to the attorney's office or to the court. If there are delays, then it is because the attorney is either not capable of doing his work or connected to the suspect.²¹⁷

Violence Against Women

The women report that there is more violence against women in Kunduz than the previous cycle:

Violence against women has increased. What makes it even more concerning is that there are more cases of rape, especially in the eastern districts of the province, perpetrated by family members or trusted men. ... women are no longer safe inside their houses ...²¹⁸

There are also more escapes from home or early marriages by young women:

Escaping from home by girls has increased. Because of early, non-consensual engagements and marriages, girls see no other options but to escape from their homes. Domestic violence has become very normal... but many women tolerate the violence and the torture in silence because they are afraid of causing damage to the name and honor of their families, or further punishment.²¹⁹

Women and Current Affairs

Female candidacy has declined due to higher minimum requirements for candidacy and fears of insecurity.²²⁰ There is stronger resistance in Kunduz, compared to other provinces, to women's involvement in peace negotiations.²²¹

²¹⁷ KI-F-NGO-2

²¹⁸ KI-F-PW-2

²¹⁹ KI-F-BW-1, KI-M-MED-1

²²⁰ KI-F-GOV-3, KI-F-GHS-3, KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-GOV-2

²²¹ KI-F-GHS-2

Mehtarlam, Laghman Province

Date of Visit:
July 4, 2014

Transition Period:
March 2011

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

There is a general consensus among the interviewees that the security situation in Laghman is much better than it was four months ago, which is partly due to close collaboration between the people and ANSF and ALP:

Right now, the security is much better than it was last year, when there were AOG in every street and behind every door and they would threaten people. The situation has also improved compared to four months ago. The roads to and through Alishing and Alingar districts are safe because there are ALP checkpoints there.²²²

Both Alishing and Alingar districts remain dangerous, however:

Not only women, but also men fear suicide attacks [in Alingar and Alishing]. There are more incidents of explosions caused by magnetic bombs attached to police vehicles. One of those exploded in front of a school recently, which injured two police officers.²²³

People are satisfied with ANP and ANSF.²²⁴ What makes Laghman unique compared to many other provinces is the general satisfaction with ALP, whose members receive continuous training with assistance from ANP:

The local police get regular training from us. We have about 850 ALP and we give them weekly trainings. Our own department of education gives trainings on [how to deal with] violence. An organization called Hewad gives trainings on law enforcement and the Department of Counter Narcotics teaches on fighting narcotics. We are also taught on issues regarding human rights and violence against women.²²⁵

Access to Work and Public Life

Access to work for women in Laghman has not changed since the last cycle. The province has yet to recover from the unemployment caused by the transition. Men generally have a positive opinion of women working in health or as teachers, but they are less accepting of women working for other organizations.²²⁶ There are also some extreme views on women working:

[Some conservative elements] say that a woman's place is either at home or in the grave. They think badly of women who work. They say that these men send their women to offices for a couple of thousand Afghans. Who knows what happens in those offices?²²⁷

²²² FGD-CE

²²³ KI-F-PW-1

²²⁴ KI-M-FRU, KI-M-ANP, KI-F-GOV-3, KI-F-GOV-1, KI-F-GOV-2, KI-F-PW-1, FGD-CE, FGD-WW, FGD-HW

²²⁵ KI-M-ANP

²²⁶ KI-M-GHS-1

²²⁷ FGD-HW

Opinions differ on attitude of men towards their female colleagues as well. Most women feel that their male colleagues do not approve of women working.²²⁸

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to health and education in Laghman has not changed compared to the previous cycle. People have now more access to health clinics than they did a year ago though the facilities and services remain poor. For example:

... when I visit a hospital and I need to see a doctor, they tell me that the doctor had to work all night and has gone home. All the patients, especially those who come from far away places are left uncared for.²²⁹

There are also complaints about the lack of medicine.²³⁰ Despite the lack of services, cases of maternal deaths seem to have decreased significantly over the past year, however.²³¹

Girls' access to education has not changed and schools are not reporting decreases in their number of students.²³² Men are said to be generally agreeable to women taking vocational training courses, most likely because of the potential for additional household income.²³³

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice has not changed over the last four months. There remain a number of complaints about the formal legal system, however:

... a person only goes to the court if he or she is very rich. If one does not have money, their problems won't get solved [because of inability to pay bribes].²³⁴

The situation is much more difficult for women:

If women approach [formal justice officials], they are mistreated, not only by judges or their lawyers, but also by their families. They do not dare seek justice. Those that do [risk being] stigmatized [and punished].²³⁵

Or

There are legal entities to serve women but people are against women asking for justice outside their families or elders.²³⁶

²²⁸ KI-F-GOV-3, FGD-HW

²²⁹ FGD-HW

²³⁰ KI-M-MED-2, FGD-CE, FGD-WW

²³¹ FGD-CE, FGD-HW, FGD-WW

²³² FGD-HW

²³³ KI-F-VTC-1

²³⁴ FGD-LIT

²³⁵ KI-F-PW-1

²³⁶ KI-F-GOV-3

Violence Against Women

Violence against women is said to have decreased compared to the last cycle.²³⁷ This decrease is attributed to improvements in general order and security. There remain serious cases of violence, however, including using women as offerings to settle disputes.²³⁸ The main causes of violence against women are seen as widespread poverty and lack of awareness.²³⁹

Women and Current Affairs

Some interviewees were optimistic about women's potential contributions to peace, especially after the transition.²⁴⁰

...Women are now freer to participate in events and gatherings without worrying about the nature of the society.

In the rural districts, however, women continue to face obstacles to their active participation in the political arena:

Outside the capital ... women cannot participate in politics because of social conservatism and high levels of illiteracy.²⁴¹

²³⁷ KI-M-FRU

²³⁸ KI-F-GOV-3, KI-F-GHS-2, FGD-HW

²³⁹ KI-F-PW-1, KI-M-FRU, FGD-HW

²⁴⁰ KI-M-ANP

²⁴¹ FGD-CE

Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province

Date of Visit:
August 13, 2014

Transition Period:
December 2014

Transition:
To be completed

Overall Security

The security situation has deteriorated since the previous cycle. The main causes of insecurity are terror attacks and other forms of AOG activity, which have intensified since the elections:

... There are many more explosions.... These explosions often take place in public places such as parks or roads. Terror attacks also take place inside the government offices. For example, before the second round of the elections, suicide bombers had entered the Provincial Court and had also injured some prosecutors.²⁴²

The interviewees unanimously stated to be happy with the attitude of ANSF toward women. Some interviewees see ALP as unnecessary and a source of insecurity while others find them helpful and necessary.²⁴³

Access to Work and Public Life

Reductions in aid funding and development projects are said to have eliminated many jobs for women.²⁴⁴

Some of the prominent women stated that they had been threatened for being active in public life.²⁴⁵ These threats are attributed to the uncertainty that followed the elections. For example:

...in the last four months I have considered leaving my job. There are explosions in all kinds of places. Because the elections and the campaigning have been going on for almost a year now, [and because of the disagreements], suicide attacks have increased. Right now, ... even a child could come up to us and shoot and kill us. ...the entire population is in danger.²⁴⁶

Male colleagues described as cordial and professional toward women.²⁴⁷ Religious leaders in Jalalabad are reported as supportive of women working outside the home and girls going to schools.²⁴⁸ In the rural districts, however, there is broad opposition to women working or older girls going to school.²⁴⁹ Some of the women complained of harassment on the streets.²⁵⁰

²⁴² KI-F-GOV-3

²⁴³ KI-F-GHS-3, KI-F-NGO-3, KI-F-PW-4, KI-F-PW-3, KI-F-PW-2, FGD-CE

²⁴⁴ FGD-CE, FGD-M-LIT, KI-F-NGO-1

²⁴⁵ KI-F-PW-1, KI-F-PW-2, KI-F-PW-3

²⁴⁶ KI-F-GOV-1

²⁴⁷ KI-F-PW-2, KI-F-GOV-2, KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-NGO-4

²⁴⁸ KI-F-GHS-2, FGD-HW, KI-F-NGO-4, KI-F-VTC-1

²⁴⁹ KI-F-GHS-1

²⁵⁰ KI-F-GOV-3

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to education and health centers is more limited than four months ago. The decrease in number of girls attending schools is predominantly caused by the worsening security situation. For example:

The number of our students in the last four months has declined because of the security risks such as explosions caused by suicide bombs and roadside mines. These have increased because of the elections, leading to a worsening security situation over the last four months....²⁵¹

The deteriorating security has had a similar impact on access to health:

Over the last four months, women avoid coming to the hospitals. They only come if their situation is very serious, because there is a lot of fear about the security...²⁵²

Access to Justice

During the previous cycle, women stated to have noticed some improvements in the behavior of justice workers towards women. There are now complaints about corruption and the bad attitude of justice officials toward women.²⁵³

The number of women who approach the formal justice system remains very limited due to a high degree of conservatism and a lack of faith in the ability of the justice system to protect women. For example:

A woman who had been subjected extreme violence complained to the judiciary.... the husband promised to not to harm the woman again. Once they were home, the husband locked his wife up in a room, then murdered her and fled. There are stories of other women who seek justice and get killed by their male relatives. For this reason, women do not dare to seek justice.²⁵⁴

Violence Against Women

The women feel that violence against women has increased compared to the previous cycle, due largely to economic hardship of many families:

There is much more violence against women now because people are unemployed and suffer economic hardship. Physical and verbal abuse are the most common forms. Some women ... lose their mind and become mentally ill.²⁵⁵

Women and Current Affairs

The shared view among most of the women about women in politics is largely negative. For example:

Women's role in the peace process is not defined or known. Those that are members of Provincial Peace Council are either incompetent or forced to obey commands and not do

²⁵¹ KI-F-GHS-2

²⁵² FGD-HW

²⁵³ KI-F-PW-2, KI-F-PW-3, FGD-M-LIT, FGD-WW

²⁵⁴ KI-F-GOV-3

²⁵⁵ KI-F-PW-4

anything by their own choice. They might be able to do more if they are in leadership positions and not subordinate to others.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ KI-F-NGO-1

Sorkhrod, Nangarhar Province

Date of Visit:
August 10, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The security situation has deteriorated compared to the previous cycle. The main manifestations of insecurity are heightened AOG activity and crime.

The security situation, because of the [uncertainty following the] elections, is much worse than four months ago. There are more activities by AOGs and the number of murders has increased. Some time ago, two people, a husband and wife were murdered and their bodies were dumped in a warehouse close to our district. I do not know who had done that. A couple of days ago, another young man, who was in ANA was murdered and his body was dumped in a remote area. A month ago, a soldier was beheaded ...²⁵⁷

A number of explanations are offered for the deterioration in security:

... First, Sorkhrod district shares borders with many other unsafe districts. Second, ANSF is not well organized and there are insufficient security personnel in Sorkhrod. Third, two rounds of elections have passed without result and this has created an opportunity for AOGs to play a more active role in destabilizing the district.²⁵⁸

Opinions about ANSF differ. Some see them as corrupt while others view them as helpful, professional, and respectful of women.²⁵⁹

Access to Work and Public Life

New women-centered projects have been generating jobs for women. However, women's access to jobs is hampered by widespread conservatism. For example:

... I have been asked to attend [vocational training] seminars on a number of occasions but when I attend, I do it clandestinely so that my son, who is at the ninth grade [15-16 years old] does not find out. If he finds out that I go to seminars, he will not have let me attend. Young men, more than the elders are putting more restriction on women and limiting their freedom of movement and work. –KI-F-VTC-3, Sorkhrod

The deterioration in the security situation also affects the willingness and ability of the women to leave the home.²⁶⁰

Religious leaders are said to be supportive of women who work outside the home but their preference is for jobs in the health and education sectors.²⁶¹ Workingwomen are generally positive about the

²⁵⁷ FGD-HW

²⁵⁸ KI-M-FRU

²⁵⁹ FGD-CE, FGD-M-LIT

²⁶⁰ FGD-WW, FGD-HW, KI-F-VTC-1, KI-F-VTC-2

²⁶¹ KI-M-MED-1, KI-F-PW-1

attitudes of their male colleagues toward them.²⁶² This is especially the case for women working in health clinics:

Men ...know that if we did not have female doctors, nurses, or midwives in our clinics, our female patients would face a lot of problems [because they] do not express their problems to male doctors and leave the clinic if there are no female doctors.²⁶³

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Lack of security and threats by AOGs are stated as the main reasons for girls not attending school:

Two or three months ago, a school bus carrying girls who attended a teacher's college in Sorkhrod from Shamshapur was stopped by AOGs and all the girls in the bus were threatened. All those girls from that village stopped coming to school after that incident.²⁶⁴

Or

In some districts we have schools that teach up to grade 12. We have teachers and we have equipment. However, because of the bad security situation many have left the village and fled to other places, so no one comes to school.²⁶⁵

There are, in addition, insufficient numbers of schools and teachers.²⁶⁶ Similarly, there are insufficient numbers of health centers, equipment, and health personnel.²⁶⁷

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice has not changed since the last cycle. Sorkhrod is culturally conservative and, as such, the general preference is to keep family disputes private especially if such disputes involve women.²⁶⁸ In addition, there are reservations by women about using the formal legal system because of its bias toward women and allegations of corruption among the justice system officials.²⁶⁹ The common method for resolving conflicts involving women is through mediation provided through customary justice system.²⁷⁰

Violence Against Women

Violence against women is not openly talked about but there is awareness among the women that many women in their community are subjected to different types of violence including physical abuse and forced marriages.²⁷¹

²⁶² KI-F-BW-1, KI-F-VTC-1

²⁶³ KI-M-MED-2

²⁶⁴ FGD-WW

²⁶⁵ KI-F-PW-1

²⁶⁶ FGD-CE

²⁶⁷ KI-M-MED-1, FGD-HW, FGD-CE

²⁶⁸ FGD-HW

²⁶⁹ KI-F-PW-1

²⁷⁰ FGD-CE

²⁷¹ KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2, FGD-WW, FGD-CE

Women and Current Affairs

The women want peace in their community but do not actively discuss participation in or their contribution to the peace process.²⁷² Despite the desire for peace, negotiating with AOGs is seen with much suspicion because of the potential loss of current freedoms and rights.²⁷³

²⁷² FGD-HW, FGD-WW

²⁷³ FGD-CE

Parwan, Parwan Province

Date of Visit:
August 26, 2014

Transition Period:
May 2012

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

The security situation in Parwan has deteriorated compared to the previous cycles. The main source of insecurity in the province has been the irregularities and the uncertainties caused by the elections:

There is unrest. ... The entire population is armed and there are weapons in every house. You are just doing your daily chores and all of a sudden someone appears on a motorcycle and shoots and kills someone else. There is also a lot of theft.²⁷⁴

The supporters of different presidential candidates allegedly distributed weapons during the first and the second round of the elections and people did not hesitate to use these weapons for their personal hostilities.²⁷⁵ Some order returned after the security officials met and decided to disarm many of those armed after the first round of elections.²⁷⁶ These efforts by the police and army chiefs in the province have led to some improvements, but there is still much uncertainty.

Those who disarmed the people were not from Parwan province, but from other regions, which made their work easier because they had no connection to the perpetrators.²⁷⁷

There are various crimes including theft, gun firing in the air, and killing to resolve personal quarrels. All personal hostilities are now fought out with weapons.²⁷⁸ Cars are being hijacked and the owners killed.²⁷⁹

Opinions on ANP are generally positive:

The police's attitude towards women is good and has been good in the past. They help and assist girls and women who go to schools or work. So far, we have not faced any problems with the police.²⁸⁰

Many others confirm this view of ANP.²⁸¹ However, people also find the police to be powerless toward the powerful figures in the province:

The police are powerless compared to the powerful people that cause insecurity in this province. When two powerful groups get into a fight, the police just stand and watch, they cannot and do not dare to take a part into this or stop those fighting... It is crucial that police are supported,

²⁷⁴ FGD-HW

²⁷⁵ FGD-WW, KI-F-NGO-2, FGD-LIT.

²⁷⁶ FGD-WW, FGD-CE.

²⁷⁷ FGD-WW, FGD-CE, KI-M-NGO-1, KI-F-NGO-2, FGD-HW.

²⁷⁸ KI-F-MED-1.

²⁷⁹ FGD-HW

²⁸⁰ KI-F-VTC-1

²⁸¹ KI-F-VTC-2, FGD-CE.

trained and organized. But most importantly, the reasons for police not being able to mediate and solve the problems of fights between two groups should be sought out and solved. – KI-F-NGO-2, Parwan.

Access to Work and Public Life

Employment opportunities for men and women in Parwan have decreased:

There are fewer work opportunities in Parwan compared to before. The lack of projects and the delays in investment caused by the uncertainties of the elections have led to much unemployment. As long as the elections are not decided, these challenges will remain.²⁸²

The insecurity has limited women's access to public life drastically:

Even if we do get a job, insecurity is a clause in our contract. We have all the opportunities, but we all have agreed with our employers that if security deteriorates because of the elections, we will stop working.²⁸³

Women who work for government or in health and education sectors are appreciated but there is disapproval for women working for NGOs.²⁸⁴ The denouncement of working for NGOs is has limited the women's choices of employment.²⁸⁵

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Girls' access to education in Parwan is still limited but has not changed over the last four months. Traditionalism and poverty are the main impediments for girls to go to school:

My husband keeps telling me not to allow my daughter to school because she has gotten older and should stay at home. My daughter is in the seventh grade, so fourteen years old.²⁸⁶

And

Some people do not allow their girls to go to school after they have reached seventh grade, some others do not allow their daughters to go to school because they want their daughters to help them with their work. Another reason is marriage, when girls get married they cannot continue to go to school.²⁸⁷

The worsening security situation has had some negative impact on girls' access to education but is not seen as a major deterrent.²⁸⁸

Access to health in urban and central areas has not changed. The quality of services provided by health clinics however, has worsened due mainly to a lack of resources:

²⁸² FGD-CE

²⁸³ KI-F-VTC-2

²⁸⁴ KI-F-VTC-3, KI-M-NGO-1.

²⁸⁵ KI-F-NGO-1

²⁸⁶ FGD-HW

²⁸⁷ KI-F-GHS-3

²⁸⁸ FGD-WW, KI-F-GHS-2) (FGD-CE, FGD-LIT, KI-F-GHS-2.

In the past we would get one box of medication to distribute to women we visited, now we only get a quarter of a box. We tell our patients to buy their medication from specific drugstores because we ask those drugstores to get the medications that we prescribe to our patients. But the drugstores are also short of the medication we prescribe.²⁸⁹

The deterioration in security has forced some clinics to close or limit their opening hours:

Access to health clinics is limited especially in the night, during the day it is much easier. There was a woman who was in labor and could not come to the hospital at night because of the insecurity. She did not survive childbirth. In Ghorband, one of our female midwives was threatened and robbed on her way home from work. After that she quit her job and stayed at home for some time. Now she works in another clinic in Bagram.²⁹⁰

Access to Justice

Women's access to justice in Parwan has not changed compared to the previous cycle. Most disputes in the province continue to be resolved through traditional means of involving the community elders.

There is a consensus among all formal legal entities and the police that the traditional judicial system is more suitable to Parwan and only in extreme cases should people use the formal justice system.²⁹¹

The formal judicial system is described as corrupt and biased against women:

There is access to justice and women can approach judicial bodies. But these bodies are very corrupt and their attitude towards women is bad. They do not treat women equally. If a woman cannot give bribes, she will not get justice.²⁹²

There are no complaints about the police's attitude towards women who seek help. Most women describe the police's attitude towards women as good.²⁹³

Violence Against Women

Violence against women has increased compared to the previous cycle. The reasons given for the increase are poverty, addiction among the men, and unemployment.²⁹⁴ Apart from poverty and narcotics dependency, forced and underage marriages lead to different types of violence against women:

The most common types of violence are forced or non-consensual marriages, which lead to girls escaping from home. ...Cases of murder of women in forced marriages by their husbands are much more common in the rural districts than the central areas.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ KI-M-MED-2

²⁹⁰ KI-F-MED-1

²⁹¹ FGD-CE, KI-F-NGO-2

²⁹² FGD-LIT

²⁹³ KI-F-NGO-2, FGD-CE.

²⁹⁴ KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-NGO-2

²⁹⁵ KI-F-NGO-2

Women and Current Affairs

Many people in Parwan appear not to be aware of the role that could be played by women in the peace process.²⁹⁶ Some are cautiously optimistic about the potential of involving women in the peace process:

A woman's role in peace is crucial... Peace starts from the family... The Provincial Peace Council has not done anything to engage women...a majority of people in Parwan does not know anything about the peace process. Though some women are present at the Peace Council, they do not have any authority or their words are not taken seriously.²⁹⁷

Women's participation in elections was high during both rounds but lower during the second round.

²⁹⁶ KI-F-VTC-2, FGD-LIT, KI-F-GHS-3.

²⁹⁷ KI-F-NGO-2

Aybak, Samangan Province

Date of Visit:
July 12, 2014

Transition Period:
April-May 2013

Transition:
Transition Completed

Overall Security

Though the security situation in Samangan is described as satisfactory, it has deteriorated compared to the last cycle. The main change occurred after the second round of the presidential elections.²⁹⁸ Criminality has increased and there have been more thefts, murders, and violent settling of personal conflicts.²⁹⁹

There is a general sense of appreciation of ANSF, who are regarded as helpful:

The fact that we can live in this relative calmness and freely move around and do our work is due to the hard work of our police and security forces. Because day and night, they work hard to ensure security in the province and we should appreciate their efforts and hard work.³⁰⁰

Access to Work Public Life

Women's access to work and public life has not changed over the last four months. The women are satisfied with their access to public life but complain of uncertainties caused by the political situation and economic hardship:

Women do not face security challenges. The main problem is that there is no work being done at the leadership level. Women graduate from schools and universities, but there is no work for them. The new president should really take this concern seriously and work on employment opportunities for women.³⁰¹

All interviewees describe the attitude of men towards their female colleagues as professional, respectful, and cooperative.³⁰² Religious leaders are said to be supportive of women working outside the home.³⁰³

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Access to education and health for girls and women in Samangan has not changed compared to the previous cycle. Women in rural districts have less access to health due to a number of reasons:

The families' conservative attitudes, poverty, or lack of transportation are the main hindrances to women's access to health services in villages and districts. Sometimes we get patients from all those districts, we help them and then ask them to come back in a month for a second check. It takes them two months to show up, just because they have not had the resources to visit us on time. This makes our work very difficult.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁸ KI-F-GHS-2

²⁹⁹ KI-F-PW-2, KI-F-PW-3, FGD-HW, KI-F-PW-2

³⁰⁰ KI-F-NGO-1,

³⁰¹ KI-F-NGO-1

³⁰² KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-MED-2, KI-M-VTC-1, KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-PW-2

³⁰³ KI-M-MED-1, KI-M-VTC-1, KI-F-GHS-2, FGD-WW, FGD-HW

³⁰⁴ KI-M-MED-2

Access to schools for girls has not changed since the previous cycle though the most common challenges such as insufficient numbers of schools and teachers remain. Vocational trainings centers have been adversely affected by the uncertainty following the election:

I am not concerned about the continuation of my training centre. Our work and the market for our work are good... Our major difficulty right now are the elections, because of which people do not join our training programs and our donors are stopping the funding.³⁰⁵

Access to Justice

Since the transition access to justice in Samangan is said to have improved, particularly in urban areas:

I have said before that in every year, every month and every week that passes, women get more and better access to justice. I have been working on women's rights for six years now and I have seen women's access to justice improve by the day. Women's legal issues get solved more often than before. In the past a woman who sought justice was defamed. Now women take lawyers and try to defend their cases. There is also a safe house for women who are in danger.³⁰⁶

In rural districts access is more limited:

In rural districts the distances to legal institutions are [a major barrier to access]. Most legal organizations locate their activities in the centre or regions close to the central areas.³⁰⁷

Other reasons mentioned are illiteracy and lack of awareness among women and traditional conservatism, more prevalent in rural areas.³⁰⁸ Opinions on the attitude of judicial institutions towards women differ. Some find the institutions corrupt and incompetent, while others find them to be unbiased and helpful.³⁰⁹

Violence Against Women

Violence against women in Samangan has not changed since the previous cycle. The main areas of concern are forced and underage marriages.³¹⁰ Forced and underage marriages in turn lead to domestic violence, divorces, and women running away from homes:

In Samangan, there is less violence against women compared to other provinces. We have incidents of women escaping from home because they are forced to into marriages. And when people are married without their consent, violence follows.³¹¹

Women and Current Affairs

The women are optimistic about their participation in the peace process but complain that they are largely excluded:

³⁰⁵ KI-M-VTC-1

³⁰⁶ KI-F-NGO-2

³⁰⁷ FGD-M-LIT

³⁰⁸ KI-F-GOV-3, KI-F-PW-3, KI-F-PW-2

³⁰⁹ KI-F-PW-2, FGD-M-LIT, KI-F-GOV-1, KI-F-GOV-3

³¹⁰ KI-F-GHS-1, KI-F-GHS-2, KI-F-GHS-3, KI-F-PW-3

³¹¹ KI-F-PW-3

Women are by nature peace lovers and do not want war. They have more to fear and have more concerns. They fear that their children and husbands would leave them to go to other places or countries for work. Some of them even die seeking work. Therefore they should have a say in the peace process.³¹²

Or

Women do have a very important role to play in the peace process. It is these women that shape the society and constitute half of the population of the country. Women can convince their men and sons not to fight and choose for peace.³¹³

Despite this enthusiasm, the current arrangements do not allow women to fully participate in the formal peace process:

I was a member of the peace council and I used to work in the Committee for Settling Disputes. One day, they came and told me that I was fired. The reason that they gave was that they had hired another woman and therefore the number of women in the council exceeded the minimum requirement. I am not saying why they hired another woman instead of me, but the commission has twenty-five members and only three of them are women. Three is not enough, there should be more women working there.³¹⁴

The large turnout by the women for the two rounds of elections is attributed to relatively higher level of awareness among women in Samangan.

³¹² KI-M-VTC-1

³¹³ KI-F-PW-3

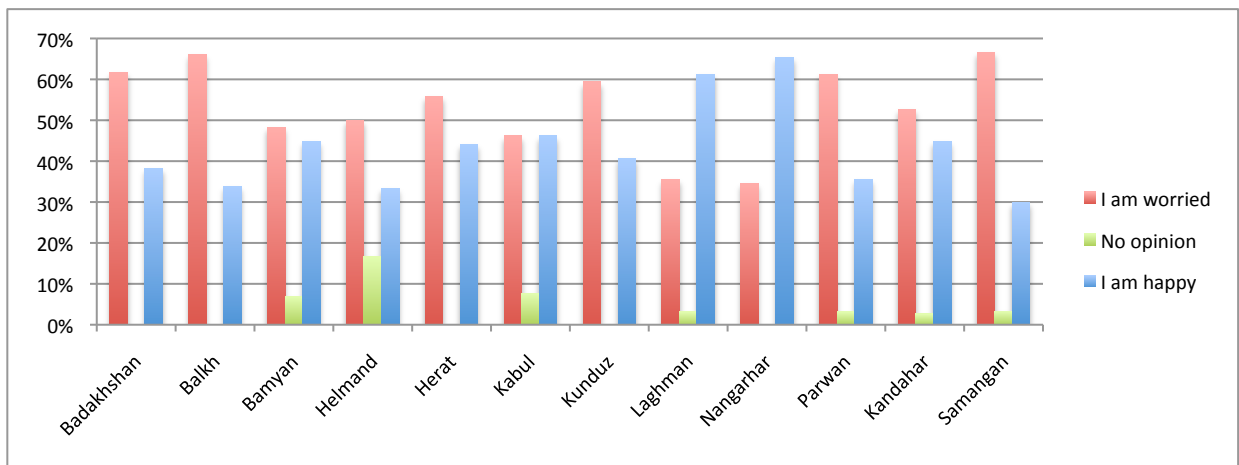
³¹⁴ KI-F-NGO-1

4. Analysis of Aggregate Survey Data

The findings in this section are based on a quantitative survey of all 471 female and 154 male respondents from the twelve provinces who participated in interviews and focus group discussions. The survey findings are *not* statistically significant. The survey was conducted as an additional data collection tool since there was secure access to the respondents. The findings from the survey reported in this section are thus for illustrative purposes only.

Over 50% of the women stated that they were worried about international security forces moving out of their areas. This worry is significant in all but two provinces, Laghman and Nangarhar, where there are higher percentages of women being happy about the transition than those worried (Figure 5). A relatively high percentage of women in Helmand have no opinion about the transition. One may speculate that given the persistently high level of insecurity in Helmand over the last few years, the women in Helmand see no relationship between the presence of international security forces and general security conditions.

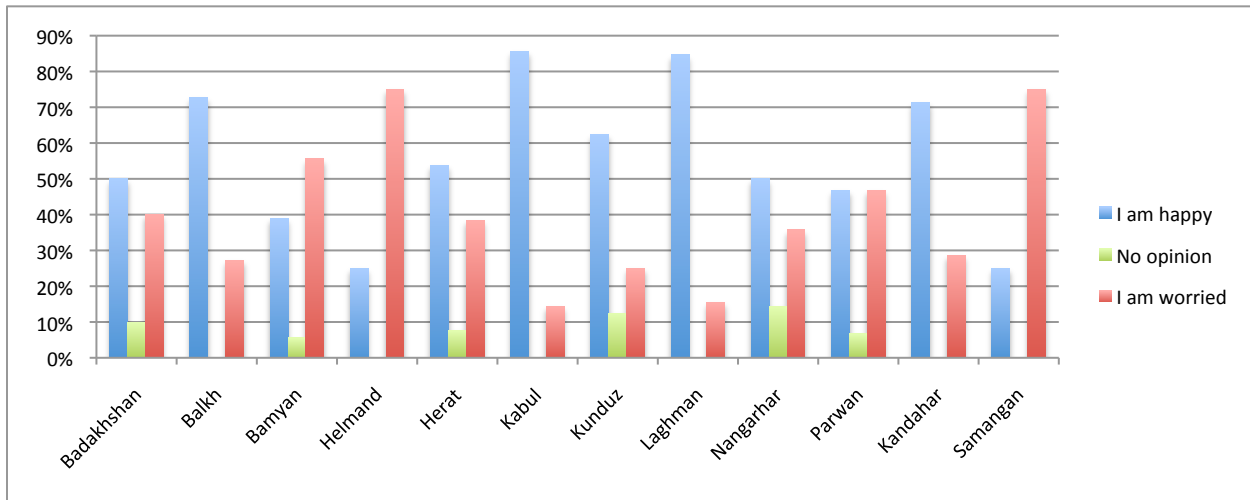
Figure 5: Women’s Feelings About the Departure of International Forces



n=427 women

Overall, the men appear to be generally happier than women about the departure of international security forces. The exceptions are Bamyan, Helmand, Samangan, and Parwan where the percentages of men worried about the departure of international security forces are higher than those of women (Figure 6).

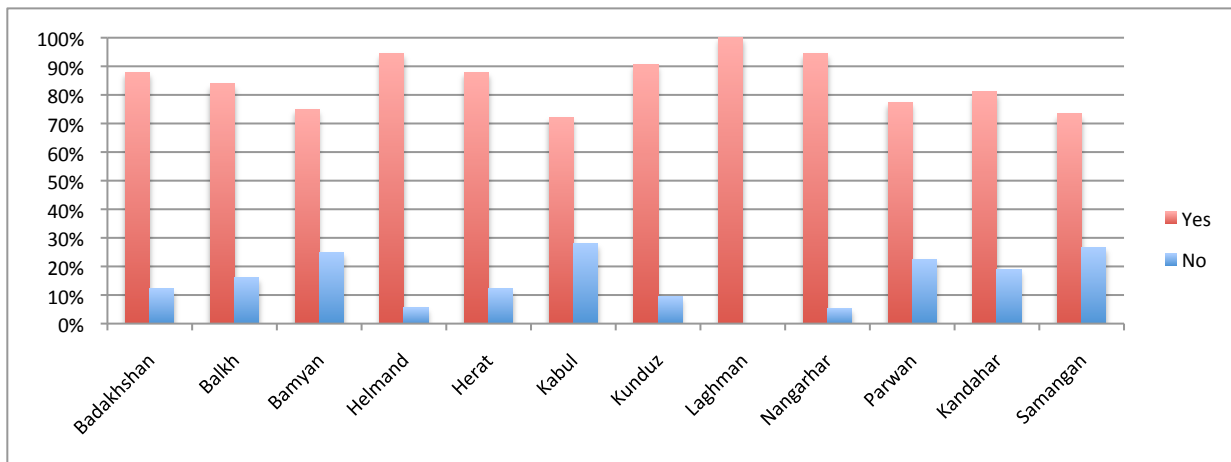
Figure 6: Men’s Feelings About the Departure of International Forces



n=154 men

An overwhelming majority of both men and women think that ANA/ANP is capable of protecting women, with men being slightly more optimistic than women. The percentages are 100% in Laghman, around 95% in Nangarhar, and over 80% in Badakhshan, Balkh, Helmand, Herat, and Kunduz (Figure 7). Also of note in Figure 3 is the relatively higher (over 20%) percentages of women in Bamyan, Kabul, Parwan, and Samangan who do not think ANA/ANP can protect them.

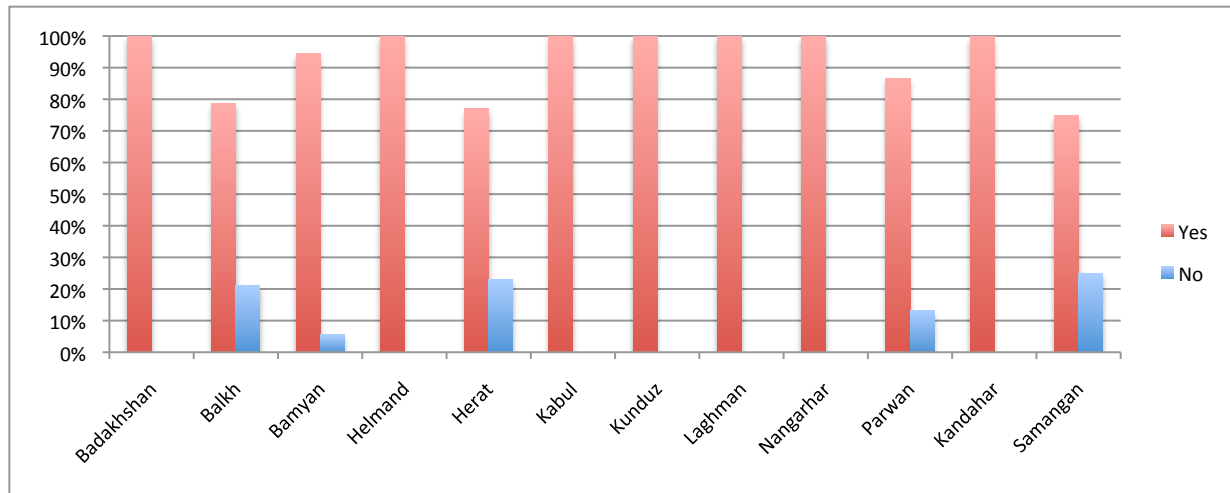
Figure 7: Can ANP and ANA Protect Women? – Women’s View



n=427 women

In Balkh, Herat, and Samangan over 20% of the male respondents did not think that women could be protected by ANA/ANP (Figure 8).

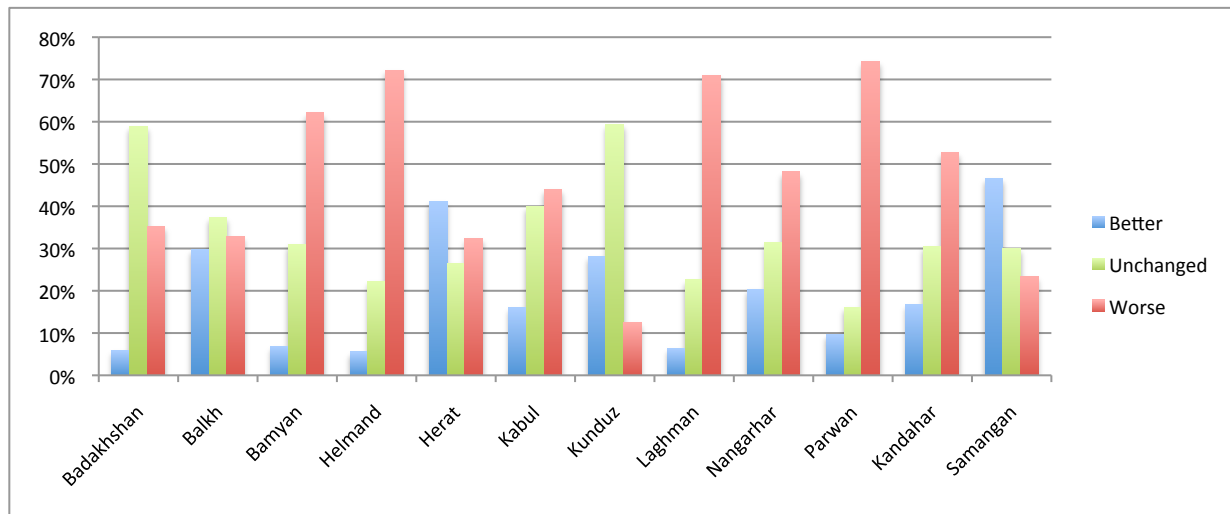
Figure 8: Can ANP and ANA Protect Women? – Men’s View



n=151 men

Perceptions of security outside the home are diverse and inconsistent among women and men. In Herat and Samangan the majority of the women feel safer outside the home after the transition than before. In Bamyan, Helmand, Kabul, Laghman, Nangarhar, Parwan, and Kandahar the overwhelming majority of women feel less safe outside the home after the transition. In Badakhshan and Kunduz the majority of the women feel that there has been no change in security outside the home since the transition (Figure 9).

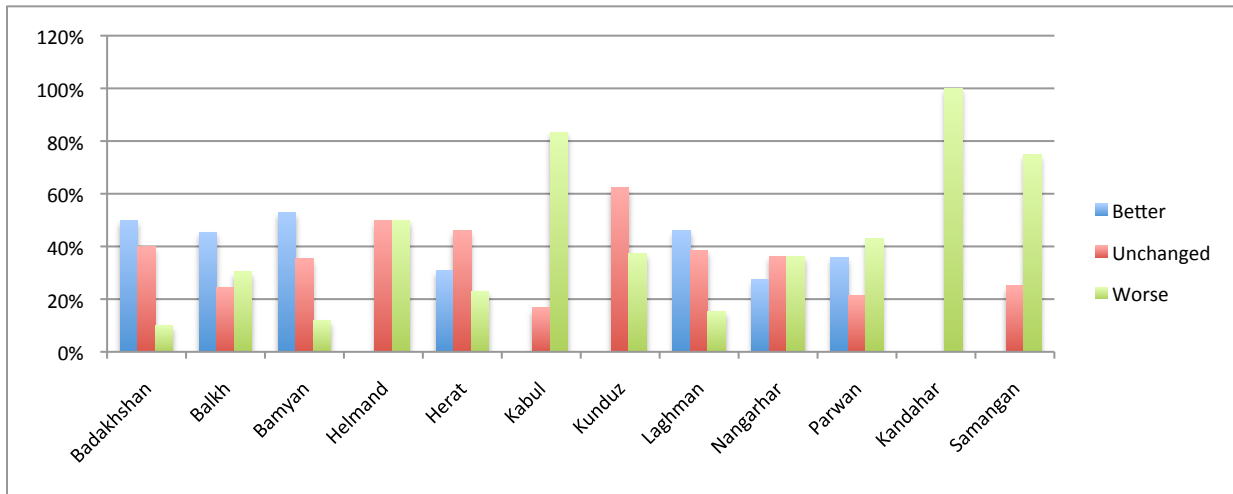
Figure 9: Perceptions of Women’s Security Outside the Home – Women’s View



n=427 women

The majority of the men also feel that security for women outside the home has deteriorated since the transition though the total percentage is lower than women’s (Figure 10). Notable in Figure 6 are Kabul, Parwan, Kandahar, and Samangan where the majority of the men feel that security outside home is worse than before the transition.

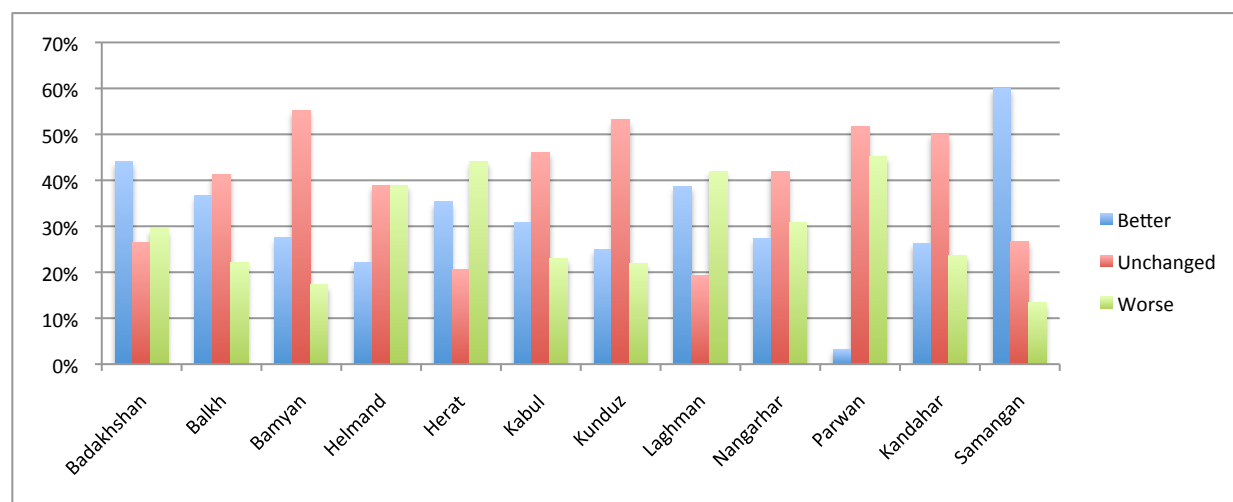
Figure 10: Perceptions of Women’s Security Outside the Home – Men’s View



n=146 men

Harassment of women in public spaces has remained the same or become worse in but two provinces: in Badakhshan and Samangan the respondents reported that the situation had improved since the departure of international security forces (Figure 11). Over 30% of the respondents in Herat, Laghman, Nangarhar, and Parwan reported that the harassment outside the home had increased compared to four months ago.

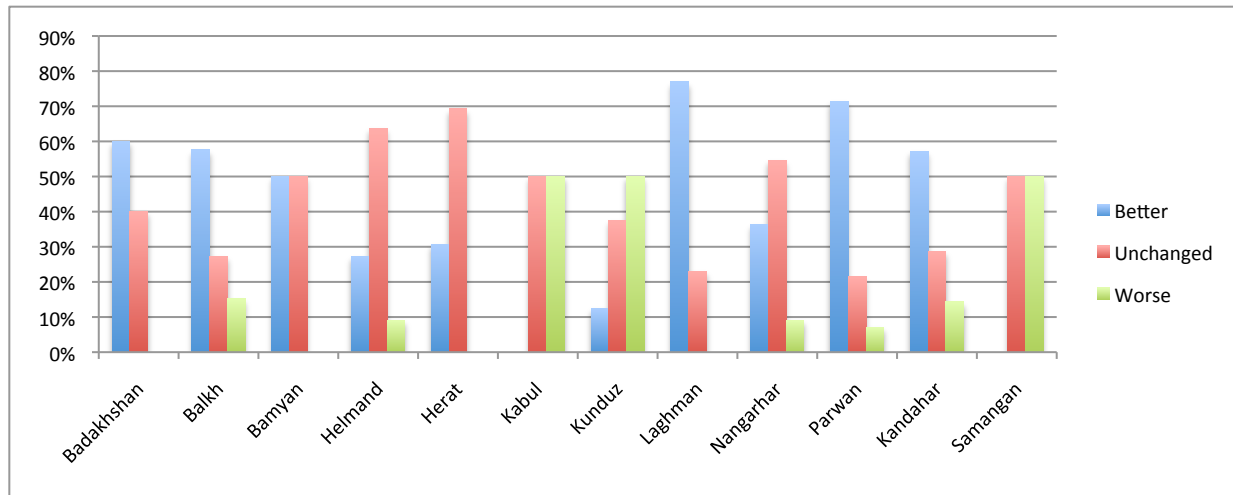
Figure 11: Harassment of Women in Public Spaces Compared to Four Months Ago – Women’s View



n=427 women

According to the majority of the men in Badakhshan, Balkh, Laghman, Parwan, and Kandahar harassment levels for women are lower than four months ago. Only in Kunduz the majority of the men feel that harassment of women has increased (Figure 12). In Kabul, Kunduz, and Samangan 50% of the men think that harassment has increased since four months ago.

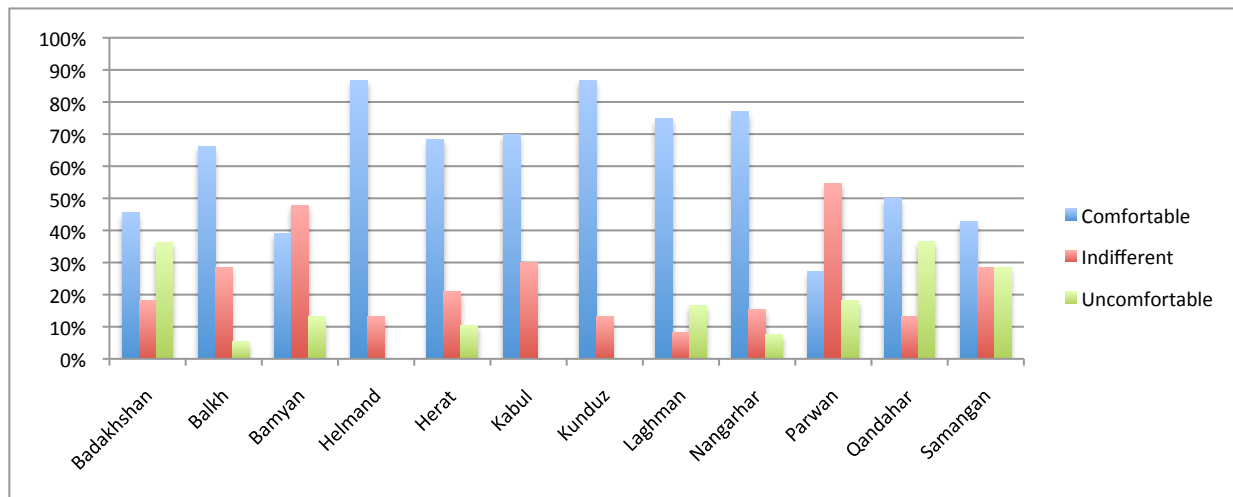
Figure 12: Harassment of Women in Public Spaces Compared to Four Months Ago – Men’s View



n=146 men

The overwhelming majority of the women across the 12 provinces felt comfortable in their encounters with Afghan Local Police (ALP). There were, however, concerns about ALP by around 30% of the respondents in Badakhshan, Kandahar, and Samangan (Figure 13).

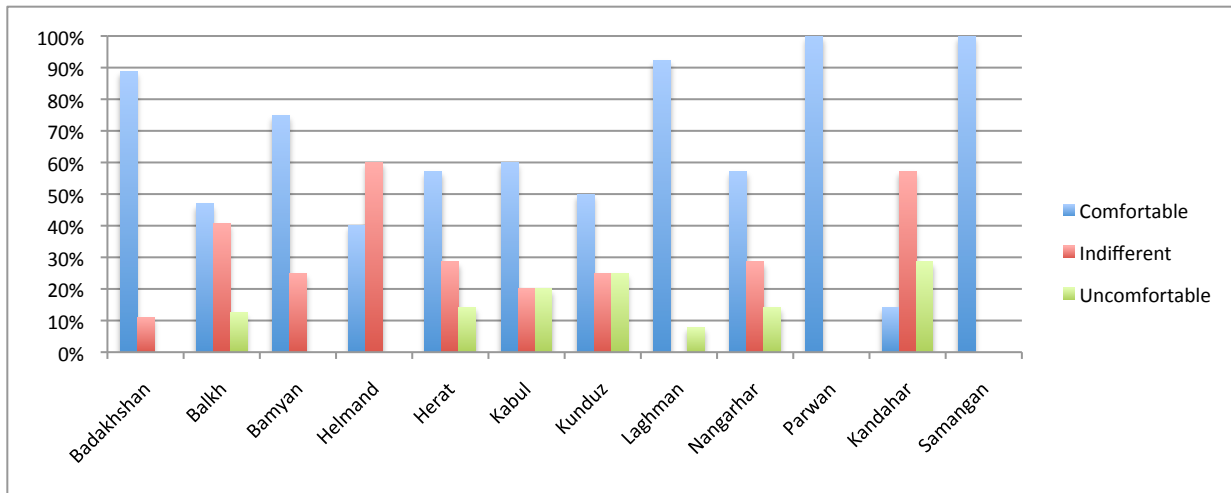
Figure 13: Comfort Level in Encounters With ALP – Women’s View



n=313 women

Men are generally more comfortable in their encounters with ALP than women. Except for Helmand and Kandahar, the vast majority of the men felt comfortable with ALP. Also notable in Figure 10 are the relatively high percentages of men who feel discomfort in their dealings with ALP in Balkh, Helmand, Herat, Nangarhar, and Kandahar. Most significantly, and consistent with the previous trends, are the situations in Badakhshan, Laghman, Parwan, and Samangan where over 90% of the men report feeling comfortable in their encounters with ALP (Figure 14).

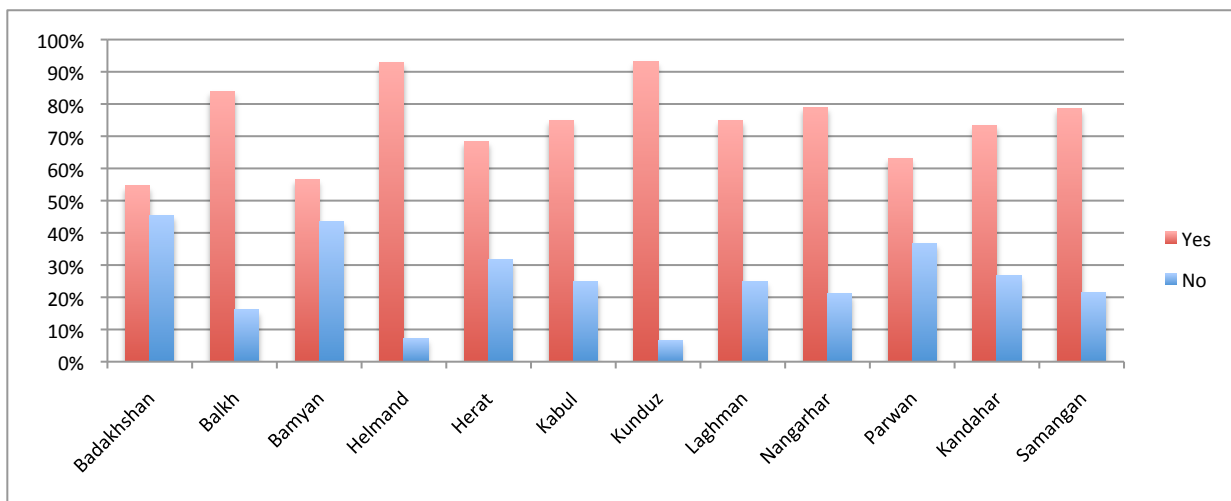
Figure 14: Comfort Level in Encounters With ALP – Men’s View



n=120 men

The overwhelming majority of women (73%) feel that it is necessary to utilize the services of ALP for maintaining security. However, in Badakhshan, Bamyan, Herat, and Parwan over 30% of the women do not feel that ALP should be used for security (Figure 15). In Helmand and Kunduz over 90% of the women feel that ALP must be used for security.

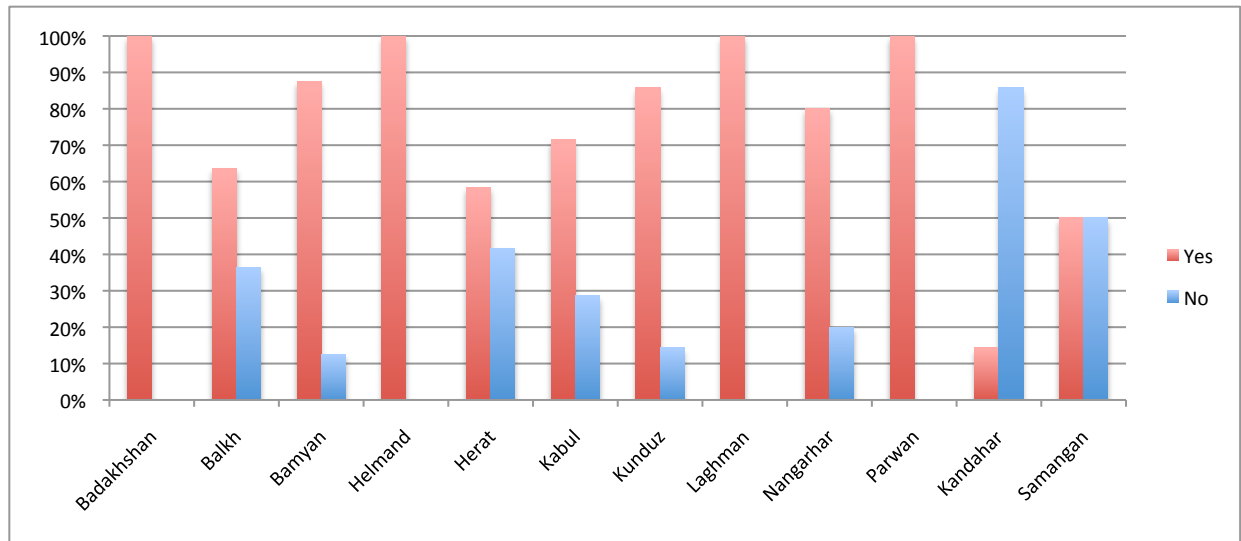
Figure 15: Is ALP Necessary for Security? – Women’s View



n=308 women

There is broad agreement between women and men on the need for using ALP for security. However, there are some locally specific and noteworthy differences. In Kandahar, 86% of the men think that ALP is not necessary for maintaining security while 73% of the women think that ALP is necessary (Figures 15 and 16). Also, in great contrast to the women, all the men in Badakhshan, Helmand, Laghman, and Parwan think that ALP is necessary for security (Figure 16).

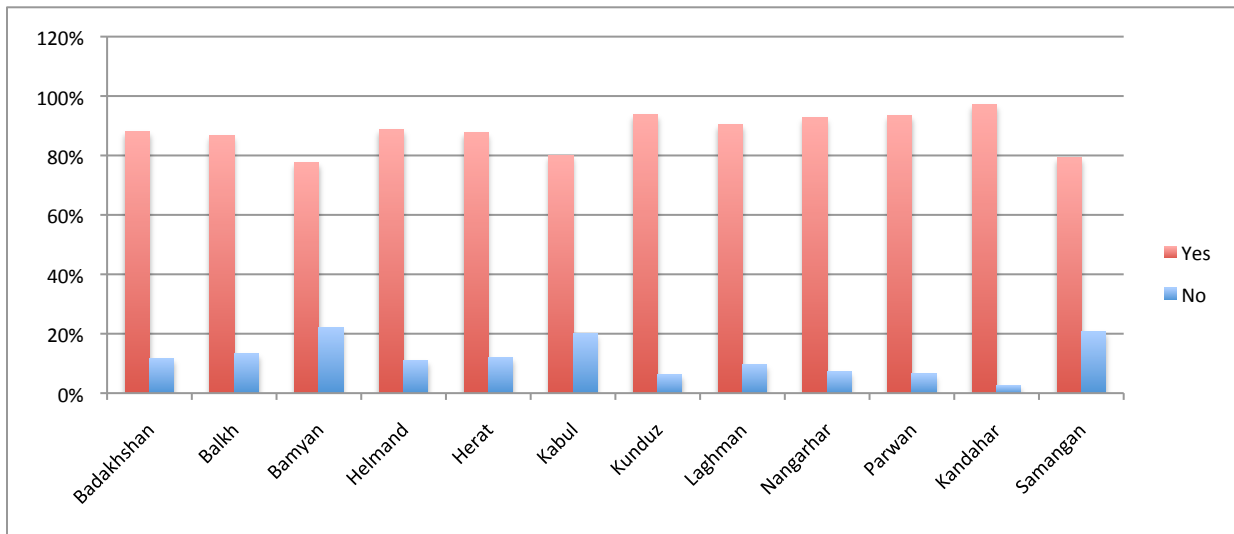
Figure 16: Is ALP Necessary for Security? – Men’s View



n=139 men

In Bamyan and Samangan around 20% of the women feel that ANA/ANP are not respectful toward women (Figure 17).

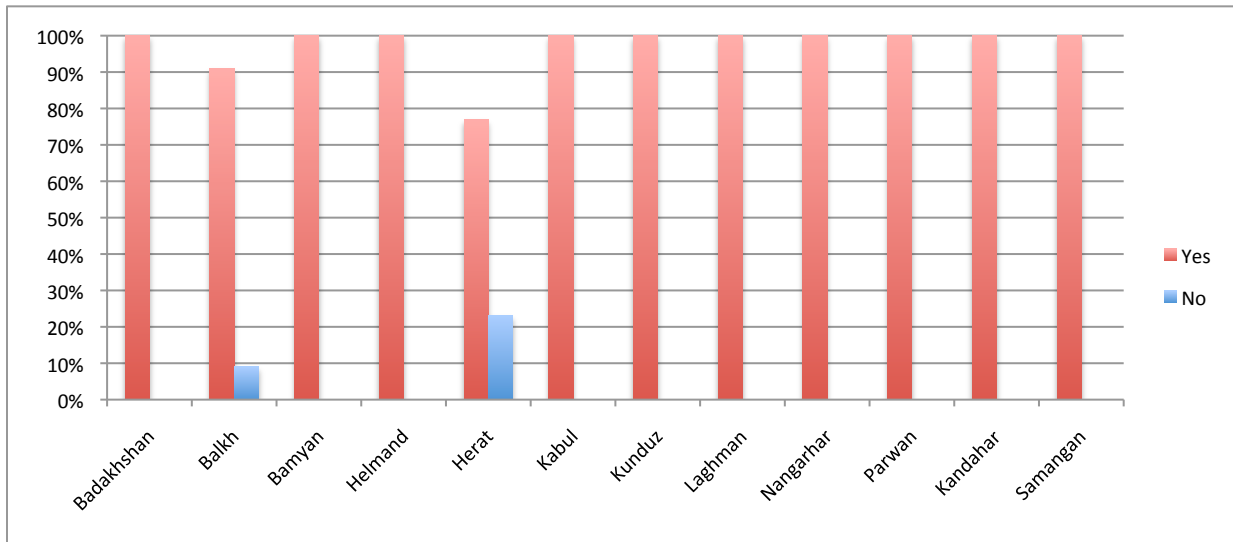
Figure 17: ANA/ANP Respectful Toward Women? – Women’s View



n=427 women

The only two provinces where men felt that ANA/ANP are not respectful toward women were Balkh and Herat (Figure 18). The overwhelming majority of women (89%) and men (96%) feel that ANA/ANP are respectful toward women (Figures 17 and 18).

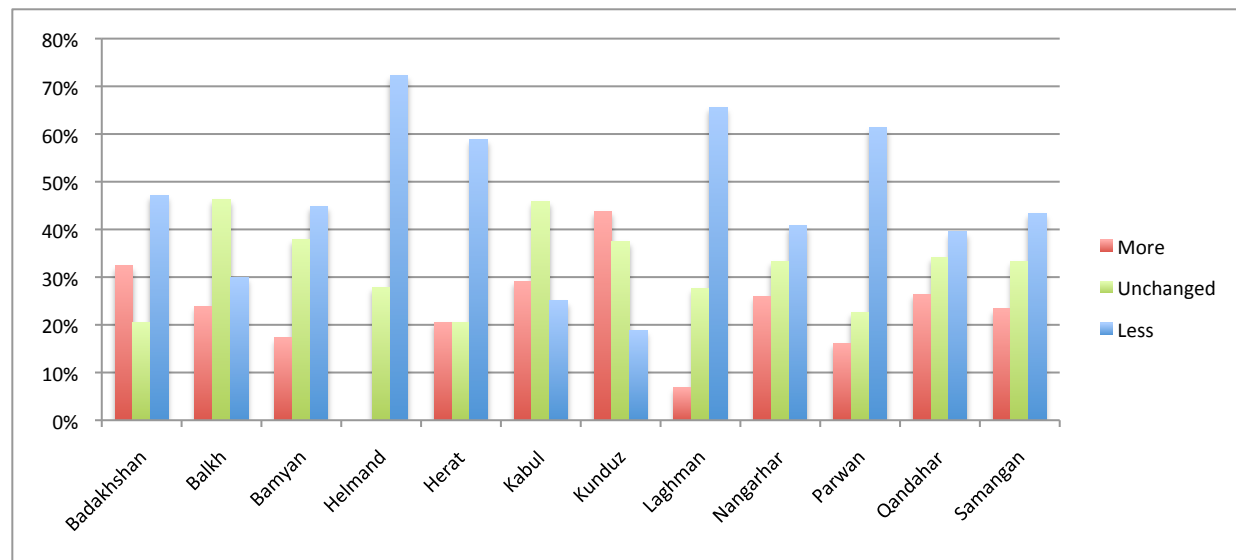
Figure 18: Are ANA and ANP Respectful Towards Women? – Men’s View



n=151 men

In all provinces the general feeling is that fewer women are able to work outside the home than four months ago. The situation is particularly acute in Helmand, Herat, and Parwan (Figure 19). Notable exception is Kunduz where over 40% of the women feel that there is a higher number of women working outside the home compared to four months ago.

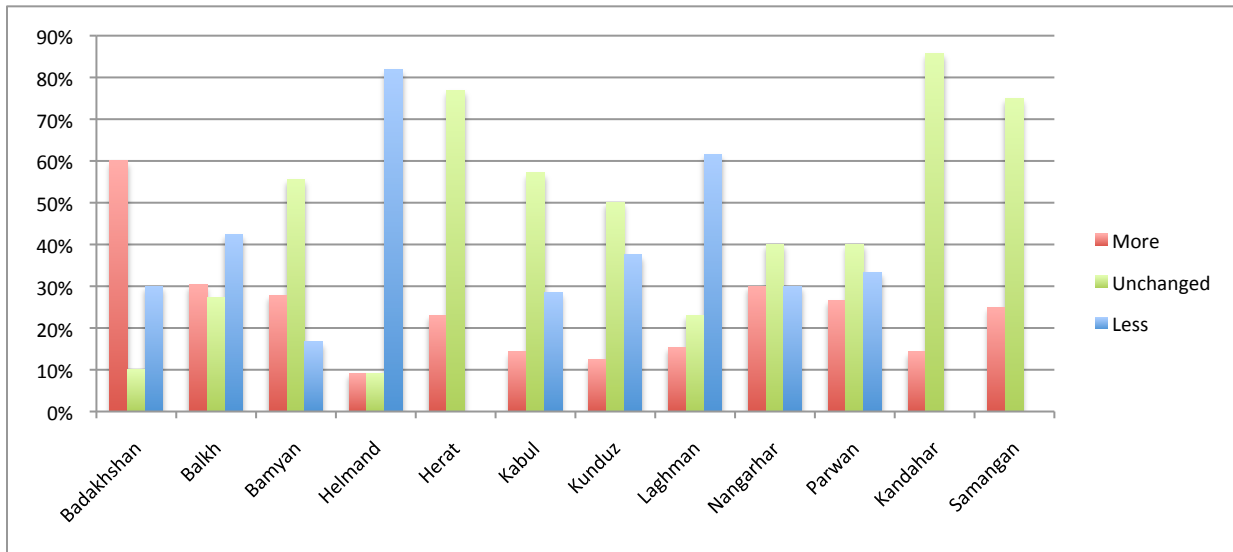
Figure 19: Number of Women Working Compared to Four Months Ago – Women’s View



n=427 women

From the men’s perspective, only in Badakhshan a higher number of women are working outside the home compared to four months ago. In most other provinces, according to the men, the situation regarding work for women outside the home remains unchanged (Figure 20). The broad sentiment among both men and women across the 12 provinces is that the fewer number of jobs for women is largely a function of fewer jobs in general.

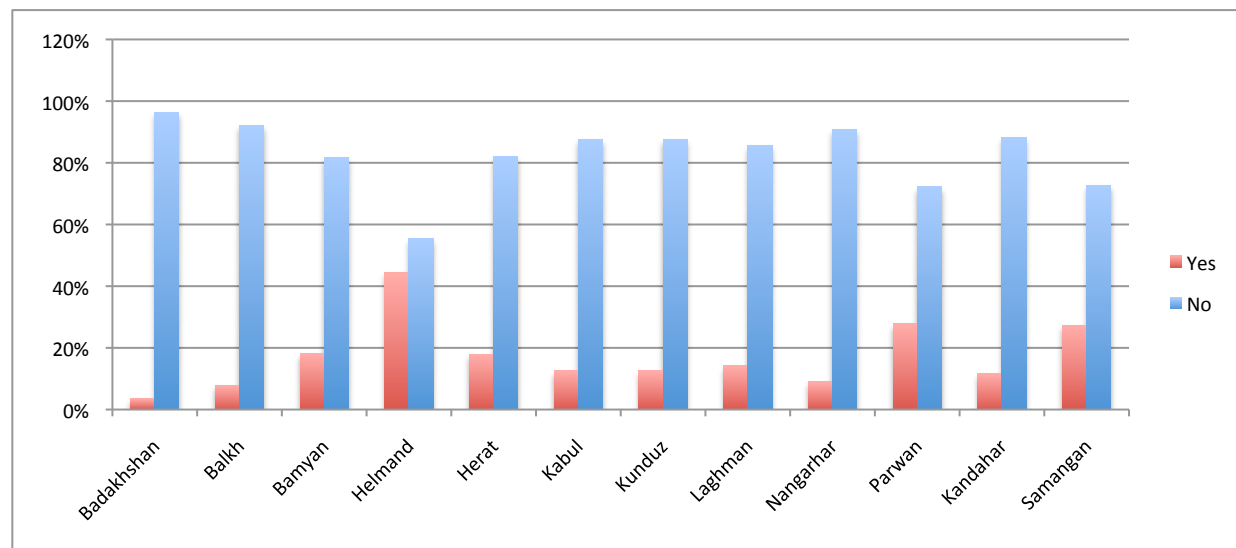
Figure 20: Number of Women Working Compared to Four Months Ago – Men’s View



n=149 men

Very few women have considered quitting their jobs on the account of changes in the security conditions. There are relatively higher numbers of women who have at least thought about quitting employment in Bamyan, Helmand (over 40%), Herat, Parwan, and Samangan (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Have You Considered Quitting Your Job Because of Worsening Security? – Women

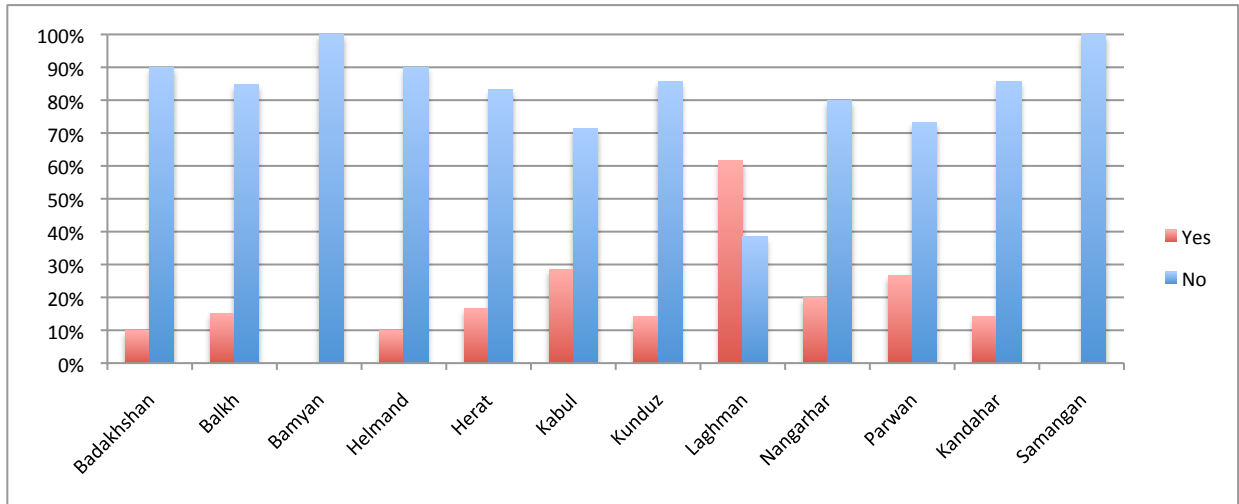


n=353 women

The responses from the men to the question of whether or not they have considered quitting their job are very different from the women’s. In Helmand where over 40% of women report having considered quitting their jobs (Figure 21), only 90% of the men have never considered quitting (Figure 22). Also notable in Figure 22 is the very high number of men (over 60%) who have considered quitting their jobs on the account of concerns for worsening security. In Helmand, women claim that they know of a high number of women have lost their jobs or stopped working due to worsening security. This claim is not shared by the men in Helmand, however. In a similar contrast, a higher number of men report that they

know of people who have stopped working due concerns for security, a claim that is not shared by the women.

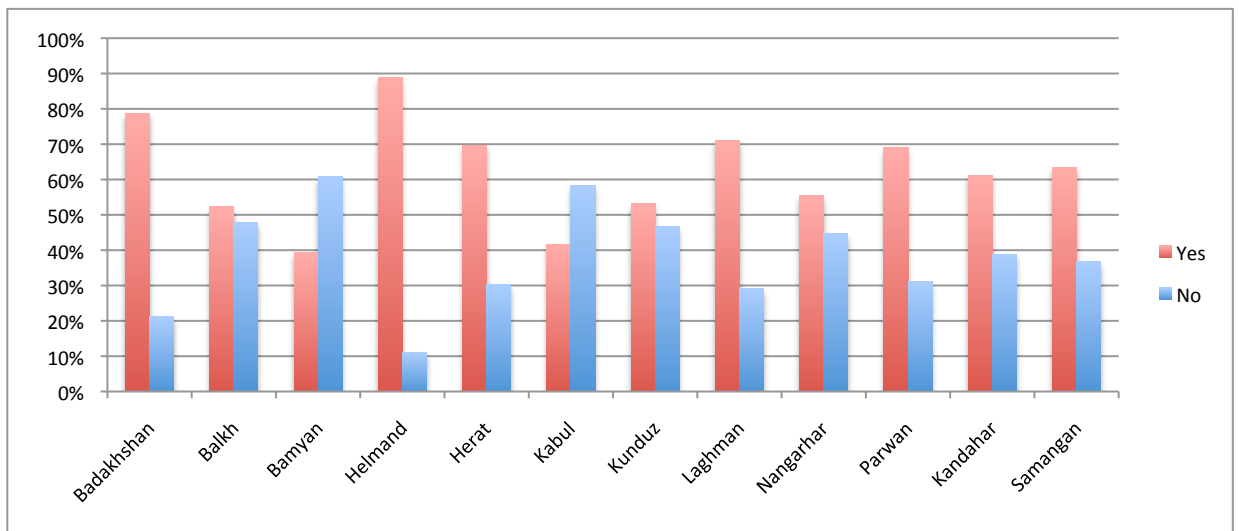
Figure 22: Have You Considered Quitting Your Job Because of Worsening Security? – Men



n=146 men

An overwhelming majority of the women think that the justice system protects women’s rights (Figure 23). Bamyan and Kabul are notable exceptions where over 50% of the women feel that the justice system does not protect women’s rights.

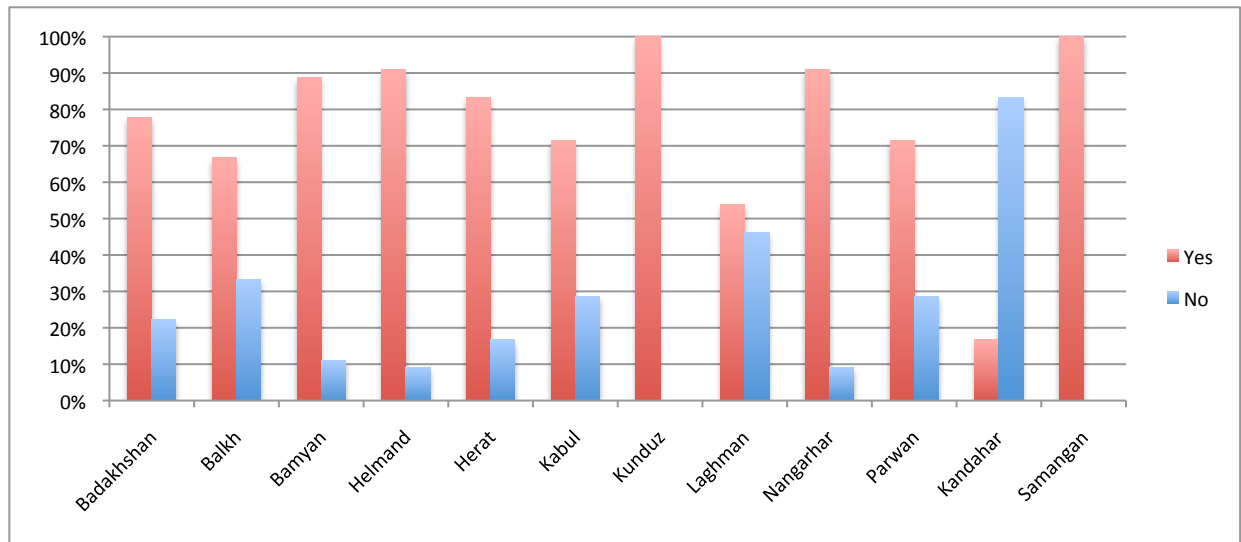
Figure 23: Does the Justice System Protect Women’s Rights? – Women’s View



n=416 women

The men’s view of the justice system protecting women’s rights is much more positive than the women’s (Figure 24). A notable finding from the men’s responses is Kandahar where over 80% of the men think that the formal justice system does not protect women’s rights. This negative view of the justice system is also shared by the men in Balkh (over 30%), Laghman (around 50%), and Parwan (around 30%).

Figure 24: Does the Justice System Protect Women’s Rights? – Men’s View



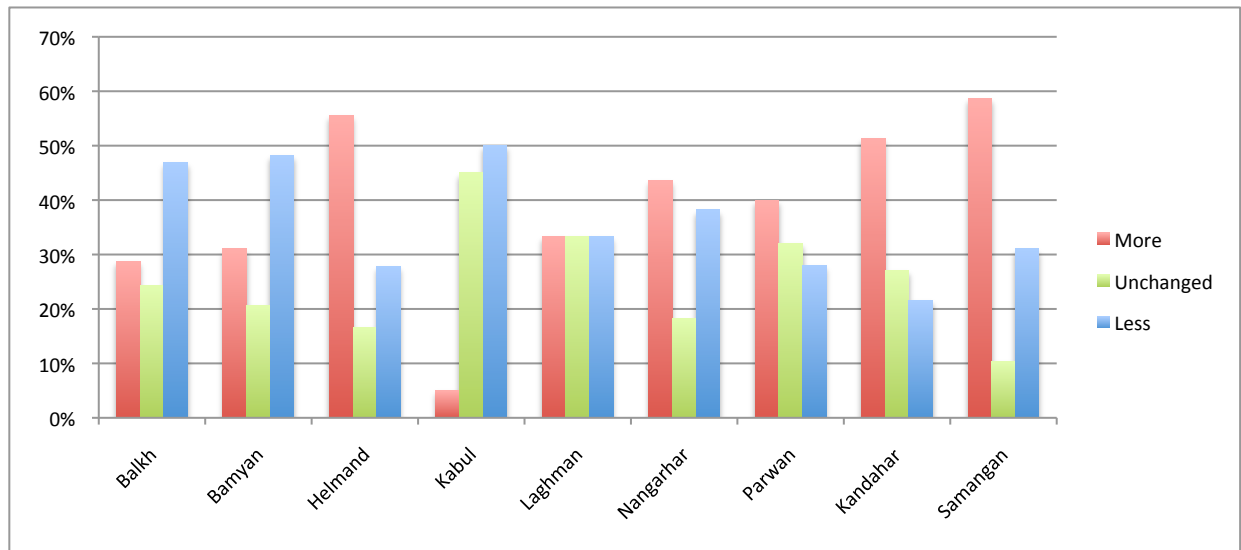
n=144 men

The findings from this round of monitoring lead us to conclude that in most provinces, violence against women has increased compared to the previous cycles. But in some monitored provinces women are evenly divided on the question of increase in violence against women.

In Balkh the majority of the women surveyed felt that there was less violence against women than four months ago. Given the categories of women interviewed and surveyed, this may be a function of the level of awareness by the women. Those who participated in focus group discussions were drawn mostly from the less educated and less aware where as the key informants tended to be women active in various facets of public life. An additional point to make is that the graphs in this section are not statistically significant. Making conclusive statements about whether or not violence against women has increased or decreased should thus be based on representative sampling of the women, a task beyond the scope of this monitoring.

Similarly, in Bamyan and Kabul, around 50% of the women feel that there is less violence against women than four months ago. Alarminglly, the majority of the women in Helmand, Nangarhar, Kandahar, and Samangan feel that violence against women has increased since four months ago (Figure 25).

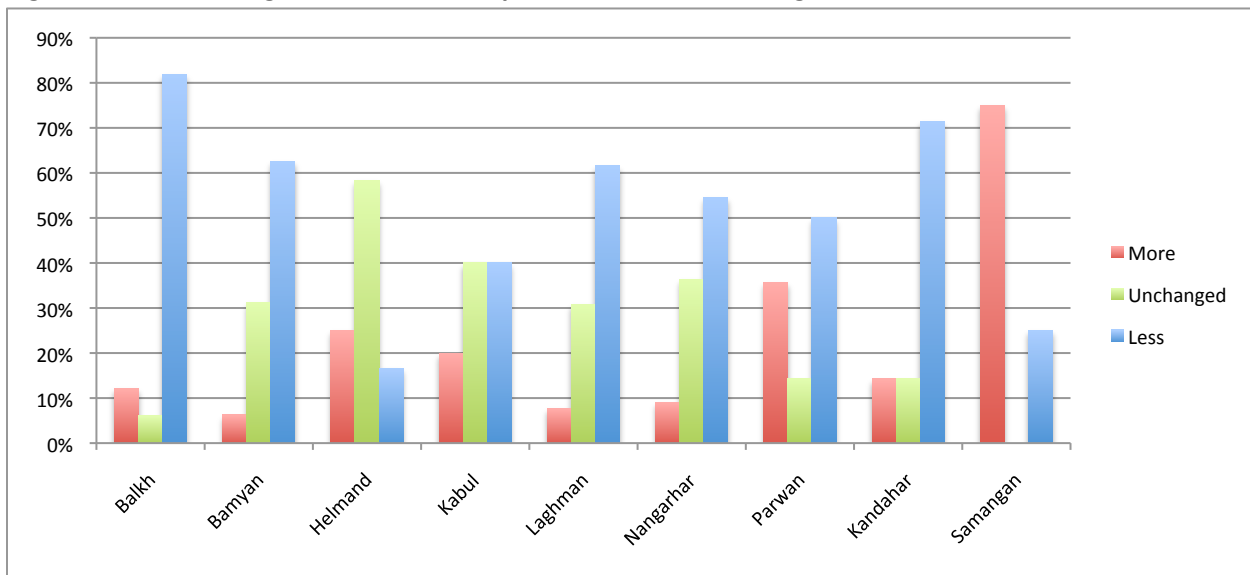
Figure 25: Violence Against Women Compared to Four Months Ago – Women’s View



n=311 women

In major contrast to the women, significantly higher percentages of men in Balkh, Bamyan, Laghman, Nangarhar, Parwan, and Kandahar report that there is less violence against women since four months ago (Figure 26). In Samangan over 70% of the men feel that violence against women has increased since four months ago.

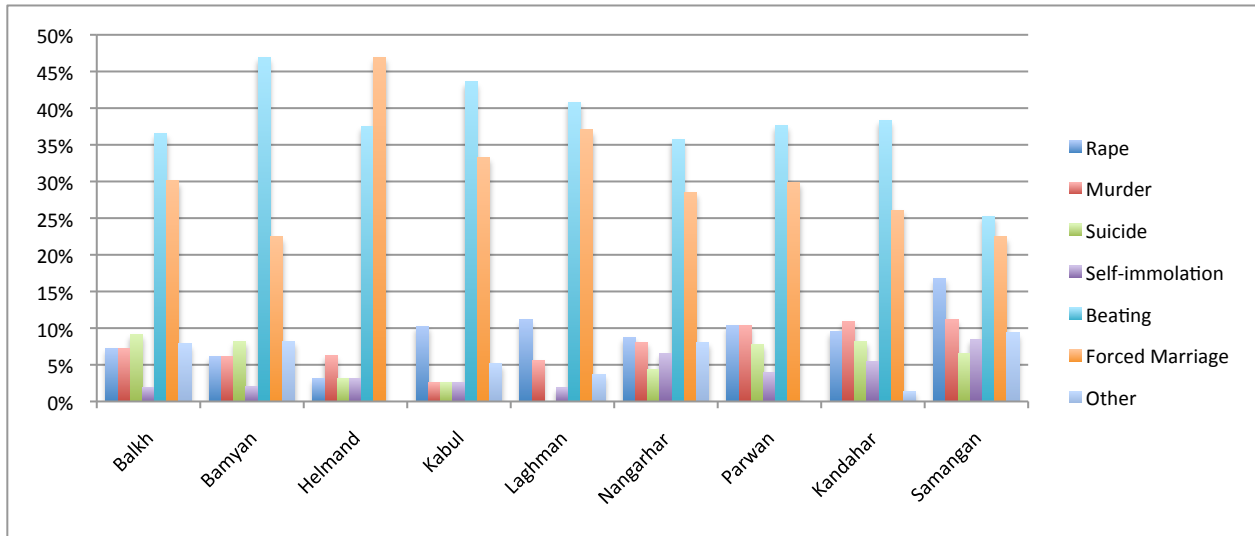
Figure 26: Violence Against Women Compared to Four Months Ago – Men’s View



n=115 men

Women were asked to list the most common types of violence against women. Figure 27 provides the percentages of the responses.

Figure 27: Common Types of Violence Against women



n= 321

The list includes physical abuse and beating (36%) and forced under-aged marriages (29%) as the most common types of violence against women.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The security transition scheduled to be complete by the end of 2014, the failure to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement between Afghanistan and its international allies until September 2014, the lengthy process of the presidential elections, and the general political uncertainty that set in soon after the first round of presidential elections in April 2014 have been clearly detrimental to the women in all 12 provinces covered in Cycle 4. While there are differences in views about women's security in different provinces, the net impact of the uncertainty in all provinces has been negative. Laghman was the only province where women indicated that the security situation had improved. In a few places the situation has remained unchanged but in most others it has deteriorated.

ANSF are held in high esteem in all 12 provinces for their effectiveness during the two rounds of presidential elections. Afghans came out in large numbers to vote regardless of their views on the ability of ANSF to provide security. Many Afghans expressed gratitude toward ANSF for the protection during the elections and later felt pride in the ability of their own security forces in providing protection.

A key underlying concern for all women and some men in the 12 provinces is economic uncertainty and the loss of many jobs due to the transition. Without jobs, many feel that domestic violence against women will increase due to general economic hardship. Without jobs for women outside the home, many women will be forced to return to unpaid and underappreciated domestic work. Having experienced some degree of economic independence and exposure to public life, many of the women returning to domestic life will do so with changed awareness about their rights and place in society and are thus likely to find it difficult to adjust. Failure to adjust can result in domestic tension and violence against women.

Using the six composite qualitative indicators, combined as appropriate with findings from the quantitative survey, the following statements can be made based on the data collected for Cycle 4:

Overall Security

The overall security situation has deteriorated in most provinces. The main reasons for the general deterioration in all provinces are said to be the uncertainties that followed the presidential elections. Only Herat and Laghman reported improvements compared to Cycle 3. In Bamyan, though Kahmard and Sayghan districts are still considered as unsafe and with much AOG activity, the security situation has remained unchanged. In Dawlatabad (Balkh), Helmand, Nangarhar and Kandahar, heightened AOG activity is described as the main source of insecurity. In Paghman, Kandahar City, Parwan and Samangan, most complaints concerned a rise in criminality including murders, robberies, burglaries, and kidnappings. In Badakhshan, Balkh and Kunduz, the deterioration in security is seen as a combined result of heightened AOG activity and increased criminality.

Access to Work and Public Life

The deterioration in security conditions and the post-transition reduction in development aid funded projects have negatively affected women's access to work and public life most of the provinces. Herat was the only monitored province where women stated that their access to public life had improved due to a decline in harassment of women in public. Women's access to work and public life in Kandahar city, Laghman, and Samangan has remained unchanged compared to Cycle 3. In Kandahar and Laghman

there were no reports of harassment of women in public. In Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Helmand, Kabul, Kunduz, Nangarhar and Parwan, women stated to have witnessed a decline in employment opportunities and less access to public life as a result of not working. Women's access to public life is especially limited in Kunduz due to a serious deterioration of the security situation.

In Badakhshan, Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Jalalabad and Samangan religious leaders are said to be generally supportive of women working outside the home. However, most of those who support women working outside the home limit their support to women working in health and education sectors, and occasionally government agencies. Opinions on women working for NGOs are overwhelmingly negative. In Helmand and Kandahar, the religious leaders in general are against women working outside the home. In Kunduz the opinions of the religious leaders on women working outside the home are divided.

In Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Nangarhar, and Samangan women stated to be satisfied with the attitude of their male colleagues, described as mostly professional and cordial. In Kunduz and Helmand, women's opinions about comfort at the workplace were divided. In Bamyan and Laghman women said they were not happy with the attitude of their male colleagues.

Access to Services (Health and Education)

Though access to services such as health or education has not changed drastically over the last four months, a number of limitations remain. There continue to be complaints about the quality of services provided by health centers and the school system with problems such as a shortage of medicines, inadequate infrastructure, and long distances to schools and clinics creating challenges for the users of these services. The general deterioration in security and increase in criminality has exacerbated the difficulty in access to these services. Increasingly parents are deciding against sending their daughters to school for fear of insecurity or criminal activity in their areas.

Access to Justice

Access to justice remains a challenge for the women. Societal conservatism, unfair and unequal treatment of women by some formal justice system officials, and corruption within the judiciary remain the three main impediments to access to justice for the women. Jalalabad and Samangan are the only provinces where the interviewees stated that women's access to justice to has improved.

In almost all provinces women who seek justice outside their homes are either punished by their families or banished from their communities. The corruption and abusive or unhelpful attitude of some justice officials often deters women from seeking justice through formal mechanisms. As a result, many women increasingly seek help through customary justice system mechanisms, which often treat women unfairly or unequally. Informal justice is common in the more conservative communities such as Paghman, Sorkhrod, and Helmand.

Violence Against Women

The continuous anxiety about a post-transition rise in unemployment and poverty among many poorer families was exacerbated by the irregularities and uncertainties of the elections and the aftermath. These developments are pointed to by many of the women as a key contributor to the increase in domestic violence against women. Laghman is the only province where violence against women is said to have decreased due to more order and security in the province compared to previous cycles of monitoring. In Badakhshan, Bamyan, Kabul and Samangan there have been no changes in violence

against women. In Balkh, Helmand, Herat, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, and Parwan violence against women is said to have increased significantly.

Almost all violence against women is of a domestic nature. The most common types of violence against women are physical abuse, murder, forced and underage marriages, and divorce with no settlement. In Herat, one key indicator of the rise in violence against women, or women's reaction to violence, has been the rise in the number of self-immolation and suicide.

Women in Current Affairs

Women's participation and enthusiasm during the first round of the presidential elections and the provincial council elections was followed by relatively high levels of participation in the second round of presidential elections. However, the delay in deciding on the outcome of the presidential elections resulted in much disappointment and demoralization among the women. Many of the women even claimed that by the time of the second round of the presidential elections, they had already decided not to participate.

The percentage of female candidacy for provincial councils is unchanged between 2009 and 2014, at around nine percent. However, the reduction in the female quota for provincial councils from 25 to 20 percent may be related to the reduction in the total percentage of female provincial council representatives from 27 in 2009 to 21 percent in 2014.

Women's participation in formal peace talks remains limited. Many of the women felt that having nine female members at the High Peace Council is more symbolic than representative or useful. Most women also feel that having so few women in the High Peace Council is perhaps intended not to alienate the more conservative AOGs with whom peace is being sought. At the same time, there is broad sentiment among the women that women should play a more central role in peace negotiations to ensure that women's needs are addressed and their rights protected.

Table 1 is a summary of the conditions in the 12 provinces based on the indicators used for monitoring.

Table 1: Women’s Security During May – August 2014

	Overall Security	Women in Public Life	Access to Services (Health & Education)	Access to Justice	Violence Against Women	Women in Current Affairs
Badakhshan	The situation has deteriorated compared to the previous cycles. There are concerns about heightened criminal activity, higher levels of AOG presence in the districts, and the unhelpful attitude of local Afghan National Police personnel.	Access has deteriorated over the last four months. Employment opportunities are fewer than before due to a drop in development aid activity since the transition. There are some reports of women being mistreated or harassed at work.	Access to health and education is limited by insufficient numbers of health and education facilities. Some schools have been closed and many girls have stopped going to school due to threat letters against girls attending school.	Access to justice remains limited though unchanged compared to four months ago. There are complaints about the way in which justice officials treat cases involving women.	No significant changes have occurred regarding the extent and types of violence against women. Women, more than men, suffer from psychological traumas such as extreme anxiety and depression.	There were high levels of participation by women in the elections with support from their communities. There are complaints about competent women not being appointed to senior government positions.
Balkh	The situation has deteriorated compared to the previous monitoring cycle. There have been a higher number of terrorist attacks and more criminal activity. There is general satisfaction with the attitude of ANSF toward women. Views on ALP are divided.	Employment opportunities for women have declined. There are no complaints of harassment outside the home. Women who work with men are generally satisfied with the attitude of their male colleagues.	Access has remained the same compared to four months ago. Communities are generally supportive of women becoming educated. There are insufficient high schools for girls in rural areas, limiting girls’ education to beyond the ninth grade.	Access to justice has not changed over the last four months. The behavior and the attitude of judicial institution officials and the police are described as very bad, especially towards women seeking justice.	Violence against women has increased compared to the previous cycle. The increase is attributed to economic hardship of many families, caused in part by the transition.	There were high levels of participation by women in the elections with support from their communities. There are fears among the women about what peace with AOGs might mean for women’s freedoms and rights.
Bamyan	The overall security situation has not changed in the last four months except for one explosion in Bamyan center during the elections.	There has been a general decline in employment opportunities for women since the transition. No cases of harassment at work or in public spaces are reported by women.	Access to health remains unchanged but limited due to long distances and the rough terrain, particularly during winter.	Women’s access to justice has not changed compared to the previous cycle but remains limited. The judiciary is described as not helpful and in many cases corrupt. The police are described as generally helpful to women.	Violence against women in Bamyan has not changed compared to the previous cycle. Almost all violence involving women is of a domestic nature. No cases of underage marriages were reported.	Despite worries about the potentially negative consequences of peace, people are generally optimistic about women’s contribution to the peace process. There is fear about possible loss of gains for women if peace is made with AOGs.

	Overall Security	Women in Public Life	Access to Services (Health & Education)	Access to Justice	Violence Against Women	Women in Current Affairs
Helmand	The situation has deteriorated compared to the previous cycle. There is the heightened AOG activity and travelling to districts is much more limited than in the past.	No change compared to the last cycle. Employment opportunities for women are fewer than before due mainly to the negative economic impact of the transition on the local economy.	Access to health and education remains unchanged but very limited.	Fewer women approach the formal legal system than four months ago. There are no formal legal or judicial institutions in most districts.	Violence against women has increased compared to four months ago. The number of women escaping from home has increased significantly in the last few months.	Some feel strongly that women should be more involved in the peace process. The participation of women in the two rounds of elections is seen as significant.
Herat	The situation in Herat has improved compared to the previous cycle. People are still concerned about target killings and the extent of harassment. Perceptions of ANSF are largely positive. The views about ALP are mixed.	Access to work and public life has improved due to better security. Women feel more comfortable in public spaces than four months ago because of the relative decline in harassment.	Total number of girls in schools has increased compared to four months ago. Vocational training centers also report increases in the number of students. There are no complaints about access to health.	There has been no significant change in women's access to justice though there are a number of ongoing challenges, including insufficient number of female justice officials.	Violence against women has increased and more cases of suicide by women are reported. There are increases in the numbers of murders and suicides, with allegations that many of the murders are disguised as suicides.	The women are very satisfied with the extent of active female participation during the elections.
Kabul	Overall security has deteriorated since the last cycle. There are more armed burglaries, robberies, and theft.	Fewer employment opportunities for women in the last several months. Community and religious leaders are supportive of women working in health and education sectors, but not for NGOs. There are no reports of harassment at work.	Access to health and education remains unchanged. There continues to be much dissatisfaction about the quality of health services. Also complaints about insufficient number of schools for older girls.	Access to justice has not changed compared to the previous cycle. Women generally do not seek help from the formal justice system in cases of domestic violence. Women are satisfied with the way police handles their cases, but unhappy with the judiciary.	Violence against women has remained unchanged since the previous cycle. The arrest of the criminal gang that had been terrorizing people in Paghman and targeting women for sexual assault was a recurring topic in interviews and focus group discussions.	The high levels of participation in the elections by the women was followed by general disappointment about the uncertain aftermath of the second round of elections.

	Overall Security	Women in Public Life	Access to Services (Health & Education)	Access to Justice	Violence Against Women	Women in Current Affairs
Kandahar	Overall security has improved in the centre compared to four months ago, though during the month of Ramadan there were more attacks on government officials' offices in Kandahar city. In the districts AOGs are very active.	Access to work has not changed compared to the previous cycle. The public opinion about working women is divided with some religious leaders being openly against women working outside the home. There are no complaints by women about being harassed outside the home.	Access to health and education in the centre of the province has not changed compared to the previous cycles. In the other districts girls' access to education and women's access to health services are more limited than before the transition.	Access to justice remains poor but has not changed compared to the previous cycle. The women continue to express dissatisfaction about the biased attitude of formal judicial organizations towards them.	Cases of violence against women in Kandahar, especially in urban areas, has increased compared to the past.	There is optimism about the potential role for women in the peace process.
Kunduz	The security situation has deteriorated compared to the previous cycle. There are more crimes and heightened AOG activity. The views on ANSF and ALP are divided. Some view the ability of the national security forces to provide security during the elections as proof of capability.	There are fewer employment opportunities for women compared to the previous cycle. The ability of women to travel to and from work is more limited than the last cycle due to worsening security increased harassment in public spaces.	Access to health and education has remained largely the same since the previous cycle. The main hindrances to girls' access to education are criminality and harassment.	Access to justice in Kunduz has not changed compared to the previous cycles. Those living in rural or remote areas have little or no access to formal justice. Those living in urban areas have access, but complain about the unfair treatment of women in the formal legal system.	There is more violence against women than the previous cycle. There are more reports of escapes by women from home and early marriages of young women.	Female candidacy has declined due to higher minimum requirements for candidacy and fears of insecurity. There is stronger resistance in Kunduz, compared to other provinces, to women's involvement in peace negotiations.

	Overall Security	Women in Public Life	Access to Services (Health & Education)	Access to Justice	Violence Against Women	Women in Current Affairs
Laghman	The security situation is much better than the last cycle, due partly to close collaboration between the people and ANSF and ALP. Both Alishing and Alingar districts remain dangerous, however.	Access to work has not changed since the last cycle. The province has yet to recover from the unemployment caused by the transition. Men generally have a positive opinion of women working in health or as teachers, but not other professions.	Access to health and education has not changed compared to the previous cycle. People have more access to health clinics now than they did a year ago though the facilities and services remain poor.	Women's access to justice has not changed over the last four months. There remain a number of complaints about the formal legal system, however.	Violence against women has decreased compared to the last cycle. This decrease is attributed to improvements in general order and security. Women are still being used as offerings to settle disputes.	Some interviewees were optimistic about women's potential contributions to peace, especially after the transition.
Nangarhar	The security situation has deteriorated since the previous cycle. The main causes of insecurity are terror attacks and other forms of AOG activity, which have intensified since the elections. There is general satisfaction with the attitude of ANSF toward women.	There are reports of threats against women who remain active in public life. Reductions in aid funding and development projects are said to have eliminated many jobs for women.	Access to education and health is more limited than four months ago. The decrease in number of girls attending schools and less access to health services are predominantly caused by the worsening security.	There are complaints about corruption and the bad attitude of justice officials toward women. The number of women who approach the formal justice system remains very limited due to a high degree of conservatism and a lack of faith in the ability of the justice system to protect women.	Violence against women has increased compared to the previous cycle, due largely to economic hardship of many families.	The shared view among most of the women about women in politics is largely negative. The women want peace in their community but do not actively discuss participation in or their contribution to the peace process. Negotiating peace with AOGs is seen with much suspicion because of the potential loss of current freedoms and rights.

	Overall Security	Women in Public Life	Access to Services (Health & Education)	Access to Justice	Violence Against Women	Women in Current Affairs
Parwan	The security situation has deteriorated compared to the previous cycles, particularly after the elections. Some order returned after the security officials met and decided to disarm many of those armed after the first round of elections and Mol launching an operation against criminals in Parwan.	Employment opportunities for women have decreased. The increase in insecurity has limited women's access to public life drastically.	Access to health and education has not changed since the last cycle but remains limited. Increase in insecurity has had some negative impact on girls' access to education but is not seen as a major deterrent.	Access to justice in has not changed compared to the previous cycle. The formal judicial system is described as corrupt and biased against women.	Violence against women has increased compared to the previous cycle. Apart from poverty and narcotics dependency, forced and underage marriages are identified as main drivers of violence against women.	Many people appear not to be aware of the role that could be played by women in the peace process. Some are cautiously optimistic about the potential of involving women in the peace process.
Samangan	The security situation has deteriorated compared to the last cycle. The main change occurred after the second round of the presidential elections. Criminality has increased and there have been more thefts, murders, and violent settling of personal conflicts.	Women's access to work and public life has not changed over the last four months. The women are satisfied with their access to public life but complain of uncertainties caused by the political situation and economic hardship.	Access to education and health for has not changed compared to the previous cycle.	Since the transition access to justice in Samangan is said to have improved.	Violence against women in Samangan has not changed since the previous cycle.	The women are optimistic about their participation in the peace process but complain that they are largely excluded.

Recommendations

Many of the recommendations below are from the previous rounds of monitoring. They remain as recommendations for this report since, to date, they have not been addressed. Also, given the period of inactivity from April 2014 elections until September 2014 presidential inauguration, all these recommendations should be revisited in the context of a newly transitioned government in Afghanistan and the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Government of Afghanistan:

Government

1. Remain committed to implementing Afghanistan's Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, drafted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with cooperation from AWN and UN Women.
2. Set up a monitoring mechanism involving Afghan civil society organizations to monitor the implementation of UNSCR 1325 with regular reports to, and consultation with, the government.
3. Honor Afghanistan's ratification of, and commitment to, all international protocols on women's rights.

Afghan Local Police (ALP)

4. Continue efforts to institutionalize community-based policing by involving women in ANSF to improve community-ANP relations.
5. Sustain and increase gender sensitive approaches in ANSF by appointing qualified female personnel to senior positions including Gender Units in military and civilian sections of ANSF.
6. Train ALP, ANA and ANP in human and women's rights, from the lowest to the highest ranks.

Gender-based Security Provision

7. Intensify government and donor-aided mentoring and exchange programs within ANSF and between provinces as a means for cross-learning from best practices of gender-based security provision in Afghanistan.

Family Response Units (FRUs)

8. Increase resources for family response units, including experienced female personnel, adequate infrastructure for handling cases of violence against women, documenting violence cases, and accompanying abused women to hospitals and courts.

Access to Justice and Violence Against Women

9. Provide adequate institutional and financial support, with civil oversight, for currently existing women's shelters and increase the number of women's shelters throughout the country.
10. Facilitate pro-bono consultations by newly trained lawyers and law students for women subjected to violence.
11. Increase women's access to legal advice supporting newly trained lawyers to work in the more remote districts throughout the country.

Women in Government

12. Increase the number of women in decision making roles in the ANSF, formal justice system including the Supreme Court, and foreign services.
13. Mainstream, through empowerment, gender units and gender focal points at all ministries and provide adequate resources and additional training on gender issues involving male co-workers.
14. Enable, empower, and support the Ministry of Women's Affairs to play a leading role in institutionalizing gender-based policy making at all ministries, working closely with each ministry's gender unit and gender focal point.

Women in Public Life and Economic Development

15. Protect public spaces for women by maintaining and expanding vocational, skills development, and business development programs for women.
16. Ensure that programs and projects under PROMOTE, the USAID multi-year strategic funding stream to support Afghan women, pay sufficient attention to outputs and outcomes of their interventions and account to the government and civil society in an ongoing basis on how the interventions are meeting PROMOTE's objectives. As much as possible, PROMOTE programming should be linked to the objectives and priorities of the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA).

Women in Community Development

17. Support and expand the involvement of women's rights and other civil society organizations in local governance.

NATO / ISAF:

NATO / ISAF Draw Down

18. Fears of a complete withdrawal of the international security forces from Afghanistan, looming during Cycles 3 and 4 of this monitoring program, are mostly alleviated with the signing of BSA. However:
 - Benchmarks should be developed in consultation with women's rights and civil society organizations to ensure women's security is not negatively affected in the post-2014 transition period.
 - The benchmarks should be linked to pre-existing policies and commitments such as UNSCR 1325, Afghanistan's National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, and NAPWA.

Women in ANSF

19. Integrate women's rights and human rights contents in all training modules for ANSF and at the Police Academy.
20. Continue and intensify efforts to increase the number of women in ANSF and engage with communities to build trust and generate support for women in ANSF.
21. Institutionalize gender-sensitive community-based policing within ANSF through such initiatives as Female Engagement Teams, Mixed Engagement Teams where feasible, and Mixed Civilian/ANSF Engagement Teams in full cooperation Afghan cultural support teams.

Gender Capacity within NATO and Member States

22. Maintain the pool of experienced international and Afghan male and female gender experts with sufficient support, including budget and specific benchmarks, to ensure the full integration of a gender perspective in programming by NATO and member states in Afghanistan.

Structural Consultation with Civil Society Organizations

23. Continue and intensify engagement with national civil society and women's rights organizations in the development of the "Review of the practical implications of UNSCR 1325 for the conduct of NATO-led operation and Mission".

International Donors:

Development Programming

24. Maintain existing levels of funding on women-centered programming in Afghanistan as a means to strengthen the gains already made and to ensure longer term sustainability.
25. Incorporate monitoring and periodic evaluations of multi-year women-centered programming in such initiatives as USAID's PROMOTE.
26. Continue women-centered economic development programming to provide employment and income generating opportunities for women as means for women to remain in public spaces.
27. Coordinate efforts to mainstream women and women's rights in development programming, the peace process, and the inauguration and establishment of the new government in Afghanistan.
28. Continue efforts to work through the Tokyo Accountability Framework provisions on women's rights, Afghanistan's National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and other relevant policies on women's rights.

Aid Transparency and Public Accountability Mechanisms

29. Support the Government of Afghanistan in developing a publicly accessible National Aid Information Center.
30. Support civil society and women's rights organizations in assuming monitoring and oversight roles in the allocation and use of development funds in Afghanistan.

Financial and Technical Support for Women-led and Civil Society Organizations

31. Maintain the provision of financial and technical support for women's rights and women-centered organizations.
32. Support the creation of community-based monitoring mechanisms involving human and women's rights organizations and traditional, locally-based, community associations.

Further Research

33. **Gender relations and regional diversity:** Establish, through in-depth assessment, why the outcome of the security transition in some provinces has been more positive than other provinces, why some provinces have experienced little or no change after the transition, and

whether there are lessons to be learned from these cases for critical provinces such as Kunduz.

34. **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 Timetable

Province	District	FGDs	Visit Date
Badakhshan	Fiazabad	2 Female and 1 Elder	05/23/2014
Balkh	Balkh	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	07/12/2014
	Dawalatabad	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	07/12/2014
Bamyan	Bamyan	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	07/03/2014
Helmand	Lashkargah	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	08/18/2014
Herat	Herat and Injil	2 Female and 1 Elder	05/09/2014
Kabul	Paghman	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	08/14/2014
Kunduz	Kunduz	2 Female and 1 Elder	05/18/2014
Laghman	Mehtarlam	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	07/04/2014
Nangarhar	Jalalabad	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	06/21/2014
	Sorkhrod	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	06/21/2014
Parwan	Charekar	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	08/20/2014
Kandahar	Kandahar	2 Female, 1 Elder and 1 Literacy Training Center	08/18/2014
Samangan	Aiybak	2 Female and 1 Literacy Training Center	19/07/2014
<i>12 Provinces</i>	<i>14 Districts</i>	<i>28 Female and 24 Male FGDs</i>	

Appendix 2: Key Informants and Focus Groups Codes

Badakhshan

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-NGO-1	Head of Organization
2	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager for rights and protection of women
3	KI-M-NGO-3	Manager
4	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
5	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
6	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
7	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
8	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
9	KI-F-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
10	KI-M-VTC-2	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
11	KI-F-VTC-3	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
12	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
13	KI-F-PW-2	Head of BCWO Prominent Women
14	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
15	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
16	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
17	KI-M-ANP	Manager of Human Right Department
18	KI-M-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
19	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
20	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
21	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
22	FGD-WW	FGD with Working Women
23	FGD-HW	FGD with Housewives
24	FGD-CE	FGD with Elders and Religious Leaders

Balkh

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

Bamyan

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KIF-F-NGO-1	Manager for rights and protection of women
2	KI-F-NGO-2	Representative of an NGO
3	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
4	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
5	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
6	KI-M-ANP	Director of Human Rights
7	KI-F-FRU	Director of Family Response Unite
8	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
9	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
10	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
11	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
12	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
13	KI-F-BW-3	Business Woman
14	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
15	KI-F-PW-2	Prominent Women
16	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
17	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
18	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
19	KI-M-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
20	KI-F-VTC-2	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
21	FGD-CE	FDG with Elders and Religious Leaders
22	FGD-HW	FDG with Housewives
23	FGD-WW	FDG with Working Women
24	FGD-LIT	FDG with male literacy course participants

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-GH-1	Government Employee
4	KI-F-GH-2	Government Employee
5	KI-F-GH-3	Government Employee
6	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
7	KI-F-PW-2	Member of Provincial Council
8	KI-F-PW-3	Member of Provincial Council
9	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
10	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
11	KI-F-Gov-3	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-M-ANP	Manager of Criminal Department
17	KI-F-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
18	KI-F-VTC-2	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
19	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
20	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
21	FGD-CE	FDG with Elders and Religious Leaders
22	FGD-WW	FDG with Working Women
23	FGD-HW	FDG with Housewives
24	FGD-LIT	FDG with male literacy course participants

Herat

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

Nangarhar

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-PW-1	Member of Provincial Council
2	KI-F-PW-2	Member of Provincial Council
3	KI-F-PW-3	Member of Provincial Council
4	KI-F-PW-4	Member of Provincial Council
5	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
6	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager
7	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager for rights and protection of women
8	KI-F-NGO-3	Manager
9	KI-F-NGO-4	Manager
10	KI-M-NGO-5	Manager
11	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
12	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher of VTC
13	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
14	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
15	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
16	KI-M-FRU	Member of Family Response Unite
17	KI-M-ANP	Director of Human Right Department
18	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
19	KI-F-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
20	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
21	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
22	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
23	FGD-WW	FDG with Working Women
24	FGD-HW	FDG with Housewives
25	FGD-CE	FDG with Elders and Religious Leaders
26	FGD-LIT	FDG with male literacy course participants
Sorkhrod District		
1	KI-F-PW-1	Prominent Women
2	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
3	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
4	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher of VTC
5	KI-F-VTC-3	Teacher of VTC
6	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
7	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
8	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
9	KI-M-ANP	Head of Human Right Department
10	KI-M-FRU	Manager of Family Response Unite
11	KI-F-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
12	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
13	FGD-LIT	FDG with male literacy course participants
14	FGD-WW	FDG with Working Women
15	FGD-HW	FDG with Housewives
16	FGD-CE	FDG with Elders and Religious Leaders

Kandahar

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-F-BW-3	Business Woman
2	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager NGO
3	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager of Human Right Department
4	KI-F-PW-1	Prominent Women
5	KI-F-PW-2	Prominent Women
6	KI-F-PW-3	Prominent Women
7	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
8	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
9	KI-F-BW-3	Business Woman
10	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
11	KI-F-VTC-2	Teacher of VTC
12	KI-F-VTC-3	Teacher of VTC
13	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
14	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
15	KI-M-MED-3	Director of Health Clinic
16	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
17	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
18	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
19	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
20	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
21	KI-M-LIT	FDG with male literacy course participants
22	FGD-WW	FDG with Working Women
23	FGD-HW	FDG with Housewives
24	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders

Kunduz

No	Code	Affiliation
1	KI-M-ANP	Member of Human Right Department
2	KI-F-FRU	Manager of Family Response Unite
3	KI-F-PW-1	Prominent Women
4	KI-F-PW-2	Member of Provincial Council
5	KI-F-PW-3	Prominent Women
6	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
7	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
8	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
9	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
10	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
11	KI-F-NGO-1	Manager
12	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager
13	KI-F-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
14	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
15	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
16	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
17	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee (Principal of the School)
18	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
19	FGD-WW	FDG with Working Women
20	FGD-HW	FDG with Housewives
21	FGD-CE	Elders and Religious Leaders

Laghman

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

Paghman

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

Parwan

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

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-M-NGO-1	Manager
5	KI-F-NGO-2	Manager
7	KI-F-VTC-1	Manager of a Vocational Training Center
8	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
9	KI-F-VTC-1	Teacher of VTC
10	KI-F-GHS-1	Government Employee
11	KI-F-GHS-2	Government Employee
12	KI-F-GHS-3	Government Employee
13	KI-F-BW-1	Business Woman
14	KI-F-BW-2	Business Woman
15	KI-F-BW-3	Business Woman
16	KI-F-Gov-1	Government Employee
17	KI-F-Gov-2	Government Employee
18	KI-F-Gov-3	Government Employee
19	KI-M-MED-1	Director of Health Clinic
20	KI-M-MED-2	Director of Health Clinic
21	KI-M-FRU	Manager of Family Response Unit
22	FGD-CE	FDG with Elders and Religious Leaders
23	FGD-HW	FDG with Housewives
24	FGD-WW	FDG with Working Women