

**AFGHANISTAN**  
**MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT**  
**November and December 2012**

The UK is part of a 50-nation coalition to prevent international terrorists, including Al Qaeda, from again using Afghanistan as a base from which to operate, threatening our security and that of the region.

The Government has committed itself to keeping Parliament informed about developments in Afghanistan on a monthly basis. This twenty third report covers progress in November and December 2012. It reflects the combined assessment of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development.

The Rt Hon. William Hague MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs

**Overview**

On 5 December the Foreign Secretary, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Hina Rabbani Khar and the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Dr Zalmay Rassoul, held a trilateral meeting to discuss the Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process and how to strengthen their joint efforts to address extremism and advance regional peace and stability. They were joined by Masoom Stanekzai, Head of the Joint Secretariat to the High Peace Council. This meeting was the third in a series of trilateral discussions that have taken place this year.

On 19 December the Prime Minister announced that the UK would reduce force levels in Afghanistan to around 5,200 by the end of 2013. This reduction is in response to improving conditions on the ground and the growing capability of Afghan security forces. The Prime Minister had previously said that the UK will not have any troops in a combat role in Afghanistan after 2014. However, the UK will maintain a long-term partnership with Afghanistan post-2014 through trade, diplomacy and development, as well as training mentoring and funding of Afghan security forces. The Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) will close as troops drawdown (alongside other PRTs, as requested by the Afghan Government). We are working to ensure that the substantial progress made since 2007 on security, development, justice and governance is sustained and continues long after our departure.

The Prime Minister visited Afghanistan from 20 to 21 December. He met British forces and civilian staff to thank them for their efforts and to receive an update on the progress of transition.

The Secretary of State for International Development visited Kabul and launched the latest phase of UK assistance to the Afghanistan Revenue Department (ARD). With just £35 million of UK aid since 2004/05, the ARD has increased government revenue from \$250 million to more than \$2 billion in 2011/12. The Secretary of State for International Development also met President Karzai to underline the UK's long-term commitment to Afghanistan. She made clear the importance of the role of women in securing a prosperous and stable future for Afghanistan.

On 11 December, the Secretary of State for International Development and FCO Senior Minister, Baroness Warsi, discussed with UK Parliamentarians how best to help improve the position of women and girls in Afghanistan. At this meeting they reiterated the UK Government's long-term support to women and girls in Afghanistan.

On 17 December the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2082 (2012), making further steps to ensure the sanctions regime is well equipped to support the Afghan peace and reconciliation process. The new resolution includes a more flexible travel ban exemption for individuals proposed by the Afghans to participate in peace talks. This permits these individuals to undertake unlimited travel between specified locations for a maximum nine month period. The resolution also encourages greater cooperation between the UN Sanctions Committee and the Afghan Government.

Tranche Four of transition was announced by the Afghan Government on 31 December. The 12 provinces added in this tranche are mostly in the north and interior of the country. One district in Helmand (Now Zad) is included in this tranche. This is a further sign of progress in Afghanistan and a reflection of the improving capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces. As a result the ANSF will take the lead in providing security for nearly 90% of the Afghan population.

On 10 January 2013 the International Development Committee (IDC) published DFID's response to their report on *Afghanistan: Development Progress and Prospects after 2014*. Both the IDC report and DFID's response can be found here:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/international-development-committee/Publications/>

## **Strengthening the Afghan State**

### **Political**

Progress towards the development of the electoral reforms necessary prior to the forthcoming elections in 2014 continued. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) Structure and Duties Law was considered by both Houses of the National Assembly, with the *Meshrano Jirga* (the Upper House) passing the bill in a revised format from that considered by the *Wolesi Jirga* (the Lower House). Members of the two Houses will now form a joint commission to establish a compromise between the two versions of the bill. Debate around the wider Electoral Law continued, with dispute resolution mechanisms an area of particular contention. Both laws will need to be passed by early April 2013 if they are to be implemented in time for the election.

At the request of the IEC, a United Nations Needs Assessment Mission in support of preparations for the elections arrived in Afghanistan for an initial scoping visit between 27 November and 5 December. The second phase will begin in the coming weeks.

On 6 November, the national budget for the fiscal year beginning 21 December was submitted to the *Meshrano Jirga*. Following the necessary procedure, on 27 November it was passed to the *Wolesi Jirga* with the advisory comments of the Senators. The budget was rejected by the *Wolesi Jirga* on 22 December. Ministries cannot begin any new development projects until a new budget is passed. The MPs also rejected the *Qatia*, an end of year Government expenditure statement which must be passed alongside the budget. They have summoned seven Ministers to the *Wolesi Jirga* to account for having spent less than 50% of their departmental budgets.

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The Foreign Secretary attended the NATO Foreign Ministerial meeting on 4-5 December. On the second day there was an ISAF session where Foreign Ministers discussed progress in security and NATO's commitment to Afghanistan after combat troops leave post 2014.

### Reconciliation and Reintegration

The Afghan High Peace Council had a successful visit to Islamabad on 12-15 November. We welcome the joint statement, which included clear agreement that the Taliban should take part in the peace and reconciliation process and sever all links with Al Qaida and other international terror networks.

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### **Governance**

At the end of November the Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, an anti-corruption organisation jointly funded by the UK and Denmark which is managed by international and Afghan experts, released the report of their public inquiry into the Kabul Bank crisis. The report looked at the circumstances surrounding the almost \$1 billion fraud and issued recommendations to recover the lost funds, prosecute the perpetrators and avoid a repeat of the fraud. The extensive media coverage internationally and in Afghanistan will help reassure the Afghan people that corruption is being investigated thoroughly. The Special Case Tribunal publically convened between 17 and 2 November to hear evidence from the

prosecution and defence on the Kabul Bank case. The proceedings were then adjourned pending further enquiries by the prosecution and deliberation on the evidence. We expect a verdict in January.

The UK-Nordics funded *Tawanmandi* strengthening civil society programme agreed to fund a further 27 civil society organisations (CSO) under its second round call for proposals for projects and core grants. The programme is helping to strengthen CSO's ability hold the Government to account, thus helping ordinary Afghans influence the course of their development. The successful CSOs cover 18 provinces. They will take forward projects on access to justice, peace building and conflict resolution, human rights, anti-corruption, media, gender, youth and disability. 20 of the 27 organisations receiving grants will either work on promoting women's rights or have this agenda as one of their main project objectives.

In Helmand the local infrastructure, health and education sector line Ministries finalised their funding bids for the DFID-funded Strengthening Provincial Administration and Delivery (SPAD) budgeting process for next financial year, with the support of advisers from the UK-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). The assistance line Ministries receive through SPAD is helping them to respond to the needs of, and provide better public services for, local communities in Helmand.

### **Counter Narcotics (CN)**

The Afghan Deputy Minister for CN, Haroon Sherzad visited the UK in December. He called on Ministers and officials from the Home Office and FCO and gave the opening address at the Ditchley conference. He also visited The Ley Community, which is a drug and alcohol treatment centre in Oxford. His visit provided a good opportunity to re-state the UK's continuing support for the Afghan Government in developing and implementing realistic and targeted counter-narcotics policies, whilst discussing preparations for transition. In the coming months we will be helping the Ministry for Counter Narcotics develop and deliver a more sophisticated international engagement strategy.

### **Economic and Social Development**

During her recent visit to Kabul the Secretary of State for International Development launched the latest phase of UK assistance to the Afghanistan Revenue Department (ARD). With just £35 million of UK aid since 2004/05, the ARD has increased government revenue from \$250 million to more than \$2 billion in 2011/12. In December the ARD began to engage with the Afghan Ministry of Justice to pave the way for a new VAT law. The introduction of VAT in 2014 is one of the key benchmarks set out by the International Monetary Fund's Extended Credit Facility and will help the Afghan Government raise more revenue to pay for vital basic services, as well as reduce dependency on international aid over time.

The Development Secretary also visited the Helmand PRT where she saw how, alongside our international PRT partners, UK assistance is helping to improve local health services in the province. She visited the Kartelagan Comprehensive Health Centre where, after significant previous investment, UK funding has recently helped to improve security at the site by improving the boundary walls.

During November the UK supported the delivery of two training workshops for District Health Officers, helping them to improve their management and monitoring of district healthcare provision, thereby improving the quality of healthcare service for the future. Also with UK assistance, construction work began on a new school in Washir, a remote district of north-west Helmand.

In November 55 women participated in skills development training through the *Zardozi* project. UK aid through this project is helping women to make and sell craft goods for market, improving their chances for better livelihoods. Another 74 women took part in training to strengthen civil society organisations engaged in protecting and promoting women's livelihoods through the same programme. Over the life of the project the UK will increase the incomes and employment opportunities for more than 6,000 women.

Reporting published in November has shown that between July and September almost 4,000 people enrolled in savings groups through the Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme. This was co-funded by the UK, the World Bank and the Canadian, Swedish and Danish development agencies. This brings the total number of Afghans enrolled in savings groups to more than 45,000, of which more than 21,000 (47%) are women. Savings groups provide people without jobs or income access to affordable credit to start a business. The groups also give them a legitimate credit history so they can engage in formal business activities in the future.

## **Security**

In 2012 year-on-year enemy initiated attacks fell in Afghanistan for the second consecutive year. Levels of recorded violence also continued to decrease in November and December, although this pattern is in accordance with seasonal norms. As observed in previous years, this downward trend is likely to continue throughout the winter months as the cold weather and lack of vegetation cover restricts the insurgents' freedom of movement. Nevertheless, reporting has indicated that the Taliban senior leadership intends to sustain an enhanced level of activity throughout the winter and, as we have seen in recent weeks, we expect the insurgency to continue in their efforts to carry out attacks and assassination attempts against high-profile targets. This is part of an insurgent tactic intended to undermine popular confidence in the Afghan government and reverse the security gains that have been made.

On 21 November a suicide bomber detonated near ISAF's Headquarters in Kabul's Green Zone. The blast killed two Afghan security guards and a second bomber. This was the second such attack in the Green Zone in the last three months. Two days later a suicide vehicle borne attack struck the Governor's compound in Wardak Province, Regional Command (East). The strike resulted in the deaths of two members of the ANSF and one Afghan civilian. More than sixty others were injured and nine buildings damaged.

On 6 December Assadullah Khaled, Head of the National Directorate of Security, was injured in a suicide attack in Kabul. Following initial treatment in Afghanistan Khaled is now recuperating in a US hospital. The Taliban have claimed responsibility for the assassination attempt. This attack was followed by two assassinations on 10 December: Colonel Haji Mohammed Musa Rasul, the Nimroz Provincial Chief of Police was killed in a blast while travelling from Herat to Nimroz and Najia Siddiqi, the acting Director of Provincial Women's Affairs, died in a drive-by gun attack in Laghman Province. We condemn these murders and those who planned and perpetrated them in the strongest possible terms. As General Allen,

Commander of ISAF, said ‘this violence against government figures is an affront to peace ... ISAF stands with the brave leaders of Afghan society, who will not be deterred by these violent acts’.

One member of the UK Armed Forces was killed on operations in Afghanistan in the reporting period. On 11 November a Captain from 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland died after he received gunshot wounds at Forward Operating Base Shawqat in Nad-e Ali. This incident was assessed to be an insider attack.

### Force Levels

President Karzai has stated many times that the ANSF should have full security responsibility across Afghanistan by the end of 2014. This Afghan objective is fully supported by NATO and is being delivered through the transition process. Huge progress has been made in developing the ANSF since the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan was established in 2009. As transition continues they have been taking increasing responsibility for delivering their own security. With the announcement of the fourth tranche of transition in December, the Afghans will soon have lead security responsibility in areas home to roughly 90% of the Afghan population. In central Helmand – which includes the UK’s area of operations – the ANSF are now firmly in the lead in the populated areas, increasingly with the ability and confidence to operate independently.

In December the UK completed its planned drawdown of 500 personnel from Afghanistan. Our enduring force level currently stands at 9,000, although this does not include temporary surges, Special Forces or their enablers.

On 19 December the Prime Minister announced in Parliament that further reductions to our force levels this year would leave around 5,200 troops deployed on operations in Afghanistan at the end of this year. This draw down is entirely consistent with the strategy agreed at the NATO Lisbon Summit in 2010. The announcement followed discussions by the National Security Council and takes into account military advice, conditions on the ground and the pace of transition.

As ANSF capability continues to improve, the focus of our efforts is evolving from one based primarily on combat to a training, advisory and assistance role. In tandem, our mentoring levels in Afghanistan are currently switching from company to battalion level activities and by the end of 2013 UK forces will no longer need routinely to mentor the ANSF below brigade level. We will continue to support them up to and beyond 2014 but as transition continues it is right that our role and those of our ISAF allies gradually shifts and that our force levels reduce.

### France

In December France completed its redeployment of combat forces in Afghanistan. This followed an election campaign pledge made by President Hollande. The timing and number of troops drawn down is a matter for individual countries in discussion with ISAF. France continues to support the development of the ANSF by retaining an advisory presence in Afghanistan.

### Sangin Peace Jirga

On 20 November Dr Salahuddin Rabbani, Chairman of the High Peace Council, attended the Sangin Peace Jirga at an event supported by the US Ambassador and UK Deputy Ambassador. Helmand Provincial Governor Naim, who drove to Sangin, hosted the event assisted by the Helmand Provincial Peace Council. 350-400 tribal elders, mullahs and religious scholars attended.

The event not only demonstrated commitment from Kabul but also established an agenda of conflict resolution, which will ultimately be led by the Afghan Government and the ANSF in one of the most contested districts in Helmand.

### Cricket Tournament

Following the success of the Helmand Olympics in September, the Helmand 20/20 Cricket Tournament was held from 25-28 November. Eight teams representing the ANSF, ISAF and local citizens competed. The Task Force Helmand team, who were invited to participate by the ANSF, were plucky losers in the first round. The final was concluded with a display of national pride in Lashkar Gah Stadium. Masses of Afghan flags were waved enthusiastically by players and spectators. The tournament was enabled by ISAF but delivered by the ANSF with the District Chief of Police for Lashkar Gah holding the security lead for the event.

**Table One: ANSF Growth to 20 November 2012**

	<b>Target Strength (November 2012)</b>	<b>Actual Strength* (November 2012)</b>	<b>November Target Met</b>
<b>ANA:</b>	187,000	174,645	NO
<b>AAF:</b>	5,800	5,872	YES
<b>ANP:</b>	157,000	148,499	NO

\* In October 2012 ISAF reported that the ANA and ANP had reached their *surge* targets of 187,000 and 157,000 respectively. These figures include all personnel who have been recruited, but not all have yet been inducted at the training centres. By February 2013 all recruited personnel are expected to have been inducted into their respective Service with all personnel fully trained, equipped and fielded by the end of 2013.

### Attrition Rates

**Table Two: ANSF Attrition Rates**

	<b>Target Monthly Attrition</b>	<b>Actual Monthly Attrition</b>	<b>Nov/December Target Met</b>
<b>ANA:</b>	1.4%	3.5%	NO
<b>AAF:</b>	1.4%	1.7%	NO
<b>ANP:</b>	1.4%	1.2%	YES
<b>Uniformed Police</b>	1.4%	1.0%	YES
<b>Border Police</b>	1.4%	1.8%	NO
<b>National Civil Order Police</b>	1.4%	1.8%	YES

High attrition rates within the ANA continue to represent a risk to the sustainability of the future force. There are a number of factors that can affect attrition rates throughout all branches of the ANSF. These range from the time of the harvest, poor leadership and individual factors such as pay, leave and food allowances.

The Afghan Government, supported by ISAF, are working to tackle the attrition rate. At the national level the Afghan chaired, Joint Attrition Working Group (JAWG) meets weekly. It reports bi-monthly to a steering committee. The JAWG has been in existence for over two years and while initially focused on leave and leave transportation, is now considering a wider range of factors to lessen attrition levels.

In a further attempt to reduce attrition within the ANA and as part of continued efforts to ensure proper leadership, the Afghan Ministry of Defense has formed an evaluation committee to assess over 500 army commanders and if necessary replace unsatisfactory leaders from Battalion through to Corps level. The Ministry has also authorised increased use of contracted flights to meet the challenge of homesickness among ANA soldiers serving in locations far from their home towns and villages.

### Violence Levels

**Table Three: Security Incidents**

Type of incident	Definition	Change from October 2012	Comparison with November 2011
Security incidents	Enemy action and explosive hazards, both executed attacks and ‘potential’ attacks (e.g. an IED found and cleared)	↓ Fall in attacks	↓ Fall in attacks
Enemy initiated attacks	Attacks executed by insurgents (This does not include ‘potential’ attacks)	↓ Fall in attacks	↓ Fall in attacks
Complex and Coordinated attacks	Attacks that exhibit deliberate planning conducted by multiple hostile elements, against one or more targets and involving at least two distinct classes of weapons system.	↓ Fall in attacks	↑ Rise in attacks

**Table Four: International Contributions to ISAF**

Country	Contribution	% of Total
US	68,000	66.7%
UK	9,500*	9.3%
Germany	4,318	4.2%
Italy	4,000	3.9%
Poland	1,770	1.8%
Spain	1,606	1.6%
Georgia	1,561	1.5%



Romania	1,549	1.5%
Australia	1,094	1.0%
Turkey	998	1.0%
Others (40 nations)	7,615	7.5%
<b>Current Total: 102,011</b>		
<i>Above numbers are indicative of troop contributions as at 3 Dec 2012, actual numbers fluctuate daily.</i>		
<i>Source: ISAF</i>		

\*The most recent ISAF placemat is dated 3 December 2012. It does not reflect the drawdown of 500 personnel to UK force levels. As at 31 Dec 2012 the UK's enduring force level in Afghanistan is 9,000 Service personnel.

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
**January 2012**