

**AFGHANISTAN**  
**MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT**  
**June 2012**

The UK is engaged in Afghanistan as 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 nineteenth report covers progress in June 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**

In June the UK continued to support job creation and private sector development in Afghanistan, including in Helmand. Through our support to Mercy Corps more than 1,500 male and female students graduated from technical and vocational education and training courses in June. The IMF board approved the first review of Afghanistan's programme of support, but more work needs to be done by the Afghan Government to take forward key reforms. This approval is vital for giving donors the confidence to make long-term funding commitments at the Tokyo Conference. Full details of outcomes of the Tokyo Conference will be covered in the July report.

The Kabul Ministerial Conference on the Istanbul Process took place on 14 June. The Foreign Secretary attended, together with Foreign Ministers from the region and supporting countries. The Conference endorsed key confidence building measures in security, development and economic affairs. The Secretary of State for International Development visited Afghanistan between 30th June and 3rd July to press the Afghan Government to commit to key reforms in the run up to the Tokyo conference.

An extraordinary session of Parliament was held on 21 June to debate governance and corruption issues. Over 150 MPs and Senators attended, even though the session was held during the Afghan Parliament recess. This was the first time that such a session had taken place.

Due to Parliamentary timings, this month's report is being published earlier than usual due to Parliamentary recess. As a consequence, statistics on violence levels and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) were not available in time to be included in this report.

Updated ANSF figures information on both will be included in the next report, which will be a single report for July and August to be published when the House returns from summer recess.

## **Political**

The Foreign Secretary visited Afghanistan on 13-14 June. In a meeting with President Karzai on the eve of the Kabul Ministerial, he applauded the President's leadership in securing the cooperation of Afghanistan's neighbours to work together to ensure sustainable security and prosperity for the whole region. He also met with the Chair of the High Peace Council Chair Salahuddin Rabbani and Head of the Joint Secretariat Mohammad Masson Stanekzai. In his meeting the , where the Foreign Secretary reiterated the UK's enduring commitment to Afghanistan.

On 14 June, the Foreign Secretary attended the Kabul Ministerial Conference on the Istanbul Process, at which Foreign Ministers from the region and supporting countries endorsed key Confidence Building Measures in security, development and economic affairs. The UK announced its support to regional initiatives in counter-narcotics, counter terrorism, disaster management and joint chambers of commerce.

The Foreign Secretary also visited Pakistan in June. He met with a range of political leaders including Pakistan's President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and opposition leaders. The Foreign Secretary took the opportunity to discuss the strength of bilateral UK-Pakistan relations and the UK and Pakistan's mutual interests in promoting stability in the region, ahead of the Kabul conference.

## **Reconciliation and Reintegration**

Implementation of the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP) in Helmand was bolstered in June through coordination between the Helmand Provincial Peace Council and representatives of the Afghan National Security Forces. They held a shura tribal meeting (shura) and a training seminar on 25 June. These were the first of their kind in Helmand. These events represented a commitment from the ANSF to promote and support the implementation of APRP in Helmand.

## **Strengthening the Afghan State**

### **Governance**

The Secretary of State for International Development visited Kabul and Helmand between 30th June and 3rd July. During the visit he impressed on President Karzai and senior Afghan ministers the need for clear commitments to governance and financial reform in order to secure long term support from donors at the Tokyo Development Conference on 8th July. Mr Mitchell also visited travelled to Helmand to see the impact of UK aid and visited a Mercy Corps project providing vocational training to Afghan men and women. He also met and met representatives of women's rights groups to hear first-hand how UK assistance is helping to tackle violence against women.

At President Karzai's behest, an extraordinary session of Parliament was held on 21 June to debate governance and corruption issues. Over 150 MPs and Senators attended, even though the session was held during the Afghan Parliament recess. Government and judiciary figures also attended. This was the first time that such a session had taken place.

On 23 June, President Karzai formally appointed four new members of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC). The Committee independently monitors anti-corruption efforts undertaken by the Afghan Government, donors and civil society organisations. The new members are two Afghans and two international experts. Members of the international community welcomed this announcement, which signals the important role that the MEC is playing in the Afghan Government's anti-corruption efforts.

## **Economic and Social Development**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board approved the first review of Afghanistan's programme (the Extended Credit Facility) on 29 June. This represented key progress made by the Afghan Government in undertaking tough macroeconomic actions and is a positive signal ahead of the Tokyo Conference, which will set out a mutual vision of sustained development assistance and reforms in Afghanistan over the coming years. Continued progress on recovering assets following the Kabul Bank crisis in late 2010 remains paramount for the international community. The UK Government will continue to support the Afghan Government's efforts, through strengthening the financial sector and ensuring effective privatisation of the New Kabul Bank.

On 19 June the International Development Committee visited the UK Conflict Pool-funded Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute's (ATVI) temporary campus in Lashkar Gah. Over the summer ATVI are delivering operations and maintenance (O&M) training to GIRoA Afghan Government officials and private sector students at the campus. Plans are underway to establish a permanent campus in Lashkar Gah with the support of the Provincial Governor. The continued push for capacity-building activity saw the Specialist Team of Royal Engineers (under Operation Tethys) engaged in 'train the trainer' classes for ATVI engineers. The Specialist Team passed on their expertise to line departments and trained Helmand and Arghandab Valley Authority (HAVA) officials. This was to enable them to lead on the 2013 canal repairs. Works on the Asia Development Bank/DFID supported Bolan to Chan-e-Anjir Road, which is phase one of the Lashkar Gah to Gereshk Road, were completed.

Mercy Corps held graduation ceremonies for 1,586 male and female students completing DFID supported vocational training courses in Lashkar Gah, Nad-e Ali, Nawa, Marjah and Gereshk. The Roshan/MPaisa project, which is supported by the PRT, saw its first mobile phone salary payments (via credit exchanged at the bank for cash) to Afghan Local Police in Nahr-e-Saraj. Initial reports suggest recipients are seeing an approximately nearly a 30 per cent increase in their salaries thanks to the more direct payment method. The Afghan mobile phone company AWCC also visited Garmsir and Khaneshin to explore options for network expansion in Helmand.

The 28 July Private Sector Development summit in Delhi attracted over 220 companies from 33 countries. The event proved a successful forum for substantial discussion of private investment opportunities in Afghanistan. The number of companies present was encouraging and the Afghan ministerial presence was a sign of the value the Afghan government places on the bilateral business relationship with India. However, little of substance in terms of policy

was added to either the Istanbul Process or the upcoming Tokyo Conference with the main outcome being India showcasing its position as Afghanistan's largest private investor.

## **Rule of Law**

### National:

The EUPOL Police Staff College delivered 34 courses to 431 students (around 4,000 senior police have now been trained at the College). The Criminal Justice Taskforce Prosecution Directorate investigated and prosecuted 56 serious cases. It sent 61 cases to the CJTF Primary Court, 56 to the CJTF Appeal Court and 39 to the Supreme Court for final decision. Eight officers from National Directorate of Security (NDS) Department 40 attended a two week programme on Crime Scene Photography and were presented with cameras and other equipment.

### Helmand:

Female Afghan police officers continued to deliver presentations to school children on the danger of Improvised Explosive Devices. Participants in the Female Police Scholarship programme graduated on 21 June. Afghan personnel at the Lashkar Gah police training centre, which currently hosts 141 trainees, are now taking on started to planning and training Afghan personnel instead of responsibilities from international advisers. A course on 'Cooperation of Police and Prosecutors' was delivered to enhance relationships and processes in this critical area. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) has agreed to increase the national prison guard quota by 1,000. Initial indications are that 150 prison guards will go to Helmand Provincial Prison (HPP). The PRT have continued to provide training for NDS guards and investigators at HPP.

## **Counter Narcotics**

Afghan Counter Narcotics Minister Zarar Osmani attended the UN meeting in New York in June to help launch World Drugs Day and further raise the profile of work underway to tackle the Afghan drugs trade. A key part of his visit was his participation in the UN General Assembly Thematic Debate on Drugs and Crime.

## **Security**

### Operations

In late June Task Force Helmand provided support to Operation *Maahi Buzurg* ("Big Fish"), a major Afghan and Regional Command (South West) operation in northern Nahr-e Saraj. Its aim was to establish an enduring Afghan security presence, in the form of an Afghan Local Police site, and to extend Afghan government influence into the area. UK forces provided a screening and guarding role for the operation and in parallel supported a major Afghan clearance operation further south to extend the security zone around the important town of Gereshk. Despite some expected Taliban resistance, the initial phases of both operations have been successful. Insurgent activity has been disrupted, US forces have begun

establishing the Afghan Local Police site and there have been discussions between Afghan district officials and local residents, which would have been inconceivable even a few months ago.

### Violence Levels

The effects of the winter have now completely subsided. An early end to the poppy harvest has allowed insurgents to rejoin the fight earlier than in previous years and in June nationwide recorded violence levels were higher than figures reported for June 2011. Nationally, Combined Force (ANSF and ISAF) operations continue at a high tempo, particularly in the south, south west and east which have experienced the greatest number of violent incidents. We will continue to track violence levels in Afghanistan, but at this stage of the summer it remains too early to draw finite conclusions on the state of the insurgency.

On 22 June seven insurgents wearing suicide vests attacked the Spozhmai Hotel on the shores of Lake Qargha to the west of Kabul. At least 15 Afghan civilians were killed in the attack, including eight hotel staff. The attack led to a swift and efficient response from the ANSF, who were supported by ISAF. The Taliban later claimed responsibility for the attack, declaring that it was targeting western-style decadence. All seven insurgents were killed in the clearance operation and one member of the Afghan security forces was killed in action. Despite continued insurgent intent to conduct a violent campaign in Afghanistan the majority of their attacks are unable to have not achieved their tactical objectives. However, recent high profile incidents, such as that at the Spozhmai Hotel, demonstrate repeated efforts by the insurgency to try to distort overall perceptions of security in Afghanistan.

On 4 June the US confirmed that Abu Yahya al-Libi, al Qaeda's second in command, was killed along with 14 militants in a drone strike in North Waziristan in Pakistan. An important figure within the terrorist network, Libi is believed to have played a critical role in al Qaeda's planning against the West.

### Civilian Casualties

In addition to a number of insurgents, 18 Afghan civilians were reported killed in an ISAF airstrike in Baraki Barak district in Logar province on 6 June. General Allen, Commander ISAF, visited the site of the attack on 8 June to apologise for the unintended civilian deaths and offer personnel condolences to the Provincial Governor, Parliament leaders, provincial council leadership and village elders. In addition, General Allen met with President Karzai to discuss the matter. Subsequently ISAF issued additional guidance regarding the use of air delivered munitions in close proximity to civilians. An investigation into the incident is underway. has started.

Despite tragic and deeply regrettable incidents such as that the 6 June attack in Logar, the protection of the Afghan civilian population remains at the core of our military strategy in Afghanistan. The most recent United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) report published on 31 May recorded a 21% decrease in the total number of civilian casualties in the first four months of this year, when compared to the same period in 2011. UNAMA has attributed 79% of all civilian casualties to anti-Government elements with 9% attributed to ANSF and ISAF. A further 12% of civilian casualties were unattributed. We will continue to take considerable steps to prevent civilian casualties.

## Equipment

The first of the British Army's new Foxhound vehicles arrived in Afghanistan in June. They are currently undergoing final testing in the Helmand desert before being deployed on operations later in the year. Foxhound provides unprecedented levels of blast protection for a vehicle of its size and weight. It has been specifically designed and built in the UK to protect against the threats our troops face in Afghanistan. Foxhound, being lighter and smaller than other protected vehicles, brings a new capability to the Army and is ideal for soldiers operating in mentoring and partnering roles. The vehicles are agile and versatile and are expected to be a mainstay in the British Army for years to come.

**Table One: International Contributions to ISAF**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
US	90,000	69.6%
UK	9,500	7.3%
Germany	4,701	3.6%
Italy	3,986	3.1%
France	3,279	2.5%
Poland	2,420	1.9%
Romania	1,800	1.4%
Spain	1,596	1.2%
Australia	1,550	1.2%
Turkey	1,272	1%
Others (38 nations)	9,365	7.2%
<b>Current Total</b>	<b>129,469</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<i>Above numbers are indicative of troop contributions as at 15 May 2012, actual numbers fluctuate daily. Source: ISAF</i>		

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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