

CPAU Human Security Project

Quarterly Report: Helmand Province, July - August 2010



Front Cover: *The map depicts the average Human Security score for Lashkar Gah (2.37), Nad-i Ali (0.70) and Garmsir (2.26) in July 2010. Scores closer to 0 represent poor human security, scores closer to 5 indicate good human security.*

Note:

The Human Security Indicators Project was implemented by Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU). Data collection was carried out in 9 districts in 3 provinces in Afghanistan from January – March 2010. The sites include, Kabul Province: Kabul City, Kalakan and Surobi; Kunduz Province: Kunduz city, Imam Sahib and Ali Abad; Helmand Province: Lashkar Gah, Nad-i Ali and Garmsir. Data collection continued in these sites and expanded to 6 other districts in Kandahar Province: Kandahar City, Arghandab and Spin Boldak; Nangarhar Province: Jalalabad City, Surkh Rud and Muhmand Dara. Data from all sites was collected each month from April – August 2010.

This Quarterly Report aims to provide a comparison of three sites in Helmand across the 25 indicators over two months from July – August 2010. The Quarterly Report is based on the Monthly Reports provided for each district. Additional Sectoral Papers focus on analysis and comparison of districts between provinces.

The Human Security Scores outlined in the report **do not** necessarily rank the same number of incidents, nor necessarily use the same respondent groups across indicators. An explanation of the respondent groups and questions asked is available in the Human Security Indicator Methodology Paper.

The scores from 0-5 are also relative to population sizes and are based on ranges outlined in the Human Security Technical Annex. Please note that a score close to 5 is considered to represent a good level of Human Security, a score close to 0 is a very poor level of Human Security.

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1. Human Security Summary

- Human Security in Helmand continues to be dominated by pervasive insecurity, with sharp differences between areas under government control and those under Taliban control. In common with all collected data since the beginning of the Human Security indicators monitoring project, Helmand supports predominantly subsistence livelihoods and the population in general have low levels of education.
- Security in Helmand declined over the quarter, and researchers experienced difficulty accessing rural parts of the province due to the presence of Taliban and the general instability. Even within safer areas of the province, many respondents were too fearful to engage with our researchers: any interaction with obvious strangers could lead to threats and violence from a number of different sources. Although the Taliban do not control some of the areas that they previously did, they still enjoy extensive influence and can travel easily to most government-controlled areas to conduct meetings, deliver threats and carry out killings. Curfews were in place in some areas, both forced and voluntary, with Taliban, police and criminal groups all named as sources of fear.
- Police drafted in from elsewhere in the country had a much better reputation in comparison with police from the local area, and were seen as better trained and less corrupt.
- The movement of people remains largely towards the provincial centre, caused by the growing insecurity in many of the surrounding districts. This is primarily because areas are increasingly controlled by the Taliban, but the situation is exacerbated by the fear of ISAF bombing raids. The influx of people has caused numerous problems, with robbery and harassment increasing and disputes over grazing land for migrating livestock a significant problem. Many residents suspect that newcomers could be Taliban sympathisers. Travel around the province continues to be dangerous, but despite this there was a healthy trade in public transport in all areas.
- The end of the agricultural season and the slowing-down of all economic activity due to the intense summer heat reduced people's optimism about their household situations. This is in line with other economic and livelihood indicators, such as threats to livestock, natural shocks, availability of work and food prices which all decreased from the levels seen in the second quarter.
- Poppy cultivation remained a significant factor in many household incomes, particularly as some farmers were told not to plant maize, which the Taliban use to hide from ISAF patrols. However, this harvest was poorer than expected, and together with the additional taxes levied on the crop by both police and Taliban, caused rural incomes to suffer. The reduction in new NGO projects due to threats directed at employees exacerbated the general reduction in economic security.
- Any successes enjoyed by development projects conducted by local and national government continue to be undermined by a combination of factors including corruption, violence (both insurgent and international forces) and the pervasive fear inherent in such an unstable province
- Work was difficult to come by for many because of a surplus supply of labourers, who travel from the surrounding areas. The families of migrant workers often end up worse off than before, as their remaining lands lie fallow whilst they are away. The intense summer weather and the reduced working hours during Ramadan have lowered the number of hours available for work during the day and consequently the number of ongoing construction projects. Those fortunate enough to find work with NGOs were targeted for additional "taxation" by the Taliban.

2. Quarter 3: Indicator Scores & Analysis

Cluster 1: Personal/Physical security

Cluster 1 Analysis

Security in Helmand declined over the quarter, and researchers experienced difficulty accessing parts of Nad-i Ali and Garmsir due to the presence of Taliban and the general instability. Even within safer areas of the province, many respondents were too fearful to engage with our researchers; any interaction with obvious strangers could lead to threats and violence from a number of different actors. Although the Taliban do not control some of the areas that they previously did, particularly in Nad-i Ali as a result of Operation Moshtarak, they still enjoy extensive influence and can travel easily to most government-controlled areas to conduct meetings, deliver threats and carry out killings.

A curfew was in place in Lashkar Gah, exacerbating the threat that people felt outside their houses after dusk. Respondents cited police, Taliban and thieves as the groups that prevented them from leaving their homes. The imposition of an curfew exacerbated the already strained relations between ANSF and the local population, and incidents of arbitrary detention, harassment and bribery were frequently alleged, as they were in all surveyed sites. This was noted as a particular problem with the local Lashkar Gah police force, who were often characterised as drug addicts. In addition, there were many reports of the police working with Taliban for mutual gain, including one incident where the Gereshk district governor was kidnapped with the alleged collusion of the police. Many respondents claimed that much of the city was under the control of Taliban fighters after daylight hours. The Taliban are feared and their authority respected in equal measure: rumours that they were able to bring down a helicopter in Nawa district reinforce the commonly-held view that they have significant power.

A voluntary curfew was also reported in Nad-i Ali, where the worsening insecurity prevented people from leaving their homes after dark. The Taliban presence reportedly increased, and the atmosphere of lawlessness means that people live in constant fear of threats and killings, not only from Taliban operatives but also from criminals and vigilante groups seeking revenge. While all three district centres enjoyed relative calm, instability increased dramatically only short distances from the centre, and the Taliban enjoyed impunity when destroying government-funded infrastructure, schools and health centres in more remote areas. This is largely due to the high number of ANSF checkpoints around the district centres, which in Nad-i Ali and Garmsir increased significantly over the quarter. General security decreased only very slightly in Garmsir, but the population continued to live in fear, and ANSF continued to take bribes and detain travellers at certain checkpoints. There were also reports of other militia operating in the district¹, and although they have allegedly been equipped through official sources, local people see them as criminal and predatory.

A distinction was made between police officers from the local area and those trained and brought in from Kabul. In Lashkar Gah police from Kabul had a better reputation, although they primarily manned police stations rather than checkpoints, and therefore had less direct interaction with the public. In Nad-i Ali “foreign” police were criticised for their lack of knowledge of local people, and those police operating on the peripheries of the district reportedly extract bribes at checkpoints, despite attempts to improve behaviour. Checkpoints overall were disruptive, although again there was a marked difference between those within the town, which were reported to be a necessary inconvenience, and checkpoints in the outlying areas, where bribery was reported. Police manning checkpoints near the IDP camp to the north of the town evoked particular disdain, and were reported to have taken young boys as they were in Garmsir, where abuse and the practice of *bachabaze* (dancing boys) were common.

¹ Respondents referred to these militia as ‘Arbakai’, although it is unclear whether they stem from the same ideological, political or financial sources as Arbakai in other parts of the country, e.g. Kunduz (see Human Security Quarterly reports: Kunduz).

Threats and *shabnameh* (night-letters) were also widespread, and were apparently delivered by both the Taliban and the border police in Garmsir. A further development in this process during the quarter was that, particularly in Lashkar Gah, killings started to occur without prior warning, increasing the fear and vulnerability that people feel carrying out their everyday activities. Respondents reported that they were unwilling to walk anywhere at night due to such pervasive anxiety.

Official governance in all districts was perceived as remote and corrupt, and many people pointed to bribes paid to officials to avoid poppy eradication as evidence. Arbitrary detention, committed primarily by the ANP, was also reportedly accompanied by payment demands in exchange for the release of detainees. This behaviour reinforced the deep suspicion of all government agencies. Bribery at government offices was universally acknowledged, with many having direct experience of bribes. This impression further undermines the fragile or non-existent trust that most communities have in government, whatever form it takes. However, backing for the Taliban has not benefitted from this, as their behaviour in threatening, killing and destroying local services does not engender widespread support.

Cluster 1 Data

Indicator		Lashkar Gah				Nad-i Ali				Garmsir				
		June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	
1.1	Attacks in district against International and national forces (-)	2.30	-0.13	- ²	-	-24.43	-28.98	-	-	0.47	1.55	-	-	
1.2	Threats by resistance groups (shabnameh: preaching in mosques) (-)	3.62	4.48	-	-	-0.55	-1.90	-	-	5.00	4.80	-	-	
1.3	Threats, intimidation and bribery by ANSF & government (-)	Experienced bribery, extortion, or threats by ANSF & government in the district / province in the last month	3.50	2.25	2.00	-1.50	3.54	2.67	2.67	-0.88	1.59	0.29	1.92	0.33
		Heard about bribery, extortion, or threats by ANSF & government in the district / province in the last month	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.40	0.21	1.32	0.68	0.47	0.00	0.24	0.38	0.38
		Total	1.75	1.13	1.20	-0.55	1.88	1.99	1.67	-0.20	0.80	0.27	1.15	0.36
1.4	Violent clashes injuring/killing civilians (-)	5.00	- ³	-	-	4.48	-	-	-	5.00	-	-	-	
		Q2	Q3		Change	Q2	Q3		Change	Q2	Q3		Change	
1.5	Number of checkpoints (-)	Number of ANSF/military checkpoints	-1.82	-0.63		1.19	2.49	1.01		-1.48	2.41	1.55		-0.86
		Number of insurgent checkpoints	5.00	5.00		0.00	5.00	5.00		0.00	2.58	5.00		2.42
		Total	1.59	2.18		0.59	3.75	3.01		-0.74	2.50	3.27		0.78
Cluster Total		2.85	1.91	1.69	-1.16	-2.98	-6.47	2.34	5.32	2.75	2.47	2.21	-0.54	

² No attacks or threats information was available for August.

³ No civilian casualty data was available for July or August.

Cluster 2: Freedom of Movement

Cluster 2 Analysis

Travel around the province is fraught with danger, but despite this there was a healthy trade in public transport in all areas. Although there were some reports of bribery in the outlying districts, drivers in Lashkar Gah reported that there were no informal taxes and instead just a 10Af formal tax issued by the government. This payment is legal and accepted by drivers.

Schools were generally shut for the summer during the reporting period, with the intense heat also affecting the normal functioning of economic and social services across the province, and the scores for attendance in Lashkar Gah have dropped significantly, albeit from the incredibly high levels seen in the second quarter. Most respondents did, however, note that children can generally attend school without problems, particularly in Lashkar Gah. Some schools have facilities for children from the surrounding areas to live-in and attend school each day, although complaints about the lack of educational resources were widespread. There is a discernable appetite for education and some schools offer small-scale provisions that can help maintain girls' attendance. Although accurate population and school attendance figures were difficult to get, a significant minority of children in Lashkar Gah do not attend school; this is more a consequence of cultural conservatism than of insecurity. Garmsir and Nad-i Ali too offer little in the way of schooling for girls, but attendance is restricted by both profound conservatism and pervasive security threats including mines and police harassment as well as Taliban activities; problems that affect almost everyone due to the extensive travel that school attendance involves.

Despite reports that in the coming months new hospitals are opening and closed hospitals will be reopening within Lashkar Gah, healthcare in the province as a whole remains overstretched and of poor quality. Corruption in the system is rife, with reports of doctors frequently referring patients to their own private practices rather than treating them in government-funded clinics, and this was noted as a major factor in the persistence of low quality care and under-developed public health systems. In addition to these problems, health centres in the outlying districts are difficult and dangerous to get to. Respondents unanimously reported that drugs were generally unavailable and doctors poorly trained. In Garmsir patients often chose to travel across the border to Quetta to get treatment, although UNHCR does operate a clinic in the district.

The dominant flow of people continues to be towards the provincial centre, caused by the growing insecurity in many of the surrounding districts including Nad-i Ali, Marja, Sangin and Garmsir. This is primarily because areas are increasingly controlled by the Taliban, but the situation is exacerbated by ISAF bombing raids which have reportedly destroyed homes. From Nad-i Ali the movement of people into Lashkar Gah has risen because of Taliban threats, and is highly variable from month-to-month. In both Nad-i Ali and Garmsir movement of people was only reported in July, and not in the surrounding two months. Reports of arbitrary detention by the insurgents are common, a tactic that appears to be used mostly on the routes out of the district centre to outlying villages; in fact, respondents felt safer travelling to the provincial centre than to their own rural communities.

The influx of people, particularly into the Mukhtar IDP camp, has caused numerous problems, with robbery and harassment increasing and disputes over grazing land for migrating livestock a significant problem. Many residents were worried that they now no longer knew the people arriving, and as such suspected that they could be Taliban sympathisers. Some returnees were reported in Garmsir, mostly households returning to reclaim their land. This was the cause of several local disputes between residents and returnees.

Cluster 2 Data

Indicator			Lashkar Gah				Nad-i Ali				Garmsir			
			June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change
2.1	Cost & frequency of public transport (to provincial capital) (-)	Afs / km	3.33	1.97	3.33	0.00	3.33	3.48	3.38	0.05	2.87	2.59	2.13	-0.74
		Number of journeys per day x number of cars servicing route	0.75	1.13	1.15	0.40	1.00	0.33	0.41	-0.60	1.06	2.50	0.31	-0.75
		Total	2.04	1.55	2.24	0.20	2.17	1.90	1.90	-0.27	1.97	2.55	1.22	-0.74
2.2	Informal taxes for travelling along a road (-)	3.25	5.00	5.00	1.75	3.50	4.00	5.00	1.50	3.97	3.75	4.25	0.28	
		Q2	Q3		Change	Q2	Q3		Change	Q2	Q3		Change	
2.3	Number of children attending school (+)	School attendance (age 6-13) male, as percentage of potential attendance rates	7.65	3.27		-4.38	0.88	0.99		0.11	0.39	0.41		0.01
		School attendance (age 6-13) female, as a percentage of potential attendance rates	3.78	0.76		-3.02	0.18	0.18		0.00	0.01	0.01		0.00
		Total	5.77	2.05		-3.72	0.54	0.59		-0.54	0.21	0.21		-0.21
2.4	Number of patients using healthcare centres by population number (+)	1.07	0.24		-0.83	0.81	0.97		0.16	1.55	0.40		-1.15	
		June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	
2.5	Returnee, IDP and migrant movements (-)	3.33	3.27	4.72	1.40	5.00	1.65	5.00	0.00	5.00	3.96	5.00	0.00	
Cluster Total		3.09	2.42	2.85	-0.24	2.40	1.82	2.69	0.29	2.54	2.17	2.22	-0.32	

Cluster 3: Household Security

Cluster 3 Analysis

Cluster 3 indicators show a general decline over the two-month period. The end of the agricultural season and the slowing-down of all economic activity due to the intense summer heat had a stultifying effect on people's perceptions, which have shown a marked reduction in all surveyed areas. This is in line with other agricultural indicators, which also displayed a negative trend, such as threats to livestock and natural shocks, and also with other economic indicators such as the availability of work and food prices (see cluster 4), which both decreased from the levels seen in the second quarter.

In the provincial centre land was reportedly readily accessible, and only in Nad-i Ali was it reported that most farmers were prevented from reaching their lands due to the fear of violence, compounded by an increase in natural shocks from June to August. An increasing number of households with access to land reported having enough water to irrigate their crops despite the seasonal heat, and this was a welcome sign as insecurity affected more rural parts where work has dried up and the harvest has not been sufficient. A relatively high proportion of respondents had some form of coping mechanism, either a tube wheel or water pump, and deep wells were used by those who could afford them.

Adequate food consumption, whilst not seen as the most pressing of our respondents' problems, remained relatively constant, rising steadily in the district centre and falling slightly in Garmsir. This is one of the only indicators of household security that has not suffered a fall across all surveyed areas; a positive sign given the extremely high prices in rural areas (indicator 4.2), increasing natural shocks (3.4), a general lack of manual work (4.3) and plummeting perceptions of household sustainability (3.5).

Opium production has continued to be a major source of income for many rural households, although anecdotal evidence suggests that the income from this source is not enough on its own to sustain most communities. However, those who continue to grow opium are perceived as better-off than their counterparts, and both police and Taliban reportedly "tax" the poppy harvest or, if their demands are not met, destroy the land used for cultivation.

Natural shocks were widely reported, and despite the seasonal lack of water, illness and disease were the most commonly cited. *Tabqh* (livestock fever) was a common occurrence in August, showing a steady increase in the number of incidents after falling slightly in July. This pattern occurred in all three districts and can be explained by the hot weather and migratory movements of household animals due to insecurity, both of which encouraged the spread of disease.

Table 1: Agricultural Seasons⁴:

<i>Agricultural Activities:</i>	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Land Preparation												
Planting												
Irrigation												
Weeding												
Harvesting												
Threshing/Storage												
Annual hunger periods												
Staple food purchase												
<i>Livestock activities:</i>												
Open range grazing												
Peak milking												
Sale of livestock												
<i>Other economic activities:</i>												
On farm employment												
Off farm employment												
Peak trade												
Seasonal												

⁴ USAID FEWSNET, Afghanistan rural livelihood profiles (zone 10: Southern Intensively Irrigated Cash Crop zone, p. 49), September 2005

Cluster 3 Data

Indicator		Lashkar Gah				Nad-i Ali				Garmsir				
		June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	
3.1	Extent to which water supply meets crops requirements (+)	Households reporting sufficiency (%)	2.25	3.45	3.80	1.55	2.50	2.63	4.23	1.73	3.41	4.25	4.23	0.82
		Households reporting access to irrigated land (%)	4.25	3.93	3.20	-1.05	2.92	2.39	1.40	-1.52	4.32	3.67	4.62	0.30
		Households with coping mechanism (%)	4.47	1.03	4.00	-0.47	3.50	0.79	5.00	1.50	4.29	0.75	2.88	-1.40
		Total	3.66	2.80	3.67	0.01	2.97	1.94	3.54	0.57	4.00	2.89	3.91	-0.09
3.2	Threats to livestock ownership (-)	2.80	2.95	2.42	-0.38	3.25	4.57	2.54	-0.71	3.16	3.90	2.67	-0.48	
3.3	Percentage of households consuming less than daily calorific requirements (-)	3.95	4.24	4.60	0.65	2.64	2.62	2.67	0.03	4.13	3.77	3.78	-0.35	
3.4	Impact of natural disasters (-)	3.27	2.59	2.60	-0.67	4.58	2.06	3.42	-1.16	3.33	1.92	3.46	0.13	
3.5	Perception of household economic situation (+)	4.71	2.60	3.40	-1.31	2.81	1.36	0.63	-2.19	3.52	2.94	2.50	-1.02	
Cluster Total		3.68	3.03	3.34	-0.34	3.25	2.51	2.56	-0.69	3.63	3.08	3.27	-0.36	

Cluster 4: Economic (Trade/Business) Security

Cluster 4 Analysis

While Afghanistan was largely unaffected in any direct way by the flooding that engulfed Pakistan and the forest fires that swept southern Russia during July and August, the impact on prices for basic foodstuff was stark. Where researchers were able to collect this data, it showed that prices had rocketed to a point that made many items practically unaffordable to the vast majority of households.

Despite the relatively high employment indicator scores, work was difficult to come by for many in Lahskar Gah, a situation that was compounded by several factors. Firstly, the provincial centre suffers from a surplus supply of labourers as people flood in, often on a daily basis, in order to find work. Workers appear to travel from all the surrounding areas, including Pakistan, and they rarely find regular, if any, work. Their situation is often made worse by the fact that their lands lie fallow whilst they are away, leaving their families worse off than before. The intense summer weather reduces the number of hours available for work during the day and as a consequence the number of ongoing construction projects. This, combined with reduced working hours during Ramadan (only 4 hours per day), has served to cut off a significant proportion of labourers' income. Even people finding employment with NGOs - some of the more fortunate jobseekers, particularly in districts where construction was at a standstill - were targeted for additional "taxation" by the Taliban, often 1/6th of their daily wage.

Rural incomes were affected by a poorer than expected poppy harvest, plus the added inconvenience of Taliban and police "taxes" on such crops. Poppy cultivation remained a very important factor in many household incomes, particularly as there were reports of police telling farmers not to plant maize, which the Taliban use to hide from ISAF patrols. The economic effects of such demands are obvious. The reduction in new NGO projects due to threats directed at employees exacerbated the general reduction in economic security.

In Garmsir, jobs associated with road building and stone breaking needed for IRD projects appeared to have come to a halt, possibly because the projects have come to an end, or because of the summer conditions.

Price increases and a reduction in credit availability have combined with these other negative factors to produce an extremely fragile economic environment. Where the data was available to be collected, bazaars continued to offer high prices, and those outside the provincial centre showed a steep increase, a result of both a shortage of supply and the cost of moving goods from central distribution points across extremely hazardous transport routes. In addition, exchange rate fluctuations meant that the trade in Pakistani Rupees, as commonly practiced in the border district of Garmsir, left consumers even worse off.

In such an environment it was perhaps not surprising that people's perception of their economic prospects fell across all sample areas (indicator 3.5).

Cluster 4 Data

Indicator		Lashkar Gah				Nad-i Ali				Garmsir				
		Q2	Q3		Change	Q2	Q3		Change	Q2	Q3		Change	
4.1	Cost of shop rental (-)	1.76	2.09		0.33	4.88	5.20		0.32	4.64	4.85		0.21	
		June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	
4.2	Price of a basic basket of consumer goods including fuels and agri inputs (-)	1.57	2.38	- ⁵	-	-3.79	-	-	-	0.24	-1.51	-	-	
4.3	Availability of employment reported by casual & agricultural labourers (+)	3.88	3.10	3.63	-0.25	3.78	3.00	2.80	-0.98	3.50	3.05	3.72	0.22	
4.4	Average daily wage (Casual/urban & agricultural) (+)	2.43	2.53	2.91	0.49	2.45	2.49	2.81	0.36	2.24	2.14	2.76	0.51	
4.5	Access to credit (-)	Percentage of respondents currently with a loan (%)	4.06	3.13	2.78	-1.28	4.38	4.69	3.13	-1.25	2.19	2.96	3.13	0.94
		Availability of informal credit; % of respondents that feel they have access to credit	1.25	1.50	0.00	-1.25	1.00	0.63	2.50	1.50	0.25	0.00	0.00	-0.25
		Total	2.66	2.31	1.39	-1.27	2.69	2.66	2.81	0.13	1.22	1.48	1.56	0.34
Cluster Total		2.46	2.48	2.51	0.05	2.00	3.34	3.40	1.40	2.37	2.00	3.22	0.85	

⁵ CPI data not available in all districts in August, or in Nad-i Ali in July.

Cluster 5: Judicial & Political Security

Cluster 5 Analysis

Judicial and political security was divided sharply between those areas controlled by government and those controlled by the Taliban. The majority of respondents within Lashkar Gah appear to be pro-government and despite their unhappiness with the police from Lashkar Gah they are reasonably happy with the police from Kabul. In Nad-i Ali much of the district territory appeared to be under a certain level of Taliban control, who provide summary justice and resolve conflicts quickly, in stark contrast to the glacial judicial process under the government's ostensible control. People also reported not using any form of government service because of their constant demands for bribes and Taliban threats, and pointed out that elders were generally corrupt, as opposed to the Taliban, who were regarded in many cases as honest. Elders were also seen as ineffectual because of the pressure put on them by the Taliban, although respondents noted that elders provided better access to justice than either government or Taliban.

The lack of government structures evident in Garmsir gives local elders and religious leaders considerable autonomy, and *mullahs* especially claim that they are not influenced by the Taliban, despite the proximity of their conservative views and anti-western sentiment. Religious leaders could generally travel to attend meetings outside government-controlled areas, and an estimated 80% of the district population claimed to trust them. Some elders were reported to be involved in smuggling opium, and this damages their reputation as "honest brokers" within the context of their conflict resolution responsibilities.

Visits by elected representatives were virtually non-existent in all areas by the end of the reporting period, and district *Shura* did not meet (or were not attended by the elders interviewed), in either of the rural districts. The increase in activity seen in Nad-i Ali now seems to have been short-lived, and the previous positive indications appear to have been only temporary. When the *Shura Ulema* did meet, at the beginning of the summer, its constituent members were picked by the government, and this afforded it little public legitimacy. Despite a drop in the activity of the Lashkar Gah *Shura* at the beginning of Spring, it has continued to hold regular meetings and addresses some key concerns brought by those living in the provincial centre. Although it was formed as a province-wide *Shura*, it has only limited participation from those outside Lashkar Gah itself, mostly due to the difficulty and danger involved in making any significant journeys around the province (indicators 2.1 & 2.2 give some indication of this).

Religious leaders reported that, particularly in rural areas, they operated informal *Shura* at lower levels which tried to address common problems within communities. These are not prominent, however, and their work is conducted with an overhanging fear of Taliban interference, which significantly reduces the scope and effectiveness. Despite this, these bodies appear to maintain the trust of many communities, and religious leaders are usually invited to meetings and social functions.

The informal justice system continued to function with differing degrees of success. In the provincial centre both religious leaders and elders have a functioning relationship with government representatives, and are able to refer cases and decisions through the formal justice mechanisms. The strength of this relationship fluctuates, however, and some reported that religious leaders were not supported by the government, only appeared at social gatherings, and referred to the Taliban for guidance. Community elders in Lashkar Gah appeared marginally more neutral, cooperating with neither the government nor the Taliban, and were more likely to criticise government justice mechanisms for their widespread corruption.

In areas controlled by the Taliban both elders and religious leaders fell under their influence, rejecting all government structure including *Shura Ulema* and the courts. In these areas the Taliban control virtually all avenues of social activity.

Arbitrary detention was seen as a significant problem in all areas, and undercuts support for the government, international forces and also the Taliban. Many respondents were unwilling to talk

about the subject in Nad-i Ali; this may have given a misleadingly optimistic view of the problem despite the already low scores.

Cluster 5 Data

Indicator		Lashkar Gah				Nad-i Ali				Garmsir				
		June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	June	July	August	Change	
5.1	Number of Ulema Shura meetings in district (+)	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	-5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
5.2	Number of visits to districts made by Parliamentarians and Provincial Councillors (+)	0.86	0.00	0.43	-0.43	0.00	0.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	- ⁶	0.00	0.00	
5.3	Number of new cases and decisions within informal justice mechanisms (+)	Number of new cases per/month/population	2.42	0.40	2.76	0.34	4.28	0.27	0.97	-3.31	2.69	-	3.52	0.83
		Number of decisions in courts per/month/population	1.73	0.48	4.40	2.68	5.62	0.81	2.14	-3.48	9.78	-	4.89	-4.89
		Total	2.07	0.44	3.58	1.51	4.95	0.54	1.55	-3.40	6.24	-	4.21	-2.03
5.4	Engagement of religious actors in political and social decision making (+)	Number of consultative and decision making gatherings attended by religious actors per month/population	4.07	2.85	0.42	-3.64	4.17	2.93	0.63	-3.55	3.25	2.62	4.47	1.22
		Public perception of representativeness of Religious leaders; involvement in in Social & Development affairs	4.25	4.60	4.60	0.35	5.00	5.00	4.41	-0.59	4.29	4.06	4.23	-0.05
		Total	4.16	3.73	2.51	-1.65	4.59	3.97	2.52	-2.07	3.77	3.34	4.35	0.58
5.5	Levels of arbitrary detention (-)	4.25	0.86	0.21	-4.04	3.33	1.54	0.65	-2.68	0.23	1.43	2.31	2.08	
Cluster Total		3.27	2.01	2.35	-0.92	3.57	2.28	0.94	-2.63	2.05	1.59	2.17	0.13	

⁶ No information was collected from elders in Garmsir during July (indicators 5.2 & 5.3)