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Information Update

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Content of the Current Issue

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Security (1) | 5. Shelter (6) |
| 2. Road Safety (2) | 6. National Army (7-13) |
| 3. Iran/Afghanistan Joint Prog (3) | 7. Radio Programmes/BBC (14) |
| 4. Repatriation (4,5) | |

Security

Maqsuod village, Dara-e-Suf District, Samangan Province: Maqsuod village witnessed inter-factional fighting and heightened tensions between Junbesh and Jamiat factions, although the rest of Samangan Province has remained relatively calm.

Pul-I-Khumri City: There were reports of two child-kidnappings in Islam Qala and Number Do villages of Pul-I-Khumri City. The Police have been conducting searches locally for the children.

Kunduz City: Three explosions were reported in Kunduz City, one of which took place in front of the Provincial Governor's office. No casualties were reported and the Police were said to have arrested some suspects. An investigation is now underway.

Narang District, Kunar Province: A UNICEF school tent was set on fire by armed personnel. It has been linked to a dispute over land in the area.

Nawa Pass border: The harassment that returnees had experienced from Pakistani militia at Nawa Pass border has abated following intervention by UNHCR with the appropriate authorities. The situation is said to have improved.

Gardez and Khost towns: Visibility of the Afghan National Army has improved in these towns, with an increase in the number of checkpoints and street patrols throughout. There are reports of expanding their presence also to surrounding villages in the near future.

Paktya, Khost, Paktika Provinces: Following the attacks on several de-mining missions in the area, de-mining agencies continue to suspend operations in Paktya, Khost and Paktika Provinces.



Dergah (Sergay Pattack checkpost), Gurbuz Miran Shah and Ghulam Khan border crossing points: Returnees crossing the border at Dergah, Gurbuz Miran Shah and Ghulam Khan have reportedly been experiencing extortion committed by local forces (distinct from other militia and the Frontier Constables) controlling the tribal areas.

Non-Security issues:

Ghazni: The National Lawyers Association in Afghanistan has held meetings to discuss the formal establishment of the Association in Ghazni Province.

Road Safety: Road robberies are a major security problem for returnees from both Pakistan and Iran. Returnees should exercise particular caution when travelling on the following roads:

- The road from Kunduz city to Shirkhan border.
- Route from Hirat to Farah and Kandahar (Shindand to Dilaram)
- Roads in the districts of Farsi, Gulistan and Ghormach (route to Bala Morghab)
- Main road from Nili to Tirinkut, Uruzgan
- Road between Ghazni centre and Malistan district and on connecting road between Malistan and Nawur.
- The road from Ghazni to Kabul, especially in Saalar area of Said Abad district of Maidan/Wardak province.
- Main road between Qalat and Ghazni.
- The road linking Qalat to Lashkargah, Helmand Province.

The Afghan and Coalition forces have established joint check-posts on the main Kandahar-Spin Boldak road to inspect all traffic for security purposes.

Note: All returnees are advised NOT to travel during the night hours, and should seek shelter in one of the major settlements.

Safety Message: Returnees are advised to refrain from smoking while travelling with their luggage to ensure the safety of their inflammable items, and to avoid sitting dangerously on the top of the trucks. Returnees are solely responsible for their own safety and that of their belongings. UNHCR assumes no responsibility for accidents while travelling.

Salang Tunnel: The tunnel is currently closed and will remain so for at least three months while the rehabilitation work is carried out by the Turkish Construction Company (Chukurova), that intends to complete the task before December when winter sets in. An alternative route to the north is through Maidan Shahr (Wardak) and up through the Haji Gak passes to Bamyan. And from Bamyan it passes north to Doshi, Sayghan and Doabe Mikh Zarin, and then on to Pul-I-Khumri and north.

The trip from Kabul to Pul-I-Khumri through Bamyan - Dosi takes at least 2 days with a good vehicle under optimal conditions. During the rehabilitation process of the Salang Pass, returnees who return to the North through this alternative route, will receive the following UNHCR transport assistance, depending on the distance they travel:



From Torkham, Nawa Pass, Chamkani, Joji Ariub, Babrak Tana, Ghulam Khan and Joji Maidan, those travelling

1. to Faryab, Jawzjan and Badakhsan will receive \$30; \$15 in the Pul-e-Charkhi, and \$15 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.
2. to Balkh, Kunduz and Takhar, will receive \$25; \$15 in the Pul-e-Charkhi, and \$10 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.
3. to Baghlan and Samangan will receive \$20; \$10 in the Pul-e-Charkhi and \$10 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.

From Spin Boldak, those travelling

1. to Faryab, Jawzjan and Badakhsan will receive \$35; \$15 in the Ghazni and \$20 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.
2. to Balkh, Kunduz and Takhar, will receive \$30; \$15 in the Ghazni and \$15 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.
3. to Baghlan and Samangan will receive \$25; \$10 in the Ghazni and \$15 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.

The Joint Programme Between The Governments of Iran and Afghanistan and the UNHCR for the Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees and Displaced Persons:

Time Frame and Voluntary Character of the Repatriation: The governments of Iran and Afghanistan, and the UNHCR signed an agreement in Tehran on June 16th, 2003, for the second year a Joint Programme. According to the programme, the repatriation of all Afghan refugees and displaced person will be on voluntary basis until the end of March 2005

Tripartite Commission: The Agreement established a Tripartite Commission, which will organise and co-ordinate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees and displaced persons living in Iran. The latest meeting of the Commission was held on the occasion of the signature of the Joint Programme on June 16. Next meeting is scheduled in Geneva in October.

Safety and Security: Both governments are responsible for the safety of the returnees in their respective territory. The Iranian government shall make all efforts to ensure that Afghans can repatriate without any fear of harassment, etc.

Choice of Destination: Refugees are free to return to their places of origin or any other place of their choice in Afghanistan.

Customs: The Islamic Republic of Iran shall help all returning Afghans to take with them their tools and household belongings with customs exemption, unless prohibited. All returnees can take back their money in Rials and Afghanis. Every Afghan can also take up to \$ 1,000 or the equivalent in other currencies.

Juridical Status and Equivalency: the Government of Iran recognises the legal status of Afghan refugees and displaced persons from Iran, including births, deaths, marriage and divorce. The Iranian Government also recognises diplomas and certificate obtained by the refugees and displaced persons issued by valid Iranian institutions.

2



Dispute Settlement Committees: The Government of Islamic Republic of Iran has agreed to establish in Iran dispute settlement committees to assist Afghans to resolve their legal problems before returning home.

Unity of the Family: The Governments of Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic State of Afghanistan will make all efforts to preserve the unity of the family. Spouses and/or children of returning refugees who are not Afghan citizens will be allowed to enter and to remain in Afghanistan. Similar treatment applies to the spouses and/or children of deceased Afghan refugees.

UNHCR Voluntary Repatriation –2003

Neighbouring Countries:

Returnees have the free choice of either returning to their village (location of origin) or to any other place in Afghanistan – but not to **the IDP camps**.

Iris Validation Centres: All refugees returning from **Pakistan** to Afghanistan with UNHCR assistance will have to go through an iris machine, a computer-based technology that examines the eye and can detect if someone has been tested before. **The machine does not take the picture of the eye, but registers a number that's similar to fingerprint. (Iris Recognition Centres are located at Hayatabad in Peshawar, Alizai in Kurram Agency and Chaman in Balochistan in Pakistan, and in Khost in Afghanistan.)**

Returnees who want to receive the UNHCR assistance package have to go through the Iris screening, otherwise they will not receive their entitlements. Returnees are advised to have their VRFs with them while travelling in the host country and Afghanistan. Anyone who is discovered to have received assistance before will not receive assistance.

Single returnees will have to join other single returnees or families to make a minimum distribution unit.

Returnees should not approach just any Distribution Centre, but only the one marked on their VRFs, otherwise they will not receive assistance.

Closing of a Scheduling Centre: The scheduling centre at Shinwari Sarai, in Dalazak Road, Peshawar, will be closed permanently at the end of July, 2003.

Transport Assistance: Returnees will receive cash assistance at the following encashment centres in Afghanistan located in **Pul-I-Charkhi, Ghazni, Mohmand Dara, Zaranj, Daman, Mazar-I-Sharif, Pul-I-Khumri, Kunduz, Herat, Gardez and Khost. The DC's in Mazar and Kunduz are assisting only the returnees from the Central Asian republics – those returning to northern provinces (Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, Samangan, Balkh, Jawzjan, etc) should receive their entitlements at the first EC or in Pul-I-Khumri.**



Note: Please be advised that the working hours at **Pul-I-Charkhi** encashment centre is from 0800 in the morning to 1400 in the afternoon. The returnees arriving after 1400 hrs. will not receive their entitlement on that day, and the next day only the head of the household should go to the centre to receive the assistance (cash, food and non-food items).

Properly filled, signed and stamped VRFs will be valid for seven days (from the day the returnees (from **Pakistan**) leave the Iris Scan Centre, and returnees from Iran from the day they leave the registration centre and arrive at the encashment centre inside Afghanistan.

Depending on final destination in Afghanistan, each family member will receive between 3 - 30 dollars, and is limited to 7 persons per family. Children under 12 months of age (less than one year) will receive only half of the amount given to other members of the family. **Returnees from Karachi and Lahore will receive an additional 5 dollars per person at the first encashment centre.**

Returnees from camps in Pakistan will receive 5 dollars per family in addition to the established amount if they transport construction material **only** from their dismantled houses. The transportation of construction material will be certified by a special note made on the VRF at the Registration point in Pakistan

Note: The Returnees' personal belongings are exempt from all customs duties. But please note that returnees neither can take commercial amounts of any item nor can they export the governments proscribed items. Returnees should also advise their truck drivers not to carry business goods on returnee trucks in order to avoid delay at the border and undesired consequences at the customs.

Working Days: The UNHCR-assisted repatriation operation in **Pakistan** will run from Sunday to Thursday. There will be no UNHCR-assisted repatriation on Friday and Saturday. In **Iran**, the operation will run from Saturday to Thursday. There will be no operation on Friday.

Note: All refugee students must have their school certificates stamped by Afghan embassies/consulates before returning to Afghanistan. There have been reports that some Afghan embassies and consulates in the region have been charging Afghan refugees for validation/stamping of the school certificates of the students. The Afghanistan Foreign Ministry has issued a directive to its missions in the region that they should NOT charge validation/stamping fees on academic certificates of repatriating Afghan students. Those graduates who want to work as teachers in Afghanistan should also have their documents stamped by Afghan embassies/consulates.

Messages to women:

1. The Ministry of Public Health has urgent need of women health professionals in all provinces of the country. Women with interest in professional training as nurses, midwives and community health workers are advised to register their interest with Departments of Public Health or of Women's Affairs at provincial level, so that they can be contacted when opportunities arise.



2. Tetanus (TT) vaccination campaign for women between 15 – 45 years of age is ongoing inside Afghanistan. All women returnees who have been vaccinated against TT are advised to keep the records - before they return.
3. Refugee Women are advised to seek professional training in safe delivery, early infant care, nutrition, and hygiene, 'first aid', emergency medical care, or as a midwife/auxiliary nurse.
4. They are advised to bring educational certificates, including courses they have taken.
5. Single women should link with a family for the journey and identify themselves immediately on arrival.

Khair Khana Maternity Hospital Reopens in Kabul:

Improved maternity care for women in northern Kabul is now available following the complete renovation and refurbishment of the Khair Khana Hospital. The work, which has cost two million USD, has been done by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with the support of the Government of Italy.

The hospital which serves around 700,000 people in northern Kabul, has obstetric and gynaecology, general medicine, internal medicine, outpatient and emergency wards. It is now equipped to handle 30-40 births a day, twice the previous capacity.

Afghanistan has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world and the majority of Afghan women have no access to medical care during pregnancy and childbirth. UNFPA is working with the Ministry of Health to improve reproductive health care and reduce maternal mortality.

Shelter:

To help returnees in their initial phase of reintegration, the UNHCR is providing shelter for 60,000 families in 2003. The shelter project is **NOT** for every returnee family but only for the most vulnerables, who have been identified from returning IDPs and refugees, as well as returnee receiving communities. The beneficiaries are selected with the help of local Shuras, local authorities and UNHCR partners. They have to build the shelter on their own land or property, in their places of origin. Shelter (a **standard** two-room, one corridor and one latrine unit) programme is self-help assistance, and while building material (timbers, lintels, doors, windows and tool kits) is provided by UNHCR, the beneficiaries are responsible for the construction work. The recipients are also entitled to a sum of money or food for work for standard and domed type shelters.

Important Message: Refugees prior to their voluntary return should note that:

1. Shelter programme is only for the most vulnerable.
2. UNHCR shelter programme is **not** for every returnee family
3. The conditions for benefiting from the shelter project are; for the returnees to be in their village of origin, be identified through the help of local Shuras and UNHCR partners, and to build the shelter on their own land or property.

Afghan National Army



The first army that could be called a national army in Afghanistan was created in 1747 during the reign of Great Ahmad Shah Durrani. The army was 16,000 strong, and was poorly armed. The army was modernised during the reign of Amir Shir Ai Khan in 1870. The national army was dismantled in 1992.

The decision to revive Afghanistan's National Army (ANA) was made right after the Bonn Agreement in November 2001. After more than 20 years of conflict and chaos, a national army consisting of all tribes and ethnic groups of Afghanistan is a top priority for the Afghan government, as well as the international community, to ensure peace and security, sovereignty and social justice, and to create a conducive environment for reconstruction and development. The size of the force is to be around 70,000 soldiers and officers, and recruitment is on voluntary basis.

The trainee soldiers receive a monthly salary of \$50, while the trainee officers receive between \$140 to \$400, according to their military ranks. Each training course takes two and a half months, during which the soldiers are provided with monthly salary, accommodation, food, three pairs of military uniforms, sports clothes and a personal kit.

The initial contract of service is for 4 years, and at the end of the contract the soldier has the choice of either renewing it for an additional four years or cash two-months' salary and receive the service certificate.

50% pension is given to soldiers who decide to retire after 20 year of service, 30 years service receives 75% pension salary.

For soldiers serving with various armed groups and wishing to join the ANA, it is essential for them to **FIRST** disarm and surrender their weapons to the ANA Commission. This category will be given only a one-year contract, which would be a probationary period.

The recruiting and training of the personnel is currently underway, with assistance from a number of countries, including USA, France, Britain, South Korea, Germany and Canada.

So far 9 battalions have completed training, and the graduation ceremony of the tenth Battalion, trained by a French army team, has just taken place. Each battalion consists of 600 military personnel, including 36 officers. Three battalions have been trained by the USA, three by France, and the rest are being trained by professional Afghan officers. The Koreans are training the medical staff.

According to Professor General Ghulam Sakhi Asifi, Commander of Kabul Military Education Centre, the trained battalions have been assigned to three big divisions. He says the current personnel have joined the national army voluntarily, and anyone wanting to enter the service should be referred to this centre to receive training by their respective military divisions.

Military Training Centres

1. The Military High School: The military high school used to enrol sixth grade graduates who wanted to become professional officers. After graduating from this high school, the students



entered the Military Academy and become officers after four years of study and military training in various fields. At present the military high school is not accepting students, and is a centre for the training of 1,600 people who will be involved in the disarmament operation.

2. The Military Academy: Now called Military Education Centre, is training professional personnel for the Afghan National Army. The Tenth battalion –600 people – have just graduated from this Centre.

3. The Air Forces University: 30 officers are currently on French language course, and will be sent to France for military training. 6 Afghan officers have already gone to France for further military education.

Disarmament

The government's challenging drive to disarm tens of thousands of armed men was to have officially started on 1st July 2003, but has been postponed for another month until key reforms have been implemented in the Defence Ministry. The reforms are aimed to make the Ministry more ethnically balanced and to receive logistical support from UN and other donors. The government is making efforts so that the delay may not go beyond the end of July 2003.

The Ministry has been preparing for the implementation of the disarmament process for the past 7 months and is now ready for its implementation. The delay is said to be due to the late arrival of logistical support from the UN and other donors. It's expected that around 100,000 weapons will be collected within a year.

The Ministry is downsizing and restructuring some of its big divisions, and has collected some weapons and ammunitions from various bases in various provinces. This should not be mistaken for the disarmament process, which is to start in a month or so.

One of the problems of disarmament is that some people say they have bought their weapons, and want payment for surrendering them. Another is that some people want to keep small arms for protection against robbers and criminals.

The DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration):

On 12th of July the Centre for the DDR was inaugurated in Kabul City by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, UN Special Representative to Afghanistan. The Centre, with 80 staff, will work in close collaboration with DDR's mobile teams in the provinces. In coming days DDR will open two other offices in Kunduz and Gardez cities, and its offices in six other cities; Jalalabad, Herat, Kandahar, Mazari sharif, Bamyán and Parwan will be inaugurated soon after.

The programme, which is funded by Japan, UK, Canada and US, through the UNDP trust fund, has earmarked \$50 million for the first year. The programme is to provide opportunity to active soldiers to reintegrate into civilian life; to promote the restoration of security in the country; to create a conducive environment for further reforms in the security apparatus; and facilitate the creation and deployment of the Afghan National Army as the only military force in the country.



DDR will target nearly 100,000 active soldiers and officers who are part of the command and control of the Ministry of Defence. DDR will also identify under-age soldiers, drug addicts and mentally and physically disabled soldiers, and where appropriate, process them separately. In the first phase, six thousand soldiers in Kunduz, Bamyan, Gardez, Kabul, Mazar and Kandahar will go through DDR.

How will DDR be implemented?

- Regional Verification Committees (RVC) will be deployed to each region to identify and verify lists of potential DDR candidates.
- Subsequently, disarmament will be implemented through Mobile Disarmament Units, where staff will verify and collect arms, collect initial identification information, including fingerprints and a photo, and issue the ex-combatant with temporary identification.
- When disarmed, combatants arrive at the Regional Office, they will receive a full briefing on the reintegration process, take an oath of conduct, and receive a medal and certificate of service. Next, demobilised combatants will receive severance package containing cash, food and clothing.
- Two to four weeks following disarmament/demobilisation, ex-combatants will return to the Regional Office for their first meetings with their assigned, dedicated caseworkers. After discussing their skills, aspirations and goals, the demobilised combatant will be offered a range of reintegration packages to suite his profile.
- While demobilised, combatants are welcome to meet with their caseworkers at any time, after four months of being engaged in a reintegration activity, the ex-combatant will return to the regional office to collect the second instalment of the severance package and to discuss continuing reintegration opportunities.

What kind of reintegration packages will be offered?

- Short- term, public infrastructure wage-labour positions to commence immediately following demobilisation.
- On-the-job vocational training courses, mainly in the construction industry and tied to job placement.
- Agricultural assistance to those returning to their farms, including seeds fertiliser, tools, training and livestock distribution.
- Support in starting a small business, for example a tarmac construction crew or a rice milling operation.

Police Force: Following the establishment of the Afghan Interim Administration in the country, the Police Department, under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, started new appointments in the outer checkpoints of Kabul city, changed and renovated the structure, and established better arrangements for maintaining security in the country.

According to Mr. Haroon Asifi, General Director of Police, currently, there are 75,000 security police and 12,000 border police functioning in departments of Security Police, Intelligence, Traffic and Border Police. Around 20,000 of this force are professional/trained police personnel. There are 15 police stations in districts of Kabul City. He says that 50,000 extra police are needed over the next 3 years for security maintenance in the country. More than 120 female



police personnel are working at various police departments, including women's prison. There are also 35 previous police women who are being re-trained at the Police Academy in Kabul.

A number of countries, including USA, Germany, Norway and Turkey are assisting the re-organisation of the police force, and France will also join in. The Ministry of Interior, with the help of these countries, has set up long and short-term training courses and has provided some equipment. 1,400 police cadets are currently being trained at the Police Academy in Kabul. Anyone who passes the medical examination can join the Academy.

The restructuring and equipping of the police force is still in need of more funding and assistance, and some donors, especially USA and Germany, have promised further contributions.

Army and Police in Southern Provinces:

Army: Various military forces, including airforce, artillery and Infantry, organised in different military Divisions, Battalions, and Brigades and regiments are based in the provinces. There are no formal or centrally organised military training programmes in the region, but some of the personnel, mainly former Mujahedin, are being trained by experienced Afghan officers who had previously served in these forces. Since the end of 2002 four training courses have been held at the Quli Urdu (Garrison) in Kandahar.

These forces have been deployed at various bases and locations in provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan. Although the army has no presence in Nimruz province, the police are in charge of all military and police duties in this province.

Air Force: The Central Airforce Base of Southern Provinces is located in Kandahar, with detachments in various locations, including in Helmand.

Most of the aircraft and heavy weaponry of the airforce have been destroyed or damaged during the years of conflict, but the remaining weapons have been stored and are to be distributed when the new force is organised, which is expected to be in the near future.

The formal disarmament process has not yet been implemented, and is to start in a month's time by the Disarmament Commission, assigned by the central government, with co-operation of commanders in the South. However, since the collapse of the Taliban regime about 50,000 different weapons such as Kalashnikov, different types of Howitzers, Rocket launchers, missiles, etc., have been collected from Taliban / Pro-Taliban elements without any problem. Almost 1,000 different weapons are stored for future use, and the remaining are being used by the Police and Army.

Police: Currently about 2,000 policemen have been deployed in various locations with specific duties, such as maintaining law and order, traffic control, guarding important buildings and offices, and the Criminal Branch. Two women officers are also working in the Criminal Branch for dealing with women's cases.

Although there is no Military/Police academy, school or training centres in southern provinces, around 140 people have been trained by the officers of Kandahar Police Department.



More than a1,000 policemen have been stationed in **Helmand** Province, and another 1,000 are being organised in Nimruz Province. At present, there are no organised police forces in Uruzgan and Zabul provinces.

According to the Chief of Police in Kandahar, the existing number of police (approved / identified by the Ministry of Interior) is not enough for the performance of all the required activities, and that there is a need for at least 3,000 policemen in Kandahar Province. One problem is irregular payment of salaries, which at times has led to the resignation of personnel.

Salary and food allowance: The salary of the officers is not fixed, but food allowance (1500 Afghanis per person per month) is given to all officers. The soldiers are paid a sum of 800 Afghanis per person a month, though this is not regular.

Army and Police in South-eastern Provinces:

No ANA grouping has yet been formed in **Paktia**, and the process is at the initial recruitment stage. A delegation from the Defense Ministry has visited Paktia province to implement the recruitment procedure. The training of the Afghan National Army is being carried out by professional Afghan, American and French officers.

Disarmament: The disarmament group in South-eastern provinces (Paktia, Khost, Ghazni and Paktika) is led by General Moneer Mangal. The disarmament process is to formally start in a month's time. But during a recent visit to the region, the Deputy Defence Minister, General Atiqullah, said that a number of artillery guns and tanks have already been shifted from Gardez to Kabul. Various types of ammunitions have been handed over to ANA in Gardez.

Police Force: The restructuring of the police and the training of the new personnel is to start soon by professional Afghan police officers in the provinces.

Ghazni Province: The recruitment for the new National Army has not yet started in the province. Mr. Ali Akber Qasimi a former professional officer and a Jehadi commander is the division commander in this province.

According to General H. Gul Aga, who's also a member of the National Army Restructuring Commission, the recruitment of volunteers between 22-28 years of age has started in Ghazni. The village elder recommends the candidate and two residents of the village vouch for his honesty and loyalty to the country. Upon medical clearance, the candidate undergoes a ten-week training in Kabul, and if succeeds, a four-year contract will be issued.

Although the disarmament process has not yet formally started, General Moneer Mangal says that they have collected a number of heavy weapons from civilians. According to the General, weapons are verified and inventoried at each military base.

Khost Province: The Khost Division has nearly 2,000 soldiers and officers, who don't belong to a particular political party or Jehadi groups. All have been newly recruited for the National Army. The



commander of the division is the professional officer, General Khail Baze. Professional Afghan officers carry out the training of the soldiers.

Although the official disarmament process has not yet started, a number of various artillery guns and armoured tanks have been collected.

Police Force: According to the Chief of Police in Khost Province, the National Police Force that had been created in Afghanistan 50 years ago, had been seriously affected during the fighting with the Soviets. But now it's being restructured and reorganised under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior. He says that 50 new policemen have newly been recruited from various tribes of Khost Province and are being trained by professional police officers.

Army and Police in Northern Provinces

The DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reconstruction) commission had two missions to the northern region. The aim was to provide information on the process to the local authorities and local population; to identify locations for disarmament centres and warehouses to store collected weapons; and to make assessments for the establishing of the National Army in the region.

Previous disarmament attempts in the region have not been very successful, and only around 200 weapons were collected, and there are reports that some arms have been redistributed to factional groups in Samangan (Dar-I-Suf and Kohistanat districts).

A main problem for disarmament in the region is rivalry between armed factions that at times has resulted in tensions and clashes between these groups in some districts of the region.

The factions say they have no opposition to disarmament and reintegration into the National Army, but would like to be assured that the army will include all ethnic and religious groups, and that all groups will co-operate sincerely. They also express concern about the future of their men and sources of income for them.

Military Training Centres: There are no academies or training centres for military personnel in the region, though the main factional forces have some training periods for their militia (for about two or three months).

Mazar City: Security has been undermined because of the presence of dozens of unofficial checkpoints in the city. Although there is a police station in each of the 11 districts of Mazar, the police force is not strong enough, and there have been many reports of criminal activities.

Baghlan: So far no progress has been made for the building/rehabilitation of the National Army/Police in Baghlan province. However, 1,000 soldiers and 200 officers are to be allocated to each of the three Brigades of the 20th Division in the province. A group of 20 individuals from the 20th Division in Baghlan have been sent to Kabul for training and future participation in the disarmament process.



Recently, a workshop, with Canadian and German trainers, was held in Kabul for capacity building purposes in the National Police Force. The Police Commissioner of Baghlan and his deputy also took part in the workshop. Currently there are 10 police stations in various districts in the province, and there are plans for 4 more stations.

Samangan: The 19th Division is in charge of law and order in Samangan Province. The force is 1,500 strong – stationed in the provincial capital, Aibak, and other locations - and is considered to be part of the National Army. The official disarmament process has not yet started in Samangan.

Maimana: On May 18th, General Dostum, Deputy Defence Minister, arrived in Maimana to implement the disarmament process in Faryab on behalf of the Transitional Government. As a result, about 1,100 light arms were collected from his own forces (200th Division). Local people, including returnees, strongly support the disarmament process in the province.

Kunduz and Takhar: More than 500 people have been sent to Kabul for recruitment in the national army, but the establishment of the national police has not yet taken place. The authorities say that disarmament in Kunduz, Takhar and Badakshan has been partially completed, and around 25,000 various weapons have been collected and stored locally or shifted to other military bases.

Army and Police in Eastern Provinces

All tribal and ethnic armed groups, at provincial and regional level, are involved in the security of the region. Those volunteering to join the National Army must meet the following criteria:

- must be between (22-28) years old
- have Afghan nationality
- pass the medical examinations
- have no connection to terrorist and anti-government groups inside and outside Afghanistan.

So far, the personnel for two military Divisions have been recruited on voluntary basis, and the process for a third Division is underway. Top officials for military affairs in the region are the Corps Commander, Haji Hazrat Ali, and Governor Haji Din Mohammad. Soldiers may be sent to serve in their respective province if requested, and approved by the Governor or other top officials.

The central government is in overall charge of the restructuring of the Army and recruitment process, but the Military Commissioner in Jalalabad, with co-operation of the local authorities and “Wakil Gozars” carry out recruitment in the region. Since there are no military training facilities in the Eastern Region, the new recruits are sent to Kabul for training.

Police: In order to resurrect and restructure the police force in the region, the Security Office of Jalalabad, with support from the Interior Ministry, has made the following plans:

- a. Training of the police personnel, including officers
- b. Reconstruction of the police buildings/offices



c. Obtaining required supplies/equipment

Some of the objectives have been achieved, and young men with 12th degree diplomas are in the process of being recruited and trained to serve in different Police departments. There is a Police Training Centre at the Security (Police) Headquarters in Jalalabad for volunteers from Eastern provinces. In the reconstruction section, nearly 50% of the work has been done and more work is ongoing. Obtaining supplies, including uniforms, beds, food items etc., is underway. Training is done by professional Afghan officers, many of whom have been trained in other countries. The Governor and then the Chief of Police/Security (Commandani Amniat) are in charge of the forces in the region. The recruitment, with the authorisation of the Central government, is the responsibility of the Commandani Amniat in the region.

Disarmament: A disarmament mission from Kabul is to visit Jalalabad soon to discuss the implementation plans with the Disarmament Commission in the region.

UNHCR/BBC Radio Programme: There is a joint BBC/UNHCR radio programme specifically aimed at Afghan refugees, IDPs and returnees. The programme deals with the situation in Afghanistan, including security, development activities of the Afghan government, United Nations and other aid agencies, and the difficulties that the Afghans, especially returnees, are facing. The BBC radio programme is part of UNHCR's efforts to provide an accurate account of the situation in Afghanistan to those wishing to return home, and to offer a forum for a wider debate on all aspects of repatriation and reintegration.

The programme is broadcast from Saturday to Wednesday (5 Days a week):

- **1st edition:** 0730 to 800 GMT = 1100 to 1130 Iran time, 1200 to 1230 Afghan time, and 1230 to 1300 Pakistan time.
- **2nd edition:** 12.00 to 1230 GMT = 1530 to 1600 Iran time, 1630 to 1700 Afghan time and 1700 to 1730 Pakistan time.

The programmes are broadcast on Short wave frequencies of 15420 kHz (19-meter band, and 17870 kHz (16-meter band).

The programme has a section for the listeners' letters. If you have any comments or questions please write to the following addresses. The BBC will include them in the programme:

- **Afghanistan:** BBC, Post Box No. 1, Central Post Office, Kabul, Afghanistan.
- **Pakistan:** BBC, Post Box 255, University Town, Peshawar, Pakistan.
- **Iran:** UNHCR (BBC) – P.O.Box No. 91775 – 1876, Mashhad, Iran.

UNHCR/ARTV Radio Programme: UNHCR has also a joint radio programme with Afghanistan Radio and TV, "Coming Home", as part of its mass Information efforts. The programme is broadcast on Sundays and Fridays (2 days a week) at 9:00pm for 30 minutes in Dari and Pashto languages.



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