

# ANSO QUARTERLY DATA REPORT Q.4 2010

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## SUMMARY & ASSESSMENT

Throughout 2010 NGOs were involved in 126 incidents in which 28 people were killed and an additional 33 injured. 22 deaths were attributed to AOG, three to criminals and an additional three died collaterally in IMF/AOG clashes. While these figures represent a 27% fall in the total volume of attacks from 2009 (172 cases) they also show an alarming 42% increase in fatalities. Of the deaths, 20 were Afghan nationals and eight foreign nationals, all of the latter dying in a single incident. Ten of the Afghan nationals killed worked for demining NGOs. Abduction by armed opposition grew by 7% with 74 persons taken in 30 separate cases. All of the victims were Afghan nationals and all of them were released without harm, often within three days. We assess that the primary motivation in AOG abduction of NGO staff is information gathering. One foreign national was abducted, and released, but that case was assessed as criminal. Of the sixty eight separate NGOs involved in all incidents ANSO noted no commonality or trend in their profiles (such as nationality, sector of intervention, funding sources) with the exception of deminers. It is clear that AOG have an opposition to this field of work, particularly in the southern provinces. In sum, a difficult year for NGOs in which deadly ambient violence posed as much of a threat as direct and deliberate strikes. Despite this there remains no evidence to suggest that AOG deliberately target NGOs (except deminers) or that we will not retain space for our operations. ANSO continues to advise that transparent dialogue with all combatants is key to NGO safety going in to 2011.

The forces of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) fought a significant campaign in 2010 expanding the total volume of attacks by 64%, the highest annual growth rate we have recorded, and securing new strongholds in the North, West and East of the country. Their momentum would appear unaffected by US-led counterinsurgency measures. The campaign grew increasingly complex with reports suggesting the deployment of parallel governance structures including courts, judges and administrators. Attacks remained focused on the IMF and Afghan Government, targeting personnel, resources and enablers (including hundreds of Afghan civilians) and expanded to include significant attacks on Private Development Companies for their role in supporting the IMF. The IEA will enter 2011 in a very strong position.

The International military forces (IMF) pursued their three pronged exit strategy (security, governance, development) with massive interventions in Helmand and Kandahar that achieved little other than to diversify and diffuse the insurgency. New initiatives, such as the Afghan Peace & Reintegration Program (APRP), have resulted in a few hundred surrenders but not enough to undermine AOG manpower. Village Stability Operations (the formation of irregular forces) are exacerbating tensions in the North and may be contributing to a below-radar process of factional remobilization. The rapid recycling of APRP reintegrees in to irregular forces is of particular concern.

Looking ahead, we expect the impending IMF drawdown to stimulate further factional separation on all sides, as leaders jostle for the best starting position, however we do not expect this to result in significant conflict between factions, it will simply be an insurance policy against State collapse. The IEA will press their military advantage, exploiting the fractures that emerge with 'transition'.

**Nic Lee, ANSO Director, Kabul 2011**

*The views expressed in this report remain the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ANSO donors or partners.*

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid



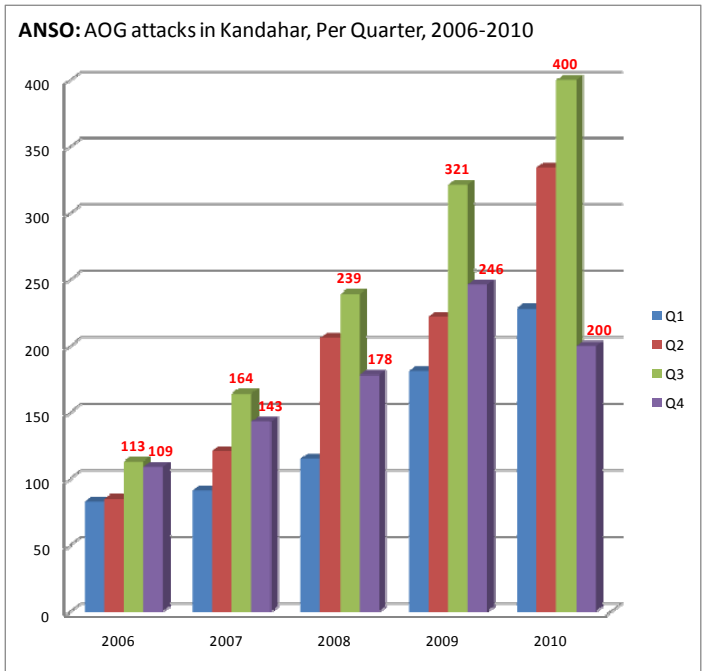
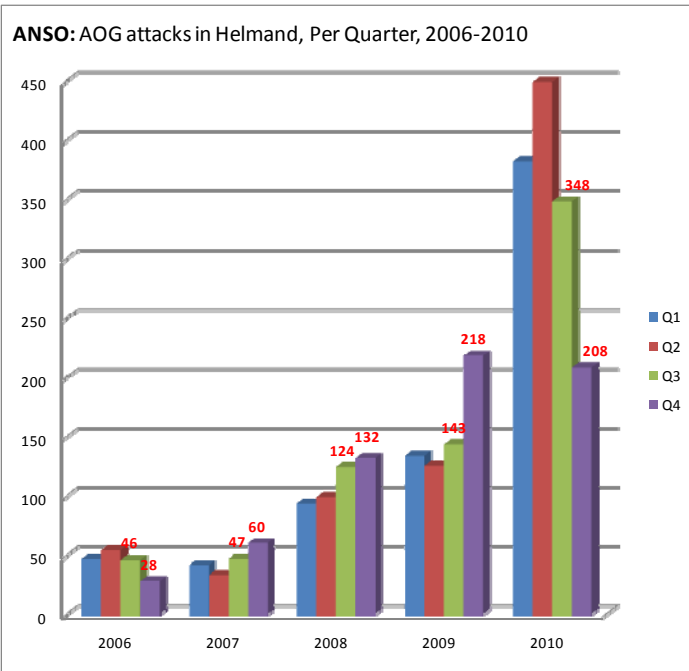
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## 1.1 Trends in Key Battle Grounds



The US Strategy Review in December suggested the IEA’s momentum had been blunted in some areas and, while not specifically mentioning Kandahar or Helmand, given that those are their focus areas it is reasonable to assume that they meant there.

Our quarterly attack rate figures for each province (above) do indeed show a substantial **reduction** of attacks in both between August and December. Kandahar dropping by 50%, in contrast to the usual 20%, and Helmand dropping by 40% in Q.4, a trend not seen since 2006. This demonstrates that the IEA have turned away from the battlefield earlier, and in greater numbers, than before but it does not provide an explanation as to why. The pressure of US operations could certainly be a factor here, anecdotal reporting suggests many commanders felt the areas to be too hot and sought sanctuary in other provinces or Pakistan, but so too could other more benign factors like the early onset of Ramadan and the normal seasonal downturn.

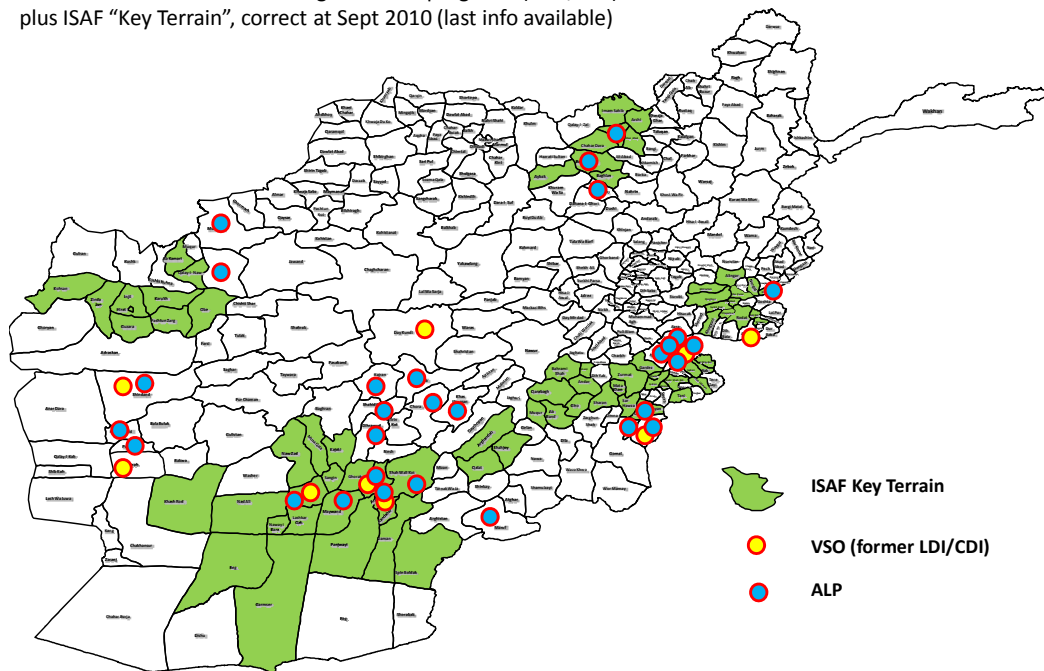
However, regardless of which explanation one prefers when you put the quarterly data in its annual context, which to us is a much more valid analytical period as it captures a full operational cycle rather than just the tactical to & fro, it becomes completely irrelevant. Over the full year the IEA **expanded** their attacks in both provinces, Helmand by a whopping 124% and Kandahar by a more conservative 20%, suggesting that in the bigger picture their capacity to conduct attacks has improved substantially. In light of this the deep downturn could just as easily be interpreted as an early winter reprieve, after an intense summer fight, and would not represent any longer term degradation of capacity. If the 2011 spring offensives sustain, or build on, the level of violence achieved this year then it will be a sure indicator that the surge operations achieved little. If they do not then the US conclusions, in those provinces at least, will be validated.

To borrow a phrase from the global warming debate...keep your eyes on the climate, not the weather.

## 1.2 Irregular Armed Forces

Irregular armed forces (militias) continue to be stood up in an uncoordinated and opaque manner and constitute an emerging security threat to NGOs. Two official programs are active, the Village Stability Operations (VSO) run by US Special Forces and the Afghan Local Police (ALP) led by the Ministry of Interior (see map for districts). However, ANSO has received numerous reports of other irregular groups spontaneously forming

**ANSO:** Districts with official Irregular Force programs (VSO/ALP) plus ISAF “Key Terrain”, correct at Sept 2010 (last info available)



outside of these programs, for instance in Faryab, Balkh and Takhar (but there could be others), that then seek retroactive sanction for their mobilization. While the subject is complex, the early concern is that irregulars are actually coalescing around political/ethnic leaders, in a low-intensity arms race, stimulated by the need to preposition ahead of the impending IMF withdrawal. If confirmed, which 2011 will show, then this aspect of the COIN strategy will be deeply at odds with efforts to form a strong central State.

The phenomenon seems most acute in the North where we suspect the fractured ethnic landscape gives rise to a more imminent sense of danger when the neighbor's suddenly re-arm and don a badge of State legitimacy. In Kunduz recently, competing irregulars, loyal to opposing Jamiat/Tajik and Hezb-i-Islami/Pashtun commanders, have engaged in armed conflict over territory and taxing rights. In other provinces locals have reported being robbed or assaulted and some claim the Arbaki even have links to the armed opposition. These developments are really of concern. The official response suggests that ultimately all irregulars will be brought under the control of the MOI with the ALP program, however this seems highly unlikely given the level of unauthorized mobilizations already occurring. The genie is out of the bottle.

In the short term the main risk to NGOs is simply that of the introduction of new armed actors to the field. We have not yet seen an Arbaki kill an NGO worker (although we suspect we have seen some robberies and maybe an abduction) but it will only be a matter of time. In the long run, irregular forces could pose a significant obstacle to lasting peace in the country (by delegating State legitimacy) and leave NGOs negotiating a complex, and shifting, patchwork of competing authorities.

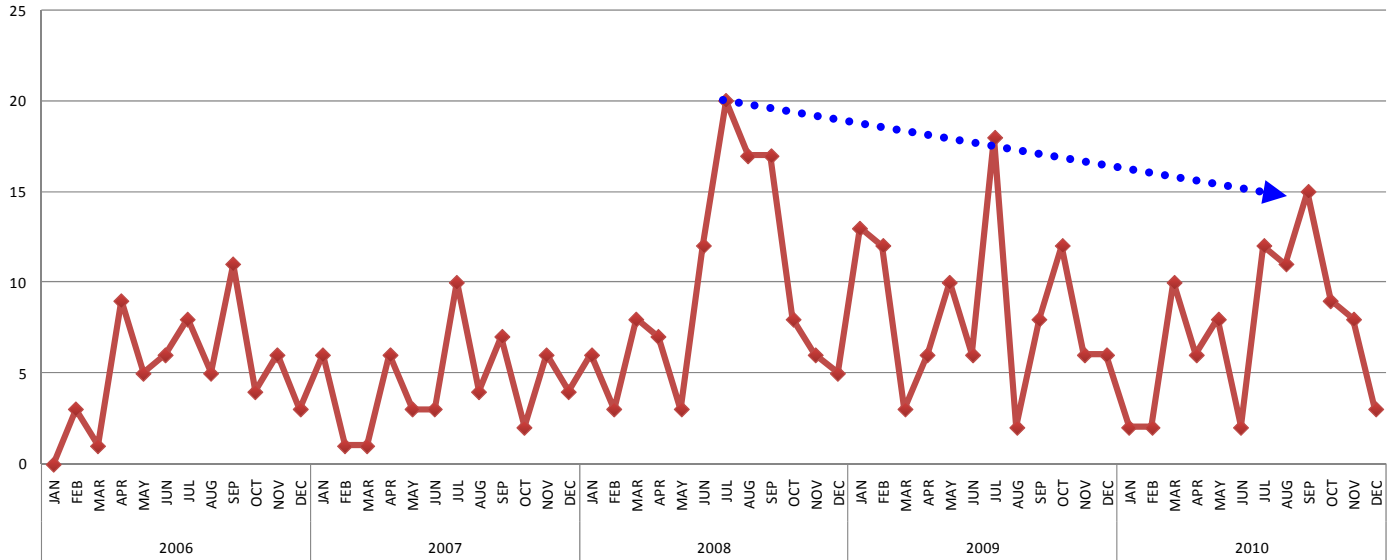
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# **Part 2.**

# **NGO TRENDS**

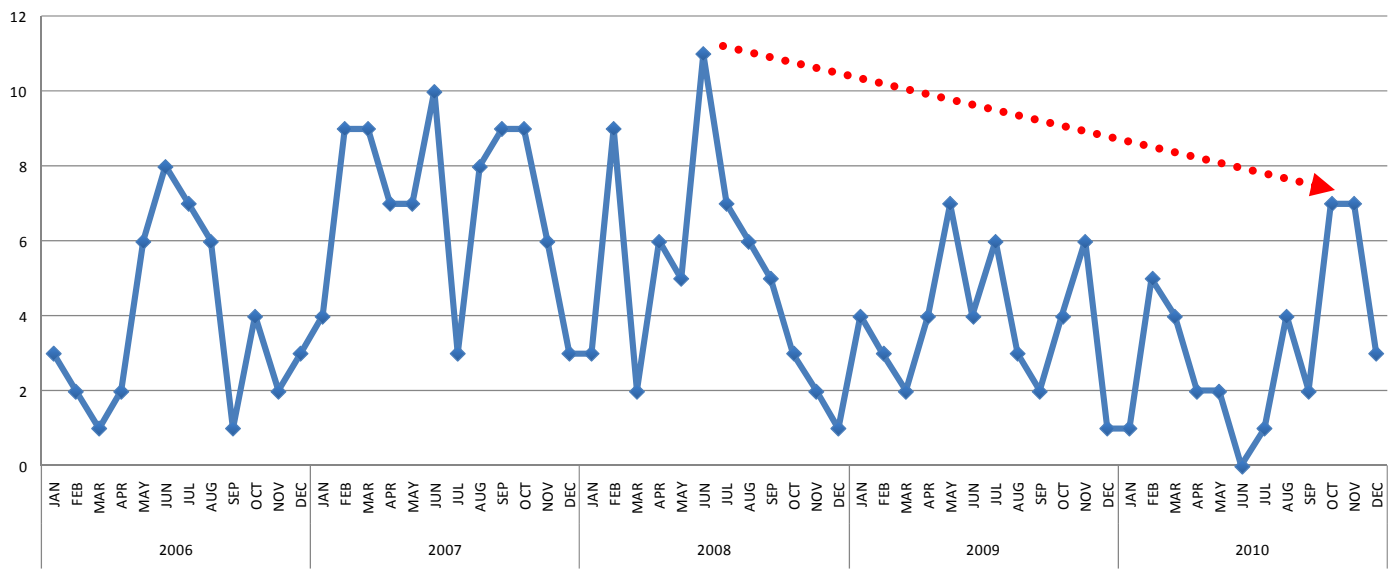
## 2.1 General NGO Trends

**ANSO: NGO security incidents attributed to AOG per month, 2006 - 2010**  
*(Includes all types of event such as kinetic, non-kinetic, threats and abductions)*



A total of sixty eight NGOs were victimized in eighty eight separate AOG attacks this year (above), **14% down** from the previous year. 51 one these were rated as ‘serious’ including abductions and kinetic attacks. The rate of attacks per month fluctuates significantly and with no obvious correlation to the rate of general conflict. A long term downward trend remains visible, between the peaks of 2008 and 2010 for example, likely reflecting incremental changes in NGO behavior rather than AOG intent or changes in demographics. The data still solidly supports the conclusion that NGO’s are not broadly or routinely targeted by AOG otherwise this would be visible in this data set. Exposure to crime (below) remains low, an additional 38 incidents, and has been dropping over time. Armed robbery is the main concern.

**ANSO: NGO security incidents attributed to criminals per month, 2006-2010**  
*(Includes all types of event kinetic and non-kinetic)*

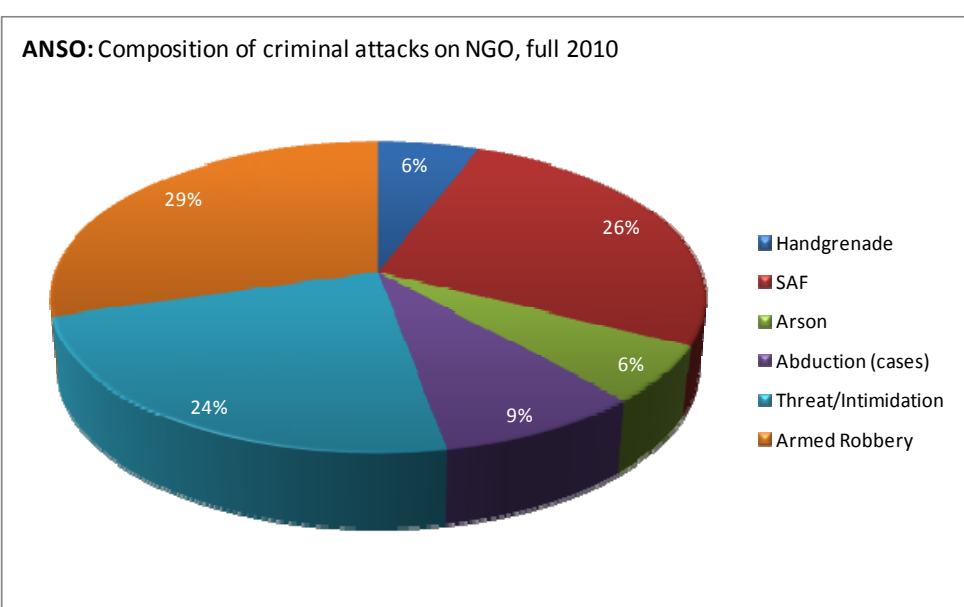
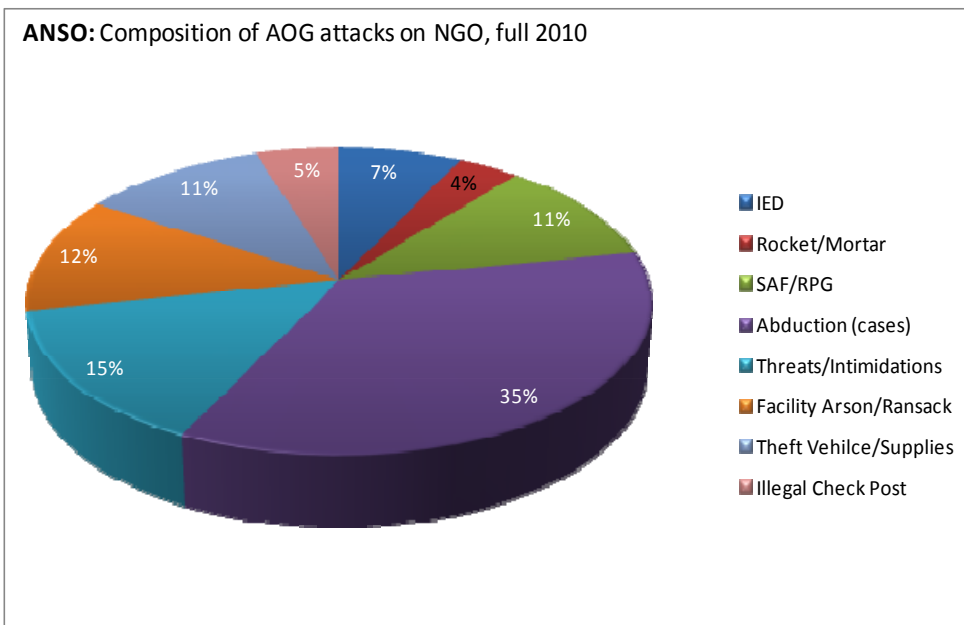


## 2.2 Category of NGO Incidents 2010

Abduction was the most common form of AOG attack on NGOs this year (right, 30 cases) accounting for 35% of the total, significantly up from 21% of the total in the fourth quarter of 2009. To date, all 74 victims have been released. Small arms fire events (9 cases), mostly in the form of roadside ambushes, also dropped as a percentage, down to 11% from 19% in 2009 but, as this category of attack accounted for 12 NGO

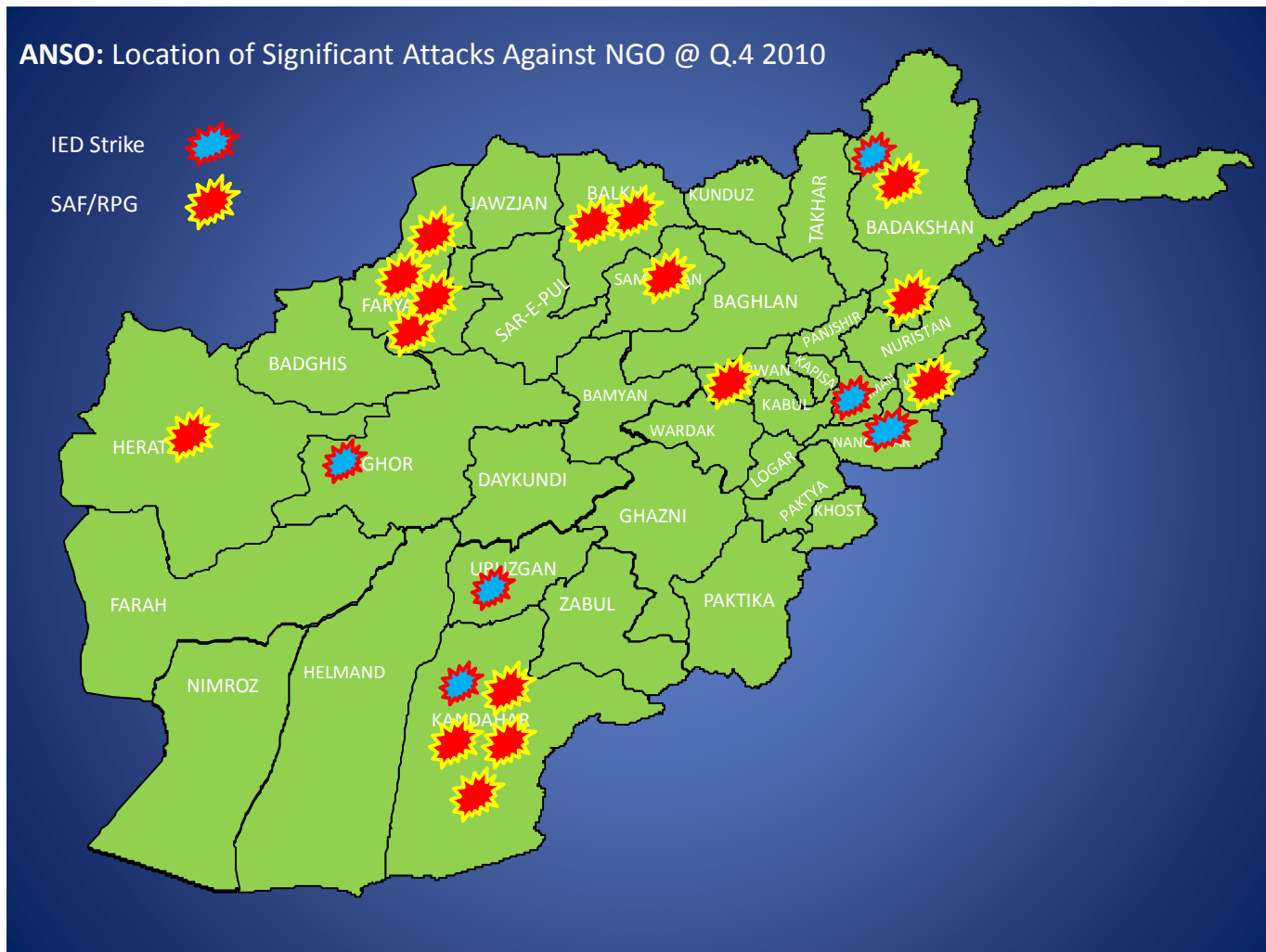
fatalities, it remains a serious threat. The murder of 10 NGO staff in one incident in Badakshan is included in this count. Four of the nine roadside ambushes targeted demining NGOs. IEDs (7%) continued to plague NGO road movement with six strikes occurring, killing 10, with four of these being assessed as deliberate and two accidental. Three of the deliberate IED strikes targeted demining NGOs. In 2009, IEDs made up 8% of the total attack profile. Lesser events, like threats (15%) via phone or in person, theft of vehicles or supplies (11%) and the ransacking/burning of remote offices or project sites (12%) made up the remainder of the annual profile. The data confirms what was laid out in greater detail in Q.3, that serious attacks on NGOs by AOG are in decline. See page nine for discussion on motivations.

Armed robbery (10 cases) remained the most prominent form of crime against NGO (right) at 29% of the total but is also down from 52% of the total (25 cases) of 2009. Of this year's cases, seven occurred at remote facilities and just three on the road. An additional four robberies were attempted but failed. Criminal homicide (SAF) remained a concern with three killed and six injured in armed attacks by criminals.



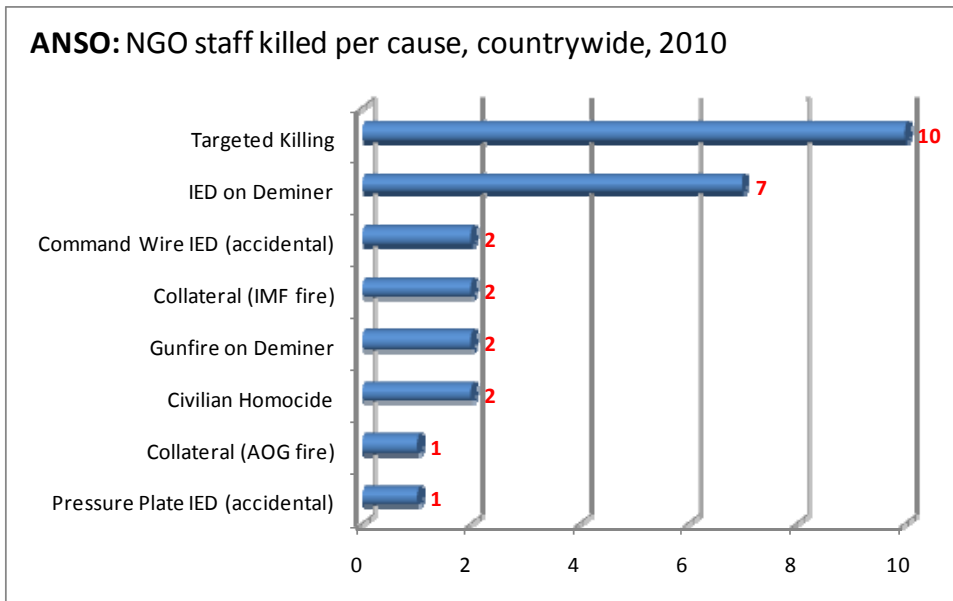
## 2.3 NGO Serious Incident Map 2010

ANSO: Location of Significant Attacks Against NGO @ Q.4 2010



The location of kinetic attacks against NGOs (see map) does not demonstrate any particular geographic concentration or trend. Attacks occurred in provinces with dramatically different underlying levels of conflict (from safe to highly insecure) and with both high and low levels of AOG presence. The unknown variable is the population density of NGOs themselves. The number of people killed per attack type (right) shows that while deliberate targeting still accounted for the majority of deaths, collateral fatalities are a growing cause for concern.

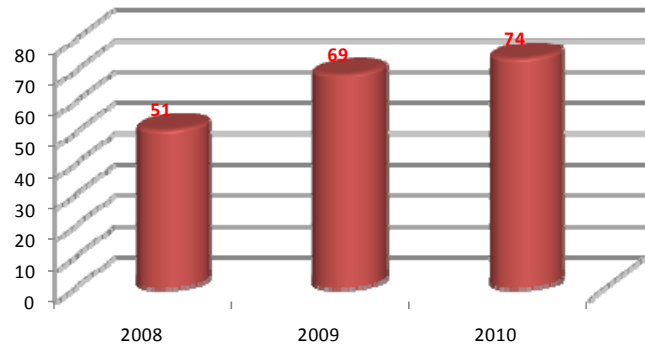
ANSO: NGO staff killed per cause, countrywide, 2010



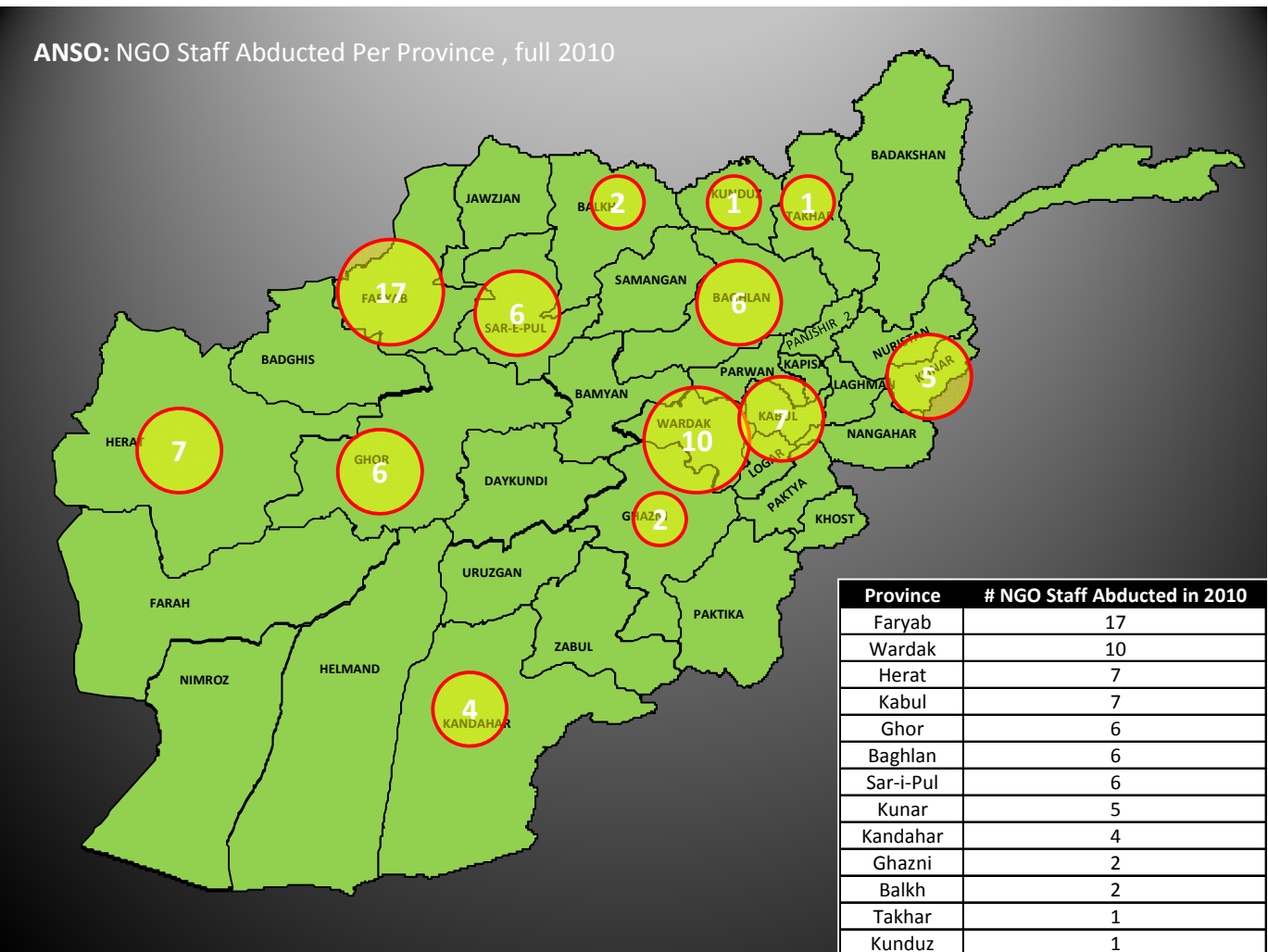
## 2.4 NGO Abduction Map 2010

While Q.3 data indicated that abductions would sky-rocket in 2010, the last quarter rates slowed sufficiently to being the annual total in line with last year, 74 cases compared to 69 in 2009. Still abduction remained a major concern effecting many organizations. The general profile remained consistent throughout the year with little violence displayed in most cases, the average detention period falling to just 3 days (down from 6 weeks in 2007) and all victims being released unharmed. The soft nature of most cases would suggest they are better referred to as 'illegal detentions' conducted for the purpose of information gathering rather than abductions for political advantage. We expect 'detention/abduction' to remain a prominent risk for NGOs going in to 2011, as AOG seek to control and understand new battle spaces, but, given the lack of violence this year, perhaps one that could be reinterpreted as offering opportunities to open dialogue and encourage acceptance.

ANSO: NGO Staff Abducted Per Year, 2008-2010



ANSO: NGO Staff Abducted Per Province, full 2010





## 2.5 Motivations

While not an area that lends itself to precise analysis, the question of AOG motivations in attacking NGOs needs unpacking. We assess that all serious incidents this year, meaning the 21 cases of kinetic attack plus 30 cases of abduction, have fallen in to one of the following four categories:

**1. Information Gathering:** We assess that at least 64% of serious incidents, including all of the AOG related abductions, have been committed for the purpose of systemic information gathering, or in NGO parlance '*actor mapping*'. This explains why 100% of victims have been released without harm and often within 48hrs. In this light, it would

be more accurate to refer to most events as '*investigative detentions*' rather than abductions and to see them as the IEA version of, albeit involuntary, civil-military coordination offering an opportunity to open dialogue.

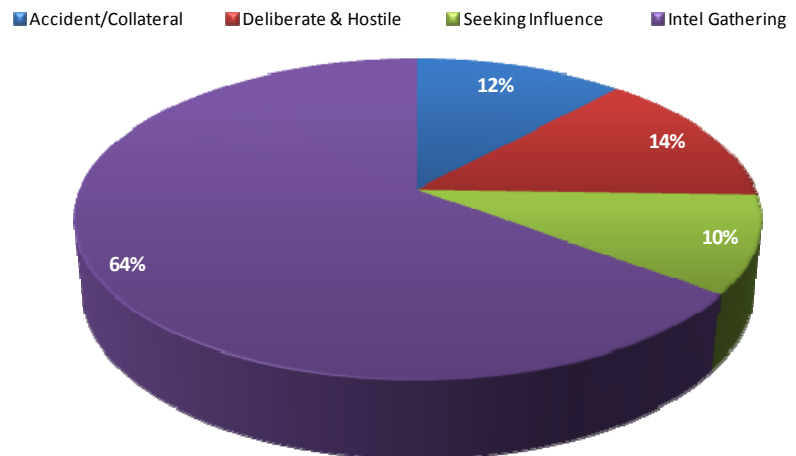
**2. Accident/Collateral:** We estimate that up to 12% of serious incidents (six of the 51 cases reviewed here) are simply accidents resulting from the volatile and fluid environment. Within this category you can find mortars and rockets, fired by IMF or AOG, that fall short and hit NGO offices, command wire IEDs that mistake a target and pressure plate IEDs that simply blow up the first person that drives over them. All accidents illustrate the importance of avoiding combatants, both in terms of perception and location, even though some events would not have been mitigated by any measures. Increased IMF & AOG offensives have created more ambient violence.

**3. Deliberate and Hostile:** Without doubt the purpose of some attacks is precisely what it seems to be, to kill or injure NGO staff. Of the 51 cases under review here we assess that eight (14%) fall in to this worst of categories but, more alarmingly, seven of these targeted demining organizations. This reflects a clear and direct opposition to the work of deminers. The eighth case involved the murder of ten NGO staff in Badakshan by a non-local armed faction. In this case religious extremism, expressed as a desire to kill non-Muslims, was assessed as an underlying cause essentially divorcing the murders from the surrounding political context. The common thread in all cases is that the NGO staff are killed for their direct characteristics with the attack being an end in its own right.

**4. Influencing Populations:** Also known as '*effects based operations*' (or EBO), these are the types of attacks where the NGO is not targeted for its own sake but rather acts as a means through which to influence the surrounding population. Essentially the inverse of winning hearts and minds. We estimate that just 10% of the attacks (5 cases) fall in to this category with most of these being non-fatal attacks on schools or health care facilities where the purpose was to punish the community (by denying access) for supporting '*un-Islamic*' activities and drive them towards a condition more favorable to AOG presence. The fact that the schools were run by NGOs was irrelevant, that they offered free education to young women was not.

In conclusion we suggest that deliberate attacks on NGOs, for who they are and what they do, are actually extremely rare, with the notable exception of deminers. However, even benign scrutiny by AOG, whether deliberate or mistaken, can easily leave an NGO bloodied or worse.

ANSO: Assessed motivation of AOG attacks on NGOs



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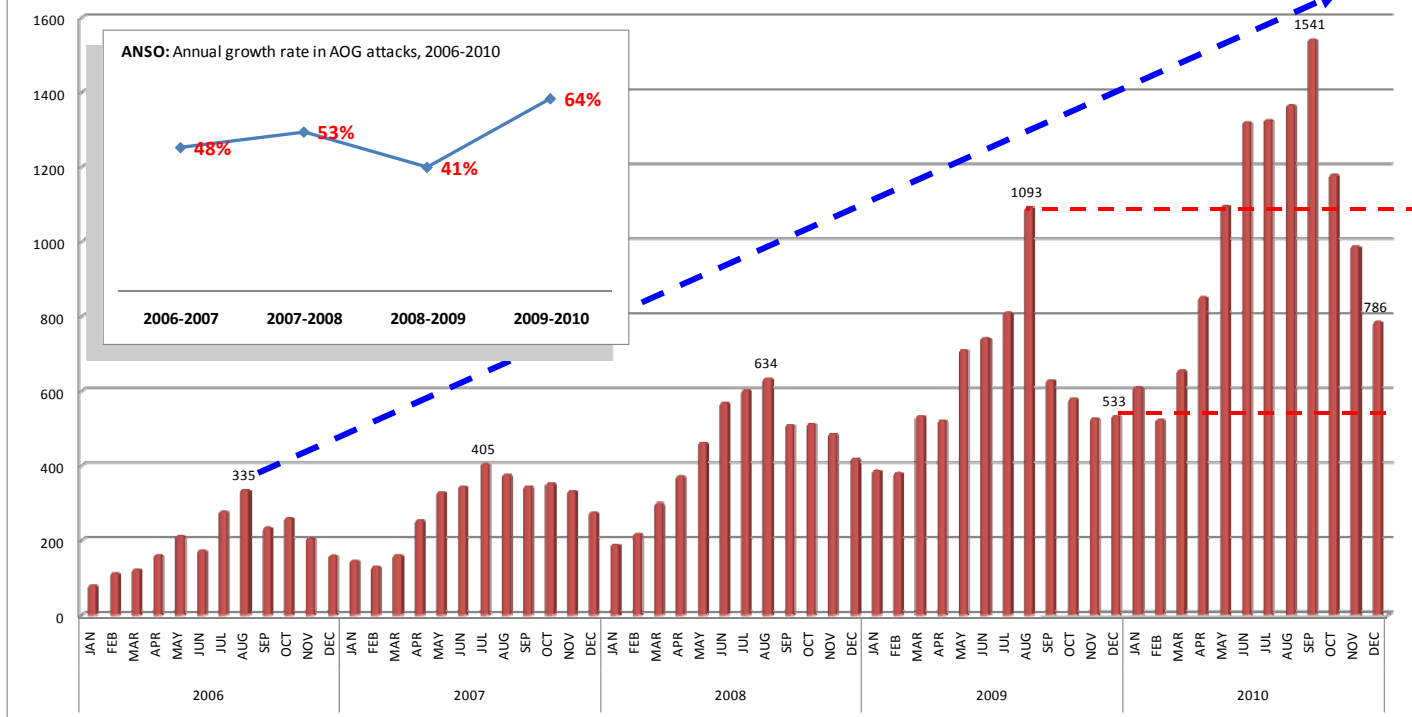
# **Part 3.**

## **State of the Conflict**

### 3.1 AOG Initiated Attack—Countrywide

#### ANSO KEY DATA: Monthly Attacks by Armed Opposition Groups, 2006 to 2010

(Significant kinetic attacks only, does not include criminal activity. Includes all AOG cooperating under the IEA umbrella (HiG, LeT, HQN, TTP, IMU etc))

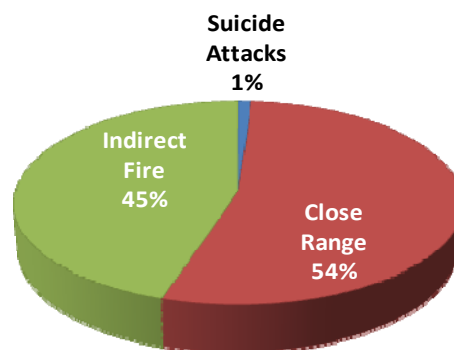


Consistent with the five year trend (above) attacks by armed opposition groups continue to rise. This year they were 64% higher than 2009, the highest inter-annual growth rate we have recorded (see inset graph above). If averaged, the total of 12,244 armed operations (mostly small arms ambushes, below right) represents roughly 33 attacks per day, every single day of the year. In September this rate jumped to more than 50 attacks per day, or 1,541 operations, as they ramped up their efforts to disrupt parliamentary elections that month. The year followed a familiar pattern with Jan/Feb starting slow, as AOG remobilize from the winter retreat, followed by seven solid months of expansion and a rapid de-escalation back to December. The final month closing out at 47% higher than December 2009.

Although provincial level data (p.12) shows that each province performed differently, taking the national data as a whole we consider this **indisputable evidence that conditions are deteriorating**. If losses are taken in one area they are simply compensated for in another as has been the dynamic since this conflict started.

More so than in previous years, information of this nature is sharply divergent from IMF 'strategic communication' messages suggesting improvements. We encourage NGO's to recognize that, no matter how authoritative the source of any such claim, messages of this nature are **solely intended** to influence American and European public opinion, ahead of the withdrawal, and are not intended to offer an accurate portrayal of the situation for those who live and work here.

ANSO: Composition of AOG attacks, 2010



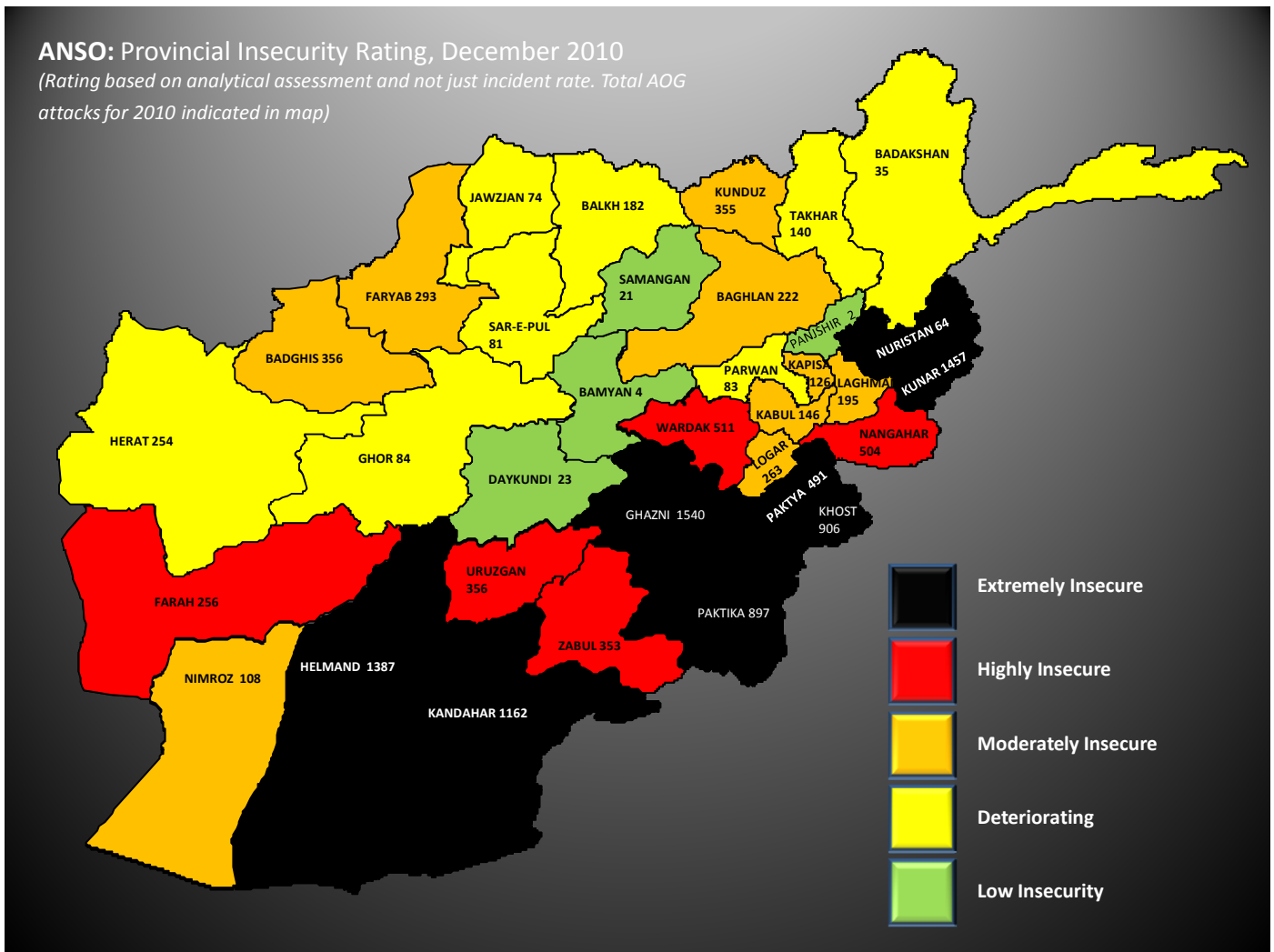
### 3.2 AOG Initiated Attacks—Per Province

**ANSO:** AOG Attacks Per Province, 2009 to 2010 comparison and % of change.

PROVINCE	2009	2010	% Change	
SAR-E PUL	23	81	252%	ABOVE AVERAGE GROWTH
GHAZNI	461	1540	234%	
PAKTYA	180	491	173%	
PAKTIKA	379	897	137%	
HELMAND	620	1387	124%	
BAGHLAN	101	222	120%	
TAKHAR	65	140	115%	
FARYAB	137	293	114%	
SAMANGAN	10	21	110%	
BALKH	88	182	107%	
KHOST	478	906	90%	
URUZGAN	196	356	82%	
NANGARHAR	295	504	71%	
PARWAN	52	83	60%	
FARAH	162	256	58%	
JAWZJAN	48	74	54%	
BADGHIS	239	356	49%	
LOGAR	188	263	40%	
ZABUL	259	353	36%	
LAGHMAN	149	195	31%	
WARDAK	414	511	23%	
KUNDUZ	292	355	22%	
DAYKUNDI	19	23	21%	
KANDAHAR	970	1162	20%	
HERAT	227	254	12%	
KUNAR	1318	1457	11%	
KAPISA	116	126	9%	
GHOR	83	84	1%	
KABUL	177	146	-18%	DECLINE
BADAKHSHAN	43	35	-19%	
NIMROZ	135	108	-20%	
NURISTAN	85	64	-25%	
BAMYAN	22	4	-82%	

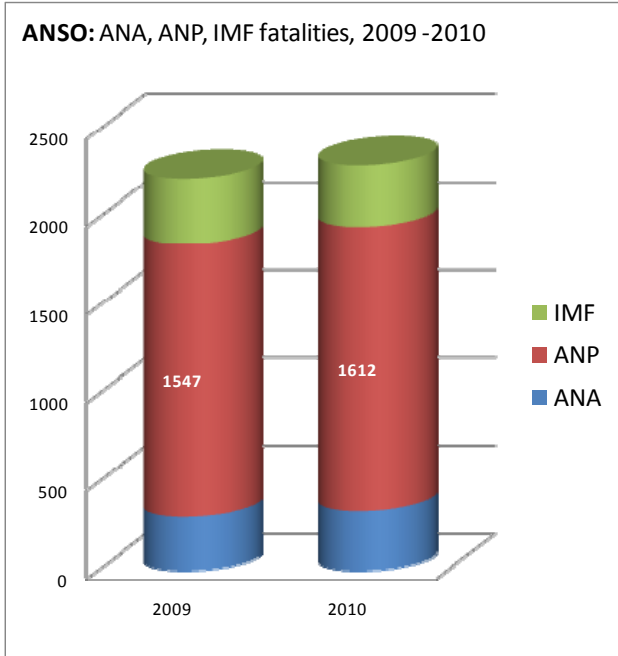
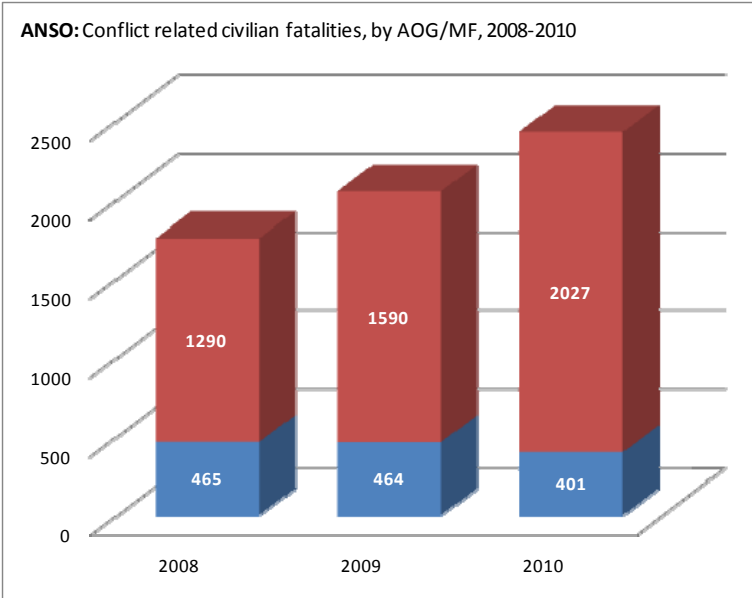
This table provides raw AOG attack rate data per province for 2009 and 2010, plus the percentage growth rate, per province. The average referred to is the 64% overall growth rate countrywide. Notable is that of the 10 provinces in RC-North six of them saw above average growth from 107%-252%. As a bloc, the provinces of P2K (Paktya, Paktika & Khost) plus Ghazni saw the sharpest deterioration with an average 158% increase of attacks across all four. Only five provinces saw less violence than last year with one being the capitol.

### 3.3 AOG Initiated Attacks—Insecurity Rating

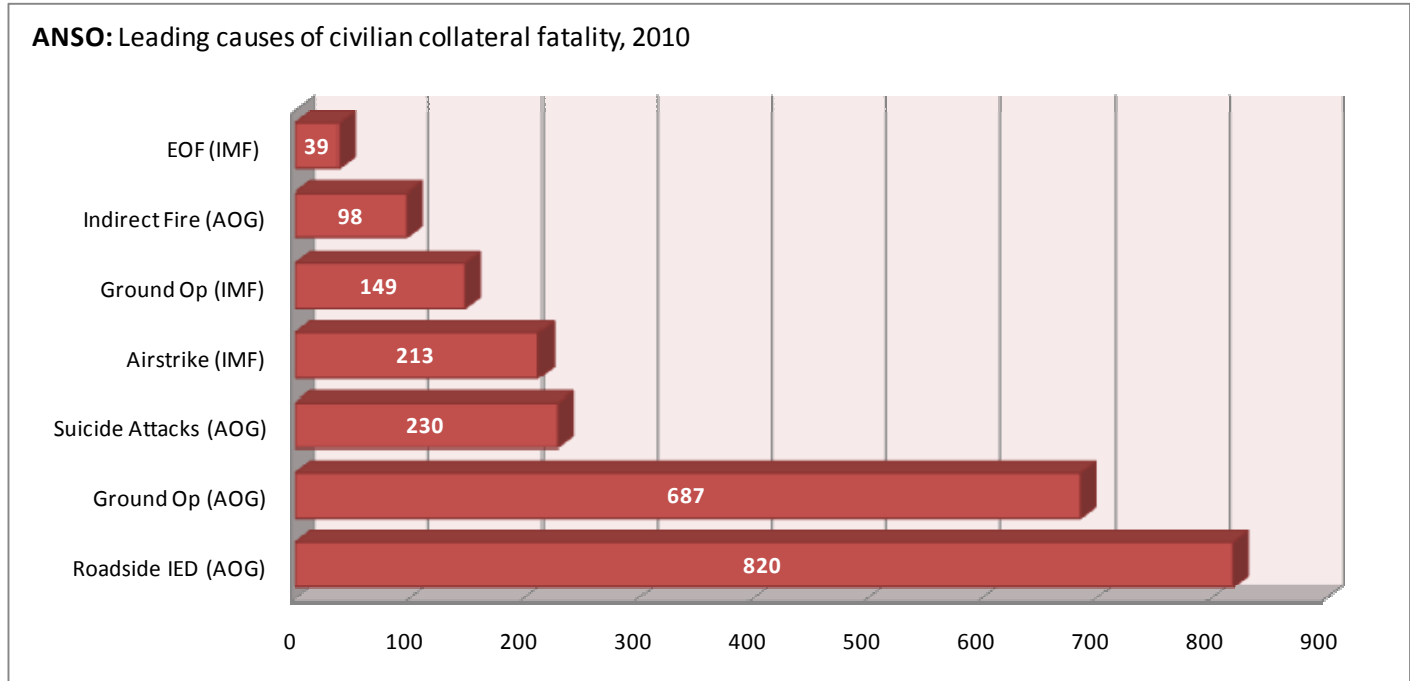


The most important and notable trend of the year was the AOG offensive in the North which concentrated on disrupting main supply routes, killing Government personnel and exploiting ethnic and political tensions to obtain a foothold. The offensive was initiated in early February from strongholds in Dahana-i-Ghuri and Baghlan-i-Jadid but soon spread to encompass large areas of Kunduz, Takhar and even Badakshan. Today Kunduz district is the focus of the most sustained attacks. On the western flank, AOG developed an impressive campaign in Faryab which by now has established resilient pockets in Jawzjan and Sar-E Pul. In the East Paktia, Paktika & Khost dramatically destabilized with two of the three seeing triple digit growth rates. The reported relocation of the Haqqani headquarters from Waziristan to Kurram no doubt supporting this trend. Ghazni surprised by surpassing Helmand, Kandahar and Kunar in attack rates, the majority of which occurred in just two districts Andar and Ghazni. This will be critically contested terrain in 2011. No surprises in the South as AOG put up a respectable resistance to the enhanced US pressure, doubling the attack rate in Helmand although mostly in the form of victim operated IEDs. In the West displaced AOG turned up in Farah and Ghor bringing instability, particularly to Pasaband and Taywara in the latter province. Going in to 2011, the AOG position looks strong.

### 3.4 Conflict Related Fatalities



Conflict related civilian fatalities grew by 18% this year (above left), to a total of 2,428 persons killed, with 17% caused by IMF and 83% caused by AOG. The leading cause of death was roadside IED strikes (below) with 820 people dying this way, 58% of them in the Southern provinces. This reflects the increased volume of ‘pressure plate’ (VOIED) devices utilized as AOG sought stand-off strike capability against overwhelming IMF numbers. The IMF have succeeded in reducing both the volume and percentage of fatalities caused by them, although IMF airstrikes killed a comparable number to AOG suicide attacks. Within the security forces\*, the ANP still account for the majority of fatalities (above right) with a roughly 5:1 ratio against ANA/IMF deaths. (\*ANSO’s ANSF/IMF fatality figures indicative only)



**Acronyms:**

**IEA** - Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban)

**AOG**- Armed Opposition Groups (specifically Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA, Taliban); Haqqani Network (HQN) and Hezb-i-Islami Hekmatyar (HiH/HiG), Lashghar-e-Taihba (LeT)

**IMF** - International Military Forces (specifically ISAF, USFOR-A, PRTs and SOF)

**ANSF** - Afghan National Security Forces (mostly Police & Army)

**IED** - Improvised Explosive Device (home made bomb)

**IDF**—Indirect Fire (rockets, mortars)

**CAS** - Close Air Support (airstrike)

**EOF** - Escalation of Force (shooting a vehicle at a check post that fails to stop)

**SAF** - Small Arms Fire (from a machine gun such as AK47)

# REPORT ENDS

For further information  
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