



April 2012

Comprehensive Information on Complex Crises

Socio-Economic Reintegration and Livelihoods

Part 3 of a 4-Part Series on Peace and Reintegration in Afghanistan

Rainer Gonzalez Palau

Social and Strategic Infrastructure Desk Officer

rainer.gonzalez@cimicweb.org

This report comprises the third in a four-part series addressing peace and reintegration in Afghanistan. This piece provides an overview of socio-economic approaches to combatant reintegration and particularly examines the role of infrastructure and livelihoods in such processes. Further information on these issues is available at www.cimicweb.org. Hyperlinks to source material are highlighted in blue and underlined in the text.

During the last decade, the Afghan government and international community worked to promote peace, governance, security and development in Afghanistan. However, as discussed in a report entitled "[Talking about Talks: Toward a Political Settlement in Afghanistan](#)" from the International Crisis Group, the current situation is still [fragile and volatile](#). A recent article in *The Independent* adds that insurgency hampers service delivery, accessibility, development initiatives and employment opportunities and, in doing so, may foster grievances which further fuel violence. In order to address this situation, the Afghan National Security Council passed the [Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program](#) (APRP) in July 2010. The APRP, which is introduced in the first piece in the CFC's introductory report on "[Peace and Reintegration](#)", "provides means for anti-government elements to renounce violence and reintegrate and become a productive part of Afghan society". As highlighted in the following pages, such processes can draw upon international experience and frameworks regarding the reintegration of armed groups and fighters. This piece introduces the main challenges encountered in many international reintegration programmes and discusses how Afghanistan and other countries have utilised infrastructure-related activities to help combatants transition to civilian life.

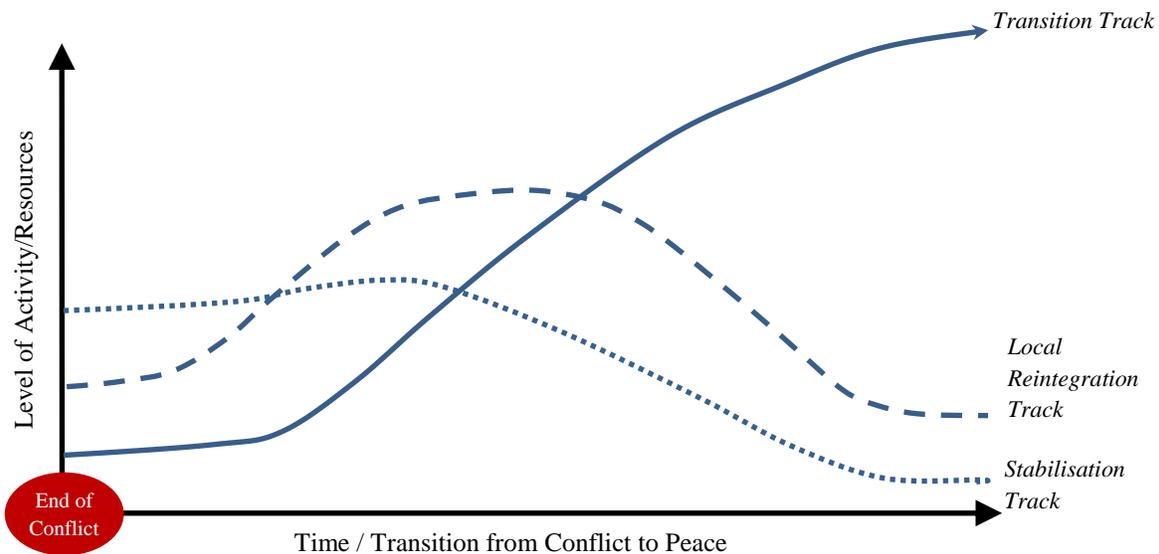
The United Nations' "[Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration](#)" says that employment is critical in fostering short-term stability, reintegration of combatants and returnees, economic growth and sustainable peace. The United Nations encourages an approach to employment-based reintegration that includes three tracks which are outlined in Figure 1: (i) stabilisation, (ii) local reintegration and (iii) transition. The Stabilisation Track aims to consolidate security and stability through short-term programmes targeting conflict-affected individuals such as ex-combatants in the immediate aftermath of conflict. These programmes,

The Civil-Military Fusion Centre (CFC) is an information and knowledge management organisation focused on improving civil-military interaction, facilitating information sharing and enhancing situational awareness through the [CimicWeb](#) portal and our weekly and monthly publications. CFC products are based upon and link to open-source information from a wide variety of organisations, research centres and media sources. However, the CFC does not endorse and cannot necessarily guarantee the accuracy or objectivity of these sources. **CFC publications are independently produced by Desk Officers and do not reflect NATO or ISAF policies or positions of any other organisation.**



which include cash-for-work, public employment or small enterprise grants, stimulate economic and social recovery and restore livelihoods. The Local Reintegration Track utilises employment to foster the reintegration of former fighters and others (e.g. returning refugees) at the community level in order to ensure reconciliation between returning/reintegrating individuals and the broader community. Such a phase may follow upon the stabilisation-oriented employment activities and may benefit reintegrating individuals as well as others in the community. Finally, the Transition Track aims to establish sustainable, long-term employment opportunities. In this case, transition refers to the process of moving from the recovery phase of operations after the end of the conflict to a long-term development model rather than the sort of security transition process currently underway in Afghanistan.

Figure I. United Nations Three-Track Approach to Post-Conflict Employment/Reintegration Programming



Source: Adapted from “[United Nations Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation & Reintegration](#)”, 2009

According to a report on “[Socio-Economic Reintegration of Ex-Combatants](#)” from International Alert, reintegration is one phase of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process which fighters frequently undergo at the end of a conflict. Reintegration commonly involves livelihoods for former fighters which enable them to take care of their families and transition to civilian life. However, International Alert notes that reintegration efforts are generally most effective when employment opportunities are not only provided to ex-combatants but also to their communities at large. According to Afghanistan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), such a [community-centric approach](#) has been adopted within the APRP in Afghanistan, where benefits are tied to communities which accept former insurgent fighters rather than being allocated solely or even primarily for the “reintegreees”, as they are commonly referred. Before further discussing reintegration under the APRP in Afghanistan, this report reviews the experiences of other post-conflict states in using socio-economic approaches to reintegrate former fighters.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt from Other Cases of Socio-Economic Reintegration

According to [International Alert](#), DDR efforts carried out by national governments and the international community in Latin America, Africa and Asia throughout last two decades have yielded the following lessons:



- Labour market analyses are rarely done to ensure that the assistance provided via reintegration programmes is aligned with local market gaps and contextual realities. For instance, poor planning has led some DDR programmes to provide reintegrating fighters with computer trainings despite the fact that their home communities lack electricity.
- In many post-conflict states, the DDR process begins at a time when the economy is weak or in decline. As such, reintegrating fighters become frustrated when the vocational training or grants they receive do not ultimately lead to suitable, if any, jobs. To overcome this challenge, reintegration efforts in Colombia involved 35 private companies which, under the coordination of the Interior Ministry, offered training, apprenticeships and/or jobs for reintegrating guerrilla fighters.
- Reintegration efforts are often undermined by market competition. Reintegrating fighters attempting to begin a civilian livelihood, many for the first time, find it difficult to compete with established traders or craftsmen.
- In some contexts, ex-combatants may face stigma, biases and discrimination which undermine their businesses or prevent them from being hired by local employers. Accordingly, International Alert notes that DDR programmes should view livelihoods as a social as well as technical or economic process.
- Age matters in reintegration, and DDR programmes may need to tailor the offerings they provide according to the age of combatants and the number of years that they have been away from civilian livelihoods.

International Alert further notes that DDR programmes must be viewed as long-term undertakings which require continued support rather than as a process which can be quickly completed with short-term trainings or cash payments.

Infrastructure-Specific Experiences

With many examples worldwide, a significant proportion of DDR projects concern reconstruction projects and the infrastructure sector, whether at the national or community level. For instance, following the end of the hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the World Bank describes how it helped [demobilise and reintegrate 158,000 members](#) of the Ethiopia National Defence Force by involving them in the rehabilitation of public infrastructure. ABC further notes that the Eritrean government is employing veterans in the rehabilitation of the [Asmara-Massaua railway](#). Similarly, a [European Union project in Liberia](#) promoted access to livelihoods for both civilians and ex-combatants by facilitating their involvement in community infrastructure projects. This approach made ex-combatants and the broader community work together in projects intended to benefit everyone, thus helping to implicitly foster the acceptance of the fighters.

The case of the Kosovo Protection Corps ([KPC](#)) is a prominent example in which ex-combatants contributed substantially to [rebuilding infrastructure at the community level](#), according to the International Organization for Migration. The KPC, which was composed of 2,800 former Kosovo Liberation Army combatants, was created in 1999 in accordance with the [UN Resolution 1244](#). In addition to rebuilding infrastructure, the KPC offered disaster response capabilities, including search and rescue, provided humanitarian assistance and assisted in demining efforts. A Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) "[Critical Study](#)" of the KPC describes the experiment as a success. The benefits of the KPC were further validated in 2010 by [a separate study](#) from the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies.

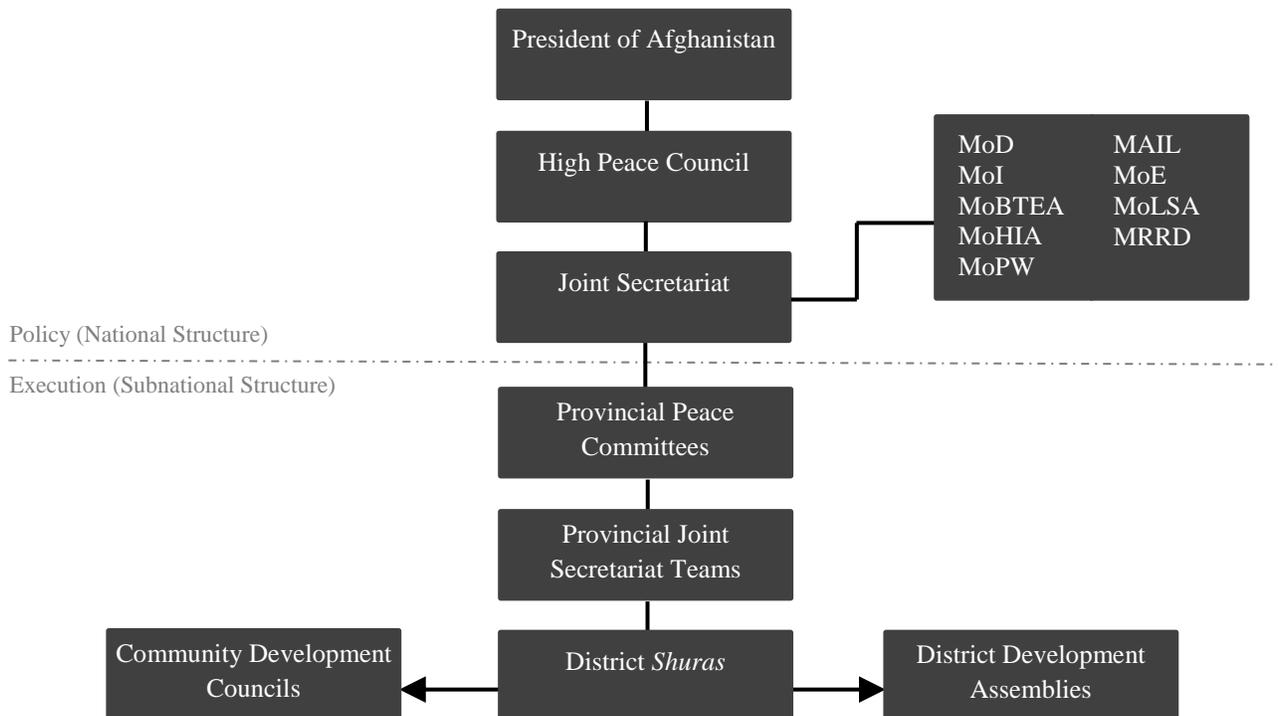
Reintegration & the Role of Infrastructure Rehabilitation

This report now turns from past global experience to on-going reintegration efforts in Afghanistan. The APRP structure, according to the March 2012 "[Guide to the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program](#)" by the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) Force Reintegration Cell (F-RIC), includes national as well as



subnational structures (*see Figure 2, next page*). While the APRP's full structure is further discussed in the introductory report in this series, execution of reintegration activities closely involves the Joint Secretariat, which includes ministerial representatives. Afghan ministries, among others, then implement reintegration activities targeting those communities which accept reintegrating insurgent fighters, a process which involves a wide range of sub-national structures, including Provincial Peace Committees (PPCs), Provincial Joint Secretariat Teams (PJSTs), district-level bodies (including District Development Assemblies (DDAs)) and Community Development Councils (CDCs).

Figure 2. Organisation Structure of the APRP¹



Source: Adapted from "[A Guide to the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program](#)", March 2012

Within this reintegration structure, several Afghan ministries play a crucial role in providing assistance – including infrastructure-related assistance – to reintegrating fighters and their communities. These include, among others, MAIL, the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) and the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD). According to the F-RIC, ministries such as these work with the Joint Secretariat to develop policies and programmes to support reintegration efforts within the APRP. These initiatives, many of which are reportedly at their initial stages, will be subsequently supported, implemented and managed by the ministries themselves at the sub-national levels. The last [Quarterly Report](#) released by the US government's Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) notes that socio-economic reintegration efforts are moving forward but that it is too early in the process to identify their outcomes or impact. The APRP began to function in late 2010, and many ministries did not develop working plans until mid-2011. However, initial plans and efforts can be extracted from the working plans publicly released by the MoPW, one of the ministries with relevance to the infrastructure sector.

¹ The acronyms for the ministries are as follow: Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs; Ministry of Tribal, Border and Ethnic Affairs; Ministry of Public Works; Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled; and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.



The [MoPW's APRP Implementation Plan](#) for Solar Year 1390 (March 2011-March 2012) aims to create a cadre of more than 1,000 Public Works Corps (PWC) personnel at a cost of USD 2 million. Reintegrating fighters and their fellow community members would, under the PWC initiative, be recruited as contractors for the MoPW for routine maintenance of roads within [Faryab](#), [Baghlan](#) and [Kunduz](#) provinces (*see Table 1 for further details*). In addition, MoPW's plan would engage reintegrating insurgents in maintaining four strategic passes (i.e., Sabzak Pass in [Badghis](#), Onai Pass in [Wardak](#), Seta Kandaw Pass in [Paktiya](#) and Mahipur Pass in [Kabul](#)).

Table I. Reintegration Opportunities under the MoPW Implementation Plan from March 2011 to March 2012

Province	District	Distance (km)	No. of Community Maintenance Groups (#)	No. of Persons Engaged (reintegrees & community members)
Faryab	Ghormach	47	6	150
	Almar	33	4	100
	Provincial Teams (Inspectors and Equipment Operators Groups)			22
Kunduz	Ghaziabad	25	3	75
	Markaz	5	1	25
	Imam Sahib	20	2	50
	Khanabad	33	4	100
	Provincial Teams (Inspectors and Equipment Operators Groups)			22
Baghlan	Baghlan e Jadid	33	4	100
	Pul-e Khomri	48	6	150
	Provincial Teams (Inspectors and Equipment Operators Groups)			22
Kabul	Sorobi	Mahipar Pass	2	50
Paktya	Gardiz	Seta Kandaw Pass	2	50
Maidan Wardak	Behsod	Onai Pass	2	50
Badghis	Karukh	Sebzak Pass	2	50
Total		244	38	1,016

Source: "[MoPW Implementation Plan for the APRP](#)", 2011

According to the MoPW Implementation Plan, reintegrating fighters will take part in a re-orientation programme in which the APRP and the PWC concept will be explained. After registration, each reintegrating insurgent or community member's skills and experiences will be assessed so they can be placed in the most appropriate role based on factors such as literacy and capability. Furthermore, the assessment will identify those individuals who are willing to work in remote areas or those who prefer to work near their communities of origin. The Implementation Plan stipulates that the "reintegrees" and their community are classified in the following groups:

- **MoPW Reinforcement Groups:** These groups will be added to the maintenance teams currently working on those mountain passes which are in a poor state. It is expected that these groups will increase the effectiveness of maintenance efforts at the targeted passes. Each group will consist of 50 individuals overseen by two supervisors.
- **Community Maintenance Groups:** These groups will consist of 24 labourers and one supervisor. Each CMG will be responsible for routine maintenance as well as preliminary emergency maintenance of eight km of roads near their communities.
- **Equipment Operators Group:** These groups will consist of 15 individuals at the provincial level. From their bases in provincial departments of public works offices, they will go to targeted CMG locations to provide support by operating technical equipment.



- **Inspectors Group:** These groups will consist of seven individuals who are highly skilled and who will conduct roads inspection and monitor CMGs' work.

As the efforts and plans outlined above suggest, Afghanistan is building upon models attempted in Kosovo and other conflict-affected countries in order to engage former combatants in the process of maintaining, rehabilitating and constructing infrastructure.

Conclusion

Under the APRP, Afghanistan has moved forward with reintegration. As has been shown in other post-conflict states, providing socio-economic support to reintegrating fighters and their communities may help to solidify peace and security. Engaging fighters in infrastructure construction, rehabilitation and maintenance as a reintegration option is one approach being attempted, though it remains too early to understand what effects such efforts are having. However, referring to the three forms of reintegration noted by the United Nations (*see Figure 1, page 2*), plans may be needed to eventually move from stabilisation and local reintegration models to transitional approaches that facilitate long-term development and self-sustaining livelihoods for former combatants and their communities.