



AFGHANISTAN REVIEW

Inside This Issue

[Economic Stabilization](#)
[Governance & Participation](#)
[Humanitarian Assistance](#)
[Infrastructure](#)
[Justice & Reconciliation](#)
[Security](#)
[Social Well-Being](#)

*This document is intended to provide an overview of relevant sector events in Afghanistan from 30 December 2009 - 06 January 2010. More comprehensive information is available on the Civil-Military Overview (CMO) at www.cimicweb.org. **Hyperlinks to original source material are highlighted in blue and underlined in the embedded text.***

ECONOMIC STABILIZATION

Matthew Hall, matthew.hall@cimicweb.org / +1 757-683-5273:

[Back to top](#)

- Due to high rates of unemployment in Afghanistan, ([estimated by the US Central Intelligence Agency to be 40% in 2008](#)) attempts have been made to provide [cash-for-work programmes](#) to entice insurgents away from the Taliban through offers of land and work. Of those countries focused on unemployment in Afghanistan, the [Japanese government](#) has included job training for former Taliban militants as part of their planned USD 5 billion aid package, according to the *Kyodo News Agency*. Similarly, *Tolo TV* reports a [United States Agency for International Development \(USAID\)-funded refuse removal project](#) is to be implemented by CARE International, generating an expected 3,000 new jobs for Kabul residents.
- *Pajhwok Afghan News* reports that the [price of gold and flour has decreased](#) over the past week. Flour dropped by approximately 4.5% from AFN 860 (USD 17.70) to AFN 820 (USD 16.87) per 50 kg bag. According to *IRIN News*, this is due to the bumper harvest of wheat in 2009. This is a welcome reversal in the trend of [recent sharp increases](#), caused by increases in fuel and transportation costs, the latter stemming from heavy winter snowfall.
- According to *ABC News*, the US military is expanding its efforts to [boost agricultural development](#) in Afghanistan. The US National Guard employs units made up of service members with extensive agricultural expertise, known as '[Agribusiness Development Teams](#),' to teach Afghan farmers efficient farming techniques. The most immediate impact is expected to come from tools given to farmers to make varied crops a viable economic alternative to opium production. ([Comments? Click here](#))

GOVERNANCE & PARTICIPATION

Ann-Kristin Otto, ann-kristin.otto@cimicweb.org / +1 757-683-4368:

[Back to top](#)

- The Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of National Assembly) has [rejected 17 of the 24 nominees](#) for ministerial posts introduced by Hamid Karzai. The ministers for Defence, Interior, Finance, Education and Agriculture were among the seven confirmed. According to the *New York Times*, most members of parliament (MPs) felt that they were not sufficiently consulted during the nomination process and claimed that most nominees lacked the professional expertise for their proposed ministries. UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in Afghanistan Kai Eide has called the vote a [political setback](#), delaying much needed reforms from being implemented. Other reactions, however, have differed, with *Agence France-Presse* citing some analysts as claiming the vote actually increased the political

power of parliament and has moved the country toward [democratic maturity](#). Other reactions focused on the significant political impasse the vote has caused, accusing MPs of [voting along ethnic lines](#), according to local *Aina TV* in Kabul. Of the seven confirmed ministers, four are Pashtuns, one Tajik, one Uzbek and one Sadat. All three Hazara nominees were rejected, as was the only female and only Turkmen nominee. [In an interview](#) with the *New York Times*, MP Shukria Barakzai drew attention to a strong rejection of powerful party nominees such as Ismail Khan of the Jamiat Party, citing MPs favouring independent candidates. Hamid Karzai has ordered parliament to [delay its winter recess](#) to allow for a vote on the new nominees. Afghan *Tofo TV* reported that Wolesi Jirga Speaker Mohammad Yunis Qanuni said that the president will [introduce 18 new cabinet](#) choices on 09 January. This will reportedly include a nominee for Foreign Minister, which was held up due to planning for the 28 January London Conference on Afghanistan.

- Independent Election Commission (IEC) Chief Electoral Officer Ali Najafi announced that Afghanistan's parliamentary [elections will be held on 22 May](#) despite concerns about the country's electoral system and lack of sufficient time for reforms. According to *Reuters*, in a meeting between the Afghan President, Chief Justice and Wolesi Jirga Speaker, it

was agreed that the [elections should take place](#) according to the predetermined schedule outlined in the Afghan constitution. The *Associated Press* had previously reported that western officials were [increasingly concerned](#) over the prospect of holding another round of elections before necessary reforms were enacted, speaking out in favour of delaying the spring vote. According to the IEC, the estimated cost of the elections is at least USD 120 million, with Afghans relying heavily on the international community to provide large portions of the budget. Speaking to the UN Security Council, SRSG Kai Eide made it clear that the [UN cannot support future polls](#) unless necessary reforms are made beforehand.

- According to *National TV Afghanistan*, President Hamid Karzai has met with several Afghan political experts to [discuss the country's priorities](#) for the 28 January London Conference on Afghanistan. Among the issues reportedly discussed were, civilian casualties, being a top priority for the government, as well as better coordination with the international community, ongoing reconstruction and economic development. The experts are reported to have urged Karzai to insist that international military forces respect Afghan concerns while launching military operations. ([Comments? Click here](#))

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Valeria Davanzo, valeria.davanzo@cimicweb.org / +1 757-683-4271:

[Back to top](#)

- According to *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)*, more than 5 million Afghan refugees have returned home from Pakistan and Iran since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, constituting the largest voluntary repatriation programme in the history of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Despite this, more than 2.5 million Afghan refugees still live in the two neighbouring countries (about 1.7 million in Pakistan and 900,000 in Iran). The annual return rate from Iran and Pakistan has been noticeably low in 2009, and has been described by UNHCR as the [lowest return rate since 2002](#). *IRIN* reports that only 4,400 families (48,320 individuals) returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan with UN assistance from March to December 2009, with only 1,007 households (5,561 individuals) returning from Iran during the same period. Despite a significant decrease in the number of voluntary returns, Noor Mohammad Haidari of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and Ewan MacLeod of UNHCR are confident that refu-

gees will continue to return throughout 2010.

- The Afghan government has announced that the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is significantly higher than previously estimated by UNHCR. The UN agency's estimates came from the findings of the National IDP Task Force, which includes UN agencies, government bodies and other NGOs. The Task Force estimated that 275,000 people were internally displaced; however figures later submitted by the MoRR covering all 34 provinces indicate that [413,890 individuals are currently displaced](#). According to *IRIN*, UNHCR believes such a discrepancy in the figures may be partially explained by the difficulty of collecting exact figures for conflict-related IDPs, caused by "the temporary nature of their displacement." The Afghan authorities terminated the formal IDP aid programme in spring 2006 and IDPs have reportedly only been assisted on an *ad hoc* basis since. ([Comments? Click here](#))

INFRASTRUCTUREMatthew Hall, matthew.hall@cimicweb.org / +1 757-683-5273:[Back to top](#)

- The National Assembly's rejection of the majority of Hamid Karzai's cabinet nominees could have reverberating effects on infrastructure development in Afghanistan as uplift schemes benefit from support and leadership at the highest levels of government for efficient implementation. According to the *New York Times*, the cabinet rejections have left the government [partially paralyzed](#). High profile candidate and former mujahedeen commander [Ismail Khan](#) was one of those affected, being rejected for a second term [as Minister of Energy and Water](#). Karzai's choices for the Ministries of Telecommunications and Mines were, on the other hand, accepted by Afghan lawmakers. According to *Bloomberg* and reported in the Governance & Participation section of this week's Afghanistan Review, Karzai is expected to [present the National Assembly with a new list of nominees](#) on 09 January.
- According to *Pajhwok Afghan News*, [33 uplift schemes](#) and social welfare projects were completed in the northern provinces of Takhar and Jowzjan. The schemes, costing a total of AFN 42 million (USD 865,000), will reportedly benefit over 6,000 families. The infrastructure projects include the construction of roads, bridges, community centres, wells, retaining walls, power lines and a micro hydroelectric power plant.
- A USD 806,000 [dam in the Khoshi district of Logar province](#) was inaugurated on 03 January, as reported by *Pajhwok*. The dam, funded by the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), will be capable of irrigating 2,500 hectares of land as well as producing 500 watts of electricity.
- On 02 January, *Ariana TV* covered the launch of a USD 10 million [hydroelectric dam reconstruction](#) project in eastern Nangarhar province. The USAID-funded Breshna-Kot project is expected to increase the power capacity of the dam to 16 megawatts. (Comments? [Click here](#))

JUSTICE & RECONCILIATIONAnn-Kristin Otto, ann-kristin.otto@cimicweb.org / +1 757-683-4368:[Back to top](#)

- According to the Afghan daily *Mandegar*, seven members of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) have been [referred to the judiciary](#) for their alleged involvement in cases of fraud during the August 2009 elections. A considerable number of IEC staff have been removed over alleged fraud, however the reported numbers vary greatly from [200](#) (*Tolo TV*) to [7,000](#) (*Mandegar*). *Mandegar* also reports that a fire in the IEC's Information and IT Office destroyed important documents and information related to the election results; the IEC has not made a statement with specific information.
- Following the conviction of Kabul Mayor Mir Abdul Ahad Sahebi on charges of [embezzlement and corruption](#), Hamid Karzai has appointed a [new mayor](#) to the capital. Through a presidential decree, Mohammad Yunos Noandesh, a former Deputy Minister of Water and Energy, has taken up the position. According to *Ariana TV* in Kabul, during his inaugural ceremony Noandesh listed the fight against corruption and city renovation as his [top priorities](#). Former mayor Sahebi was [sentenced to four years](#) in jail on corruption charges and was briefly detained before being released on bail. According to AFP, the sentencing of Sahebi was the first high-profile corruption conviction since Karzai came under renewed Western pressure to crack down on graft after winning a second term in presidential elections last year. (Comments? [Click here](#))

SECURITYJohn McClaire, john.mcclaire@cimicweb.org / +1 757-683-4302:[Back to top](#)

- One American soldier was killed and two Italians injured when an [Afghan soldier opened fire on foreign troops](#) at a military base in western Afghanistan. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the incident could lead to a heightened sense of mistrust between international troops and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), potentially undermining the military's strategy of eventually handing security responsibility over to indigenous forces. This is not the first time such an incident has happened. In March 2009, [two US Navy Officers were killed by an ANA soldier](#) at Camp Spann in Mazar-e-Sharif and in

November 2009, five British personnel were killed when an Afghan National Policeman (ANP) [opened fire on his trainers](#) in southern Helmand province.

- [In a report](#) by the Center for a New American Security, the top US military intelligence officer in Afghanistan Major General Michael Flynn said [current intelligence gathering is only "marginally relevant"](#) to the overall military mission, according to *Fox News* and the *Associated Press*. His [review](#) also pointed out that the US intelligence agencies in Afghanistan may be focusing too heavily on insurgent

activities, while overlooking the local culture, people and environment in which they operate.

- As the US continues to send more troops to Afghanistan, Pakistan has voiced concerns that the escalating war effort may worsen its own insurgency. According to the *Washington Post*, [residents in border areas](#) of western Pakistan such as Peshawar worry that Taliban insurgents fleeing Afghanistan will seek refuge across the border and join local militant efforts. ([Comments? Click here](#))

SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Valeria Davanzo, valeria.davanzo@cimicweb.org /+1 757-683-4385:

[Back to top](#)

- According to figures recently released by UNAMA, with the intensification of the conflict over the past year the number of civilians killed in Afghanistan increased by almost 11% during the first 10 months of 2009. The death toll - [2,038 civilians during the first 10 months of 2009](#), compared with 1,838 for the same period in 2008 - is one of the highest since the Taliban government was ousted in November 2001. UN calculations suggest that the Taliban and other insurgent activities caused the majority of civilian deaths in 2009 (1,404), primarily as a result of suicide bombers and roadside bombs. Figures also show that operations by Afghan Security and international Coalition forces have also led to a rise in civilian casualties and killed at least 468 people. According to *Agence France-Presse*, Hamid Karzai intends to address this sensitive issue at the London Conference on Afghanistan on 28 January. Karzai has already suggested to reporters that one way he believes civilian casualties can be prevented is by placing more ANSF on the frontlines. As reported in the *Stars and Stripes*, President Karzai's concern is supported by GEN McChrystal whose counterinsurgency strategy [emphasizes protecting civilians](#).

- In mid-December the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the launching of a vaccination campaign using a [new and more effective polio vaccine](#). No new cases of type 2 poliomyelitis have been reported anywhere in the world since 1999, however types 1 and 3 are still present in Afghanistan. According to WHO, the bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) is considered a major new tool in efforts to eradicate types 1 and 3. The UN agency also states

that because the vaccine is effective against two types of the virus, its use will vastly simplify the logistics of vaccination in the conflict-affected parts of Afghanistan. During this new round of polio immunizations, 2.8 million children under five in the country's southern and eastern regions will receive the new bOPV. WHO figures show that access to children in Afghanistan has improved over the last year. Despite this, they also report that up to 60% of children in some areas of the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand can still not be reached due to insecurity.

- According to the *Canadian Press*, of a total police force of some 92,500 in Afghanistan, there are only approximately 500 active-duty policewomen, who are essential as they can perform tasks, such as searching women and homes, that their male counterparts cannot without infringing on cultural 'sexual' norms. In the next five years, [thousands of policewomen are expected to be trained and educated](#) to perform specific duties and tasks focused on the volatile southern provinces, where they are virtually non-existent. According to the US and Afghan officials, policewomen play an essential role in winning the war against insurgents. However, even with a recruitment drive underway, the force has yet to fill the 650 slots reserved for policewomen. While there is some scope for advancement, policewomen are reported to often endure harassment and threats from not only their communities, but also from within the police force itself. ([Comments? Click here](#))

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