



Women & PEACE
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Understanding Local Conflicts: Case Study from Helmand, Logar and Nangarhar Provinces

Systems Conflict Analysis August 2017



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Executive Summary

In 2016, the Folke Bernadotte Academy and the Swedish Embassy in Kabul enabled an exposure and learning opportunity for four Afghan women activists and experts to engage with their global Dialogue and Mediation Program – organized in Sweden, Cambodia and Afghanistan. This program connected the Afghan women with the women experts from many other countries in conflict and in post conflict to devise strategies and approaches to understand the nature of conflicts in their communities and identify the possible skills and approaches that can lead to addressing the conflicts. One of the possible tools discussed during the trainings was “Systems Conflict Analysis” which is a contemporary form of conflict analysis understanding the roles and relations of different actors engaged in a conflict. The Afghanistan team chose to work in 3 provinces, Helmand, Nangarhar and Logar using the “Systems Conflict Analysis” as an attempt to understand the basic outlook of the ongoing conflict in these provinces.

It’s important to note that these three case studies are outcomes of a primary data collection through literature review and a limited number of interviews and discussions with the people who are inside these communities and are engaged in the conflict resolution in one or another form.

The case studies suggest three common findings that need further investigation and research to contextualize them to the general situation in Afghanistan:

First, a common finding from all these provinces indicate that there are enabling environments in each community that anchor insurgency and become a ground for the recruitment of young Afghans into the insurgency of the Taliban and other militant groups. The factors that push and pull these recruits vary from community to community but can be generally categorized as lack of justice, lack of opportunities, lack of a national and a local level dialogue on grievances – however, the insurgency and the recruitment processes are further supported and equipped by the regional dynamics and the geopolitical realities of Afghanistan.



Second, the insurgent groups to infiltrate into the communities use the provincial level resources. In the primary study we found out that the conflicts over resources ranging from water, to land, to power structures which are considered assets of communities become the entry point for the insurgents as an immediate strategy to push communities towards directly engaging in the insurgency because their resources will be taken away if they don't cooperate – or in worst circumstances their lives and their families will be at risk. However, the role of the local governments continue to be weak in creating a dialogue and platform among communities on how to take charge of their own resources with the help of the local governments. The local governors hired at Kabul level continue to remain disconnected from the ground realities of these communities. Even some governors commute from Kabul to their province capital on daily basis and do not stay in the province to connect with the people and find out their challenges. However, the insurgent leaders and combatants have homes inside the villages and are accessible to communities when needed to resolve local conflicts.

Third, there are clear indications that the tribal structures that used to create coexistence and harmony among communities pre Taliban and pre Mujahidin era, are now being manipulated by the insurgency to connect them with their community recruits. This needs to be further investigated as the political and governance landscape in Afghanistan continue to bank on the tribal structures.

This is a simplified version of the stories collected in these case studies – however we recommend that a thorough conflict analysis should be carried out in each province of Afghanistan to understand the dynamics, the actors and the factors that connect local conflicts with the insurgency or vice versa.



1. Helmand Province: Hasina Safi

1.1 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS:

Helmand is suffering from years of war after Marja operation 2004, the battle of Musa Qala was the 2nd large battle in Helmand provinces launched by the Afghan National Army and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) against the Taliban on 7 December 2007 and on 12 December 2007 for the first time Musa Qala was officially reported captured by Taliban and it remained for 9 months under their control.

Later on the war expanded to other neighbor districts, in 2010 Taliban assault on Sangin district and intensify their battle widely in different districts of the province, since then, Year by year war intensified and the province filled in battle, finally in 2014 when Kabul was in deep political crisis already casting the presidential election and put long-term political stability into doubt, the Taliban offensive presents a new worst-case situation to the government and foreign troops in Afghanistan.

At this time the Taliban attacks have more focused on the Helmand province particularly on the district of Sangin because of its strategic location and can easily threat other neighbor districts, to this aim they mounted simultaneous attempts to conquer territory of neighboring districts like Nawzad, Musa Qala and Kajaki. ¹

With Musa Qala the battle started simultaneously in another districts like Kajaki, Nawzad, Sangin, Nadali, Greshk, Marja, Naw and Lashkargah where great part territories of these districts have occupied and only the districts capitals were under control of the Government forces.

¹ New York Time "Taliban Mount Major Assault in Afghanistan"



As consequences of this war, thousands of people have been killed and injured where the great number of them is civilians, women and children, Afghan National Security Forces and the insurgents. The province natural resources have seriously damaged and destroyed, transportation roads, people harvest and cops and natural Forest are destroyed. Tens of thousands children deprived from school and almost all well fair institutions, schools and health clinics are destroyed and become the military strongholds which will be further elaborate in upcoming section of this report.

1.2 Methodology

The research sample size for this study comprises governmental officials, community elders and local people views across from different districts of the Helmand Provinces and this study is conducted based on two data collection processes. First, in conjunction with literature reviews and studies of the credible reports. The (second) through our census in the field where qualitative and quantitative data were collected in light of four defined questions through key informant interviews with governmental officials , Security Seniors and also interviews and discussions with community elders, Mola –e- Imams and local people from different districts.

In responds of the question number one *As what are the main actors of Helmand conflict* (40%) of the governmental official called the main actors of the conflict Taliban and other Anti-Government Army with support of Neighbor counties intelligences, 50 % called Drug Traffickers and opium, 5 % Ethical divisions and lack of their support with government and (5 %) called lack of coordination among governmental official and Army forces.

Parallel this question have been referred to the Community Elders and Influential leaders, Mola –e- Imams , they believe that (30%) the Helmand conflict's main actors are Taliban and other Anti-Governmental Army Groups (AGAG) with support of Neighbor counties' intelligences 30 % Drug Traffickers and opium ,30 % Ethical divisions and lack of their support with government entities and Afghan Security Force. These groups also called



(10 %) of the conflict due to lack of coordination among governmental official, Security organ and existing of corruption in these organs

The 3rd targeted group of the research or local people from different districts has been interviewed via telephone and face to face discussion. Among this group (60%) call the conflict main actors Taliban and AGAG with support of Neighbor Counties Intelligences 30 % Drug Traffickers and opium, 0 % Ethical divisions and lack of local peoples support with government, (10 %) called lack of coordination among governmental official, security organs and current existing corruption among the governmental entities

Further information on respondents and the number of surveys and discussions about the first main factor of the conflict is provided in below in table

Regarding the question's Number two (*What is the main factors and trends of the conflict in Helmand Provinces*), the research finding from remarks of governmental officials (20%) called the main factor of the conflict lack of sufficient army force in the battle field particularly in war session where Taliban and GAGA intensify their fight against government , 30 % called strategic location for war and 40 % called again drug trafficker and opium cultivators and 10 % call lack of coordination among government officials in the provinces .

Likewise 50 % of Influential leaders and tribal elders believe on lack of coordination among security force and the governmental official , 20 % called strategic point from battle prospective that can easily threat other neighbor provinces , 20 % believes traffickers and opium cultivation and 10 % calls the lack of coordination among ANSF and corruption in the Battle field .

Regarding the question number three (*major failure and success for control and against this conflict*) have wide-ranging views, the government official and security seniors mainly brought reason that they could not able to completely under control whole territory of Helmand provinces is slow move of the National Army Force during the battle in residential areas ANSF effort to avoid local people casualties and financial loses. But still they claim of advancing in the battle field.



But local people mainly brought reason of certain failure poor logistic and equipment support to ANSF in the battle field and also lack of coordination between security forces and sub national government on provincial and district levels, corruption, bribery and lack of professionalism in the rows of ANSF and existing of unreal troops in the list of national Police and National Army are the main elements of the failure in Helmand war.

1.3 Stakeholders Analysis: Conflict actors and their interests & positions

Helmand is famous from opium cultivation and production, according to the general views of and analysis of different reports conducted about Helmand provinces, opium and its smugglers have 60 % role in fueling of the war, as per report of UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) opium estimated rise in 2016 is 43 % in whole Afghanistan the reports said estimated opium production in this year was 4,800 tons, underscoring a “worrying reversal” in efforts to combat problems associated with illegal drugs, the statistics represent the third-highest level of cultivation in Afghanistan in two decades, following records of 2013 and 2014. Helmand makes great part of this number, it is because of its favorable weather, rising insecurity and a decline in international donor support.²

Corruption in the local government and security organs are another main factor supporting with current and past conflicts, based on views of interviews, Helmand needs seriously reforms both on the security organ and sub national government levels.

In another hand many of the local people and observer believes on number of imagined police in the line of real police which not only undermine the moral of the real police and Army but it also have seriously effects on the ware field.

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/23/afghanistan-opium-production-soaring-un-office-on-drugs-and-crime>



As consequences of our census and cross analysis of the different researches in the area the conflict main actor is opium cultivation and its smugglers along with regional countries intervention and support with Antigovernment Armies Groups, lack of coordination among the sub national government and security force is also one of the main factor for extending war in Helmand Provinces.

1.4 Mapping forces for and against Peace:

How can institutionalize peace in this war ton province, Is one of the major questions people have no clear idea particularly in Helmand province, As per deferent thoughts and different views from the governmental official, security officers to tribal elders, influential, and local people almost all are in same views about peace building in Helmand provinces.

The province is currently in unknown situation, mostly local people concern about extending of war by coming spring because as usual Taliban and other opposite groups are intensify their war in summer session and from their point of views, peace and security building in the provinces is much more related to joint cooperation between government and local people and that is possible while the governor and senior army commanders should have close coordination and single strategic plan for overcoming the war in the provinces.

The observers believes that the National Army Force should increase war with support Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in one hand and in another hand Subnational government with support of community influential tribal elders and Mola-E- Imams should work for peace building, local people and tribal elders can mediation between government and Taliban.

In Another hand many of the observers believe that international community should pressurized of the countries supports terrorism, the government of Afghanistan should prefer to peace though active intervention of local people, community elders and influential.



In 2017 government officials and Security force seniors are optimized to overcome the battle because of US new mission in Helmand by deploying more than a hundred US troops in Lashkargah to help Afghan National Security Force in defeating of the Taliban, this is the first US deployment to the embattled city since foreign troops withdrew in 2014.³

1.5 Conclusion:

As result of our census, Helmand conflict has different root causes from cultivation and smuggling of the opium and its trafficker's influences in area to influence of regional countries and lack of coordination among governmental departments. These are all main reasons, which can fuel Helmand war.

They are not much more optimistic to peace or controlling the war, because they believe that the anti-government army groups are more equipped and regular compared to the National Security force.

This long ware remained have Casualties, Catastrophes and damages in Helmand provinces As per our census 7000 Afghan army force have been killed and injured and around 10000 of the civilian including men, women and children, and 5000 Anti Government army have been killed since start of the war

By the same token 45% of the natural resources have been demanded or destroyed during the war, 70 % of schools is banned and destroyed, and 60 % of clinics have been destroyed and 75 % of whole population is displaced to Lashkargah or other neighbor provinces.

In order to overcome this long battle and end the current miseries deployed peace and stability in the provinces some serious reform in the provincial government and security forces are recommending in light of the research finding.

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/22/us-troops-sent-afghanistan-taliban-lashkar-gah>



2. Logar Province: Wazhma Frogh

2.1 Contextual Overview 4

Logar is one of the nearest provinces to Kabul located some 65 km on the eastern belt of Kabul⁵ and has a long history of various forms of violent conflicts. It's one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan and has 7 districts and over a 100 of villages. The capital of Logar province is Pul-e-Alam district where the provincial government offices are located. While Afghanistan has not had any national census surveys in the recent years, but the population reports of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) report the population size of Logar close to 500,000 people. The major ethnic group in Logar are the Pashtun's⁴ consisting of something up to 60 % of the total population followed by Hazara's and Tajiks covering the remaining population size.

The public service institutions are limited in Logar province and there are over 300 schools that accommodate up to 150,000 girls and boys – and there are 2 Higher Education Institutions available in the province capital. There are three government hospitals and 46 clinics active in the 6 districts of the province. Afghan government discovered mines existence in this province and mostly copper, cobalt and salt are found in Logar province. Likewise other provinces of Afghanistan, Logar is an agricultural province and 65 % of its cultivated lands are located in 5 districts near Maidan Wardak River – and its best products include corn, yogurt and wool.

Logar province is the highway towards Paktia and Loya Paktia region of Afghanistan bordering with Pakistan's Miranshah and Waziristan regions where the Taliban and Haqqani Network are based. The province is considered part of the southern zone and its gateway to Khost and Paktia as well. It's also a heavily mountainous province and surrounded by so many mountains that provide refuge to the militants and in 2014, over

⁴ Logar : <http://afghanag.ucdavis.edu/country-info/Province-agriculture-profiles/logar/fsnhlplogarpdf.pdf>

⁵ Province update : <http://president.gov.af/en/analysis/logar/>



1000 militant groups related to Taliban and Haqqanis⁶ were reported to operate inside Logar province. However, historically Logar has been home to the Anti-Soviet resistance movement and many resistance leaders of the Anti-Soviet Jihad comes from Logar province notably Fazlullah Mujaddidi, Sayed Rasool Hashimi, Malim Tor, Mohammad Wali Nasiri, Taher Shirzad, Asadullah Fallah – who fought against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Logar also provided a base to the Hizb-e-Islami Gulbuddin Hekmatyar group that fought the Soviets and then engaged in the civil war from 1992 up to 1995 before fleeing to Pakistan.

Logar is a strategic province because of its relationship with Kabul and its geographic location connecting the south to east and center has been the center of attention of the militants, HIG, sporadic groups of insurgents, Taliban and many other unidentified armed groups. It's a center to coordinate attacks on Kabul easily due to its closeness to the center and therefore, the militant groups continue recruiting the local armed groups from Logar to carry out attacks on Kabul and therefore, Logar has remained volatile and full of various forms of conflict caused by the internal and external groups. Logar remains to be among the highest insecure provinces of Afghanistan. The Taliban have moral and physical control over the population and many extremist tribal groups support the Taliban ideology and therefore, the Taliban do not face direct resistance from the community members and move freely within the districts – easier than the government officials.⁷

Logar is also famous for one of the most important copper mines of Afghanistan. In 2012, the Afghan government reported that with 240 million metric ton of Ore, Ainak Mine located in Mohammad Agha district of Logar is one of the world's largest deposits of Ore⁸. While it was contracted in 2012 to Chinese Company, the extraction halted due to insecurity and lack of the required capacity by the Chinese company and the Afghan government. Many analysts believe that it's a factor of insecurity and a root of conflict

⁶ Haqqani network was formed in the late 1970s by Jalaluddin Haqqani. The group is allied with al-Qaida and the Afghan Taliban and cooperates with other terrorist organizations in the regio

⁷ Logar: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/lack-of-capacity-and-capital-is-afghanistan-under-selling-the-ainak-copper/>

⁸ <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/lack-of-capacity-and-capital-is-afghanistan-under-selling-the-ainak-copper/>



that different groups want to take control of the area, want to recruit their own men for the illegal extraction of the mines and therefore, create insecurity for any external or opposing group and make it hard for them to launch the extraction plant.

One strategy that the Taliban use in Logar province is to engage with the tribal elders and identify the families who have saved money and resources for funerals, wedding and other family purposes and force them to pay that money into the Taliban charity fund otherwise the family members will have to send their male members to fight for the Taliban or if nothing works then they kill those community members. That's how they create terror and fear among communities. But they have insider supporters and facilitators who report to them on different families and their resources and they take their share. These insiders range from local tribal leaders, to criminals, to local gunmen in the area. If the tribal leaders, ulema and the community leaders don't support the Taliban programs and existence in Logar, the Taliban insiders gun them down⁹.

"IWPR interviewed around 80 residents of the Mohammad Agha, Charkh, Baraki Barak and Pol-e Alam districts in Logar in May and June who had applied to the Taliban rather than Afghanistan's formal court system. Asked why they had done so, interviewees said state courts could take years to process a case, and the judges took bribes to sway the outcome."¹⁰

The actors of conflict are a complex group. They mostly come from the surrounding provinces since Logar connects Paktia, Khost, Paktika to Kabul and insurgents from these provinces can be recruited by the Taliban groups and carry out attacks on Kabul or within Logar or even in their own home provinces.

The other actor of conflict is the Afghan Local Police – which is an auxiliary police force of the government that are recruited tribally and locally to fight the Taliban. Many criminals take up arms in this process and become source of conflict in the community and use this newly attained power of gun and image to spread fear and terror among their rivals and opposing tribes in their province. Communities report on their oppressive behavior and violent approaches that become the causes for many from their enemies

⁹ <http://1tvnews.af/en/news/afghanistan/29440-gunmen-kill-deputy-head-of-afghan-ulema-council-for-logar>

¹⁰ See http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/223738/345373_de.html



and opposing tribes to be recruited with the Taliban insurgency to protect their own lives.¹¹

2.2 Methodology

This research report is produced based on the Systems conflict analysis, which is a contemporary tool for understanding and analyzing a conflict. Developed by CDA¹², systems conflict analysis look at a conflict as a system of relationships and interactions that connect each other and form a conflict. In systems conflict analysis, the research and focus is on the relationships between the actors of conflict, the factors that drive and create the conflict and the dynamics of interconnectedness between actors and factors. This form of analysis helps to identify the entry points for building peace between actors and stakeholders in light of their connections and relationships with factors that drive the conflict.

2.3 Stakeholders Analysis: conflict actors, their positions and interests

The current rising violent in Logar province has a multitude of actors involved on daily basis. These actors have a varying level of interests to keep their influence and engagement in the management and leadership of the provincial resources, particularly mines as well as its proximity with the center, but their positions keep changing based on the nature of their power and sources of power.

Local stakeholders: provincial government

The security agencies, police, ALP, governor

¹¹ <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-empty-streets-of-mohammad-gha-logars-struggle-against-the-taliban/>

¹² CDA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) is a non-profit organization based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, affiliated with Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. CDA is committed to improving the effectiveness of international actors who provide humanitarian assistance, engage in peace practice, and are involved in supporting sustainable development. CDA is best known for its Do No Harm (DNH) and Reflecting on Peace Practice programmes, having piloted the DNH approach in 1993.



Local stakeholders: Taliban insurgents, criminal gangs, mine gangs

Regional stakeholders: Pakistani Taliban, Haqqanis, regional terror groups

International stakeholders: PRTs, ISAF/NATO, US SFO,

2.4 Systems Conflict Analysis: Factors for conflict and peace

Discussed with key informants and asked for their vision for their province

Where we are now: Rising violence – increasing fear – closing doors of education and work for women – assassinations of government employees – suspension of all mine extraction activities

Where we want to be in 1 years: gradual decrease in level of violence, start identifying the local and regional threats that's acceptable to the whole community – negotiate peaceful terms between community elders, tribal leaders and local Taliban commanders

Where we want to be in 10 years: elected local government, local municipality, and open and accessible education system for girls and boys, women able to work, inclusive and transparent mining extraction projects that provide incentive to the province

Defining a vision for peace: The people who were involved in the interviews and discussions discussed “peace” as end of any form of violence in their community, no fear and intimidation against anyone and enabling environment for all different communities to live a life free of violent. Since the level of violence is rising, the immediate vision for “peace” among all is the end of violence and the stopping of war. Therefore, the facilitator tried to convene the conversation in present and future situation in the time space of now, in one year and in 10 years to bring the attention of the interviewers to the long-term peace in their province

2.5 Mapping forces for and against peace

Without any doubt and repeatedly, the interviewers responded that the local government and the provincial level security agencies want to end the Taliban insurgency and conflict



in their province – but also mentioned the wrong approaches used by the local government that push people against them towards the Taliban insurgents. The interviewers mentioned that some of the tribal leaders who are supported by the Taliban commanders go against the local government because their lives and the lives of their families are protected by the Taliban and if they don't accept and support the Taliban, their lives and their families will be at huge risk.

Most critical factors for peace against conflict

- Relative commitment by the local government to bring an end to the violence and conflict
- Provincial Council and Provincial Peace Council efforts to mobilize communities for peace
- Communities being tired of violence and wanting to live in free and peaceful environment
- The close proximity of the province to Kabul putting more focus on the province security by the central government
- Existence of SOME tribal and community leaders who want to end the conflict and negotiate between Taliban groups
- A number of educated Afghans working in Kabul and wanting to promote peace and stability in their province who keep advocating on behalf of their people at the central level

Key driving factors for conflict against peace

- Rising level of violence and civilian casualties by the security forces and ALP mistreatment of the population
- Lack of the central government plan to secure the population centers in Logar
- Lack of the local government commitment to provide justice and services
- Continued and strong influence of the Pakistani Taliban, the Haqqanis and regional terror groups
- Ethnic tensions – esp between the nomads and the inhabitants of some districts



2.6 Conclusion

This pilot study was remotely managed from Kabul and the challenges of Logar province was discussed with a number of stakeholders involved in the province. However, considering their relevance to the situation, their analysis and description of the conflict situation can be considered an entry point for further investigation and study. However, the major finding of the study is that there are many local roots to the conflict that can be evaluated and researched further that can be a departure from the superficial analysis of the Afghan conflict towards a more localized understanding that each province have their own unique characteristics and vulnerabilities to the insurgency.



3. Nangarhar Province: Samira Hamidi

3.1 Introduction

In this case study Nangarhar province conflict from communities' viewpoint is analyzed. The aim of this paper is to identify some of the most emerging gaps at the local level that add to the existing conflict including increase of Daesh (ISIS) influence in Nangarhar, different means of instability that are the key driving factors to the ongoing conflict as well as the key actors adding to the conflict. This paper also brings a set of policy recommendations to Afghan government and donors on addressing peace and stability from peoples' perspectives.

3.2 Methodology

This paper is not development based on an extensive research through a project. As explained in the executive summary, this is a small contribution by the four trainees of dialogue and mediation in peace process training which was organized and supported by Sweden Embassy in Afghanistan. While the extensive training provided a lot of tools and ways forward to use the systematic conflict analysis approach, there have been limitations to carry on such research in provinces with ongoing conflict and instability.

For the development of this paper several reports on current situation of Nangarhar province was studied. There has been also an effort to understand the changing situation in the province in the last few years. Also key informants (unofficial and personal) contacts were used for the interviews.

As this was a totally volunteer initiative, there was couple of limitation in data collection from communities. Firstly since discussing conflict with focusing on key driving factors such as actors and structures were sensitive most of the



interviewees were not confident enough to share their thoughts. The second limitation has been limited data available on understanding conflict from communities' views. During the interviews, it was also noticed that most well educated and informed community representatives do not trust the data collection and this kind of report collection. They were unhappy with earlier researches and data they had shared which were not even shared back with them after these research initiatives were completed.

3.3 Geography and Population

Nangarhar province in eastern¹³ Afghanistan is a mountainous with borders to tribal areas, the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan. Nangarhar has 22 districts, Jalalabad city as capital of the province. Nangarhar has a population of more than 1, 489,000 (762,000 male and 727,000 female) people with 90 per cent Pashtuns and remaining 10 per cent of Pashays, Tajiks, Gujas and Kuchis (224000 urban and 1,265,000 rural)¹⁴.

Some of other districts are Achin, Bati Kot, Behsud, Chaparhar, Dara-e Nur, Deh Bala, Durbaba, Gosht, Hesarat, Kama, Khogyani, Kot Kuz Kunar, Lalpur, Muhmand Dara, Nazyan, Pachieragam, Rodat, Shinwa, Surkhrod and Sherzad¹⁵.

3.4 Findings: Key Driving Factors

Forces for Peace:

According to the interviewees for the report there are number of actors and factors that are identified as forces for peace in Nangarhar province. These include the presence of local government at Jalalabad city and some of the other districts.

¹³ The eastern region includes the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan and Laghman

¹⁴ CSO population projection for 2014/1015,
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Humanitarian%2520-%2520Profile%2520Nangarhar%2520Province%2520%28January%25202015%29.pdf>

¹⁵ OCHA, MRRD, 2014



There has been also number of civil society and social organizations identified as key actors for peace building and carry on positive messaging. Some have been using educational awareness, sports, workshops, seminars and conferences discussing the need for ending conflict and bringing peoples' contributions. It is also identified that people in Nangarhar province are willing to contribute to peace building efforts using local solutions. It is documented that people have shown great interest in supporting government's interventions and initiatives related to development and peace.

Some of the forces for peace building in Nangarhar province identified are provincial peace council, provincial council, civil society organizations, security forces, peoples' councils (shura) at the community level and emerging youth groups with peace building mentality at the local level.

Forces for Conflict:

The nature of the conflict in Nangarhar province has evolved in 2013 in line with the drawdown of International Military Forces (IMF). Insurgents and other armed groups continue attempting to expand their territorial footprint by challenging government control in this 'strategic' province, by engaging in ambushes, ground engagements and localized clashes. Other tactics employed by armed groups include targeted killings designed to undermine and weaken state authority, and intimidation and harassment which have led to increased levels of displacement and civilian casualties. The situation is worsened by the porous border with Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province, which allows unhindered movements by armed groups¹⁶.

The summer month between June to September insurgents are more active. There has been massive attacks and insurgency noticed within the mentioned timeline. The security situation in Nangarhar is relatively peaceful compared to other provinces, however it keeps deteriorated markedly over the last few years, reaching its worst levels. The level of threats and attacks increases in July with many shops targeted and girls reportedly receiving night letters, prohibiting them from travelling to the bazaar during the summer months mentioned earlier¹⁷.

¹⁶ Ibid 2

¹⁷ [http://cpau.org.af/manimages/publications/Quarterly_Report\(Q3\)Nangarhar_Province.pdf](http://cpau.org.af/manimages/publications/Quarterly_Report(Q3)Nangarhar_Province.pdf)



Most of the 600,000 Afghans who returned from Pakistan last year chose to settle in the eastern border province of Nangarhar. This has put considerable strain on both health and education services. There has also been a boom in property prices, which has exacerbated land grabbing, already a major source of conflict in the province¹⁸.

Since mid-2016 another emerging challenge and addition to the ongoing instability in Nangarhar province is the existence and influence of Daesh (ISIS). Different sources have provided various unconfirmed information on presence of Daesh in between four to 10 districts of the province¹⁹. Daesh is considered most serious threat to the local communities where governmental control over certain districts is almost missing. Provincial council members as well as local communities have continuously shared their concern on lack government's plan and capacity to fight against Daesh in Nangarhar province.

Beside the geographical and military situation in Nangarhar province, there are number of other key factors that continuously contribute to the ongoing conflict reported by number of interviewees. The existence of armed groups with community influence and support has added to the instability. The armed groups are found responsible for kidnapping of well-known officials, business men and civilians in Nangarhar province.

Half of these kidnapping are reported to be done for selling the victims to insurgent groups such as Daesh and Taliban, who then use them as bargaining chip for the release of their own group members. Half other kidnapping is carried for financial benefits where in return huge amount of ransom is demanded²⁰.

Forces for Peace- Against Conflict	Forces for Conflict- Against Peace	Key Actors
Local government	Taliban	Government
Provincial Peace Councils	Daesh	People
Educated population	Warlords	Insurgent Groups

¹⁸ <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/resettling-nearly-half-a-million-afghans-in-nangrahar-the-consequences-of-the-mass-return-of-refugees/>

¹⁹ <http://www.tolonews.com/node/12513>

²⁰ http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3493/1/3493_1.pdf



National Security Forces	Armed Groups	Armed Groups
Civil Society	Drug dealers and Mafia	Civil Society
International Actors	Weak rule of law	
Youth		

3.5 Recommendation

- Designing and implementing economic activities and other sustainable projects that can engage youth to avoid youth engagement in local and insurgent developed conflicts;
- Organize a thorough systematic conflict analysis for Nangarhar province, to identify why Daesh and other insurgent groups has gained power and what are the approaches to avoid communities engagement with these groups and conflicts;
- Tie people/ communities among each other to promote the culture of unity and encourage the local conflict resolution initiatives and dialogues. People to people interaction can avoid some of the most emerging internal conflicts in communities in Nangarhar province;
- Focus on peace building, mediation, dialogue and facilitation educations to community members engaged in peace building efforts or are influential actors.
- The more people know about local solutions, they better manage to systematically address internal conflicts which are not part of a bigger war;
- Support communities in designing and conducting public debates related to root causes of conflict, war consequences and communities' role in addressing it through public debates and seminars.

