

Conflict analysis: Baharak district, Badakhshan province

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Glossary

ANBP	Afghanistan new Beginnings Programme
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
CPAU	Cooperation for Peace and Unity
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration
DfID	Department for International Development
DIAG	Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups
IAG	Illegally Armed Group
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNODC	United Nationals Office on Drugs and Crime
US	United States
WB	World Bank

Dari and Pashto terms

Hizb	Party
Jirga	Council
Mujahideen	Literally those who strive, used to refer to participants in the resistance against the Soviet backed Communist government
Sharia	Islamic law
Shura	Council
Toyana	Bride price

List of Parties

Harakat-i Inqilab-i Islami

Hizb-i Islami (Hekmetyar) (HIG)

Jamiat Islami Afghanistan

Khalq – A faction of the PDPA

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)

Sazman-i Inqilab-i Zahmatkashan-i Afghanistan (SAZA)

United Tajik Opposition (UTO)

1. Introduction

This paper is a first step in attempting to explain not only the potential impact of conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities, but also to examine the ways to improve peacebuilding programming and understand the links between local conflicts and higher order conflicts (including drug, commander and insurgent related conflicts) in order to provide not only better programmes, but better policies to undermine conflict dynamics. This is a complex process and each of those three areas deserves individual exploration. This paper on Baharak in Badakhshan forms one of five papers exploring these areas from which it is hoped a better understanding of local conflict dynamics in Afghanistan can be gained.

The conflict analysis has found that land and water conflicts are prominent in Baharak district, Badakhshan. However their resolution is made more complicated by the connections between local conflict and other actors and conflicts in the district and Badakhshan more broadly. These conflicts include commander infighting linked to control of the cross-border drugs trade. The drugs economy appears to create linkages between land/water conflicts, factional conflicts, anti-government conflicts, and colour the general political, economic, and social dynamics in the province. This is in part because of Badakhshan's border location which allows it to be integrated in to the trans-national drugs economy and generates a large flow of resources and weapons that influence the procedures as well as the outcomes of formal and informal governance systems at the district and provincial levels.

Importantly in Baharak the conflicts addressed in the Peace Councils do not seem to deal with higher level conflicts which involve numerous communities or have political implications. These conflicts do exist, and impact on local conflict, but the higher order conflicts are dealt with through the political parties and commanders in the district and wider province rather than the Peace Councils. The strength of the impact of the drug economy and political fragmentation in the province is much stronger than other factors. Only development processes and projects seem to have caused any other significant local conflict and neither the return of refugees nor the low levels of disarmament which have significantly impacted on local conflict dynamics.

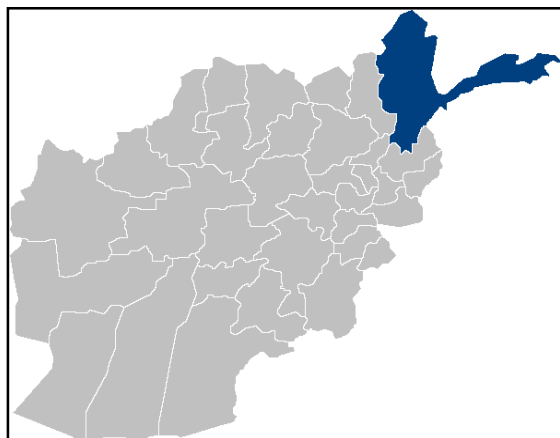


Figure 1 Map of Badakhshan (Baumgartner, 2007)

Local conflict dynamics also seem to have been affected by the deterioration of security in the Badakhshan over the last 4 years. Despite the lack of presence of some anti-government groups there continue to be incidents affecting the Afghan government, international military forces and international and civilian actor. Despite this deterioration, security and local conflict seem to be linked primarily to the control and use of economic resources rather than any ideological or ethnicised conflict. Badakhshan and Baharak's conflict dynamics are therefore primarily driven by material motives regarding the control of territory, drugs smuggling routes, and capture government offices and institutions.

2. Definitions and Methodology

Definitions

The definitions applied in this project reflect the perception of conflict as defined by the Peace Councils. This has been adopted in place of an externally applied definition so as to reflect an Afghan interpretation of their experiences of conflict. This led to several categorical and definitional challenges and therefore coding of conflicts, who was involved and what was the cause of the conflict have been driven by what the councils reported rather than a pre-defined list set by CPAU. This step is crucial to the process of understanding what conflict is in Afghanistan.

Conflict

'Conflict' in the context of this study is an incident that has been brought to a Peace Council run by CPAU in the districts under investigation. The range of conflicts is diverse, including everything from fights over parking; access to pasture land; control of water resources; domestic violence; kidnapping; murder; debt amongst others. Further conflicts are not recorded in terms of the number of times they are brought to a council for resolution, nor the length of the conflict (though some records note that conflicts have been present for a number of years). In addition the councils do not record whether this is a conflict that had been addressed by another body, or been considered dormant by the parties.

These limitations mean that we cannot make any judgements on how many times the Peace Council must meet to address a conflict, how long conflicts last or what is the rate at which they are dormant but then re-emerge at a later date. These are issues that could be looked at in future studies but are beyond the ability of the current data-set.

Parties

'Parties' to the conflict recorded are individuals or groups that are directly engaged in the conflict. The councils recorded not only the individuals involved but also their affiliation and relation to other parties in the conflicts, including both individual and communal groups. The team created a separation between conflicts within families (intra-family), between 2 families (inter-family), between families in the same community (intra-community) and finally between different communities (inter-community).

Cause

Conflict is often caused by more than one factor, and conflicts can continue over many episodes (see definition above). When the data was collected the councils were asked to identify the *primary* reason or cause for the conflict that they recorded. The team then formed categories based on the themes that came out from the data. They include conflicts caused by water, land, weddings/marriages, debt/financial, murder/blood feud and domestic violence. These 6 categories captured 82% of the conflicts recorded. Another category of 28 'other' conflicts was created as well as one for the 18 'interpersonal' conflicts (11% and 7% respectively of the total included in the data set). The 'interpersonal' conflicts were all recorded in one district and 'other/interpersonal' is considered one category in the analysis – though the reason why one district would have a large number of different interpersonal conflicts should be investigated further.

Conflict rate

The 'conflict rate' that is applied in some of the quantitative data analysis and graphs is based on the calculation of crude mortality rates used in humanitarian situations such as refugee camps to identify the severity of the health issues facing a community. The rationale behind the use of the 'crude conflict rate' is to address some of the perennial data issues in Afghanistan. Firstly, there is an extreme variation in population sizes between districts – within this sample alone the range is from 15,000 – 249,000. Secondly, simple counting of conflicts provides no indication about how severe a situation could be. As an example we could imagine the report 'a car accident on a road killed 3 people and injured 7'. The accident itself doesn't tell us

anything about how dangerous the area where the accident happened actually is. Is it a one off accident, or the latest in a series of accidents?

Similarly, in an example using conflict, if there are 15 cases of conflict in a district with 250,000 people how do we know whether or not this is as severe as 15 conflict cases in a district with 15,000 people? This indicates how simple reporting of conflicts tells us very little which is why, for the purposes of the project, we devised a Crude Conflict Rate to provide some empirical basis for qualitative and quantitative data.

The crude conflict rate indicates severity allowing greater comparability between districts with differing populations. By indicating severity over time we can also identify which conflicts are affected by other conflict drivers. Replacing deaths with 'conflicts' results in the following calculation;

$$\text{Crude Conflict Rate (CCR)} = \frac{\text{Crude Conflict Rate} \times \text{Population of District}}{100,000}$$

The 'crude' in the title is important – this is a crude indicator, and conflict is not as finite as mortality, so caution should be exercised in taking the analysis too far. This is particularly important because the CCR does not differentiate the seriousness between the different causes or parties – a murder is given the same importance as a debt related conflict. What it can help with is analysing which districts are affected by a very high rate of conflict – from which, using other data and analysis, strategies can then be developed to mitigate, address and reduce conflict.

Primary sources

CPAU monitoring

The key primary resource is a data-set of the monitoring carried out by CPAU Peace Councils in 6 of the 8 target districts. Once the data was cleaned and re-coded the data for 5 districts was significant and include 256 unique conflict incidents in 5 of 8 districts. One district, Chak, had only 8 incidents so was dropped from the quantitative analysis. However it was retained in the analysis as a null category, along with Sayedabad and Jaghori which had no monitoring data collected, to identify whether the CPAU monitoring made a significant difference to our understanding of conflict in the district.

The remaining districts provide information over the period 2005-2008 (first half). Not all districts had data for all years – and Baharak had a gap in reporting for one year between August 2006 – June 2007, though this did not affect the trends noted in the analysis.

The analysis of Chak, Sayedabad and Jaghori districts continued without the quantitative data, in effect creating a null category where a conflict analysis is done with qualitative data only. This is important in demonstrating the value added by using quantitative data in support of qualitative analysis.

The data is a comprehensive set of what the Peace Councils experienced but from interviews with Peace Council members and reviewing the data it is clear that a) the councils are not reporting all of the incidents they deal with b) they are not reporting many incidents they fail to 'resolve'. These issues are discussed in greater depth in Implications for Peace Building Programming later in this synthesis paper.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire was sent to CPAU staff to assist with political, social and economic understanding of each district under investigation. The questionnaire covered a number of areas including the political affiliations of key individuals in the district and province; movements of nomadic groups; presence of armed groups and functioning of state institutions. The questionnaires were also designed to fill gaps in knowledge about the relationships between district level conflicts and provincial level conflicts and / or dynamics. For some districts where information was difficult to verify additional organisations and individuals were contacted to provide further analysis.

Secondary sources

Each of the researchers reviewed literature specific to their region, province and district to investigate the historical conflict trends in that area. This included a range of academic and policy related information and was summarised in a background paper for each district (Provinces where two districts were under investigation were combined into 1 paper). Further the team was able to access a media database covering 2002-2008 for all of the target districts. This allowed the staff to corroborate academic material, the security databases and the CPAU monitoring against reporting from that area.

Security databases

The team has access to 2 security datasets which are not public. They cover 2002-5 for all provinces/districts and 2007-8 for some of the districts. The two datasets are not comparable.

They provide a benchmark to investigate the statistical linkages between local conflicts (as reported by the CPAU Peace Councils) and higher order conflicts – though simple inferences should not be made and causality can only be made from further qualitative data.

Analytical frameworks

In order to assist in the ordering, prioritisation and critique of the large amount of data generated by the project various frameworks were developed in the process of the project. Of these two were selected to help provide an appreciation of the dynamics of conflict and another for the dimensions of conflict.

The framework for dimensions of conflict was developed to represent the international/regional, national, provincial and local dynamics and factors in conflicts that had emerged out of the various data sources. The types of conflicts, such as land or water, were inserted into the matrix and the team was asked to identify the links that the major conflicts in their areas had with other actors.

The dynamics of conflict framework is adapted from the Department for International Development's (DfID) Conflict assessment tool developed by the Conflict Security and Development Group (Goodhand 2001). The dynamics framework uses the same list of major conflicts that were in the dimensions framework and asks questions about the relation of the conflict to economic, social, political, and security elements. It has been modified in this project to include space for discussing the policy implications of each section where relations are identified and is presented only in the synthesis paper.

3. Conflict history in Badakhshan

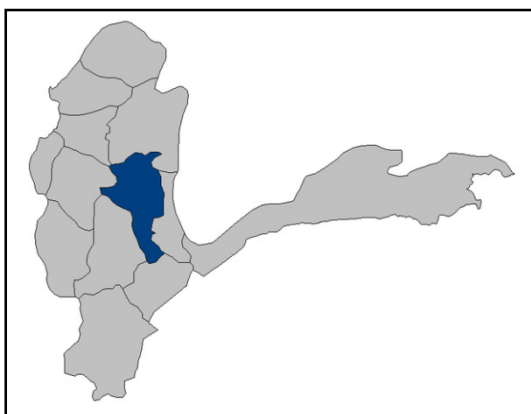


Figure 2 Map of Badakhshan using the 13 district system (Baumgartner 2007)

Badakhshan is one of the most remote and impoverished provinces in Afghanistan. It is 89.9% mountainous and its population is 96% rural (MRRD Undated). Food insecurity is a major problem and the maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world. Winter snowfall and spring floods cause annual road closures from December to April for 10 to 15 of the province's 27 districts (AREU and World Bank 2004, 1).¹

Badakhshan is situated in the extreme northeast corner of Afghanistan and bordering Tajikistan, China, India, and Pakistan, the province holds several transit points for Afghan opium and heroin on its way to Central Asia, Russia, and Europe. The major transit points are at Ishkashim, Shighnan, Ragh and Shahri Buzurg (Goodhand 2007). There are few employment opportunities, roads, or linkages to the rest of

the country. As a result of political and economic changes in Afghanistan the cultivation and transportation of narcotics have become major economic activities in recent years. Conflict has historically been connected to the use of land and control of the major economic lifelines in the province – which may or may not be illicit.

Table 1 General information about Badakhshan and Baharak

	Population ²	Area (km ²) ³	Major ethnicities and tribal groups ⁴	Major political parties ⁵	Major agricultural products ⁶
Badakhshan Province	819,396	44,702	Tajik, Uzbek, Pashtun, Hazara, Turkmen, Kuchi	Jamiat-i Islami; Hizb-i Islami; Setam-i Melli Democracy	Wheat, barley, maize, rice, flax, melon, onions, potatoes, sesame, tobacco, cotton, honey
Baharak District	33,012	426.866	Tajik (Shaqany, Qharqhza, Zebaki tribes) Hazara, Uzbek, Pashtun	Jamiat-i Islami; Hizb-i Islami	Wheat, barley, onions, potatoes

¹ Badakhshan, previously known as Qataghan, has been in a process of continuous administrative sub-division for several decades. Under the Rabbani government there were 13 districts, during the 1990's 27 districts ended up being recognized due to the need for political elites to provide posts for the fragmented armed groups in the province. Currently it is proposed to recognize a 28 district (as part of the 398 district model for Afghanistan). This was originally undertaken in 2005 though it has not been approved by the Government of Afghanistan. Baharak, the primary focus of this study, has been sub-divided in to 4 districts and for the sake of the discussion here when referring to Baharak it is a reference to the newer, smaller district, except in the historical background sections. The new Baharak districts are Wardoj, Shuhada, Arghanj Khwa, and Baharak itself (Mansfield 2007). The full list of the district is as follows; though the names of the districts are; Arghanj Khwa (New), Argo (New), Baharak (Old), Darayim (New), Darwaz (Old), Darwazi Bala (New), Fayzabad (Old), Ishkashim (Old), Jurm (Old), Khash (New), Khwahan (Old), Kishim (Old), Kohistan (New), Kuf Ab (New), Kuran Wa Munjan, (Old), Ragh (Old), Shahri Buzurg (Old), Shighnan (Old), Shiki (New), Shuhada (New), Tagab (Kishmi Bala) (New), Tishkan (New), Wakhan (Old), Warduj (New), Yaftali Sufla (New), Yamgan (Girwan) (New), Yawan (New), Zebak (Old).

² CSO and UNFPA 2003

³ Taken from the 398 district model for Afghanistan held by author.

⁴ Various sources including CPAU questionnaire August 2008

⁵ Various sources

⁶ MRRD Undated

Pre-1978

In the 1940s and 1950s forced resettlement of Pashtun Kuchis in Badakhshan resulted in widespread conflict between Uzbeks and Pashtun Kuchis and between Shiwachi Ismailis and Kuchis in the Shiwa area that spreads across several districts in north-central Badakhshan. These initially land-based conflicts between agriculturalists and pastoralists escalated to take on ethnic dimensions. Kuchis also operated as traders, relying on linkages with settled Pashtuns in other parts of the country that they maintained through annual migrations. This placed them in economically privileged positions in Badakhshan which translated to political power when they used bribes and patronage to manipulate land tenure disputes in their favour (Patterson 2004).

The role of resources and patronage in influencing local conflict outcomes is a recurrent theme in Badakhshan conflict dynamics (Patterson 2004, Mansfield 2007, Chopra and Hohe 2004, Mansfield and Pain 2005). During the 1970s many Ismailis of Shighnan and Wakhan districts were attracted to socialist parties including the pro-Soviet Khalq faction of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and the Maoist SAZA. This was largely due to exposure to coreligionists on the Tajik side of the border who were perceived as thriving under Soviet affirmative action policies (Goodhand 2007). On the whole however, the province's majority Sunni Tajiks were attracted to Islamist and pro-Tajik parties, with Jamiat-i Islami (JI) being most prominent.

Badakhshan was also the site of one of the first Islamist revolts against the central government (of Daoud) with a coup attempt in July 1975. Interestingly the forces deployed in Badakhshan were linked to Dr Omar, who was close to Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, and was later executed by Daoud. The failure of the coup and subsequent crackdown by the Daoud government led to the first definitive splits between Hizb-i Islami and Rabbani's Jamiat-i Islami but also explains why Kishim district, and to a lesser extent Argu were heavily influenced by Hizb-i Islami rather than Jamiat-i Islami (Dorransoro 2005, 82, 164).

1979-2001

Immediately following the Soviet invasion in 1979 Islamists in Badakhshan, especially in Basir Khan, led anti-Soviet uprisings (Dorransoro 2005, 97-8). Local mullahs were strengthened by the war, especially in administering alternative justice through *sharia* courts, local councils, and *shuras*.⁷ Jamiat-i Islami, under the political guidance of Badakhshi native Burhanuddin Rabbani, contributed to the anti-Soviet resistance. In 1979 Faizabad city was a base for Afghan *Mujahideen* attempting to repel the Soviets. However in 1980 it was taken by the Soviets and made into a garrison town. Jamiat-i Islami continued to operate throughout the Soviet occupation from neighbouring Panjshir under the military leadership of Ahmad Shah Massoud. The segments of Badakhshi population that cooperated with the Soviets fared well during the occupation, notably the Ismailis of Shighnan (and presumably Wakhan) who had an increased political voice and benefited from social spending and affirmative action placements within the Afghan government (Goodhand 2007).

Those who did not cooperate faced persecution including executions such as a mass grave holding the remains of over 500 victims from a Soviet massacre of *Mujahideen* from this period which was unearthed in 2007 in Qorogh desert (Office of the President 2007). During this time other mujahidin groups operating within Badakhshan included Harakat-i Inqelab Islami and Gulbuddin Hekmetyar's Hizb-i Islami (HIG), though neither were locally founded and generally fared poorly in the Tajik dominated province. By 1995 leadership of Jamiat-i Islami had essentially shifted to Massoud, except in Badakhshan where Rabbani still had support (Dorransoro 2005, 253) and Rabbani subdivided Badakhshan's 13 districts into 27 in order to accommodate warlord interests during this period.

⁷ *Shuras* are customary councils of elders and local notables that convene to resolve disputes and make governance decisions through consensus. For analyses of how they have changed through the *Mujahideen* period and from the influence of foreign donors see: (Chopra and Hohe 2004, 294) and (Nixon 2008, 11-12).

After the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989 Jamiat-i Islami regrouped in Badakhshan and continued to fight against the Najibullah regime, playing a central role among various *Mujahideen* factions. In October 1990 the National Commander's *Shura of Mujahideen* groups, presided over by Massoud, met in Badakhshan near the Kunar border to coordinate strategy against the Najibullah government.

With the fall of the Najibullah government in 1992, Rabbani was selected as President, a position that was only supposed to be held on a 6 month rotating basis. The ensuing civil war from 1992-96 focused Badakhshi political interests around Kabul, but the dynamics of the civil war in Afghanistan, and neighbouring Tajikistan created a regionalized zone of conflict and the border was largely uncontrolled. During the 1993 to 1997 civil war in Tajikistan the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) formed bonds with Jamiat-i Islami and UTO members sought refuge in Afghan Badakhshan and received arms from Jamiat-i Islami (which also occurred in Kunduz). Massoud also sought refuge in Tajikistan at times, primarily in Kolyab.

Rabbani remained the President until the Taleban took Kabul in 1996. Jamiat-i Islami forces were driven north by the Taleban over the next 5 years from bases in Badakhshan and Panjshir. Badakhshan was the only province fully ruled by the United Front and never to fall to the Taliban. However JI became divided into Rabbani and Massoud factions with a multitude of medium and small-level commanders at the local level. Local allegiances often reflected this split, with villages and districts supporting one or the other faction. Baharak has long been in competition with Faizabad for supremacy of economic and political primacy (Theuss Undated). Baharak was considered a SAZA (Maoist) stronghold while Faizabad supported Khalq (PDPA). This is just one of the many levels of competition in Badakhshan which led to fluid allegiances.

Badakhshan experienced a 43 per cent increase in opium poppy cultivation during this period largely due to the 2000-01 Taliban Edict against opium cultivation which caused a ten-fold price increase (Badakhshan being the only Afghan province where opium cultivation continued unabated). Primary areas of cultivation were in Jurm, Argu and Kishim districts, and processing labs were set up in the province (Goodhand 2007).

2001 to Present

The December 2001 Bonn Agreement broadly shifted national-level power from Pashtuns to Tajiks in the immediate post-Taliban period. Many former United Front commanders from Badakhshan have been integrated into provincial and national level government and Rabbani is now an opposition leader in the Afghan Parliament. This resulted in an immediate security improvement in Badakhshan after Bonn with a decline in militia infighting and a removal of checkpoints as local commanders were integrated into the formal political apparatus.

The post-Taliban boom in opium cultivation and trafficking, in which Badakhshan commanders, government and security officials are reportedly heavily involved, has led to both insecurity and security. It has brought security through the removal of a number of illegal checkpoints, including in Baharak. It has also led to a reforming of the political balance which has increased the relative strength of Faizabad, vis-à-vis Baharak and other power centres. Though this has not all been positive as in some ways the commanders have captured the government as much as the government has 'replaced' them and power holders, including commanders and government officials are in competition to control economic resources in the provinces (including opium) (Mansfield 2007).

The Badakhshan provincial governor is Munshi Abdul Majid, a Pashtun from Baghlan province who has occupied the post for four years. Governor Majid has longstanding ties to Hizb-i Islami and is allegedly involved in consolidating the party and reviving its communications network across the country (Isby 2004, Cheragh Newspaper 2007). Since 2007 governor Majid has spearheaded an opium eradication campaign in Badakhshan leading to a mere 200 hectares of opium being cultivated in the province (in 2008) from a high of 15,607 hectares in 2004 (UNODC Aug 2008, 8). At the same time as the eradication campaign there has been a reduction in opium cultivation, however it is known that the price of opium was falling and the price of wheat

has increased meaning that a simple cause and effect relationship between eradication and lower cultivation cannot be inferred.

The impact of the decline in cultivation does not seem to have also reduced drug trafficking, though there are no reliable figure. However it seems that the eradication drive has disrupted the unofficial balance of power and security has worsened in Badakhshan in the past year as small level commanders fight amongst themselves and in some cases resist national and provincial authorities in charge of eradication efforts. As a result of these shifts security has worsened across Badakhshan in the past year as infighting has occurred between local power brokers and drug lords that both have the capability to conduct limited military operations with rockets, small arms, and roadside bombs (Oxford Analytica 2008).

There is also friction between the governor's office and the national border police. Badakhshan security officials under Majid's control have repeatedly accused the national border police of involvement in drugs trafficking. National border police in turn have claimed that Badakhshan security forces are in charge of key transit points and that stopping cross-border smuggling is their responsibility (Tolo TV broadcast 2006). The emerging dynamic is that Badakhshan provincial authorities and Ministry of the Interior authorities are blaming each other for the continued drugs trafficking and it remains unclear to outside observers just who actually is in charge of border security in Badakhshan and which authorities are in fact involved in the drugs trade (Ibrahimi 2008).

Table 2 Summary of key Government actors in Badakhshan

	Name	Known current affiliation	Known previous affiliation	Any known relations between officials
Governor	Munshi Abdul Majid	Hizb-i Islami	Hizb-i Islami	Links to Juma Khan Hamdard, governor of Paktia province and HIG insider
Deputy Governor	Shamsur Rahman Shams			
Police Chief	Brigadier General Ghulam Hayder			
Known Commanders	Mohammad Amin		Jamiat-i Islami	At centre of armed clash and road closure in Faizabad 10/2006, linked to drugs smuggling
	Mojtaba		Jamiat-i Islami	Linked to bandits in Ragh district in autumn 2006; with his men raped young woman in Shahr-i Buzurg district 11/2006; links to drugs smuggling

4. Baharak District

Baharak district is situated in central Badakhshan in a fertile river valley that supports subsistence and commercial agriculture including wheat, maize, potatoes, onion, fruits, mulberry, and some light industrial agricultural specialisation in cotton. The district is prone to flash floods, the last of which killed a number of people across several districts (IRIN 2007). Local cottage industry includes carpet-weaving and honey-making. Baharak town is situated on a junction where the main road from Faizabad splits into routes going to Ishkashim and Shighnan districts. This makes the town a hub for licit and illicit trade and Baharak traders travel throughout the province and are influential in border markets in Ishkashim and Shighnan (Theuss Undated). Narcotics smuggled through Shighnan to Khorog and Dushanbe in Tajikistan, or through Ishkashim on to the Pamir Highway through Kyrgyzstan, must pass through Baharak and there are an increasing number of heroin processing labs in Badakhshan province (AREU & WB 2004, 2).

Baharak has a relatively high percentage of all-season roads and school enrolment numbers, and Baharak hosts one of the province's four hospitals.⁸ Baharak has a population of 33,012 with 3,508 households composed of an average of 9 members, which is above the national average of 6.3 (CSO and UNFPA 2003, 40).

As with Badakhshan province in general, Baharak district experienced a surge in opium poppy cultivation following the Taliban's Opium Edict and the US and NATO military intervention. However, since 2006 the district has been the focus of comprehensive eradication efforts. Poppy cultivation in 2005 covered 1,635 hectares in Baharak but fell to 710 hectares in 2006 (Mansfield 2007, 1). In Baharak government-led eradication is perceived as indiscriminate and comprehensive. In neighbouring Jurm district however there is a local perception that patronage and power determine whose opium crops get eradicated. This has generated widespread resentment of eradication as it is seen to disproportionately target the poor and economically undiversified. These differing perceptions in the two districts reflect issues with the legitimacy and corruption of the local government. In Jurm recent insecurity has been attributed to a local commander trying to gain control of the security apparatus of the local government so as to gain control of the drugs trade and tax the licit commodity trade (Mansfield 2007, 28). It can then only be surmised that in Baharak either the district government has a greater control of local security, or that local commanders and socially-powerful actors are deeply integrated into the district government already.

The Baharak district governor is Qhorban Ali, a Tajik from Baghlan province (as is the Provincial Governor) who has held the post for the last two years. He has no publicly known affiliation with political parties or armed groups. The district police chief of the past three years is Qari Abdul Wodod, a Tajik from nearby Shuhada district who is affiliated with Hizb-i Islami (CPAU field data 2008). The presence of a district governor from Baghlan and a district police chief with Hizb-i Islami affiliation indicates that the allocation of positions may be influenced by broader political considerations related to the Provincial Governor.

CPAU's own research in Baharak during the summer of 2008 found that there was a perception that Baharak's district administration was well connected to the provincial centre rather than functioning independently or at odds with the provincial leadership (CPAU field data 2008). From a governance perspective this seems positive and indicates that governance may to some extent function.

Table 3 Significant actors in Baharak

	Name	Known current affiliation	Known previous affiliation	Any known relations between officials
Governor	Qhorban Ali			
Police Chief	Qari Abdul Wodod	Hizb-i Islami		
Known Commanders	Basir Khalid (Shiwa area)		Jamiat-i Islami	Links with Ahmed Shah Massoud, but fell out with him in the 1990s and refused to join <i>Shura-i</i> Nazar

⁸ 74% of Baharak's roads are all-season, an high rate when compared to Badakhshan's other isolated districts (MRRD Undated, 5)

5. Conflict Dynamics

Whilst security incidents are a crude measure of conflict there does seem to be a continual deterioration of security in Badakhshan. Relatively to other parts of the country it is still relatively safe, and the security incidents have specific trends (addressed below). But it does seem clear that there is a gradual increase in the number of incidents in the province with marked increases in 2007 and 2008 (Campbell and Shapiro 2008, Rubin 2008, Security Database 1 2005).

Local level conflict resolution

There were 6 Peace Councils and one central *Shura* in Baharak during the project's implementation and between 2005 and 2007 the Baharak Peace Shuras dealt with 35 conflict cases.⁹ The Peace Councils had 233 members, representing a ratio of 142 people per *Shura* member in the district.¹⁰ The total crude conflict rate for Baharak, increasing from 27.27 in 2005 to 42.42 in 2007 (see Figure 3) implies that there is a high *intensity* of local conflicts in the district. This may be in part because there is a high ratio of council members to the local population, but also may be an indicator that the fragmented political control of the area allows contributes to a high number of grievances. Either way the Peace Councils does seem to have the ability to address some forms of local conflict.

Land and water were consistently the most common cause of conflicts in Baharak (see Figure 3), which corresponds with the qualitative findings of the 2005 CPAU Baseline Survey.¹¹ Land and water-related conflicts decline between 2006 and 2007 which may be caused by several factors, firstly missing data which may lead to an under-reporting of land and water conflicts, or alternatively, it is possible that opium eradication resulted in some alleviation of land/water conflicts as other research indicates that Baharak residents accepted the programme because it was believed to have been fairly indiscriminatorily implemented (Mansfield 2007). Thirdly, the role of the Peace Council may have shrunk as district officials sought to take on some of their skills and improve their ability to mediate conflicts (though this also led to some conflicts being referred to the council itself) (CPAU Undated a). Finally the increasing salience of the drugs trade and Badakhshan's unique conflict characteristics resulting from political fragmentation, factional infighting, and government involvement in criminal networks may be placing insurmountable pressures on land and water distribution and informal conflict resolution bodies, a theme that will be explored in greater depth in the next section (Chopra and Hohe 2004, Mansfield 2007). This may mean that the Peace Councils are then not able to resolve those types of conflicts.

However, whilst there was a decline in land and water disputes, there continued to be an overall increase in local conflict, including marriages, divorces and domestic violence; financial and debt; and murder and blood feuds.

⁹ 38 total conflicts were listed in the CPAU dataset, but 3 were not dated and so were not included in this report's analysis.

¹⁰ This is higher than the ratios for CPAU's districts in Ghazni, Kunduz, and Wardak.

¹¹ 51% of 88 respondents surveyed in the 2005 Baseline Survey listed land and water disputes as the primary cause of local conflicts (Peacebuilding Programme Consortium 2005).

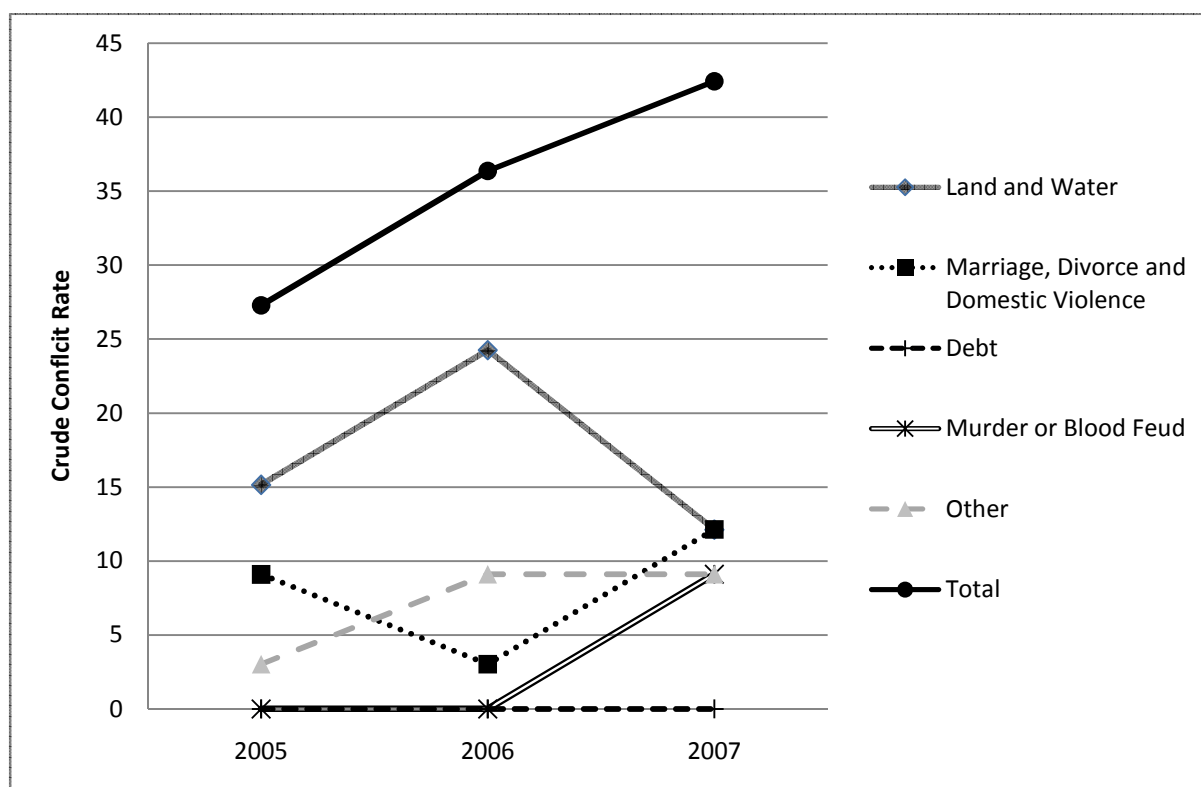


Figure 3 Causes of conflict in Baharak (2005-7) – CPAU monitoring¹²

Marriages, divorces and domestic violence played a growing role in the Peace Councils' activities. It seems that as the council has established itself a small but growing number of participants have sought out the council to help resolve family conflicts (see below). This might imply that the council was growing in its credibility with families as well as the local authorities.

Murder and blood feud conflicts are in many ways the 'mythological' heart of how many people discuss local conflict in Afghanistan. They however feature rarely in the overall database and Baharak seems to be something of the exception with a small spike in conflicts in 2007 (with half of all murder related conflicts). Without data from 2008 it is not possible to see whether this is a one-off spike or part of an emerging trend but it seems that 2 of the 3 incidents were farming accidents rather than anything larger – and that the Peace Councils were involved primarily in stopping the conflicts from becoming long running blood feuds.

The small number of 'other' conflicts in the sample included two regarding the Peace Councils intervention in demonstrations about the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed (CPAU Undated b) and one of the conflicts relating to the NSP (see below).

Financial and debt related conflicts are not recorded in the Badakhshan data from the Peace Councils at all. There are a number of possible scenarios as to why financial conflicts played no role in the councils' activities, the agricultural and economic choices of local farmers (see Mansfield 2007) for more information). This however seems anomalous in the context that Badakhshan more generally may have high levels of land mortgaging (Grace and Pain 2004, 38)

¹² As noted in the methodology, the data for Baharak is missing between August 2006 – June 2007. Given this it seems likely that the total incidence of local conflict would be higher than recorded. The missing data seems to have no effect on the annual cycle of conflict, Figures 5 and 6, which follows conflict patterns in the other districts in the project.

As shown in Figure 4, intra-family conflicts increased between 2006 and 2007 caused by the same period's increase in domestic and marriage disputes which is detailed in figure 3. Intra-community and inter-family conflicts increased together between 2005 and 2007, indicating a general trend of increasing conflict outside of the singular family unit. There were no inter-community conflicts recorded in the CPAU dataset, although it is unclear whether this was the result of a failure to record them or a misunderstanding in classification. The Security Database 1 dataset and much anecdotal evidence indicate an increase in inter-factional fighting throughout Badakhshan which could be classified as inter-community conflict. There are several possible explanations; the councils are not able to deal with conflicts of that magnitude, they have deliberately not recorded them (see methodology section) or alternatively Baharak could be an exception to the Badakhshan norm - research indicates that Baharak is relatively calm with a unified district administration when compared to neighbouring Jurm district which is experiencing factional conflict and power struggle between commanders and the district administration (Mansfield 2007).

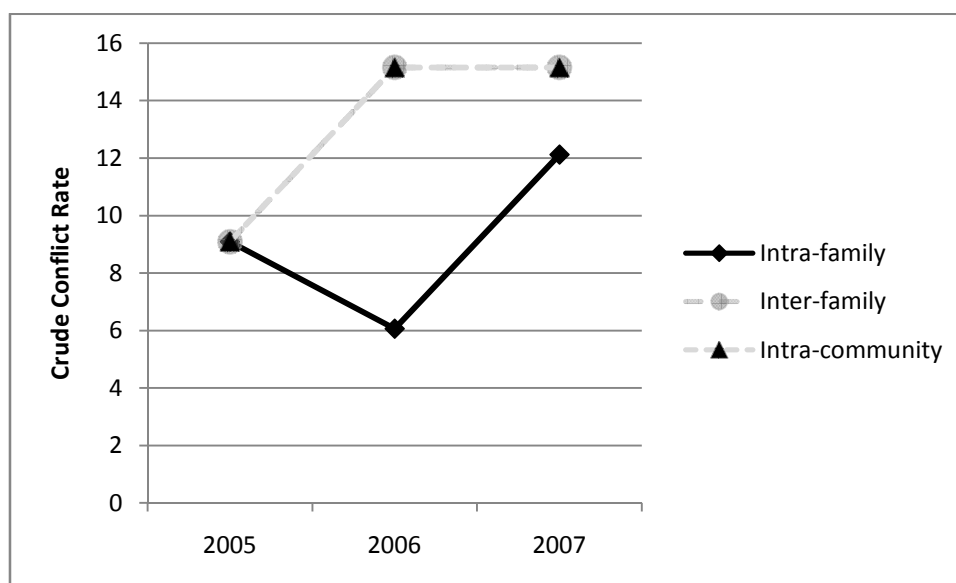


Figure 4 Parties involved in conflicts in Baharak (2005-7) – CPAU monitoring

Seasonality

As shown in Figure 5, seasonal increases in total conflicts occurred in March, July, and September-October. This corresponds roughly with planting and harvesting periods and indeed land and water conflicts contribute most to these seasonal spikes. It has been noted that areas with prominent wheat agriculture rely on intensive irrigation between March and May (Pain 2004). This may be contributing to Baharak's spring surge in land/water and other conflicts, although the increase begins in February. Irrigation may also be vital during the summer for fruit and vegetable crops. Baharak's high elevation of 3,000 meters results in a summer opium harvest during late June that is later than the national average and this corresponds with the increase of total conflicts during June and July (UNODC Feb 2008, 15).

Domestic/marriage disputes and blood feuds / murders also correspond with these seasonal spikes, perhaps indicating linkages between these conflicts and seasonal land / water conflicts. For example, weddings are often scheduled after the harvest, and harvest yields pay off outstanding debts or seal marriage agreements, so the linkages between agricultural cycles and interpersonal conflicts are significant.

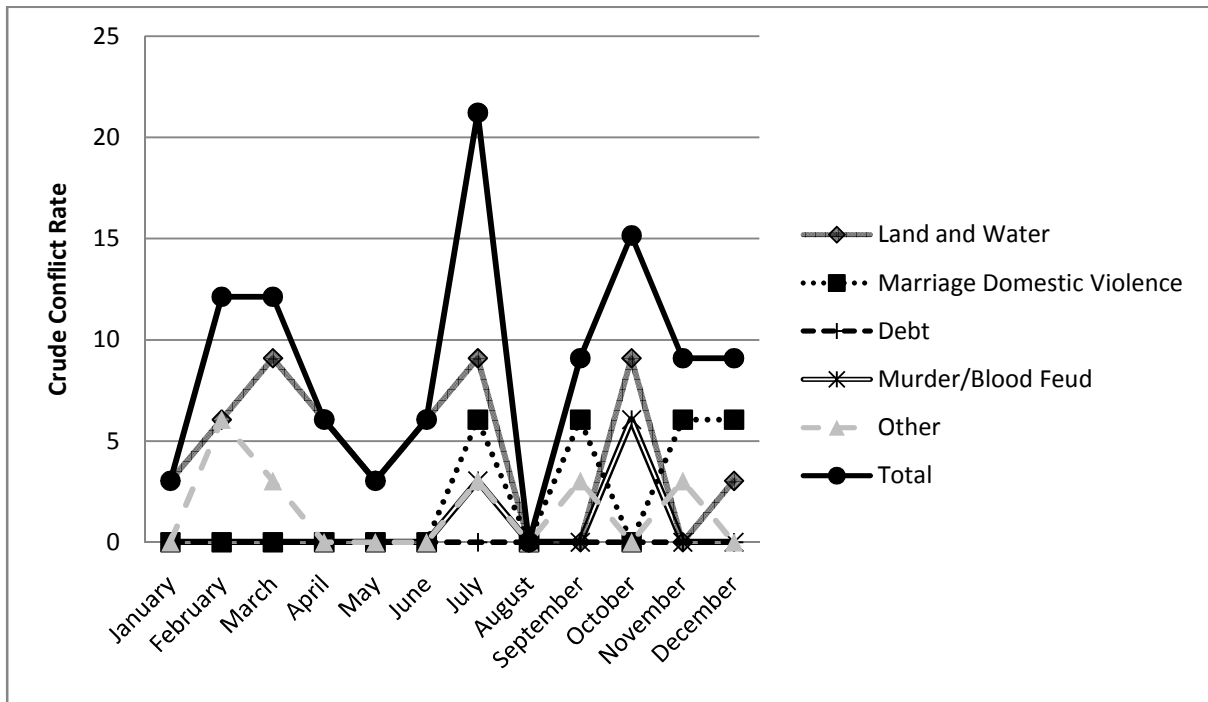


Figure 5 Causes of conflict by Month (2005-7) – CPAU monitoring

As Figure 6 shows, intra-community and inter-family conflicts followed the same seasonal trend of increasing with the March, July, and September-October spikes in total conflict, indicating a general increase in conflicts outside of the family at these times. The fact that communal conflicts spike at times of high use or dependency of communal resources (land and water) indicates that the Peace Councils are dealing with an important strand of local conflicts. Intra-family increases also occurred during the summer and autumn spikes, though they were absent during the March spike.

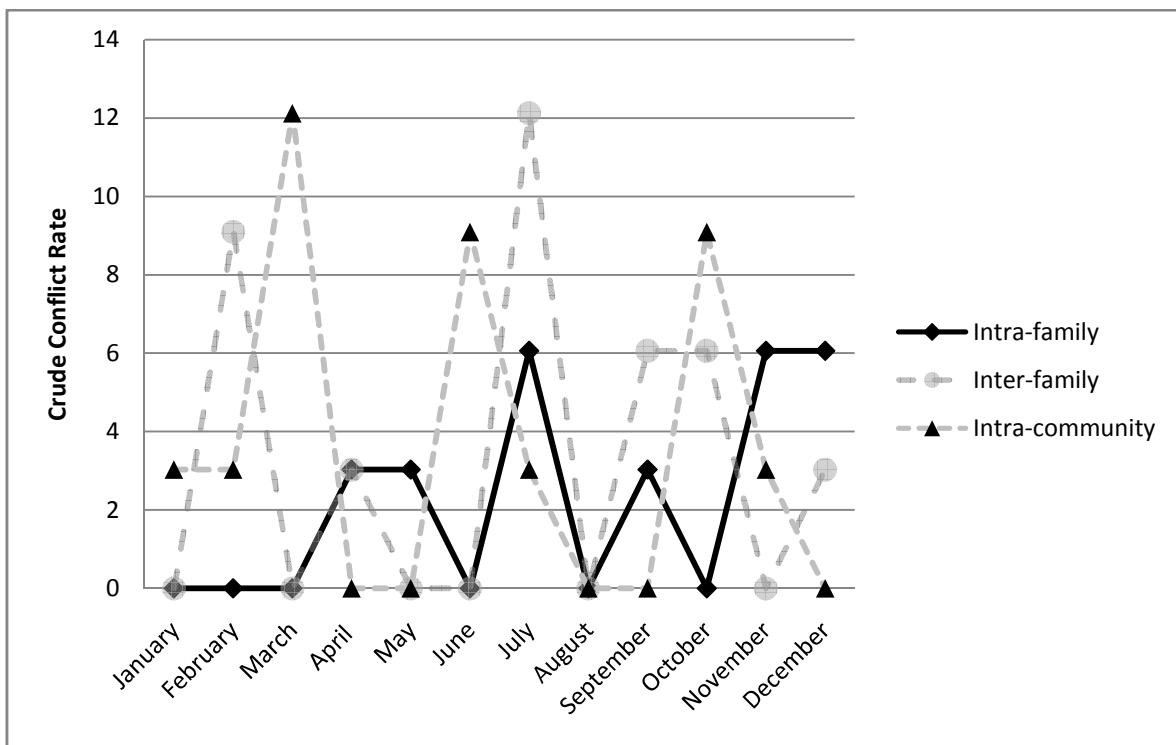


Figure 6 Parties to conflict by month (2005-7) – CPAU monitoring

The local conflicts addressed by the councils in Baharak are largely familial – though not necessarily within one family. There is also a strong communal nature to local conflicts. These are conflicts that occur within the same village but involve 3 or more families. There could be a number of inferences from these trends – particularly the conclusion from the lack of inter-communal conflict data that the councils are unable to deal with a certain magnitude or register of conflict. This may be because they are contested amongst actors who do not need to resort to the Peace Council (see below) – but shows some informative limitations to the Peace Council activities in Baharak.

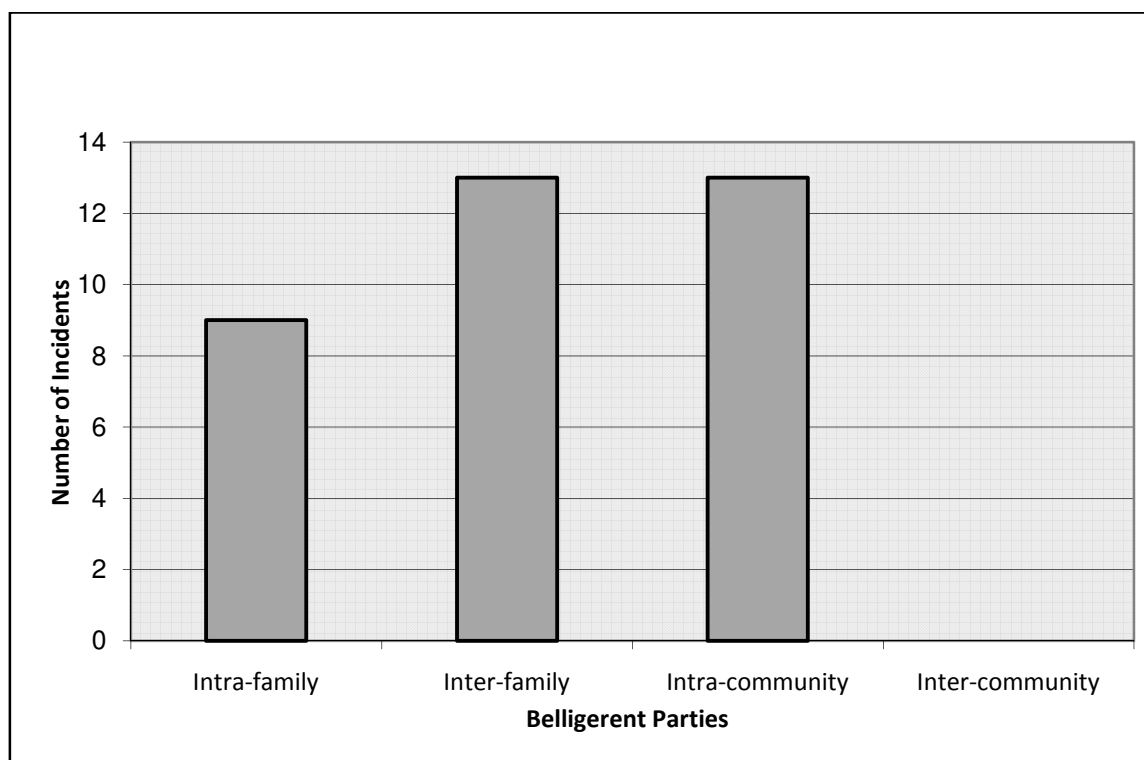


Figure 7 Total parties to conflict (2005-7) – CPAU monitoring

6. Insecurity, criminality and conflict

The provincial level Security Database 1 graph in Figure 8 details the general increase in crude conflict rate from 2003 to 2005, although the increase from 2004 to 2005 was less pronounced.¹³ Whilst disaggregating the conflict causes by type (see Figure 8) seems useful, it disguises the fact that much of the conflict in this period was related to local commanders fighting with each other and with government forces over control of territory and the drugs smuggling economy. This broad phenomenon becomes diluted in the graph however because several of the conflicts related to commanders' infighting are disaggregated into different categories; e.g. inter-factional, resistance to government, drugs, murder, debt, and other.

¹³ No land/water or domestic/marriage conflicts were recorded in Security Database 1.

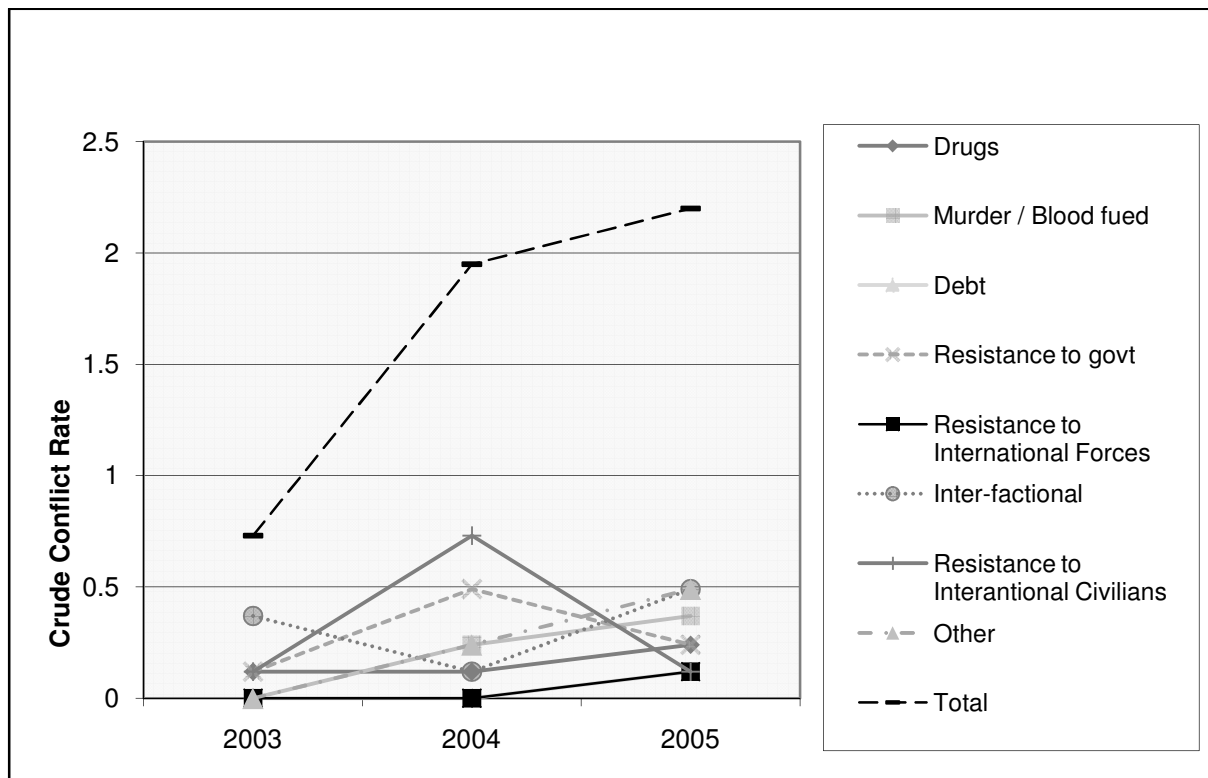


Figure 8 Causes of conflict - Security Database 1¹⁴

In Figure 9 all incidents that involve commanders and the drugs economy have been combined into one category and compared to all other incidents in Badakhshan by percentage. This graph demonstrates that the majority of violent incidents from 2003 to 2005 were caused by commanders seeking to maintain or expand their stake in the vibrant drugs trafficking economy. On average 53.3% of provincial conflicts between 2003 and 2005 were caused by this phenomenon.

In 2006 Afghanistan's opium profits were estimated at US \$2 billion per year, or half of its GDP, and UNODC estimates that around US \$600 million of opium profits stay with the producers annually (UNODC 2005 cited in Koehler and Zuercher 2007, 63). Research in Badakhshan and other provinces has demonstrated that resources and weapons generated by the drugs economy have a great impact on local conflicts. Opium cultivation can drive up the price of irrigated land (Koehler and Zuercher 2007) and others have demonstrated how the opium economy distributes profits disproportionately to large landowners, commanders, and politically connected individuals (Mansfield and Pain 2005) (Mansfield 2007). This has implications for linkages between district level land/water conflicts and provincial level factional and anti-government conflicts. For instance, the outcome of local land disputes that are brought to shuras or district government offices can be manipulated by patronage relations or bribery (Koehler and Zuercher 2007).

This has been documented in Badakhshan as long ago as the 1940s when the influx of Kuchi pastoralists with prominent trade and political ties resulted in the disruption of local land tenure patterns (Patterson 2004). This trend continues to the present day, although the massive scope of narcotics profits has altered the process. Land conflicts have a propensity to escalate when they are not legitimately settled at the local level (Koehler and Zuercher 2007). This could be occurring in Baharak, though the data from the Peace Councils does not give definitive proof. However the fact that communal conflict are absent from the data set implies that these conflicts must be addressed by another mechanism.

¹⁴ The categories of 'inter-factional' and 'resistance to international civilians' are included only in the Badakhshan and Kunduz conflict analyses in order to capture the conflict dynamics that are particular to these two provinces, particularly the inter-factional conflicts that are less prominent in the other provinces of this study.

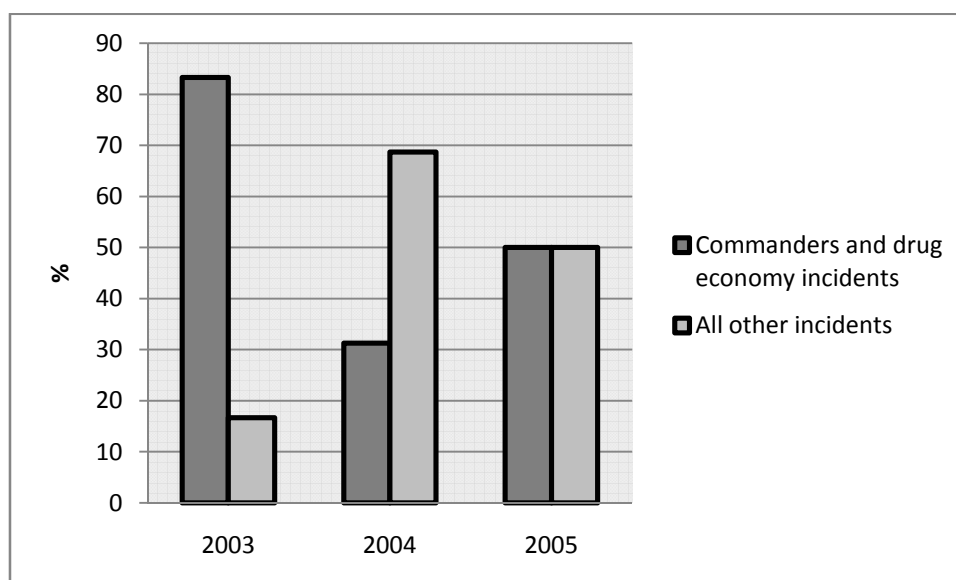


Figure 9 Aggregation of Security Database 1¹⁵

Local conflict and other factors

As well as assessing the security and Peace Council data the research team have attempted to assess the impact of other trends or government programmes on local conflict. Whilst this has not been exhaustive, in each district the level of returning refugees, disarmament and the impact of the National Solidarity Programme have been assessed, and where feasible the PTS (the national reconciliation programme). Interestingly for Baharak it seems the projects implemented by the NSP have been a part of the local conflict landscape, but the low levels of returning refugees and disarmament have had little impact.

Returning refugees

One factor that does not seem to have played a major role in land conflict is refugee returns to Badakhshan generally and Baharak specifically which have been very low, representing just under 4% of the population in Baharak and 2% of Badakhshan population (CSO 2008 and UNHCR 2008).¹⁶ Though returns for Baharak made up a proportionally high level of overall returns to Badakhshan ranking 4th (see Table 4). There is little evidence that returnees are involved in a significant amount of land disputes, presenting a different scenario than several of the other districts in this sample.

Table 4 Assisted returns of Baharak and Badakhshan province (% of annual returns) (UNHCR 2008)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Baharak	562 (9%)	404 (11.8%)	174 (9.3%)	51 (6.1%)	20 (12.7%)	10 (1.6%)	44 (10.1%)	1,265 (9.3%)
Badakhshan Province	6,247	3,438	1,871	833	157	637	436	13,619

¹⁵ The category 'Commanders and Drugs Economy' includes all conflicts in Security Database 1 that involved drugs; either directly, or indirectly through inter-factional/anti-government/murder/debt/other conflicts that were exacerbated or sustained by the drugs economy. The category 'All Other' includes all conflicts that had no obvious direct or indirect linkages to the drugs economy. These judgments were based upon a close qualitative reading of each case entry in Security Database 1.

¹⁶ Note: The returns for 2002-6 period were for 'old' Baharak and the new districts only started recording returns separately from 2007, meaning that the percentage returns to new Baharak are actually lower than 4% implies.

Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG)

The most salient theme of Badakhshan's provincial level conflict is commander in-fighting. This is due to the legacy of political and military fragmentation in the province, its position in the cross-border drugs trade, and the limited effect of disarmament programmes. A 2005 listing of illegally armed groups (IAGs) stated that there were 6-10 IAGs operating in Baharak district, one of which represented a threat to the elections in 2005. Neighbouring Ishkashim and Ragh districts also contain 'high threat' IAGs. Badakhshan itself has possibly over between 103 - 223 IAGs which makes it one of the most militarily fragmented provinces in Afghanistan. Neighbouring Takhar and Kunduz provinces also have significantly high numbers of IAGs, a phenomenon that distinguishes northern Afghanistan from much of the rest of the country.¹⁷

The formal DDR programme in 2004 identified 425 combatants of Division 29 for disarmament but none were disarmed under the DDR programme (ANBP 2004). On 8 March 2006 however Division 29 Commander Sayad Sardar surrendered 529 light and heavy weapons, 6 types of inoperative tanks, and 60 lorries of ammunition as part of the DIAG programme in Baharak (Afghan Islamic Press News Agency 2006 and D&R Commission 2006). At the time this was the single largest collection of weapons and ammunition of the DDR and DIAG programmes. In October 2006 another 143 weapons were handed over by 4 commanders from Darayim district, 2 of whom were government officials at the time (ANBP 2006). In early 2009 Governor Majid announced that across Badakhshan 4,000 weapons had been handed in as part of the DIAG programme (Xinhua, 2009). Despite the weapons collections the DDR and DIAG programmes did not seem to have significantly reduced the number of illegally armed groups in Badakhshan or their access to weapons. There is currently a steady flow of small arms into the province through the Panj river market in north-eastern Badakhshan where opium and heroin are traded for Kalashnikov and Kalakov assault rifles smuggled south from Russia and Central Asia (Ibrahimi 2008).

NSP

According to official NSP reports, by March 2008 a total of 23 districts in Badakhshan had been covered by the NSP and 812 projects financed in 711 villages worth \$16.7m (USD). In Baharak district 54 CDCs were reportedly active and were implementing 62 projects. There seemed to be a high proportion of water related projects¹⁸ (60% of projects in Baharak), the largest being micro-hydro power projects which alone accounted for 40% of all projects in the district (MRRD 2008).

Following from the fact that water related projects were the largest type of project implemented in the district there was evidently a significant potential for local conflict. Several villages came to the Peace Council in Baharak to resolve conflicts relating to the implementation of the project, including Chapchi¹⁹ and Pushistan, both of which had water related projects funded by the NSP.

It seems that in both cases changing the relative communal power relations over a shared resource, such as water, can have conflict implications. Development is not a conflict free process and whilst it would be wrong to say that the NSP 'caused' the conflict (which may have been a pre-existing tension) it is clear that in implementing the project further conflict was caused.

Links between Local Conflict and Higher Level Conflict

Whilst there are believed to be elements of HIG operating in Badakhshan there does not as yet seem to be a coherent resistance to the central government in Badakhshan. Equally in Baharak, conflicts between parties seem to have more to do with resources than ideological conflicts. These two points however have not

¹⁷ Source: UN maps held by author.

¹⁸ Including water and sanitation, irrigation and micro-hydro power.

¹⁹ The NSP divides Chapchi in to Upper and Lower Chapchi (Bala and Payan) whilst CPAU does not.

stopped incidents against civilian and military presence of the international community, nor the government itself.

Resistance to international civilian presence, mainly INGOs and UN agencies, included bombing or arson of INGO and UN offices or vehicles, demonstrations, or threats against Afghan or international staff of international organizations (Morarjee 2004). It is not clear whether resistance to international civilian presence is related to the power plays of local commanders, though the anecdotal evidence relating to the Peace Councils intervention in the demonstrations about the prophet implies that they are linked in some way.

While resistance to international civilian presence however dropped dramatically in 2005 along with resistance to government all other types of conflict increased during the same period though.²⁰ This could indicate an increase in government linkages with drugs traffickers, which has been documented by secondary and anecdotal sources (Mansfield 2007); (Chopra and Hohe 2004). However it is unlikely that this sort of trend may be fully drawn from the graph without more extensive qualitative data.

7. Dimensions of Conflict Matrix

Through this study it is clear that there are numerous interlinking factors that lead to and impact on conflict trends. Local or district-level conflicts that have been discussed on the basis of CPAU Peace Council data can be understood as linked to causes at provincial, national, and even regional levels. Effectively pursuing an agenda of local-level conflict resolution thus requires an examination and understanding of the often complex higher level conflicts and factors of influence. The table below aims to consolidate and present some of the numerous possible causal links between local conflict and contributing higher level factors, which are outlined as they apply to the categories of 'Regional', 'National' and 'Provincial'.

Table 5 Dimensions of conflict - Baharak²¹

Local Conflict	Regional	National	Provincial
1. Land and water conflicts – Type 1 - localised livelihoods	Cross-border drugs trade drives local power dynamics and land distribution	Recent national political shift away from Tajik/Northern Alliance affects provincial balance of power – HIG/Pashtun politicians at odds with local JI-oriented population and commanders	Legacy of Rabbani's division of districts affects landholding patterns; mountainous geography increases pressures on available arable land
2. Land conflict – Type 2 – Land acquisition	N/A	N/A	N/A
3. Land conflict – Type 3 – migration of nomadic	N/A	N/A	N/A

²⁰ The spike in 2004 may have been linked to the Presidential election of October that year which brought many foreign observers, corresponded with high point of conflicts, though if this was the sole cause additional incidents would have been expected during the Parliamentary elections in 2005.

²¹ The design of this table was inspired by (Autesserre 2006) who argued that in addressing conflicts in Eastern Congo the national and regional conflicts and their linkages to and expression in local conflict must be understood. The table here adds another dimension, the Province, which is critical to the state apparatus in Afghanistan.

groups			
4. Activity of government opposition groups	IAGs linked to factions (JI and HIG) that may have regional support; funding from international drugs economy	Kabul may be trying to increase control of Badakhshan through the provincial government appointments; tension between provincial administration. and Mol regarding border security and drugs interdiction	Provincial govt. apparatus desirable for capture by commanders and smugglers; eradication resented by others
5. Inter-party or factional conflicts	Afghan narcotics traded for foreign arms; HIG and JI received support from other states in the past, perhaps ongoing	Pashtun HIG governor may have been political placement from Kabul to neutralise Tajik and Northern Alliance gains of Bonn settlement	Many commanders former JI, patronage and communications networks still intact from <i>Mujahideen</i> era; possible friction with HIG provincial governor
6. Criminal activities	Connections to smuggling networks in Tajikistan exist	There seem to be linkages between provincial smuggling groups and those outside the province	There is a level a competition between smuggling groups in the province which has led to conflict in the past
7. Debt and financial conflicts	Informal credit systems are linked to <i>hawala</i> who supply credit linked to the drug economy based in a number of regional cities.	N/A	Drought, socio-economic status, geography, access to markets drive need for informal loans and land mortgaging. Usurious informal credit systems perpetuate social inequities
8. Marriage and domestic violence	N/A	Engagement disputes can cause larger public conflicts and feuds; family disputes over land	Wedding costs and <i>Toyana</i> generate economic hardship and debt Gender relations and inheritance customs perpetuate inequities

The most salient findings of the above matrix for Baharak's conflicts are that national power politics, the legacy of *Mujahideen* -era military and political organisation in the province of Badakhshan, and the drugs economy are all tied to each other and linked either directly or indirectly to many of Baharak's local level conflicts.

Approaches to resolving local conflict in Afghanistan must therefore be broadly-based and incorporate analysis of the security, political, economic, and social features of each type of conflict as well as their geographic dimensions as outlines above. Resolving local land disputes will necessarily involve a multi-pronged approach that improves the provision of credit to local agriculturalists, reduces the role of armed ex-*Mujahideen* factions

in district and provincial politics, strengthens drug interdiction at the borders, develops alternative livelihoods, and reduces corruption in local judicial proceedings.

The multiple strands of such an approach would overwhelm the limited mandate and operational capacity of any single organisation working in Afghanistan, but improved coordination between stake-holder organisations from many sectors based upon an understanding of the multiple dimensions of conflict would accomplish a great deal in resolving local conflicts and would pay dividends in return for the added effort of such coordination.

8. Conclusion

Notwithstanding the limitations of the study, it is clear that both historically and currently the major driver of local conflict in Baharak is land. This is overlaid with a complex set of provincial and national level conflicts relating to political parties and the aims of armed groups which demonstrate varying levels of command and control which have a tendency to form alliances in an ad hoc fashion.

Whilst land is the primary cause of conflict, it is important to stress that much of the conflict over land is not caused by returnee refugees, forced relocations in previous periods or large scale migrations (though migratory issues are an issue in other parts of the province). Local land conflicts are not solely addressed in the Peace Councils and as well as being about livelihoods, are also about the control of economic routes for the extraction of resources, licit and illicit, through taxation.

At the provincial level commander infighting and power struggles between the Hizb-i Islami affiliated Governor and Jamiat-i Islami affiliated commanders and district officials are prominent. The (drugs) economy fuels and links these multi-level conflicts. National tensions are manifested in outsider and Pashtun political appointments in an attempt to curb the influence of Tajik and Jamiat-i Islami / Northern Alliance influence on national level politics. There is also tension between the Ministry of Interior and the provincial administration over border security and drugs interdiction.

Conflicts addressed by the Peace Council in Baharak district follow seasonal spikes in the spring, summer, and autumn that reflect irrigation and harvesting cycles. Most other district level conflicts follow these seasonal spikes, indicating close linkages between family and community disputes and the agrarian economy. It is likely that debt links harvesting cycles to domestic/marriage conflicts, murders and blood feuds, and other conflicts. Since much informal credit is generated by opium profits, the linkages between debt and the drugs economy reinforce the broader linkages between local land/water conflicts and higher level drugs-generated conflicts between commanders and between commanders and government forces.

Other developmental and governance interventions seem to have relatively low impacts in reducing conflict, and development projects may in some cases may be exacerbating local conflict dynamics – particularly in relation to communal resources such as water.

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