

AFGHAN LINKS

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Afghan Links is a free newsletter for readers who have a keen interest in Afghanistan, its history, people and culture. It invites news and articles from anyone who wishes to create and maintain constructive links between Afghanistan and other countries by sharing their expertise, information and ideas in any field.

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AFGHANISTAN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION UNIT (AREU)

New Report Highlights Key Constraints to Women's Access to Land and Livestock

Land and livestock are key assets for rural livelihoods, yet little is known about the factors that enable or constrain different women's access to these. Earlier AREU rural livelihoods research revealed that very few women actually owned land, and only some widowed women owned livestock. But what these rights of ownership mean in practice is not known, nor is much known about women who come forward to claim their rights. In *Who Owns the Farm? Rural Women's Access to Land and Livestock*, author Jo Grace explores these issues in greater depth, based on findings from rural villages in Badakhshan, Bamyan and Kabul Provinces.

This study found that though the numbers of women who claim rights to land and livestock are not great, they were higher than anticipated. The findings also show that while women in the study villages (who represented a range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds) have a great deal of involvement in agriculture, few own land or livestock themselves. Where women were found to own either asset, most women were able to use them productively, though their level of control over those assets varied. Reasons why women face constraints in accessing land and livestock are linked to culture and tradition; lack of credit, land and shelter for livestock; and poverty.

Women's claims to ownership of land and livestock can also be better supported by:

- Exploring the potential of providing sheep, or other livestock, as payment for work. Livestock has many extra benefits as compared to cash, in terms of animal produce for household consumption, as well as income from the sale of an animal and its produce.
- Ensuring, if any land distribution schemes go ahead, that women and widows in particular are included in such schemes.
- Coordinating and scaling up a legal rights outreach programme that educates women and men about inheritance rights at the village level.
- Establishing family courts in rural areas and training and employing more female judges to adjudicate on inheritance claims cases.

Non-governmental organisations, the government and others can support women's role in agriculture through a number of tasks:

- Developing a more nuanced understanding of women's role in agriculture and women who own land and livestock, and use this to inform programme design.
- Emphasising the importance of women's agricultural activities to both men and women through extension work.
- Incorporating women into agricultural training.
- Training more women as basic veterinary workers.
- Providing women with adult literacy classes that would enable them to read labels on agricultural inputs, to read wills regarding their inheritance, as well as earn them more respect within the community.
- Providing women with credit to: purchase fodder for animals if they do not own land; hire a shepherd if they lack mobility; or enable group rental of land for cultivating crops or for building animal shelter and keeping livestock.

New Case Study Explores Transnational Networks and Migration from Faryab to Iran

Since the fall of the Taliban, much attention has been paid to the repatriation of the more than 3.5 million Afghans who sought refuge abroad during the many years of strife. More than 1 million of the up to 3 million Afghans still living in exile in Pakistan and Iran are expected to return home over the next two years – but until now there has been little consideration of the fact that returning

home may not end insecurity and vulnerability, nor that it means the end of migration as an ongoing livelihoods strategy.

Transnational Networks and Migration from Faryab to Iran examines the migration choices made by Afghans in both urban and rural areas of Faryab Province. The author, Elca Stigter, finds that many people – mostly single men – continue to travel back and forth to Iran in a cyclical fashion, largely in pursuit of employment, but also to accumulate savings and wealth. Migration continues despite the risks involved in crossing the border and the crackdown on illegal Afghan migrants by Iranian authorities.

Recommendations to the Afghan government and assistance officials working on migration include:

- Development of a national policy on migration within the National Development Framework and budget;
- Opening of bilateral negotiations with neighbouring states to better manage ongoing population movements;
- Improved targeting of national assistance programmes in those areas of high migration outflows and/or refugee returns; and
- Improvement of the procedures for Afghans applying for passports and visas.

Both case studies can be downloaded from AREU's website at www.areu.org.af or obtained in hard copy from the AREU office in Kabul. **Source:** Barney Rubin's yahoo group – 2nd March 2005. [home](#)

CHRONOLOGY OF ATTACKS ON FOREIGNERS

Major post-Taliban attacks on foreigners in Afghanistan

The killing of a British advisor to the Afghan government in Kabul overnight is the latest in a series of attacks on aid workers and foreign civilians since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001. Here is a chronology of the major attacks since December 2001.

2001 - Nov 19: An Italian and a Spanish journalist, an Australian cameraman and an Afghan photographer are killed in an ambush on the Jalalabad-Kabul road.

2002 - Feb 16: British peacekeepers come under attack from gunmen for the first time since the arrival of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in December 2001.

2003 - March 7: An Afghan ISAF translator is killed and a Dutch soldier wounded in a bomb attack as peacekeepers patrol Kabul's Bagrami suburb.

March 27: A Salvadoran-born Swiss delegate from the International Committee of the Red Cross is shot dead by Taliban militants in south central Afghanistan.

April 8: An Italian tourist is shot dead by suspected Taliban in southern Zabol province.

June 7: Four German International Security Assistance Force soldiers are killed by a suicide car bomber.

Aug 14: Two Afghan workers with the Afghan Red Crescent Society are killed and three others injured in southeastern Ghazni province.

Sept 10: Four Afghan employees of a Danish refugee agency die in an ambush in Ghazni province, about 150 kilometres from Kabul.

Nov 16: Gunmen shoot dead a young French aid worker employed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in the centre of Ghazni town.

Dec 4: One Afghan census worker is killed and four others injured in an ambush in western Afghanistan.

Dec 24: Two Indians working on a road project are freed by Taliban militants in southeast Afghanistan after being kidnapped on December 6 in Zabol province.

2004 - Feb 14: Four Afghan men, working for the Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation are shot dead in an ambush in western Farah province.

Feb 22: Gunmen open fire on a civilian helicopter near southern Kandahar, killing its Australian pilot and seriously wounding two other people.

Feb 25: Five Afghans working for an local NGO are executed by gunmen along the main eastern highway from Kabul to Jalalabad.

March 5: A Turkish engineer is killed during an ambush on the Kabul-Kandahar road in southeastern Zabul province.

March 6: Two gunmen shoot dead the head of the Afghan Red Crescent in southeastern Zabul province.

April 26: Suspected Taliban shoot dead two Afghan employees of the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance aid agency and one soldier and injure several others near Kandahar.

May 5: Two Britons and an Afghan working for the UN-administered electoral process are shot dead in eastern Nuristan province.

June 2: A Belgian woman, a Dutch man, a Norwegian man and two Afghans working for Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) are ambushed and shot dead in northwest province of Badghis. MSF later pulls out of Afghanistan.

June 10: Eleven Chinese nationals are killed in their sleep in an attack on their compound in northeastern Kunduz province.

Aug 29: A bomb blast at the office of US security contractor DynCorp, which provides President Hamid Karzai's guards, kills nine people including four of the firm's employees.

Oct 18: An Afghan election worker and four other Afghans are killed when their election commission vehicle hits a roadside bomb in southeast Paktika province.

Oct 23: An Afghan girl and an American woman are killed and three Icelandic peacekeepers injured by a suicide bomber on a Kabul's crowded "Chicken Street" shopping strip.

Oct 28: A British-Irish woman, a Kosovar woman and a Filipino man are kidnapped in broad daylight from their UN-marked car by armed men in Kabul. They are freed nearly a month later.

Dec 15: A Turkish engineer working for a US construction firm is kidnapped and murdered in eastern Kunar province.

2005 - March 7: Briton Steve MacQueen, who was working as an advisor to the Afghan government, is shot dead in his car in a drive-by attack in the diplomatic area of Kabul. **Source:** Agence France-Presse (AFP) Date: 08 Mar 2005. [home](#)

DEVELOPMENT GATEWAY

Coming in April on the Development Gateway Special Report: Public Sector Transparency: What Works?

The Development Gateway wants your opinion! If you would like to be a part of April's special report on public sector transparency, take some time to complete a short survey at <http://surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=1794882724>

The survey seeks your views on the following questions:

- How best can developing countries achieve public sector transparency?
- Does civil society involvement always lead to better outcomes?
- Who bears the cost of implementing e-government solutions? Is this cost justified?

Selected comments will be featured in the special report.

Please visit <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/special/transparency?intcmp=921&intcmp=921> for more information Public Sector Transparency: What Works?. To inquire about partnership and sponsorship opportunities for this Special Report, please contact Tatiana Nikolskaya at tnikolskaya@dgfoundation.org [home](#)

HEALTH

Message To Afghanlinks From An Afghan Aid Worker In Badakhshan Highlighting The Lack Of Health Care And Demonstrating What Needs To Be Done

My impression about the problem of maternal mortality is that it is not only a big problem in Badakhshan but there are many other remote provinces where there are many health problems and especially among women and children because most of the time they don't have access to the health facilities. For example Ghor, Nuristan etc. Afghanistan is not developed yet to provide health facilities to all the provinces in each village due to economical problems and being a mountainous country.

Badakhshan is consisted of many districts and there are many other remotest districts where access to those areas is very difficult. During winter the roads are blocked for 6 months. In those areas there might be few NGOs working and providing such facilities. Even NGOs can't have

health centers in each village. While as it is a mountainous area and being a long distance among the villages access is very much difficult.

Badakhshan has 27 districts and in those districts where NGOs have activities the mortality rate has been decreased but in the areas where NGOs are not working this might be a big problem. It is worth mentioning that some NGOs are just working in Health Education but not providing the health services. **The people in those areas need proper health centers; doctors and medicine while these are not available. Sometimes in Emergency situations there are a lot of problems. For example very cold weather, out break of communicable and infectious diseases. No health centers or facilities in those areas.**

Source: Afghan aid worker in Badakhshan who kindly shared this view of life in remote areas and the difficulties that lack of health services in remote areas cause. Conditions do not appear to have improved since I traveled from Faisabad to Ishkashim in 2000 and again in 2001. **Any contributions to the debate on what can be done to practically improve conditions in these areas, especially bearing in mind that recent reports indicate that over a 1000 children may have died in the cold weather, would be welcome.** [home](#)

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

- **Afghanistan may face disastrous floods**

The World Food Program in Afghanistan is preparing for the risk of potentially catastrophic floods after the snow melts from the worst winter in a decade, in which scores of people died, the UN body said here.

“We are already working on the risk of floods when the snow will melt and we are trying to identify the areas that could be isolated if bridges break or because of swollen rivers,” Charles Vincent, country director for the World Food Program (WFP) in Afghanistan, told AFP.

“If the snow melts fast, it could be a catastrophe,” he said. The preparations include stockpiling food in regions that could be isolated by flood waters, which would rise quickly if the weather warmed up sharply in March and melted snowdrifts.

Afghanistan is suffering from the worst winter in almost a decade, with snowdrifts isolating entire regions. The health ministry said at least 370 people had been confirmed dead but several hundred other deaths might not have been listed as communications with some affected regions were difficult because of the weather.

The dead include at least 211 children under five who suffered from diseases linked to the freezing weather, like pneumonia, according official health ministry figures.

After seven years of drought many Afghan families have not stockpiled traditional stores of food to get them through the harsh winter months, Vincent said. “In certain areas they had not seen snow in 25 years so some people had stopped doing it (stockpiling).

They did not expect such a winter,” he said. And, with little wood available to use for fuel, people cannot keep themselves warm in the worst-affected regions, such as the remote, high-altitude provinces of Ghor in Badakhshan in the northeast, Vincent said.

In September the WFP put 21,000 tons of food in regional distribution centers around the country in order to reach isolated areas. In recent weeks it has been working with Afghan authorities and US- and NATO-led soldiers and humanitarian aid agencies to air-drop supplies. “We have acted fast and there is a strong mobilisation of everybody - the government, the US coalition and ISAF (International Security Assistance Force),” he said. The World Food Program has rushed convoys with thousands of tons of food to the worst affected areas. “We have convoys almost everywhere and as soon as the roads are open, we go,” Vincent said. **Source:** Daily Times – Pakistan – 2nd March 2005. [home](#)

- **URGENT - Flooding Coordination Meetings Schedule in Central Region Provinces – Message from UNAMA Central Field Office**

All of you may be aware of the threat of flooding due to high snowfall after many years of continuous drought in the country. As requested by the Government, UNAMA regional offices are

assisting the Governors in each province to organize coordinating meetings with various actors including the government departments to develop an action plan. UNAMA Central Region Office is supporting the provincial governors of Kapisa, Kabul, Parwan, Panjsher, Logar and Wardak in coordination meetings in the central region. These meetings will identify partners in doing joint assessment in identifying vulnerable districts, villages and possible number of people who will be affected and further to develop an action plan to carry out preventive measures with cost assessment, necessary back up to support the people who would be displaced and possible rehabilitation programs.

We will assist the government to take the initiative and support it in various ways to respond to the forthcoming flood disaster. Community mobilization and awareness rising should be also a crucial component of the action plan.

Your participation in the meetings will be highly appreciated.

The schedule and Agenda of the meeting are as below.

Date	Day	Start time	Province	Venue
06/03/05	Sunday	10:00 am	Parwan	Governor office/Charikar
07/03/05	Monday	10:30 am	Panjsher	Governor Office/Bazarak
08/03/05	Tuesday	10:00 am	Kapisa	Governor office /M.Raqi
09/03/05	Wednesday	10:00 am	Logar	Kochi School/Pule Alam
10/03/04	Thursday	10:00 am	Kabul	Governor Office Kabul
13/03/05	Sunday	10:00 am	Wardak	Municipality Hall/ Maidan Shar

Flood Coordination meeting Agenda

- Opening remarks and welcome to the participants (Governor)
- Background information regarding flooding and identification of risky areas in the Province.
- Forming of working Groups
- Development of an action plane
- Reporting line
- AOB

Source: Khan Agha Dawoodzai - IDG Assistant, Institution Development & Governance, UNAMA Central Field Office, 1st Building, Compound B, Kabul, Afghanistan
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HUMAN RIGHTS

RIGHTS-US: Rumsfeld Sued Over Torture in Iraq and Afghanistan

Two major U.S. human rights groups Tuesday filed a lawsuit in federal court in Chicago against Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on behalf of eight named Afghan and Iraqi plaintiffs who say they were tortured and abused while in the custody of the U.S. military.

The 76-page filing by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Human Rights First (HRF) asserts that Rumsfeld bears direct responsibility for the torture and abuse of detainees in Afghanistan and Iraq and should be held accountable.

The plaintiffs are asking the courts to issue an order declaring that Rumsfeld's actions violate the U.S. Constitution, federal law, and international treaties ratified by the United States, notably the Geneva Conventions and the U.N. Convention Against Torture (CAT). They are also asking that they be compensated for the harm inflicted by their treatment in detention.

"Secretary Rumsfeld bears direct and ultimate responsibility for this descent into horror by personally authorising unlawful interrogation techniques and by abdicating his legal duty to stop torture," said Lucas Guttentag, lead counsel in the lawsuit and the director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project, at a press conference in Washington Tuesday.

"He gives lip service to being responsible but has not been held accountable for his actions. This lawsuit puts the blame where it belongs, on the secretary of defence," he added, noting that the

case was being filed in Illinois, Rumsfeld's voting residence, because he is being sued in both his personal and official capacities.

The case caps a series of disclosures about U.S. military abuses against detainees held in Afghanistan and Iraq since last April when photos depicting the torture and humiliation of Iraqis held in Abu Ghraib prison first came to light.

Since then, the ACLU and other human rights groups have obtained in a separate Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit thousands of emails and other documents that establish that the abuses depicted in the original photos have been far more widespread than the government has admitted. Confidential reports by the International Red Cross, as well as media interviews with U.S. servicemen and former detainees, have bolstered that conclusion.

Meanwhile, leaks of internal administration memorandums from the White House, the Pentagon and the Justice Department have also shown that Rumsfeld approved specific techniques, including "stress positions", nudity, the use of dogs, prolonged isolation and interrogations, and sensory deprivation -- all of which are considered inappropriate and potentially counter-productive in U.S. Army field manuals -- at various times since 2002.

"There is simply no doubt that his policies caused the abuses to occur," said Guttentag, who said that as defence secretary, Rumsfeld had "command responsibility", a legal doctrine that holds that a commanding officer is liable for acts of his subordinates if he knows or has reason to know that torture or cruel and inhuman treatment is likely to result from the execution of a commander's order.

Guttentag said Rumsfeld had received numerous reports about how detainees were treated long before the Abu Ghraib photos were first brought to his attention. He added that other defendants in the chain of command may be added to the case as more evidence of their involvement came to light.

As the evidence of widespread abuses and torture has mounted, human rights groups, the American Bar Association (ABA), a number of top retired military commanders, as well as Democratic lawmakers have called for a full-scale investigation by an independent commission to determine who was responsible.

But these appeals have been repeatedly rebuffed by the administration and the Republican majority in Congress. They have insisted that the 300-some investigations, courts-martial, and administrative inquiries that have been or are still being carried out as a result of specific incidents of abuse should be adequate. So far, however, no U.S. official above the rank of lieutenant has been punished. **For the full report see attachment 1.9. Source:** Inter Press Service News Agency – 1st March 2005. [home](#)

ISLAM

Understanding Islamism

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reacting to the spectacular and violent events of 11 September 2001, many Western observers and policy-makers have tended to lump all forms of Islamism together, brand them as radical and treat them as hostile. That approach is fundamentally misconceived. Islamism -- or Islamic activism (we treat these terms as synonymous) -- has a number of very different streams, only a few of them violent and only a small minority justifying a confrontational response. The West needs a discriminating strategy that takes account of the diversity of outlooks within political Islamism; that accepts that even the most modernist of Islamists are deeply opposed to current U.S. policies and committed to renegotiating their relations with the West; and that understands that the festering Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the war occupation of Iraq, and the way in which the "war against terrorism" is being waged all significantly strengthen the appeal of the most virulent and dangerous jihadi tendencies.

In understanding the different streams of Islamic activism, the starting point is to distinguish between Shiite and Sunni Islamism. The concept of "political Islam" first appeared in the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution, with Shiite activism then viewed as the most worrying threat. In fact, however, because Shiism is the minority variant of Islam (Sunnis constitute over 80 per cent of Muslims) and because Shiites typically are minorities in the states in which they find themselves, the most widespread and natural form of Shiite activism has been communal -- defending the interests of the Shiite community in relation to other populations and to the state itself. For this reason, and also because of the leading political role played by scholars and religious authorities, (*ulama*) Shiite Islamism has remained unified to a remarkable degree and has not fragmented into conflicting forms of activism as has Sunni Islamism.

Sunni Islamism -- on which most Western emphasis is today placed, and about which most fears are held -- is widely viewed as uniformly fundamentalist, radical, and threatening to Western

interests. Yet it is not at all monolithic. On the contrary, it has crystallised into three main distinctive types, each with its own worldview, modus operandi and characteristic actors:

Political: the Islamic political movements (*al-harakât al-islamiyya al-siyassiyya*), exemplified by the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and its offshoots elsewhere (including Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Sudan and Syria) and by locally rooted movements such as the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi, AKP*) in Turkey, and the Party for Justice and Development (*Parti pour la Justice et le Développement, PJD*) in Morocco, whose purpose is to attain political power at the national level. These now generally accept the nation-state, operate within its constitutional framework, eschew violence (except under conditions of foreign occupation), articulate a reformist rather than revolutionary vision and invoke universal democratic norms. The characteristic actor is the party-political militant.

Missionary: the Islamic missions of conversion (*al-da'wa*), which exists in two main variants exemplified by the highly structured Tablighi movement on the one hand and the highly diffuse Salafiyya on the other. In both cases political power is not an objective; the overriding purpose is the preservation of the

Muslim identity and the Islamic faith and moral order against the forces of unbelief, and the characteristic actors are missionaries (*du'ah*), and the *'ulama*.

Jihadi: the Islamic armed struggle (*al-jihad*), which exists in three main variants: internal (combating nominally Muslim regimes considered impious); irredentist (fighting to redeem land ruled by non-Muslims or under occupation); and global (combating the West). The characteristic actor is, of course, the fighter (*al-mujahid*).

All these varieties of Sunni activism are attempts to reconcile tradition and modernity, to preserve those aspects of tradition considered to be essential by adapting in various ways to modern conditions; all select from tradition, borrow selectively from the West and adopt aspects of modernity. Where they differ is in how they conceive the principal problem facing the Muslim world, and what they believe is necessary, possible and advisable to do about it.

Political Islamists make an issue of Muslim misgovernment and social injustice and give priority to political reform to be achieved by political action (advocating new policies, contesting elections, etc.). Missionary Islamists make an issue of the corruption of Islamic values (*al-qiyam al-islamiyya*) and the weakening of faith (*al-iman*) and give priority to a form of moral and spiritual rearmament that champions individual virtue as the condition of good government as well as of collective salvation. Jihadi Islamists make an issue of the oppressive weight of non-Muslim political and military power in the Islamic world and give priority to armed resistance.

Which of these three main outlooks will prevail in the medium and longer term is of great importance to the Muslim world and to the West. While the West in general and the U.S. in particular ought to be modest about their ability to shape the debate among Islamists, they also should be aware of how their policies affect it. By adopting a sledge-hammer approach which refuses to differentiate between modernist and fundamentalist varieties of Islamism, American and European policy-makers risk provoking one of two equally undesirable outcomes: either inducing the different strands of Islamic activism to band together in reaction, attenuating differences that might otherwise be fruitfully developed, or causing the non-violent and modernist tendencies to be eclipsed by the jihadis. **Source**: - Middle East/North Africa Report N°37 Cairo/Brussels, 2 March 2005 **For the full report see attachment 2.9 or go to**

http://www.icg.org/library/documents/middle_east_north_africa/egypt_north_africa/37_understanding_islamism.doc [home](#)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- **Country Representative, Afghanistan**

Based in Kabul, with frequent travel around the country the representative is responsible for the strategic development and management of Trocaire's programme in collaboration with local partner organisations. Applicants should have a minimum of four years overseas development experience, including management experience and a relevant qualification. The position is offered for a term of two years.

Please see Trocaire's website www.trocaire.org for further details.

Closing date for applications is **Monday 28th March 2005.**

To apply please forward your CV together with a covering letter to: Eileen Ryan, Head of Finance & HR, Trocaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare email: hr@trocaire.ie fax: 353-1-6290664
www.trocaire.org

- **Head of Mission Afghanistan and Pakistan**

Location

Based in Kabul, Afghanistan

Contract Date

As soon as possible with an initial contract for one year

Place in the organisation

Reports to the Operations and Support Director in the HNI-TPO Amsterdam office. Directly supervises the HealthNet International (HNI)-Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO) Programme Managers and the CSU expatriate staff in Afghanistan. **Please see attachment 3.9 for the full job description and how to apply.** [home](#)

MEDIA

PRESS RELEASE - 98.1 ARMAN FM Opens in Kandahar – 5th March 2005

ARMAN FM commenced its broadcasts in the historic city of Kandahar at about 11am on 27 February 2005. Since this date, the transmission has been continuing non-stop 24 hours a day. Since April 2003, ARMAN FM has been uniting the diverse people of Afghanistan, with a progressive mix of international and regional music, chat and news. The station has become a redevelopment benchmark for private enterprise in Afghanistan, and is the first independent, privately owned radio station to broadcast nationally.

Kandahar is the fourth Afghan city to hear the popular tunes of 98.1 ARMAN FM which has taken Kabul, Mazar e Sharif and Herat by storm in the last 2 years. Based on independent and internal surveys, 98.1 ARMAN FM dominates the cities it broadcasts in with a market audience share of close to 80%. Kandahar is the first city with a majority of Pashto speaking inhabitants to have access to 98.1 ARMAN FM.

“Arman FM has as its primary objective to reunite the people of Afghanistan” said Arman FM Director, Saad Mohseni. “Arman FM is aimed at the young – now representing the majority of our population and the future of our country” he added. About the Pashto speaking people of Kandahar, Mohseni commented “We have been progressively trying to increase our Pashto content leading up to the launch of Arman FM in Kandahar, and will continue to do so in anticipation of our launch in Jalalabad.”

The Kandahar installation will be repeated in Kunduz, Jalalabad and Ghazni in the coming months.

“Our investment is substantial and represents our belief in the future of Afghanistan. The technology driving ARMAN FM is comparable to that found in any modern radio network nationally. We have made a decision to use software developed by RCS systems, the leading radio station software in the world, which ensures we can provide a fresh mix of Afghan, Indian, Pakistani, Iranian, Arabic, Turkish and western music. This is the very same software that is used in 85% of leading radio stations worldwide.

“As a privately owned business, ARMAN FM’s future is dependent on its ability to be relevant to its audiences.”

ARMAN FM broadcasts at 98.1 MHz on the FM band, and will reach over 1 million additional million people in Kandahar taking its total potential audience to 8 million listeners. Additional information can be found on the web at www.arman.fm.

For further information please contact Saad Mohseni on: saad.mohseni@arman.fm or +93 79 44 55 66. [home](#)

NARCOTICS

2 March 2005 - Annual Report of the International Narcotics Control Board Focuses on Need to Integrate Drug Demand and Supply Strategies

The integration of supply and demand reduction strategies: moving beyond a balanced approach” is the focus of the first chapter of the Annual Report of the Vienna-based International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), released here today.

In the past, approaches to tackling the drugs demand and supply situation have called for a balance between activities related to reducing the supply of and demand for drugs. While this approach has been fairly successful, in this year’s Report, INCB noted that both demand and supply reduction programmes yield limited results when working in isolation. The Board called for more comprehensive cooperation between supply and demand reduction programmes at the local, regional and international levels. In order to integrate and streamline supply and demand

reduction programmes, it recommended the creation of National Drug Policy Coordination mechanisms. "To make real progress in achieving the 10-year targets set by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session in 1998, it is imperative that national governments ensure that there is operational and policy level integration of demand and supply reduction efforts," said Professor Hamid Ghodse, President of the INCB.

Sales of illicit drugs via Internet pharmacies

The Annual Report focused on the fact that several billion doses of medicine are sold illicitly on the Internet every year, posing potentially fatal health risks to customers. The Board noted that illicit sales and smuggling of pharmaceuticals have been rising steadily. In recognition of this problem, the Board organized an expert group meeting on this issue in October 2004. The Board has proposed a two-pronged approach which encourages countries to share information and, at the same time, to choke off the supply end of the chain. Countries should also share their experiences and set up a mechanism that allows for rapid information exchange on specific cases.

Shift in Dutch policy towards cannabis

The Board welcomed the significant shift in the cannabis policy announced by the Government of the Netherlands. In an inter-ministerial policy paper on cannabis, the Government acknowledged that "cannabis is not harmless" -- neither for the abusers, nor the community. The Dutch Government informed the INCB of this crucial and significant change in August 2004 -- a move which brings it closer towards full compliance with the international drug control treaties with regard to cannabis. The Board urged the Government to take further action to reduce the number of coffee shops in the country, which are contrary to the provisions of international drug control treaties.

Progress in curbing diversion of precursors

The Board called on governments to increase sharing of real-time information on seizures and diversions of precursors which are key chemicals used in the manufacture of cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants. It also discussed the progress made by its international initiatives - Project Prism, Operation Purple and Operation Topaz, aimed at preventing the diversion of key chemicals to the illicit market. Governments have followed up numerous transactions resulting in more than 430 cases of seizures, attempted diversions and actual diversions, with the assistance of INCB. Some of these cases have led to the dismantling of clandestine laboratories and trafficking networks and the arrest of traffickers.

Drug problem in Africa alarming

In its Report, the Board called on the international community to provide appropriate assistance to African states, in order to help them in their efforts to fight drug abuse and trafficking. It also called on African governments to give a higher priority to addressing the drug problem in their countries. Africa continues to be a major source of the cannabis found in illicit markets in the region or in Europe. According to INCB, there is some evidence to suggest that some of the civil conflicts in Africa are partially funded by profits from drug trafficking. On the other hand, the availability of narcotic drugs used for medical purposes, such as pain alleviation is especially low in Africa. More than 30 countries consume almost no narcotic drugs and even the largest of the African consumer countries of these drugs use only a fraction of the amounts that are consumed in the United States or Western Europe.

Regional Highlights

The Report discussed region by region, major trends in drug consumption and trafficking worldwide. It noted that opium production in Afghanistan and its impact on peace and security remains the central element of the drug situation in West Asia. In Afghanistan itself, illicit drug production and related activities reached a record level in 2004 and are threatening the stability of the country. Drug abuse has also risen in Afghanistan in recent years.

It is also observed that the drug situation in Iraq may deteriorate further because of the disintegration of the drug control structure in the country. The complex links between terrorism, organized crime, corruption and drug trafficking pose a serious threat, raising concerns that the overall situation may worsen.

The INCB is an independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body for the implementation of the United Nations international drug conventions. It was established in 1968 in accordance with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs.

INCB Report is available at http://www.incb.org/e/ind_ar.htm VIENNA, 2 March (UN Information Service) [home](#)

UNHCR Update for February 2005

In this issue - Education in Afghanistan; Radio Programme; Announcements to Afghans in Iran; Market Prices of Essential Commodities

Please see attachment 4.9 for these interesting items. Source: UNHCR – Return Information Update for February 2005, Issue 71A. [home](#)

If you want further information on any of the above subjects please email Jeanne Bryer at Afghanlinks@aol.com

NB. All information contained here identifies the source and is shared with readers in good faith. If you find any incorrect details please let me know and they will be rectified immediately. *Afghan Links* is produced by Jeanne Bryer who formerly worked for the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and who currently works for Khorasan Orphanage in Kabul and the Kathy Evans Afghan Education Trust. If you no longer wish to receive the Afghan Links Newsletter please send an email to Jeanne Afghanlinks@aol.com and your address will be removed.

