

Update on Counternarcotics in Afghanistan

August 2008 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Poppy Cultivation Survey

Overview

The narcotics problem in Afghanistan is stabilizing, but considerable challenges remain in areas of the country where security is a problem. In the northern and central provinces the number of poppy-free provinces rose from 13 to 18 suggesting that where there is security and good governance counternarcotics policies are effective. In the south and west of the country cultivation is a continuing cause for concern as the lack of security and political will hinder progress. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the United States and its international partners, and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are engaged in a comprehensive strategy to fight the narcotics problem in Afghanistan by building on the successes where there is security and good governance, and developing new strategies in areas of the country where security concerns have hampered counternarcotics efforts.

- Afghanistan is the world's largest poppy cultivator, accounting for 82% of global cultivation in 2007. Cultivation decreased in 2008 by 19% to 157,000 hectares, still a sizeable portion of world cultivation.
- In 2008, there were 18 poppy-free provinces, five more than a year before; representing a continuing shift in cultivation from primarily poor, northern provinces to concentrated cultivation in southern and western Afghanistan.
- Poor weather conditions were a factor leading to an overall cultivation decrease for 2008. However, in the north and central provinces a combination of factors contributed to lower cultivation, to include: increased security, integrating counternarcotics activities within the counter-insurgency campaign, better governance, political will on behalf of the governors, agricultural and development assistance enabling farmers to move away from poppy cultivation, and an effective public information campaign.
- Where there is strong leadership and the integration of the five pillars of the U.S. Government's counternarcotics strategy into the overall counter-insurgency campaign, such as in Nangarhar province, there has been considerable counternarcotics progress in 2008. Cultivation in Nangarhar province jumped 285% in 2007 to 18,700 hectares, while in 2008 Nangarhar is for the first time poppy-free. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is active in recruiting governors who exhibit strong political will. The Provincial leadership in Helmand province is also implementing an expansive counternarcotics program for Helmand province where more than half of the country's cultivation occurred in 2007.
- The drug trade continues to be a significant revenue source for the insurgency. Severing the link between the narcotics trade and the insurgency is a top priority for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its international partners.



Two men walk together in poppy field. [State Dept. Photo]

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Counternarcotics Efforts

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's National Drug Control Strategy, adopted in 2006, is the guiding document for all counternarcotics activities.

Encompassing eight components: public awareness, alternative development, eradication, law enforcement, criminal justice, demand reduction, international regional cooperation and institution-building, this comprehensive approach is considered sound and effective where security and political will are present.



Village Shura, Farah Province. [State Dept. Photo]

U.S. Support to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Counternarcotics Efforts

The U.S. Government's pledged assistance to Afghanistan at the 2008 Paris Conference includes \$1.02 billion to support counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan. The U.S. effort has five pillars: 1) Public Information; 2) Alternative Development; 3) Interdiction; 4) Justice Reform; and 5) Poppy Elimination. These efforts are led by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Justice and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Public Information to Prevent Cultivation

Public awareness activities in 2008 supported by the United States focused on accomplishing three goals: 1) specifically targeting farmers and decision-makers at the provincial and district level, 2) engaging local political and religious leaders as message carriers, and 3) coordinating all counternarcotics public information efforts with International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

- The Counternarcotics Advisory Teams spread word of mouth messaging in the major poppy-producing provinces. In the 2008 season, the Counternarcotics Advisory Teams will convene more than 100 shuras with opinion leaders in 25 provinces.
- Unprecedented coordination between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the ISAF throughout 2008 will allow public information programs to reach new audiences in the south where insecurity is a key obstacle.

Alternative Development

USAID's Alternative Development and Agriculture (ADAG) program is designed to create licit alternatives to poppy production by promoting and accelerating rural economic development. The goal is to increase commercial agriculture opportunities, improve agricultural productivity, create rural employment, and improve family incomes and well-being. These programs are designed to provide near-term solutions to farmers and people relying on employment, credit, and access to land from drug cultivation.

The Good Performers Initiative, established by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2006, provides high-impact development assistance awards to Governors who exhibit the political will to substantially reduce or eliminate poppy from their provinces. Moving forward, the United States is currently the only partner providing Good Performers Initiative funding for the 2008 season, providing \$28 million for the Good Performers Initiative this year.



- Good Performers Initiative rewards are awarded in one of three categories:

- ◆ *Poppy-Free Provinces* (\$1 million each)
- ◆ *Net Poppy Reduction* (\$1,000 per hectare above 10%, total cultivation)
- ◆ *Special Recognition Awards* (\$500,000)



Road Construction in Afghanistan [USAID Photo]

- Eighteen Afghan provinces have earned \$28 million in Good Performers Initiative assistance in 2008; including \$10 million to Nangarhar province. This assistance will go directly to communities that have given up poppy and will help to prevent Nangarhar from slipping back into poppy production.

Interdiction and Law Enforcement

With training, mentorship and funding from the U.S. Departments of Justice and Defense, the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan has established special units to enhance narcotics investigative efforts, target networks and network leadership and increase the impact of narcotics seizures: Sensitive Investigative Unit, and National Interdiction Unit. The strong efforts of these three units resulted in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan seizing approximately 4 metric tons of opium, 967 kg of heroin and 240 metric tons of hashish in 2008. The large amount of hashish is directly attributable to a June seizure in Kandahar province by Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan with a western street value of \$600 million.

Justice Reform and Rule of Law Programs

The Afghan Criminal Justice Task Force is a special task force of judges, prosecutors, and police investigators responsible for cases against mid- and high-level drug traffickers. The United States Department of Justice assigns six federal prosecutors and two senior criminal investigators to the Criminal Justice Task Force to provide continual mentoring and to travel countrywide training Afghan prosecutors, investigators, and judges. The United States Agency for International Development has trained 744 sitting judges including 40 women through the “Foundation” training course. They have also trained 584 judges through the Ministry of Justice Stage six-month training program designed to provide judges with core competencies over and above the initial “Foundation” course.

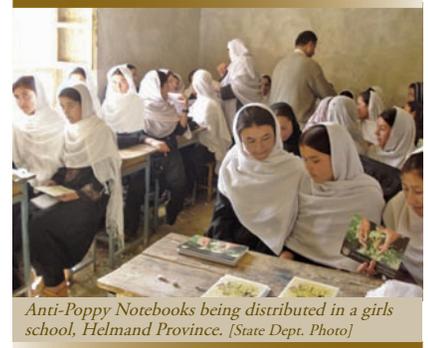
- In 2007, the Counternarcotics Tribunal registered 278 convictions for narcotics offenses, up from 182 convictions in 2006.
- From January to June 2008, the Counternarcotics Tribunal Court ruled on 125 cases, finding a total of 151 people guilty and acquitting 52; the Appeals court ruled on 118 cases, finding 160 people guilty and acquitting 29.
- From January to June 2008, the Criminal Justice Task Force registered 944 kg of seized heroin and 61,500 kg of seized opium, 265,326 kg of hashish and 18,944 kg of precursor chemicals.

Poppy Elimination Efforts

As demonstrated in Nangarhar and other former poppy-producing provinces, poppy elimination campaigns have proved successful with the proper balance of incentive and disincentive programs. Led by strong Provincial Governors, key provinces in the north and east conducted voluntary poppy elimination and alternative livelihood programs backed up by strong law-enforcement that resulted in substantial decreases in cultivation in 2008. Additionally, new equipment and improved targeting methods, along with a more secure payment method allowed governors in 17 provinces to conduct governor-led eradication as part of their poppy elimination programs this year. To prepare for next year and to ensure the Government of Afghanistan can conduct eradication in areas where Governors are unable to conduct targeting the most powerful growers, the Ministry of Defense is training a Counternarcotics Kandak (CNIK) to provide force protection for eradication efforts in 2009.

U.S.-Sponsored Demand Reduction within Afghanistan

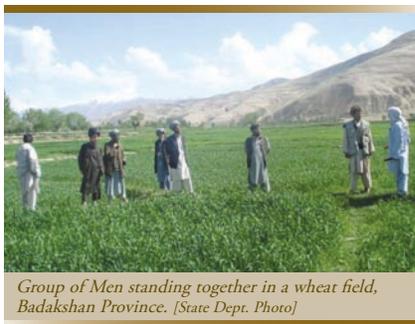
The United Nations World Drug Report recently estimated that almost 4% of the Afghan population – nearly one million individuals – is addicted to drugs. Refugees returning from Iran now make up as much as half of the entire country’s drug problem and women and children in rural areas are using drugs at higher rates than those in urban areas.



Anti-Poppy Notebooks being distributed in a girls school, Helmand Province. [State Dept. Photo]

- *Drug demand reduction* is being included in school curriculum by the Ministry of Education, who is providing teacher training and support materials.
- *Medical practitioners* are being trained to identify and treat drug users
- *Twenty-five outreach/aftercare centers* have been established, and training has been extended to develop 14 more mosque-based centers, with the aim of broadening access to all provinces.
- *Residential/outpatient treatment centers* are now located in the provinces of Wardak, Farah, Takhar, Khost, Bamyan, Day Kundi, and Kabul.
- *Mobile drug treatment clinics* in Kabul, Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Balkh, Herat, and Kandahar have been established.
- *Drop-in centers in community-based settings* in Day Kundi, Bamyan, and Logar Provinces have been built.
- *Drug treatment programs for Afghanistan’s women* who comprise almost 15% of the country’s drug addicts have been expanded. In 2007, the U.S.-sponsored Sanga Amaj Center, the first and only women’s residential treatment center in Kabul, began operating. In 2008, 240 women will receive treatment at the facility.

Moving Forward: What needs to be done?



Group of Men standing together in a wheat field, Badakhshan Province. [State Dept. Photo]

Significant strides have been made in developing the necessary infrastructure to interdict narcotics, prosecute opium traders and drug traffickers, train a competent judiciary, develop alternative crops and livelihood programs, and improve the political will of the Afghans to take a stand against counternarcotics.

In 2008-2009 counternarcotics programs will be oriented towards building and sustaining progress in the areas where good governance, security, and integration of counternarcotics activities within the counter-insurgency campaign have resulted in counternarcotics successes, and then replicating those successes to areas such as Helmand province where there is potential for progress.

Despite the significant counternarcotics progress being made in much of the country, Afghanistan remains a leading producer of illegal narcotics. Proceeds from narcotrafficking are fueling the insurgency and drug-related corruption undercuts international reconstruction efforts. Attacking the nexus between terrorism and the drug trade remains vital to progress in Afghanistan.

