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Poor conditions hindering Afghan police

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GAZNI, Afghanistan, Jan. 13 (UPI) -- Police operating in the eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan are being hindered in their efforts by a lack of supplies and overall poor conditions.

Shair Mohammad, who spent 18 months leading a police unit in Afghanistan's Ghazni Province, said the dearth of supplies and unhappy police officers severely hindered his ability to patrol hundreds of square miles, The New York Times reported Sunday.

The former acting police chief said in addition to worrying about broken down vehicles and his lack of rank, he and his officers went long periods without pay.

"My commanders always just give me promises," he said. "They never send the money."

Positive changes for the provinces' police forces may be on the horizon as both the Afghan and U.S. governments have tabbed police protection a priority in the war-torn country.

While the two governments work to assist regional police forces, those who work alongside Mohammad and his compatriots have acknowledged their struggles.

"He is a true patriot," Lt. Mordechai Sorkin of the U.S. Army said of Mohammad. "He has been here almost all alone, trying to make Afghanistan better."

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