



ANSO QUARTERLY DATA REPORT (Q.1-2008)

January 1st 2008 - March 31st 2008

****IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER****

This free report is only intended to provide a graphical representation of the incidents already provided within the ANSO weekly narrative reports.

Unless otherwise stated ANSO, and our donors, do not infer, support, propose or endorse any conclusions or assumptions as may be drawn from, or are implicit within, this data.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

NGO have been directly targeted for attack on **29** occasions in the first quarter of this year with 16 of those attacks associated to Armed Opposition Groups (AOG) and 13 to criminals.

Although comparable to last years figures in volume (30) the attacks of this year have resulted in many more fatalities indicating an **escalation in the seriousness of attacks on NGO**. This assessment is demonstrated in the fact that **NGO incidents attributed to AOG have doubled** from 8 in first quarter of 2007 to 16 in the same period this year.

The NGO incidents include, amongst others, seven AOG armed attacks which between them resulted in **nine fatalities**, nine injuries and near total destruction of two NGO compounds; seven armed abductions accounting for **12 persons kidnapped** and an **additional two fatalities** including a female US citizen; and ten serious armed robberies accounting for one additional NGO staff injury and a long list of losses and damages to property.

These figures are all higher than last year by a significant margin.

It is our assessment that that the increase in attacks on NGO is being driven first by the general escalation in conflict, secondly by the ongoing integration of criminal organizations into the AOG structure and thirdly by the partial erosion of the respect for NGO neutrality that has been evident until now.

We anticipate these trends to continue in to the next quarter with **abduction and murder by contracted criminals** being the number one threats to NGO.

Beyond NGO incidents ANSO has continued to track conflict trends with figures showing steep escalation between the three months of the period as well as **significant conflict growth over the same period last year**.

This comes as no surprise given our understanding of the nature of the conflict and current trends should be expected to continue.

Data demonstrates growth of AOG attacks in all areas of the country, with notable activity in the Centre and West regions, and a move away from suicide strikes **which are at their lowest level in 15 months**.

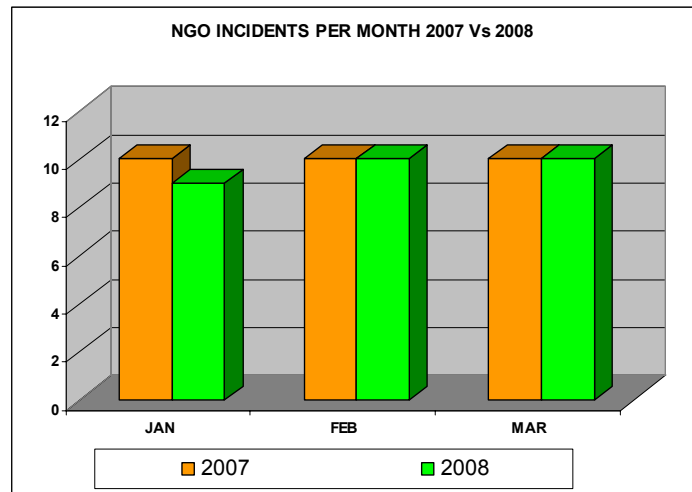
Nic Lee

ANSO Director, 2008

SECTION 1: Impact on NGO

1. Gross NGO Incidents:

This table shows the combined criminal and AOG incidents targeting NGO each month for 2007 and 2008. It demonstrates that the total volume of NGO incidents has not increased compared to the same period last year.

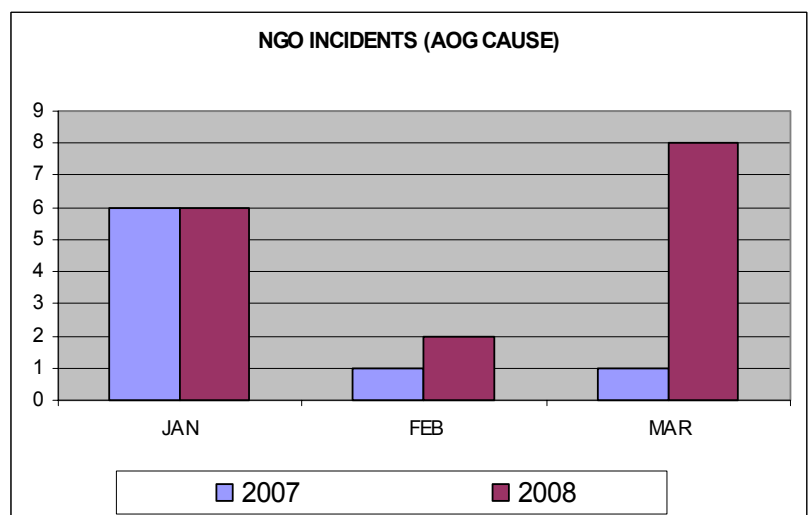
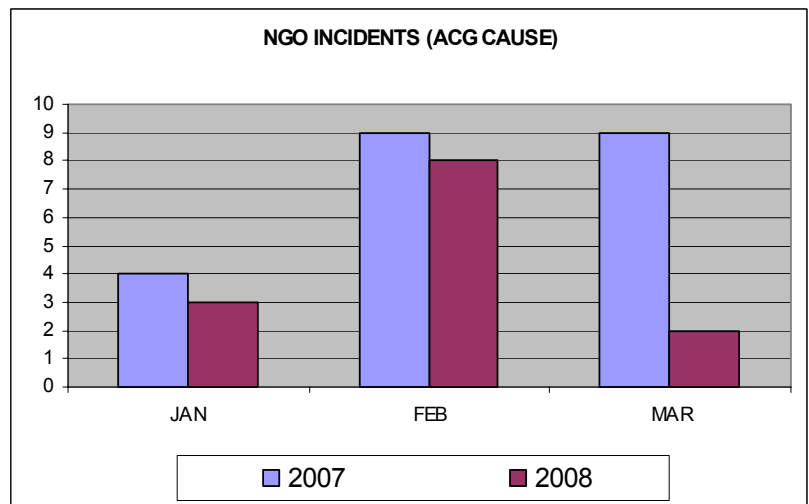


2. NGO Incidents by Cause:

These two tables show the same data as above but disaggregated by cause (AOG or ACG¹). They demonstrate that criminal incidents have fallen while AOG incidents climb.

The former trend is likely caused by improvements in NGO crime prevention measures initiated last year when crime rates against NGO were high.

The latter trend, of escalating AOG attacks, is assessed to be driven by a generally escalating conflict, the increased use of criminal proxies by AOG and an ongoing erosion of NGO acceptance strategies.

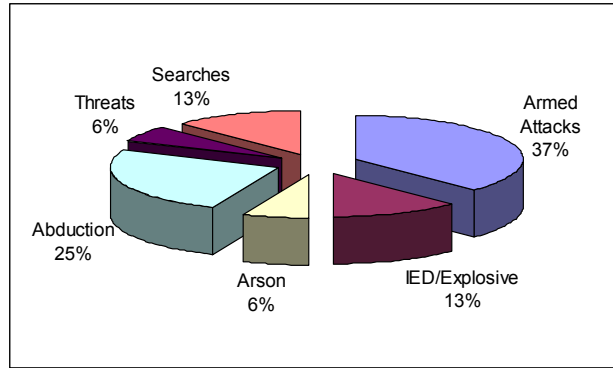


¹ ACG = Armed Criminal Groups

3. AOG incidents against NGO:

These charts show the types of AOG attacks against NGO.

The first (*inset right*) shows the breakdown of attack types for 2008 only and demonstrates that armed attacks (37%) and abductions (25%) form the bulk of the profile so far this year.

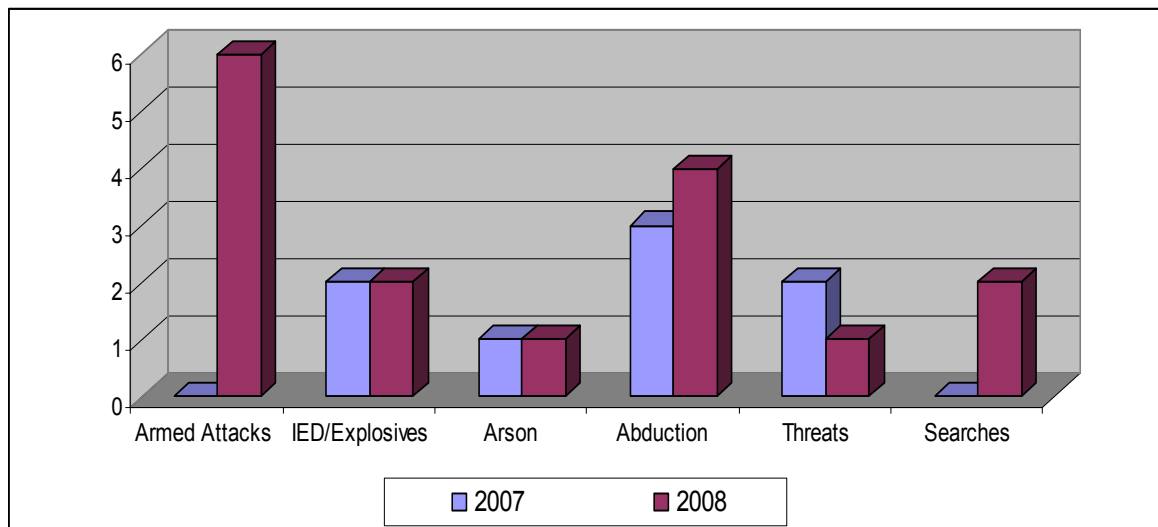


The second table (below) compares this year's attack profiles with the same period last year and supports two reasonable conclusions.

First that NGO incidents by AOG are becoming more frequent (*8 for 2007 Vs 16 for 2008*) and second that the incidents are becoming more violent/serious (*zero armed attacks for 2007 Vs 6 for 2008*). Casualty and abduction rates discussed below will also support this assertion.

As mentioned above ANSO believes these trends to be caused by a generally expanding conflict which is bringing more NGO in to direct contact with AOG; an increased use of criminal proxies to target soft organizations as part of the AOG intimidation and 'influence' campaign and (in some areas at least) the partial loss of AOG respect for NGO impartiality.

It is unlikely that there will be any reversal of these trends and NGO should anticipate higher levels of contact and violence as summer approaches.



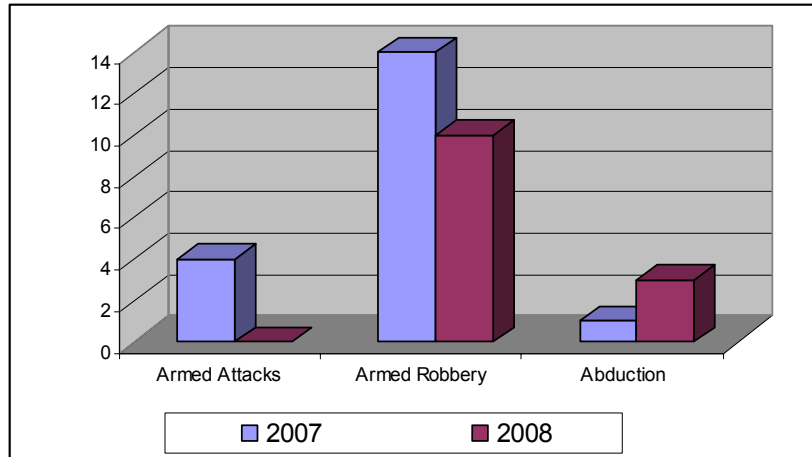
4. Criminal incidents against NGO:

This table shows the total crimes against NGO for the first quarter period in 2007 and 2008 by the three main categories (*these are the only categories of attacks for 2008 whereas in 2007 there were some additional threats*).

It provides some cause for optimism with an overall reduction in serious

incidents between the two periods although it also demonstrates NGO ongoing vulnerability to armed robbery, especially while in transit.

It would be nice to conclude that a reduction in events has been caused by NGO crime prevention measures implemented in 2007 however it is at least as likely to have been caused by the extremely poor weather conditions in the West preventing a lot of NGO movement in Jan/Feb.



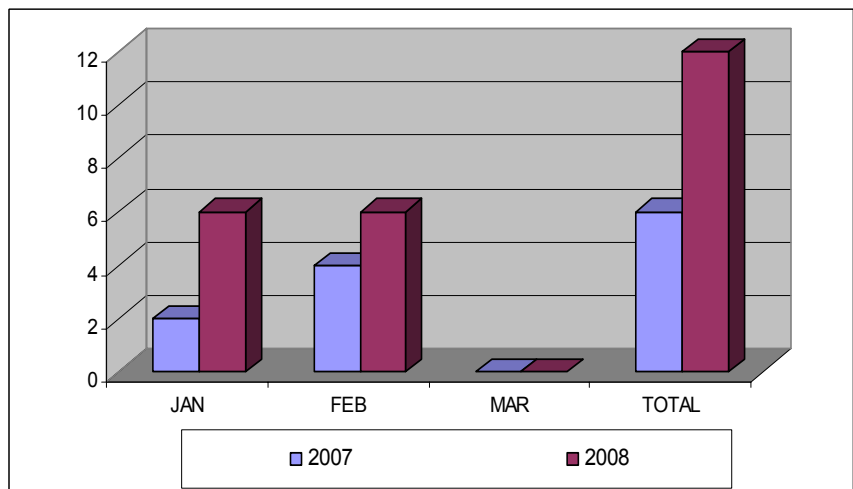
5. NGO Kidnap:

Table shows the number of NGO staff kidnapped per month for Q-I 2007 and Q-I 2008 and demonstrates a clear upwards trend, with twice as many abductees this year as last.

More importantly however this year has also seen the first murder

of NGO abductees (Kandahar) and at least two confirmed cases of targeted kidnaps implemented through a third-party.

ANSO does not believe that the murder of NGO abductees is broadly sanctioned by AOG but at the same time it should be understood that it can not take place at all without leadership approval and increasing reliance on criminal third parties possibly increases the chances of miscommunication.



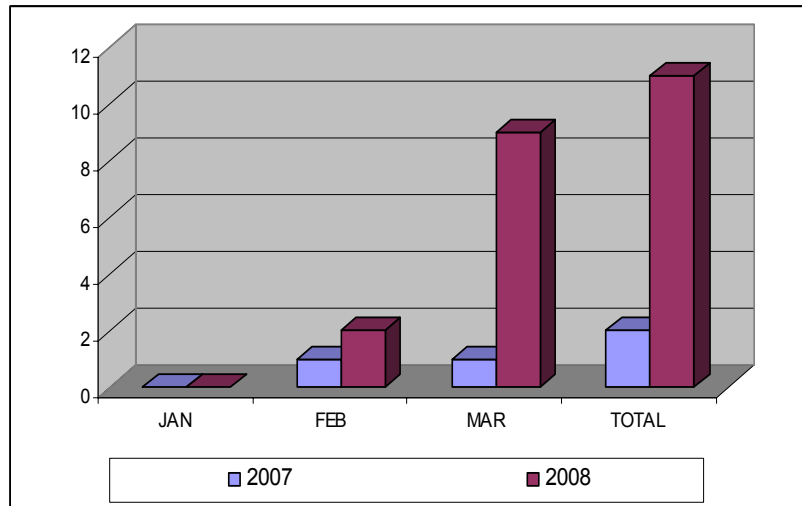
While still isolated statistically, if these actions develop in to more common patterns then they will surely represent a fundamental shift in the safety of NGO.

6. NGO Fatalities:

This table shows a comparison of the number of NGO workers killed, by AOG or crime, per month for 2007 and 2008.

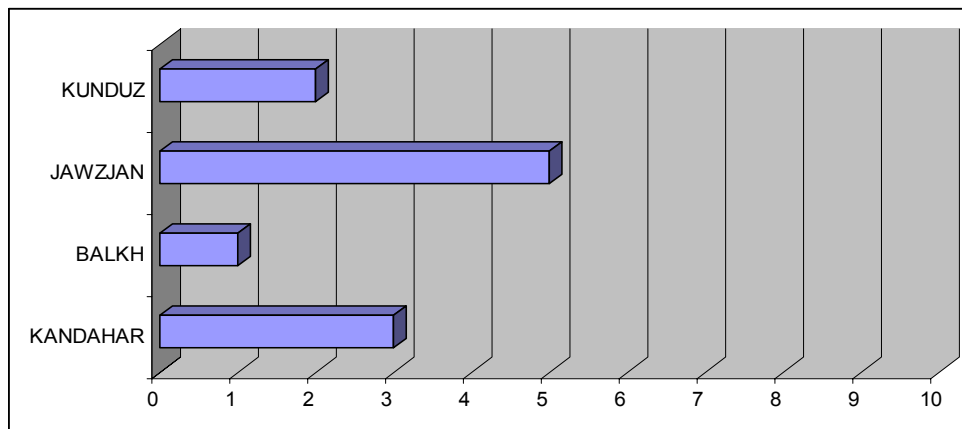
Similarly to the kidnapping data it also demonstrates a serious escalation with nearly as many killed in the first three months of 2008 as were killed in all of 2007 (15).

Obviously, the prevalence of AOG armed attacks against NGO can be cited as the most direct cause of this increase, accounting for all but two of the casualties.



It is also important to note that **eight** of these fatalities have occurred in the Northern provinces further reinforcing ANSO frequent claim that those areas are not safer for NGO operations.

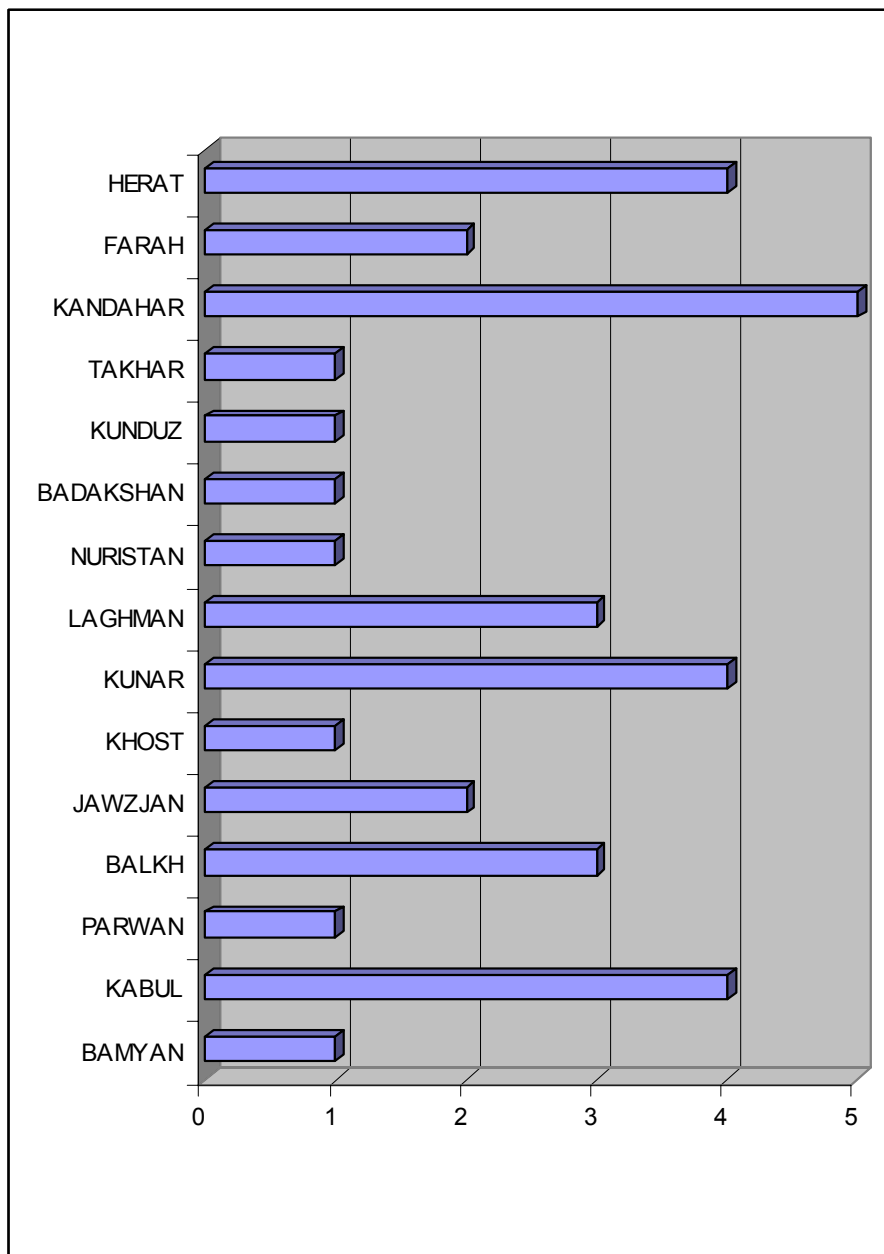
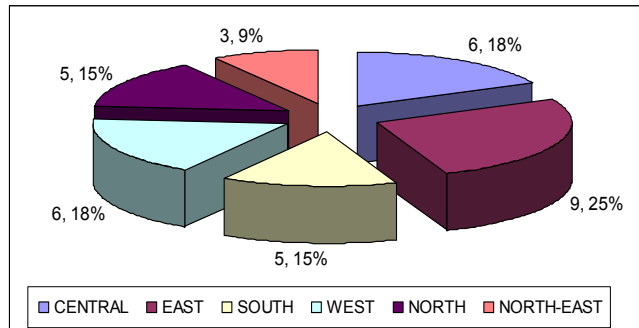
The spate of attacks on the Mazar-Andkhoy highway, which make up the bulk of these deaths, are so far being attributed to groups acting under the authority/instruction of a third-party with the identity and purpose still unknown. The location of all fatalities this year is shown below.



7. Location of NGO Incidents:

Following charts provide the provincial distribution of NGO related incidents (*below*) as well as the regional percentages (*right*)

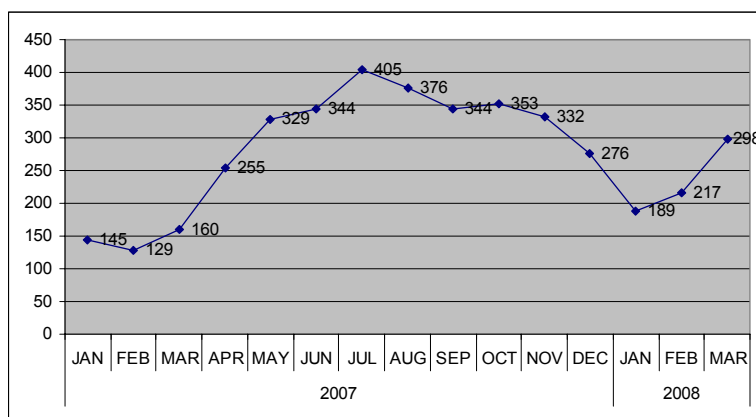
They indicate a geographically wide threat area with incidents occurring in close to half of all provinces (15 of 34).



SECTION 2: The Conflict

1. AOG Initiated Attacks:

Tables show the long term monthly AOG attacks trends (*right*) and a comparison of the total volume² of AOG initiated attacks per month for 2007 and 2008 (*below*)

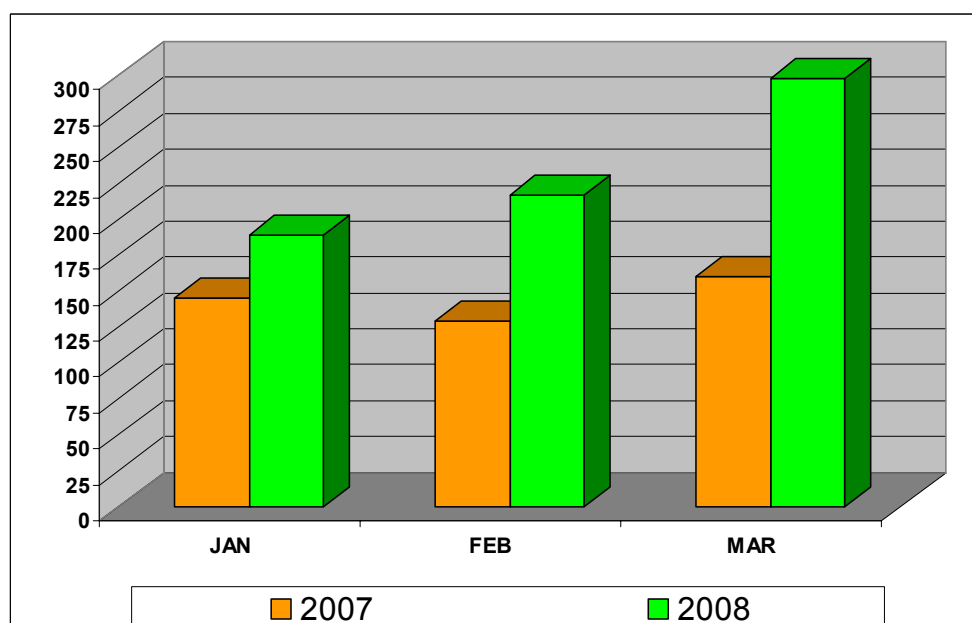


The data demonstrates a solid escalation of conflict within the first three months of the year as well as a substantial growth over the same period last year.

This is fully in line with ANSO end of 2007 assessment of an expanded conflict picking up quickly after the winter lull, which itself was not as severe as 2007.

Given the importance of this data as a basic indicator of progress (or lack of it), recently some attention has been given to differences between these figures and those of other military and civilian reporting agencies.

It is important to note that where such differences do arise they are generally caused by differences in the categorization of incidents rather than any disagreement on overall trends. To the best of our knowledge all relevant reporting agencies currently concur³ on this basic pattern of growth.



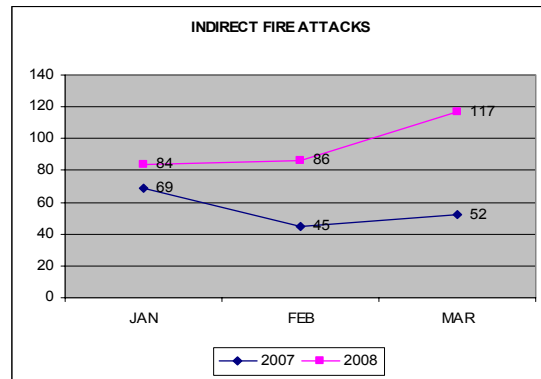
² Includes **only** close range (Small arms, RPG, grenade), indirect fire (IED, missile, mortar) and suicide attacks (SVBIED/SBBIED) attributed to AOG.

³ For example a recent cross check with UNDSS figures for March was found to be within 10 incidents of each other.

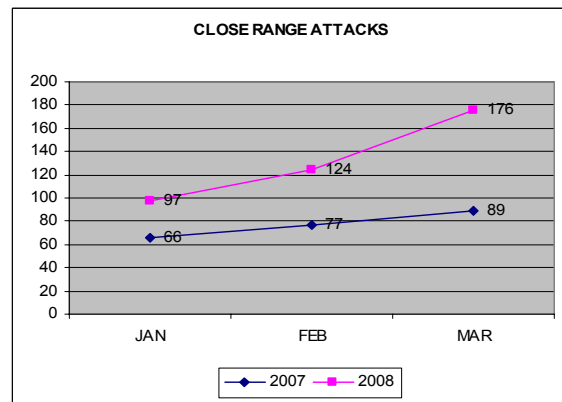
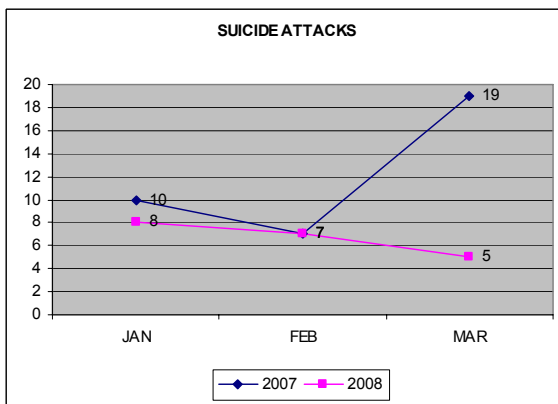
2. AOG Initiated Attack Composition:

These charts show the same data as above but disaggregated in to the three types of attacks ANSO records (see footnote above). They also then compare those attacks over the same period last year.

The data would indicate that the growth in conflict is entirely within the close range and indirect fire categories with suicide attacks being the only sector to witness a decline over last year's rates.



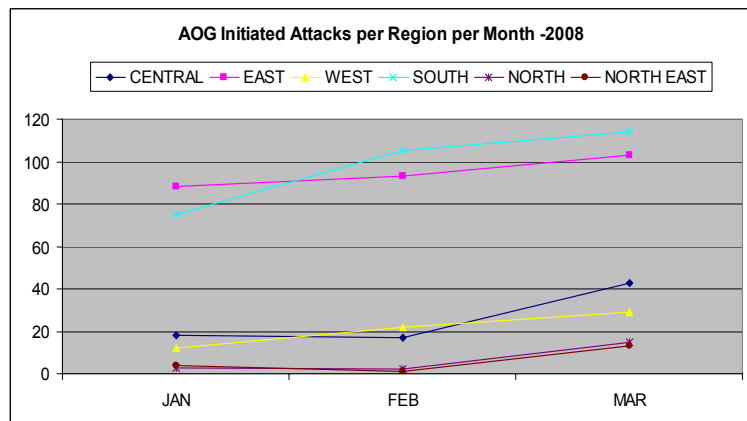
This is important to NGO to the extent that suicide attacks carry the highest risk of sustaining collateral damages.



3. AOG Attack Distribution:

Tables show the monthly regional increases for 2008 (*inset right*) as well as the monthly comparison of attacks per region for 2007 Vs 2008 (*below*).

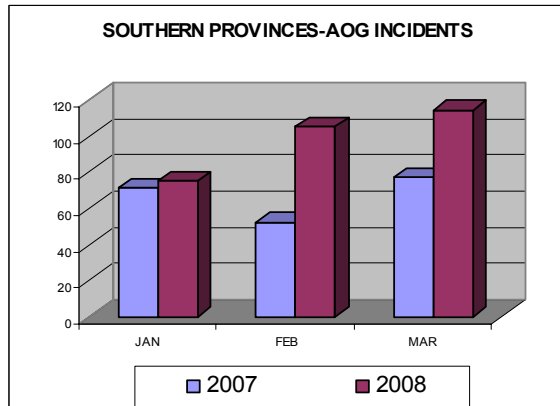
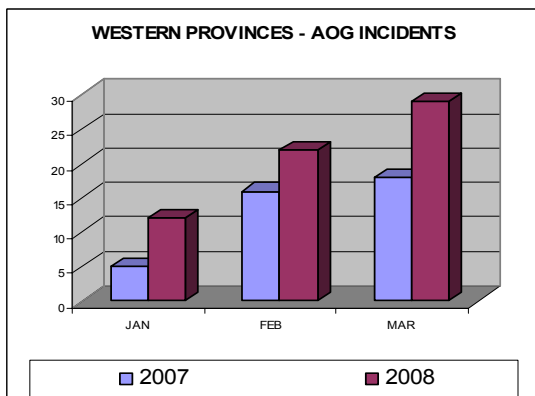
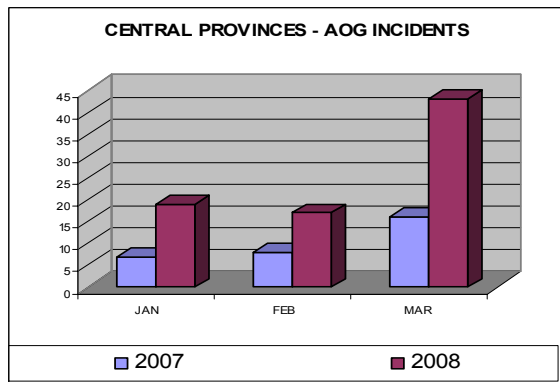
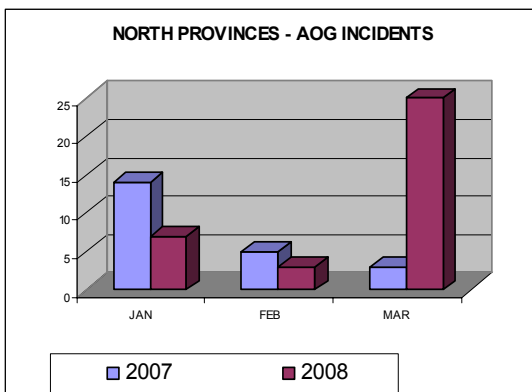
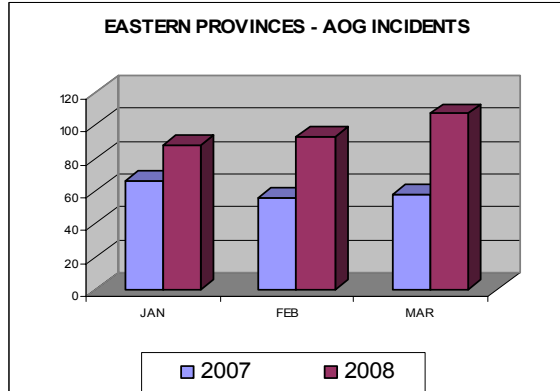
While it is certainly true that up to 60% of AOG attacks are concentrated in just four provinces (and within them to a small number of districts) the data does demonstrate the capability of AOG to conduct attacks over a much wider area than commonly reported.



Also, perhaps more importantly, it demonstrates that there is growth in all regions with dramatic gains seen in the centre and west.

These figures provide reliable indicators of the migration of conflict and would seem to support AOG claims of a refocusing of their efforts around Kabul and in the West (mainly Farah)

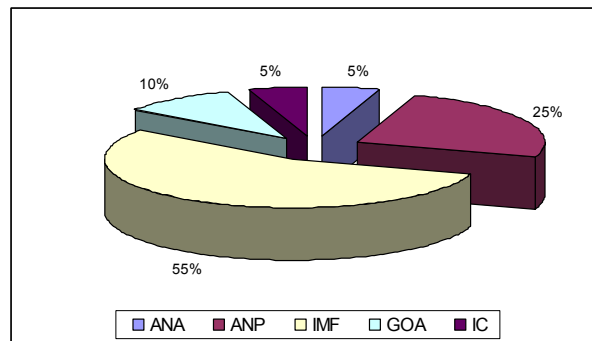
The recent rash of assumed AOG activity in the North is temporarily pushing up figures there.



5. Suicide Attack Trends:

Tables show the percentage of suicide attacks targeting various groups (*right*) and the monthly attacks since January 2007 (*below*)

The targeting data continues previous trends with up to 85% of all attacks this year targeting the international military (55%) the police (25%) and the national army (5%) and provides no evidence of a risk of suicide attacks targeting NGO.

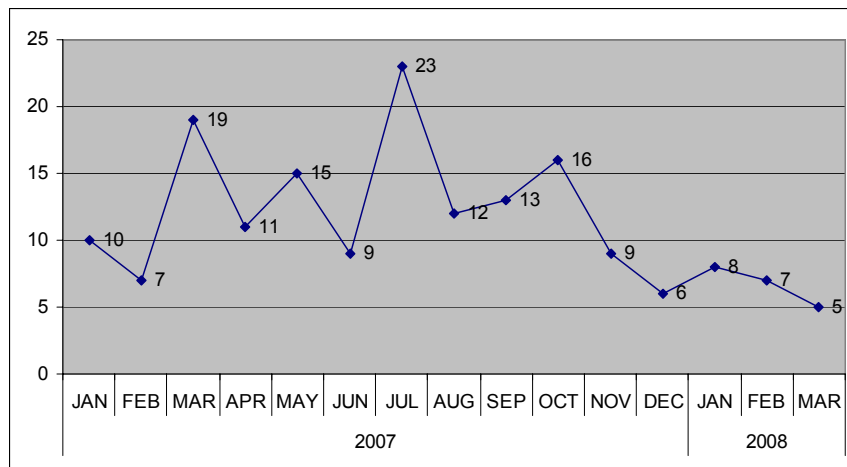


The attack volume indicates that attacks are at their **lowest level in 15 months** and significantly lower than the same period last year. This fact alone would seem to contradict some recent military claims that the AOG resurgence is being driven by a desperate resort to such measures.

However, despite the narrow target range and low volume the 20 suicide attacks of this year have killed six times⁴ as many civilians as the first 20 attacks of last year indicating a new ruthlessness in the application of this tactic.

This quarter has also seen the application of much larger devices, with the truck bomb in Khost on March 3rd practically destroying an entire compound, and the combining of multiple suicide devices and other measures such as assault teams (as at the Serena Hotel on January 14th).

AOG should be anticipated to continue experimentation in 2008 with a high probability of a 'suicide wave' attack in an urban centre involving multiple bombers attacking the same target consecutively.

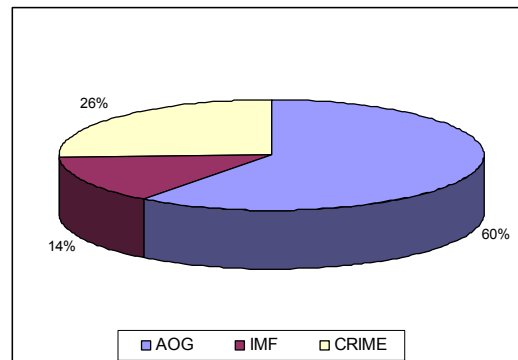


⁴ 120 in 20 attacks in 2008 vs 22 in 20 attacks in 2007.

SECTION 3: Casualties and Damages

1. Civilian Casualties:

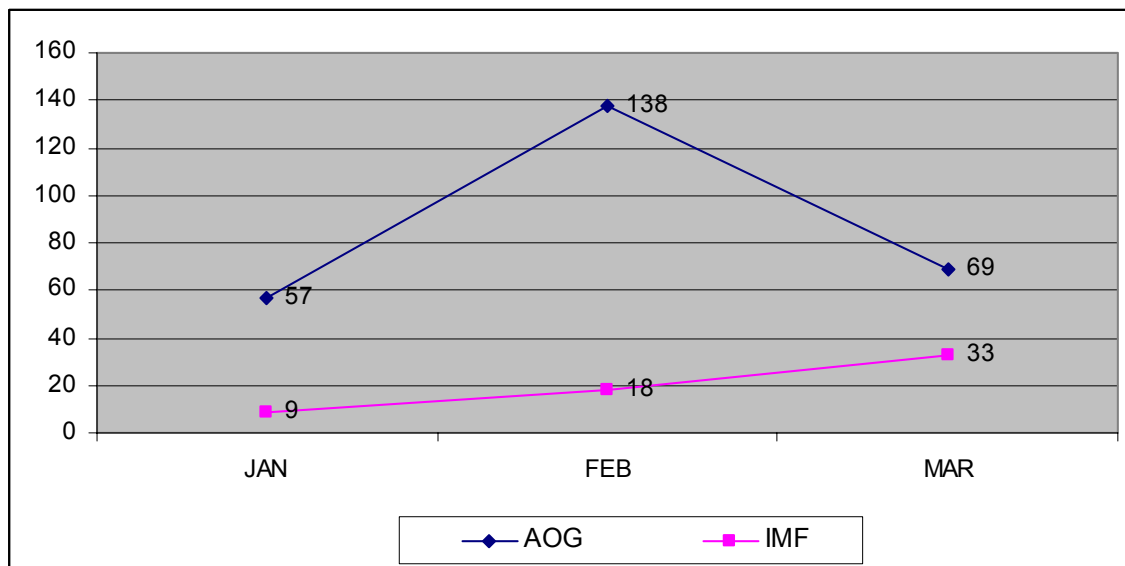
These tables show the percentage of all civilian fatalities caused by each of the three sectors ANSO tracks⁵ (*right*) and the monthly trends in civilian fatalities caused by the parties to the conflict (IMF/AOG)



The total civilian deaths recorded in the first quarter of this year is **463**⁶ compared to **264** in 2007 indicting a dire worsening of the situation for the average Afghan civilian.

Compared to the first quarter of 2007 the percentage of fatalities caused by IMF has decreased (21% to 14%) but since the size of the pie has doubled over the same time the actual persons killed has increased slightly (58 to 60).

The same is true of the criminal sector with only the AOG sector showing a marked increase in both the percentage of total (41% to 60%) and actual deaths caused (139 to 264). This has been led by the ruthless application of suicide devices discussed above.



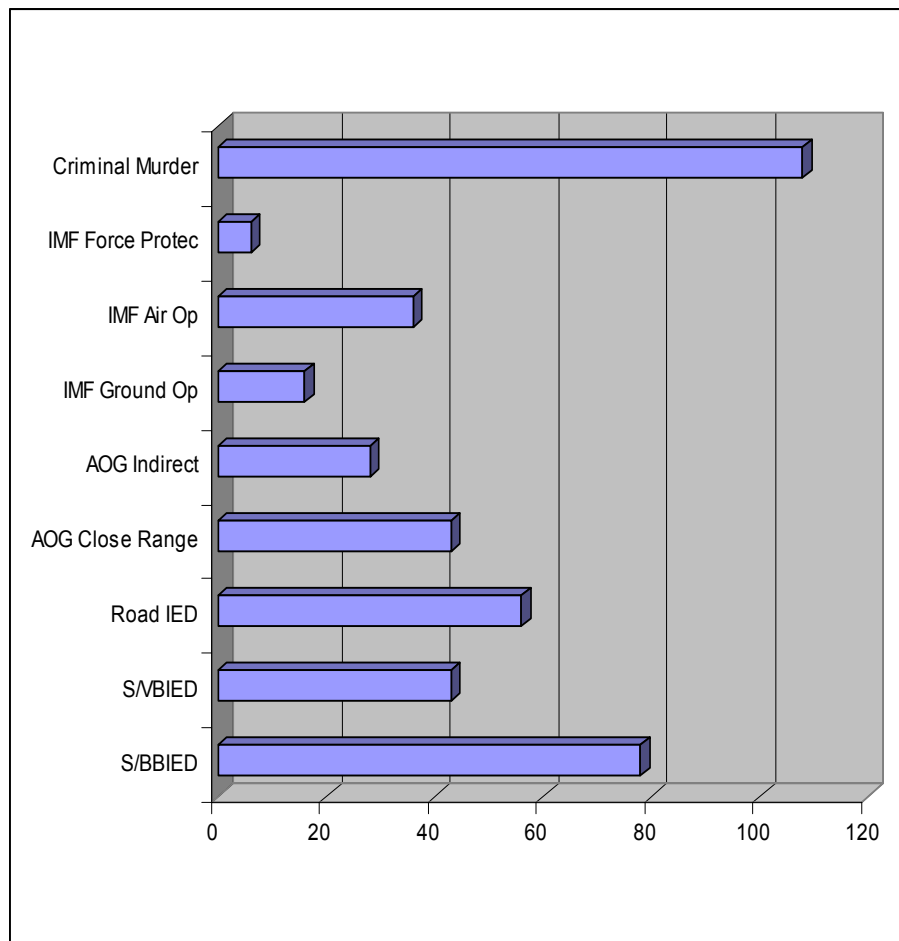
⁵ IMF includes ISAF and OEF, AOG includes Taliban, HiG, Haqqani Network, ACG includes all acts attributed to criminals acting for localized reasons

⁶ The missing figures are for those criminal civilians killed by ANP (26 additional)

2. Cause of Civilian Deaths:

Table shows the nine leading causes of civilian deaths for the first quarter this year to demonstrate that suicide attacks have driven the expansion of AOG related civilian deaths, while IMF air operations continue to incur far more civilian casualties than ground combat.

Although capturing a wide range of incident types (from tribal disputes to family homicides) the data on criminal murders continues to provide an alarming indication of the levels of violence not associated to the conflict.



****REPORT ENDS****

*Reproduction and citation is authorized.
Please contact ANSO Director at director@afgnso.org for queries and comments.*

Copyright ANSO April 2008 ©