

BRIEFING PAPER 5: CENTRAL HELMAND IN THE 2011/12 GROWING SEASON - SPRING UPDATE

Key Takeaways

- There is a widening fault line between those in the canal command area who are benefitting from increased economic opportunities and improved security, and those that have seen a significant deterioration in their quality of life due to the imposition of the opium ban.
- Amongst those farmers without viable alternatives, the provincial government's current counternarcotics efforts, combined with widespread frustration at the prevailing levels of corruption, has to growing hostility towards the government- much of it is directed at the Governor. The counter narcotics effort continues to lead to increasing levels of migration into the Taliban controlled areas north of the Boghra canal.
- There is a risk that over time the reductions achieved in the canal command area will be offset by increases in the area north of the Boghra canal. It is anticipated that in this area more than 40,000 ha of land will be under agriculture in 2012, compared to only 834 ha in 1999 and 15,777 ha in 2008. Given the shift to monocropping in the 2011/12 growing season, much of this land will be poppy. The population in the area north of the Boghra canal is now estimated to be over 200,000 people.
- In the absence of viable alternatives to opium production, the low opium yields experienced during the 2011/12 harvest are unlikely to deter cultivation in the 2012/13 growing season. In fact, many farmers both those north of the Boghra and those within the canal command area, are likely to cultivate more opium poppy in late 2012 as a way of offsetting some of the economic losses they incurred during the harvest of 2012, as well as look to take advantage of the change in both the security situation and the operational priorities that may accompany the handover to the Afghan National Security Forces.

Introduction

This Briefing Paper provides a quick overview of the findings of indepth research conducted in Central Helmand during the harvest season of 2011/12. The purpose of this research was to examine how farmers lives and livelihoods had changed over the last twelve months and identify how this had impacted on levels of opium poppy cultivation in the 2011/12 growing season. It involved interviews with 404 individual farmers in 29 different research sites located to the north and south of the Boghra canal and builds on a detailed body of research dating back to May 2008, including fieldwork the planting season in November/December 2011.¹

¹ Mansfield, David, Alcis Ltd and OSDR (2011) Managing Concurrent and Repeated Risks: Explaining the Reductions in Opium Production in Central Helmand between 2008 and 2011. AREU: Kabul; Mansfield, David (2011) Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Counter narcotics efforts and their effects in the 2011/12 growing season, AREU, Kabul, October 2011; Mansfield, David (2012) Briefing Paper 3: Central Helmand in the 2011/12 Growing Season, January 2012.

The Briefing Paper consists of a main report and two annexes which offer supporting evidence. The first consists of quotes from respondents both north and south of the Boghra canal. The second annex documents an example of a farmer that leased land in the area north of the Boghra canal and provides an account of the economic returns received by the different stakeholders involved in opium production, including the Taliban and village mullahs. A more detailed report comparing developments in both Helmand and Nangarhar in the 2011/12 growing season will be published in August 2012 under the auspices of the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit.

An Expanding Zone of Resilience

There is an expansion in the geographic area in which farmers are responding to the ban on opium poppy by diversifying their on-farm, off-farm and non-farm income. This area is no longer limited to the environs of urban centres such as Lashkar Gah and Gereshk, as it had been in the past, but has been extended northwards from Bolan into Chanjir and even into parts of Aqajan Kalay. In particular, there is growing evidence of a larger number of farmers establishing vineyards and orchards supported by local development organizations. These farmers are typically subsidizing these longer term investments in their land with off-farm and non-farm income opportunities.

Security has improved in this area over the last twelve months, and there are not only signs of an increasing number of households reporting family members enlisting in the Afghan National Security Forces, but at the time of fieldwork doubts there were also doubts over whether the Taliban would be in a position to impose the tax on land (3,000-5000 Afs/'forma') and opium (2 khord/jerib of opium) as in the 2010/11 growing season.² In this area an increasing number of households appear to be recipients of a range of different interventions including investments in health and education, the distribution of agricultural inputs and public sector wages. There are also signs of support for the government's efforts to stabilise the security situation and support economic development.

There is also evidence of a growing private sector in this part of central Helmand. For example, traders of agricultural crops in Lashkar Gah and Gereshk report that not only are their numbers increasing but they are trading a larger amount of wheat (grain and flour) and vegetables. In particular, the amount of wheat grain transported to other provinces, including Bamian, Ghazni and Kandahar, has increased since the imposition of the opium ban, with a growing demand for a local variety known as Hazaradana. However, ironically traders also report increase in the amount of wheat flour imported from Pakistan, along with vegetables and fruit from Pakistan and Iran during the winter months.³

Traders in horticultural crops report that their most significant export to other provinces continues to be melon and water melon due to the fact that the season for both these crops is earlier than in other

² Follow up enquiries with key informants revealed that the Taliban did not impose a tax on land or opium in the canal command area in 2012. However, there were reports that the local police known in the area as the arbaki absorbed the tax of 2 khord of opium per jerib of opium cultivated in those areas in Nad e Ali where opium persists. See David Mansfield Briefing Paper 4, an updated paper on 'taxation' in central Helmand, June 2012

³ Farmers complained about the difference in the price of agricultural crops during the winter, when fruit and vegetables were imported from Pakistan and Iran, and the prices that producers received in the spring/summer season when local crops were traded. Examples given included cucumbers from Pakistan which cost 40-50 Afs/kg during the 2011/12 winter season and the local crop which obtained only 10 Afs/kg at harvest time. During the same winter okra cost as much as 120-150 Afs/kg whilst those selling the crop during the recent harvest in Helmand received only 15 Afs/kg.

provinces of Afghanistan. However, traders in Lashkar Gah and Gereshk report a growing demand for wheat flour, vegetables and fruit from a growing urban population in central Helmand and the northern districts where opium production continues.

Most recently an increase in wage labour opportunities in Lashkar Gah and Gereshk has been supported by a temporary boom in local wage labour rates, as well as an increase in the number of days in which labourers could find employment. For example, unskilled labourers in Lashkar Gah report that prior to the opium harvest in early May 2012 wage labour rates were around 500 PR/day (up from 400-450 PR/day in May 2011) and they could find three to four days of work per week. However, once the opium harvest season began a large number of labourers left Lashkar Gah and travelled to the desert area to look for work in the Dashte. For those who stayed behind it was possible to find as many as six days work per week in Lashkar Gah and wage labour rates for unskilled work increased to 1,000 PR per day. In Gereshk wage labour rates increased from 250-300 Afs per day prior to the opium harvest to 450-500 Afs/day during the harvest. Given the low opium yields, and corresponding low wage labour rates received by those harvesting the opium crop the decision to remain in Lashkar Gah and Gereshk has proven a wise one (see below).

Deteriorating Welfare within the Canal Command Area

There are, however, still large parts of Nad e Ali, Marjah and Nawa Barakzai where agricultural diversification is limited and opium poppy has largely been replaced by a cropping system that consists of wheat in the winter, cotton, melon and water melon in the spring, and maize and mung bean in the summer. For the majority of households who do not have adequate off-farm or non-farm income this cropping system has led to a deterioration in welfare with reductions in expenditure on food, increasing numbers of unpaid cash debts, the delay of health care expenditure (even for serious health conditions), the sale of assets (including opium), and a failure to meet social obligations, such as marriage costs. The losses have been particularly acute in those former desert areas south of the canal that had been brought under agricultural production using tubewells and water pumps, such as Dashte Aynak, Dashte Shersherak and Dashte Basharan. Without opium production, and the means to finance the recurrent costs of irrigation, these areas have seen a reduction in the amount of land under agriculture (Mansfield, Alcis and OSDR: 2011, p 35) .

Low income and the loss of welfare has subsequently resulted in increased efforts to cultivate opium poppy in the 2011/12 growing season in some areas, including Marjah, as well as a pronounced increase in the rate of migration to the area north of the Boghra canal. However, eradication has been extensive and many complain that their crop has been destroyed in the 2011/12 growing season. There are few reports of corruption associated with eradication. Those whose crop was not destroyed typically did not have contacts (wasetah) in the government and did not pay bribes (in fact a number complain that their offers were refused) but were located some distance from the center of the village, far from the road, or cultivated their opium poppy within their household compound.

Despite there being a more permissive environment for the delivery of development assistance in this area, it is a widely held view that the agricultural inputs distributed are increasingly monopolized by those with positions in the government, the rural elite and those within their patronage network. The recent arrests of members of the rural elite in Nad e Ali who stand accused of corruption, is welcomed but is perceived locally as a distraction due to the perception that those most responsible for the diversion and misuse of development assistance are found at the top of the provincial administration.

The economic options for many in this area continue to be limited. Gross income is typically less than US\$ 1.00 per person per day and as low as US\$0.30 cents for those sharecropping land. In response increasing numbers of the population are looking to relocate to the area north of the Boghra canal (see below) to cultivate opium poppy. There are, however, restrictions on who can purchase land in the Dashte. It is the Noorzai, Barakzai, Ishaqzai, Alizai, Alkozai, Kakar and Baloch that dominate the landscape north of the Boghra canal. Those who are not from tribes that are indigenous to Helmand but were settled in Marjah and Nad e Ali from other provinces, known as the Naquilin, are not entitled to buy land in the Dashte and their exclusion causes increasing resentment and complaints about those growing poppy in the Dashte.⁴

In the absence of viable alternatives, the provincial government's current counternarcotics efforts, combined with widespread frustration at the prevailing levels of corruption, has led to farmers expressing intense hostility - often manifesting in extreme profanity and threats of violence - towards the governor, those in government, and to a lesser extent foreign forces (see Annex 1).

The dramatic fall in opium yields in the 2011/12 growing season is likely to lead to further economic losses for those farmers in the canal command area who may have family members north of the Boghra either cultivating opium on a seasonal or permanent basis and/or work as itinerant labourers during the harvest season. The loss in disposable income experienced by both those north of the Boghra canal, and those within the canal command area, is likely to have a multiplier effect on licit business across central Helmand.

While relatively high opium prices (currently 40,000 - 60,000/man down from a temporary spike of 90,000- 110,000PR/man in late May) offer some economic respite for those who still have some opium stored, when seen in the context of the imminent withdrawal of the international military forces, uncertainty over the capacity of Afghan National Security Forces to both maintain security and impose a poppy ban, as well as the cumulative effect of the ban on those without viable alternatives, there is a high risk of a resurgence in opium poppy cultivation in this part of the canal command area in the 2012/13 growing season.

An Area of Increasing Poppy, Population and Support for the Taliban

Ultimately, there is a risk that the reductions achieved in the canal command area will be offset by increases in the area north of the Boghra canal. In late 2008 when Governor Mangal began his counter narcotics efforts in central Helmand an estimated 15,777 hectares (ha) of land were under agriculture in the area north of the Boghra canal and south of Highway 1. It is anticipated that in this area more than 40,000 ha of land will be under agriculture in 2012 - much of it poppy - an increase from 834 ha in 1999 and 33,500 ha in 2011. The population of this area is estimated at over 200,000 people.⁵

The rapid increase in the rate of settlement north of the Boghra canal is in part driven by those in the canal command area that are most disadvantaged by counter narcotics efforts and neglected by development assistance, relocating to cultivate opium poppy. This group consists of both the landed and the landless. While the economic situation is less acute for those who own some land, many of those

⁴ It is alleged that some Naquilin have purchased land north of the Boghra but lie about their tribal affiliation as they know this would lead to conflict with those from tribes that consider themselves indigenous to Helmand.

⁵ Current data suggests a population density of 1.2 people per jerib of land under agricultural production (the equivalent of 6 people per hectare).

with insufficient land, large numbers of family members and high dependency ratios have experienced significant reductions in their level of income and are looking to find ways to maintain a reasonable standard of living. Where possible these households have sent members to work in the area north of the Boghra (or in Bakwah and Gulistan in Farah) whilst maintaining their farms in the canal command area.

The landless continue to be the most disadvantaged by the reductions in opium cultivation in the canal command area. Primarily they find it harder to find land in the canal command area as the shift to less labour intensive crops, such as wheat, means that many landowners can cultivate their own land with family labour and do not need to hire additional labour. Furthermore, those that do find employment in the canal command area under a sharecropping arrangement can find themselves restricted to growing crops of lower value and receive a smaller share of the final yield due to the reduced labour input of alternatives such as wheat.⁶

Those who do not own land are further disadvantaged by the fact that they are the least likely to have received any development assistance that might have been distributed in the area. Local practices determine that a farmer without land is not entitled to wheat seed, fertiliser or other agricultural inputs that have been provided such as polytunnels or waterpumps. Nor will they receive any cash for work unless a landowner elects to put their name on the lists of beneficiaries drawn up by local officials in conjunction with the village representatives. It is claimed that the manner in which these village lists have been constructed, typically resulting in the families of officials and the rural elite obtaining the bulk of the resources available, limits this assistance to wealthier members of the community who are the most likely to have alternatives to opium production.

The combination of the diminished prospects of finding land under a sharecropping arrangement, much lower returns on the crops currently being grown in the canal command area, and the absence of targeted development assistance, has led to significant reductions in income for this group of farmers. Consequently, the typical response to the enforcement of the opium ban in the canal command area has been to relocate to the area north of the Boghra canal to cultivate opium there. In fact, almost one half (n95) of those interviewed (n208) in the eight research sites north of the Boghra in the 2011/12 growing season⁷ had settled in the area since the planting season in 2009, complaining of the significant deterioration in their quality of life following the ban on opium production in the canal command area.

Furthermore, in the 2011/12 growing season there is growing evidence that many of the farmers relocating to the area north of the Boghra canal are initially monocropping opium on sharecropped land so that they can subsequently purchase land and settle permanently in the Dashte after a number of growing seasons. In total sixty nine per cent of those interviewed north of the Boghra canal in May 2012 had monocropped opium in the 2011/12 growing season. Monocropping, combined with the adoption of improved agricultural techniques, including the increasing tendency to use deep wells rather than shallow wells, as well as reports of farmers using agro chemicals, and cultivating opium poppy in rows (instead of broadcast sowing), highlight the intensification of opium poppy cultivation in this area.

There is significant popular support for the Taliban in the area north of the Boghra (see Annex 1). While the Taliban continue to collect a 'tax' on individual farmers cultivating opium poppy in the area north of the Boghra at a rate of two khord of opium per jerib grown they are perceived as a body that serves the

⁶ For instance a sharecropper cultivating wheat is only entitled to one fifth of the final wheat crop compared to one third for opium poppy.

⁷ These figures are from fieldwork November/December 2011 (45 of 98) and April May 2012 (50 of 110)

interests of local farmers. As such, the Taliban are seen in direct contrast to the government which is viewed by the population (the majority who have relocated from the canal command area) as weak, corrupt and lacking in dignity (see Annex 1). Moreover, there is a common narrative amongst farmers north of the Boghra that the Afghan government is subordinate to western military forces and that penetration into this area by government and international military forces will expose the population to heightened levels of both physical and economic insecurity.

Low yields and a growing potential for further economic stress

There are consistent reports of low opium yields, not just in central Helmand, but in the districts of Gulistan and Bakwah in the province of Farah as well. Typically yields are one man (4.5 kg) per jerib, or less, with some reporting yields of only a quarter of what they expected.⁸ Most report lancing the crop a maximum of three to four times with the latter attempts proving unproductive. Farmers report that what they refer to as disease (maraz) occurred at harvest, initially detected in the stem before affecting capsule development.⁹ Some farmers report forestalling the harvest and using fertiliser, irrigation and, in some cases herbicides, in an attempt to aid plant recovery.

Whilst farmers refer to disease, and rumours are circulating claiming that the low yields are due to the distribution of contaminated fertiliser¹⁰ and the dissemination of diseased seed,¹¹ it is widely believed that the cause is the unusually cold temperatures in late March, during the hook stage (changak) of the crops development. The drop in temperature was reportedly accompanied by a dusty wind ('rain of the soil') which is said to have affected other crops (such as damaging the flowers on fruit trees) and impacted on human health.

Reports of low yields from farmers are corroborated by those working as labourers during the harvest. Despite negotiating payments of between one fifth to one quarter of the final crop those harvesting the crop report that once they had been given their final share of the crop they received less than the equivalent of 500 PR per day.¹² For example, one respondent reported receiving as little as 6 khord (675g) of opium with a value at harvest of only 7,500 PR for sixteen days work, the equivalent of 468 PR per day.

At the time of harvest farmers were reporting significant economic losses. In the former desert area north of the Boghra canal, commonly referred to as the Dashte, farmers complained that they had only

⁸ Those farmers who were less affected by low yields are reported to have obtained an earlier crop, some because they cultivated an earlier maturing variety known locally as 'chabak Sabay'.

⁹ Itinerant harvesters will typically inspect an opium poppy field before finally agreeing to harvest it. The fact that farmers made these arrangements in 2012, particularly when they offered to pay in cash rather than in-kind, highlights how they were unaware of any problems with their crop until the harvest began.

¹⁰ One rumour circulating claims that that the fertiliser distributed by the government as part of the Food Zone project was contaminated and subsequently reduced the opium yield. The credence given to this argument perhaps highlights the degree to which some of the fertiliser distributed by the government has been used on opium poppy.

¹¹ A further rumour claims that the US disseminated 'diseased' seed by plane. The purported evidence for such a claim is the presence of isolated opium poppy plants in areas where opium poppy has not been cultivated for a number of consecutive years, such as in parts of Bolan near the city of Lashkar Gah, and amidst other crops. Rather than seeing these as volunteers crops these plants are cited as evidence of an attempt to spread 'disease' by the foreigners.

¹² In 2011 wage labour rates during the poppy harvest were the equivalent of up to 1500 PR/day.

earned enough to meet the recurrent costs of production. Those that had incurred the costs of installing a deep well in the 2011/12 growing season had made significant losses (See Annex 2). The economic impact was such that there were reports of farmers absconding in the night so as to avoid paying itinerant harvesters what had been agreed, and of the Taliban being asked to mediate in disputes over pay between landowners and itinerant harvesters.¹³

Conclusion

The dramatic fall in opium yields experienced by those north of the Boghra canal may deter further cultivation in the 2012/13 growing season amongst those with capital who purchased land, installed tubewells and hired labour to cultivate opium poppy in the 2011/12 growing season. However, ultimately, there are no alternatives to opium poppy north of the Boghra canal due to the high costs of agricultural production. It is likely that most farmers in this area will continue to cultivate opium poppy, and, given their losses this season, may even expand the amount of land under cultivation. With the expectation that yields will return to normal next season and with prices of 40,000 to 60,000 per man in July 2012 (after spiking at 90,000 to 100,000 PR/man in late May) further cultivation will be an attractive proposition in 2012/13. Furthermore, there are no signs of a shortage of land to bring under agricultural production in the area north of the Boghra. There is still plenty of potential for increasing rates of migration, especially if the government persists with its opium ban in the canal command area of central Helmand and does not take remedial action to meet the needs of the land poor who are most disadvantaged by the current opium ban.

Predicting the amount of cultivation in the canal command area in the 2012/13 growing season is not so easy. It is evident that the cumulative effect of the opium ban is taking its toll on those without sufficient non-farm and off-farm income. Low yields in 2012 have imposed further costs on this population, reducing the subsidy that households in the canal command area have received from those family members that had relocated to the Dashte to work on the opium crop on a seasonal, or more permanent basis. The impact will be most acute in those areas in the canal command area of central Helmand where farmers have replaced opium poppy with a low -risk low-return cropping system such as wheat, cotton, mung bean and maize, as seen across research the sites in Marjah and western Nad e Ali.

Much will depend on the security situation in central Helmand during the 2012/13 growing season and whether the Afghan National Police and the Afghan Local Police look to maintain a zero tolerance on opium poppy in the canal command area in the coming season. The growing anger felt towards the Governor and the government offers an entry point to the Taliban in the run up to the next planting season. In the coming seasons local 'government' security forces are likely to look to the interests of their rural constituents, as well as to their own opportunities for extracting rent on the opium crop, and wonder whether pursuing a robust CN strategy is actually to their advantage.

¹³ In one example in the Dashte the landowner had agreed to pay labourers a fixed sum of 35,000 PR for the harvest of his land. When the harvest was finished and the landowner fully realised how low the yield was he offered a payment of only 17,000 PR. The labourers refused the payment and referred the case to the Taliban. The Taliban ruled in the labourers favour arguing that had the landowner received a particularly good yield he would not have shared his extra profits with the labourers, so why should the labourers incur the loss now that the yield was low.

Selected Quotes from Respondents in Central Helmand, April/May 2012

North of the Boghra

In my first year there was a lot of problems as I didn't have a tubewell, I didn't have house, no water and there was a big problem with transportation but now we have everything and there are no problems (Dashte ab Pashak, 10 Jerib, sharecropper (1/6), Ishaqzai, arrived in 2011).

The Government is a slave. They are very weak. They are dishonoured: they are the sons of the Americans and as long as I am alive I will not like them (Dashte ab Pashak, 8 Jerib, ownercultivator, Barakzai, arrived 2004).

The Government is corrupt and lies. I don't have interest in them. They try and keep the foreigners happy and threaten their own people (Dashte ab Pashak, 10 jerib, ownercultivator, Barakzai, arrived in 2007).

We have a lot of money but we don't have a school for our children so what do we do with this money? (Dashte ab Pashak, 15 Jerib, owner cultivator, Barakzai, arrived 2004).

Last year's crop was destroyed, land was close to the road and this year life is very poor. The Government destroyed my poppy, they destroyed my life. If I had power I would destroy their houses. (Dashte ab Pashak, 11 Jerib owner cultivator, Barakzai, arrived 2006).

The first year here was difficult. It was hot desert with no shadow, no water, no house but now we have these things we have no plans to leave (Dashte ab Pashak, 10 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2008).

F*** these people who have destroyed my crop! F*** the wife of the Americans and the Government! (Dashte ab Pashak, 12 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2003; crop eradicated in 2011/12).¹⁴

I don't have interest with the Government as the Government works for the foreigners (Dashte ab Pashak, 10 Jerib, owner cultivator, Balakzai, arrived 2004).

I don't like this Government [they] are cruel and they are the children of the kafir (Dashte ab Pashak, 15 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2003).

The Governor is a pimp¹⁵ I don't like him. If the Government is in the hands of such pimps it is difficult to improve the country (Shen Ghazai, 10 jerib, rented land, Alkozai, arrived in 2009).

¹⁴ Profane words have been edited out of the document as the IT systems of some institutions filter attachments and will decline emails containing what they consider to be offensive language. Quotes of this nature have been included in this report to highlight the depth of feeling amongst communities in parts of rural Helmand.

¹⁵ The term used for pimp here is 'dowus' - a person who sells their own wife to others for sex - as opposed to murdagow, someone sells women who are unrelated to others for sex. 'Dowus' is considered more dishonorable and was a term often used, particularly when describing the governor.

In the past we didn't like the Government but now the Americans have killed people in Kandahar I am more against it. [The government] are sons of the Americans when the Americans kill people in Kandahar they didn't take any action (Shen Ghazai, 10 Jerib, owner cultivator, Alkozai, arrived 2006).

I don't have interest with this Government. They have no shame because the US burns the Koran and they don't do anything, the US kills people and they don't take any actions, I don't like such weak people (Shen Ghazai, 16 jerib, owner cultivator, Alkozai, arrived 2002).

In this government, all the way up to Karzai, I will F*** their wives by donkey (Shen Ghazi, 9 Jerib, share cropper (1/3), Ishaqzai, arrived in 2010).

It is because of the Taliban that life is good. I appreciate them and they should always be here (Shen Ghazi, 12 Jerib, share cropper (1/5), Alkozai, arrived 2009).

The government; all of them are pimps and cruel. Allah will keep everyone safe from them (Shen Ghazi, 7 Jerib, owner cultivator, Sulani Alkozai, arrived in 2007).

Don't ask about the government, don't talk about the government when you come to the Dashte, ask about the Taliban. There is no government. The Taliban should always be here (Shen Ghazi, 16 Jerib, share cropper (1/4), Alkozai, arrived 2009).

I just looked to where I can get a good benefit. This area is better as it is safe from eradication. I had no problems on arrival. I have no plan to go back if poppy is banned here I will go somewhere else where it is possible to grow poppy. The government is happy that we are poor. For this reason we don't like them. As long as the Ghazi¹⁶ and Mujahidin are still here we will grow poppy (Shen Ghazai, 12 Jerib, sharecropper (1/4), Alkozai, arrived 2009).

I thank Allah my life is good, my food is good, everything I want to get I have the money to buy. It is thanks to poppy that I have reached the stage in my life where I have everything. These pimps always announce the ban of poppy. I don't have interest in these people in the government. If the Mujahidin is still here [next year] we will again grow poppy (Shen Ghazai, 18 Jerib, sharecropper (1/3), Alkozai, arrived 2010).

Life improved with poppy. Because of the presence of Taliban we have poppy and because we have poppy we have a good life (Shen Ghazai, 13 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2003).

I don't like the government because the government and foreigners do not allow people to have a life (Dashte Loy Manda, 7 Jerib, sharecropper (1/5), Noorzai, arrived 2008).

I will F*** the mother of those people who work for the Government (Dashte Loy Manda, 10 Jerib, sharecropper, Ishaqzai, arrived 2010).

If there are no Talibs here, then the government will come here and destroy the poppy here too (Dashte Loy Manda, 15 Jerib, sharecropper (1/5), Barakzai, arrived 2009).

¹⁶ Someone who fights against infidels.

The price of poppy has increased, this is why my life has improved. We pray to Allah to keep the Taliban strong as they help the local people. When this government comes we don't see any benefits from them, we just see losses (Dashte Loy Manda, 13 Jerib, owner cultivator, Barakzai, arrived 2002).

F*** the Government people, they destroyed my crop [in the canal command area] but they didn't give me anything. This year I am very poor. This year if [the government] destroys my crop I will do a suicide attack against them (Dashte Loy Manda, 16 Jerib, sharecropper (1/4), Barakzai, arrived 2011)

Life is not good because I was a sharecropper in the canal area. For the last three years my crop was destroyed. Each year I lost everything and now I am very poor. Last year when my crop was destroyed. I worked in the Dashte during harvest for fifteen days and I got 1000 PR/day. I also worked for several months in Lashkar Ghar working for a daily wage of 500 Pakistan Rupees. Always I pray to Allah no one is sick in my family because I don't have money for medicine. The government? I cannot say anything. You know my situation - they destroyed my life. (Shna Jama, 10 Jerib, 1/3 sharecropper, Noorzai, arrived 2011)

I have no interest in the government as government people eat the meat of the Kafir (Shna Jama, 8 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2007).

If the Government allows poppy in the lower part I will return there (Shna Jama, 7 Jerib, rented, Noorzai, arrived 2010).

I don't like such a bad government because they bought the husband of their mother (Shna Jama, 10 Jerib, sharecropper, Noorzai, arrived 2009).

The government is not good. We can't live with them in the areas where they control. We have the Taliban here. (Shna Jama, 5 Jerib, sharecropper (1/4), Noorzai, arrived 2009).

In this area no one knows the Government, who are they? And no one has relationship with them. Here there is the Taliban and we support the Taliban (Shna Jama, 12 Jerib, sharecropper (1/3), Noorzai, arrived 2009).

Here is the Islami Emirate and these people F*** the wife of this Government (Shna Jama, 12 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2003).

Now we have life and we know the meaning of life because we have money. The Government is the slave of the foreigners we cannot accept that. Next year if the Mujahidin is still here we will again grow poppy (Shna Jama, 13 Jerib, owner cultivator, Ishaqzai, arrived 2004).

Life has improved because of poppy; but also because of the Taliban. Due to the presence of the Taliban we have poppy and all the desert area is developed. We always we pray to Allah to destroy this Government as they are the labourers of the foreigners (Shurawak, 12 Jerib, ownercultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2007).

I don't like this Government they are children of the Americans they are not able to come here and we will continue to grow poppy here next yea (Shurawak, 10 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2007).

I prefer a donkey to these people who are working in this Government because the donkey knows his owners but these people in Government don't know their people (Shurawak, 15 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2008).

Here is the Government of Taliban, we don't think about other Governments (Shurawak, 12 Jerib, owner cultivator, Barakzai, arrived 2006).

Until the Wakil and Maliks are killed how are we to get [development] assistance. This year [the government's] mother was F***ed by the Taliban as all their tractors were burned by them. I am a Talib, I F*** the wife of the Government (Shurawak, 14 Jerib, owner cultivator, 14 Jerib owner cultivator, Alizai, arrived in 2001).

Because of poppy my life is very good. (Shurawak, 11 jerib, owner cultivator, Ishaqzai, arrived 2002).

I don't have interest in the Government we are poor. We need to have poppy but Government does not allow us to grow poppy. (Nawabad Shawal, 8 Jerib, sharecropper (1/3), Ishaqzai, arrived 2010).

Don't ask about the Government because people who work in Government are pimps and they sold the country to foreigners. (Nawabad Shawal, 10 jerib, sharecropper (1/5), Ishaqzai, arrived 2009).

I am landless. I searched for land in the lower part but poppy was banned I came here to cultivate poppy on the land of my relatives (Nawabad Shawal, 10 Jerib, sharecropper (1/5), Noorzai, arrived 2010).

The government is very weak they can't keep themselves safe how is it possible for them to help other people. For this reason we have no interest in them (Nawabad Shawal, 10 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2002).

The government announced poppy is haram and not to cultivate it but what can they do? The eradication team came but they left like a dog (Nawabad Shawal, 15 Jerib, sharecropper (1/4), Noorzai, arrived 2010)

The first year there was nothing. All the area was desert; there was no water, no house. Now we have a tubewell, a house, and we will not go back to the lower part (Shawal Nawabad, 15 Jerib, owner cultivator, Noorzai, arrived 2002).

The Government doesn't have any control here. We don't have any relationship with them, they are weak (Dashte Shin Kalay, 8 Jerib, owner cultivator, Kakar, arrived 2007).

Life is good. During the winter we killed two sheep for landi, we also have money for medicine and other things (Dashte Shin Kalay, 12 Jerib, sharecropper (1/4), Ishaqzai, arrived 2010).

Don't talk about government. If the government people come immediately they will be hanging by a rope as here is the Taliban (Dashte Shin Kalay, 11 Jeribs, ownergrower, Baloch, arrived 2002).

No one counts sharecroppers as human. One day I went for seed and fertiliser [in Nad e Ali]. All the rich people received it but no one gave anything to me (Dashte Shin Kalay, 8 Jerib, sharecropper (1/2), Noorzai, arrived 2010).

I don't like government as if the government come here the fighting will start and the poppy will be banned (Dashte Shin Kalay, 13 Jerib, sharecropper (1/4), Ishaqzai, arrived 2010).

Recently settled land south of the Boghra canal

I have no interest in the government because they destroyed my crop for the last two years (Dashte Shersherak, 10 Jeribs, Ownercultivator, Barakzai)

This government is the rival of the people and they want to kill the people (Dashte Shersherak, 5 Jeribs, Ownercultivator, Kakar)

[The Government] just thinks about the poppy they don't think about the life of the people. If I had power I would not allow anyone in the government to live (Dashte Shersherak, 10 Jeribs (only 5 cultivated)¹⁷, Ownercultivator, Noorzai)

With the cultivation of poppy our lives were better and we had food. Now the government has taken the food from our homes (Dashte Shersherak, 16 Jeribs (only 7 jeribs cultivated), Ownercultivator, Kakar)

The pimps in the government do not work for the benefit of the people they just search for their own benefits (Dashte Shersherak, 6 Jeribs, Ownercultivator, Kakar)

It is difficult for me to find one dish of meat in one month. The government has taken the bread from my hand. Why would I like this? (Dashte Shersherak, 9 Jeribs, rented, Noorzai)

In the last few months I have not bought meat. I have no money for tablets or a bottle of syrup. If the government people are all killed in one day I will be happy (Dashte Basharan, 8 Jeribs, sharecropper (1/4), Barakzai)

The government is not good. If they want to become friendly with the people they should allow poppy (Dashte Basharan, 12 Jeribs (cultivates only 6 jeribs), ownercultivator, Noorzai)

The government belongs to the Angreze, we don't like them. When an Islamic government comes we will speak of a government (Dashte Basharan, 15 Jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Barakzai)

The government destroyed my crop. I am very angry with them. I don't have such a bad word to describe them (Dashte Basharan, 10 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Alizai)

If you lost eight jeribs of poppy in one year what do you think you would think of this pimp? Instead of this eight jeribs of poppy the government gave me one water pump but no diesel for running it. What do we do with that? (Dashte Basharan, 20 Jeribs (cultivated only 12 jeribs in 2011 and 8 jeribs in 2012), ownercultivator, Noorzai)

¹⁷ In Dashte Shersherak farmers relied on their tubewells to irrigate their land. Now that poppy is banned they cannot afford to irrigate all their land.

We will fight with this government as they just ban the poppy and they do not find a job for anyone (Dashte Basharan, 19 Jeribs (cultivates only 6 jeribs), ownercultivator, Alizai)

I don't have any relations with the government. The government is in the hands of the foreigners. The foreigners advise the government and the government doesn't listen to the people (Dashte Basharan, 10 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Noorzai)

Under the canal command area

I support the government. I always persuade my sons to help and support the government (Qala Bost, 7 Jeribs, Rented (1/5), Noorzai)

We are the partner of the government and want to support them (Qala Bost, 6 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Noorzai)

The government is good but the opposition does not allow them to work for the people (Qala Bost, 7 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Noorzai)

We are in government, we support the government; we defend the government by my head and by my wealth (Qala Bost, 6 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Barakzai)

I support the government. Because of this I send my son to [join] the Police(Qala Bost, 7 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Tokhi)

The government tries hard to work for the people but the people in the government in Lashkar Gah are thieves and take everything for themselves (Qala Bost, 10 Jeribs, rented, Noorzai)

I am unhappy with the case of Panjwai. The government did not take any action against the Americans (Qala Bost, 7 Jeribs, Sharecropper (1/5), Noorzai)

I am most opposite to fighting and war. I wish to have a peaceful life and because of this I support the government (Bolan, 5 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Barakzai)

I am happy with the government because for the last three or four years there have been a lot of changes in Lashkar Gah and a lot of development projects (Bolan, 15 Jeribs, rented, Noorzai)

The Taliban and the government are the same to me; both fight for their own benefit and we don't see anything from either of them (Bolan, 7 Jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Wardaki)

Because of this government business has improved. Because of development assistance there is more money in Helmand and people spend it in my shop (Bolan, 6Jeribs, ownercultivator, Noorzai)

I am not opposite to the government as the government has control here. But we are poor and the government does nothing ; all of the assistance is for those with land not for the sharecropper (Bolan, 6 Jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Barakzai)

We thank the government; they provide work opportunities for my family (Mohejerin, 5 jeribs, ownergrower, Kharoti)

A government is good but there is a lot of corruption in this government (Mohejerin, 7 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Kharoti)

We are happy with government. A nation without a government is like a sheep without a shepherd. As long as I am alive I will support this government (Mohejerin, 5 jeribs, ownergrower, Barakzai)
I am most opposite with the Taliban, they killed my brother (Mohejerin, 8 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Alkozai)

I don't like the government as it has friendship with the kafir (Khwaja Baidar, 14 jeribs, ownergrower, Barakzai)

I have become very poor because of the banning of poppy. Allah will destroy this government. My life has become much worse (Khwaja Baidar, 14 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Barakzai)

The government has taken my income and I don't like them (Khwaja Baidar, 20 jeribs, ownergrower, Barakzai)

When we had poppy our food was good. We could always buy meat. Now my pocket is empty and I can't afford anything (Khwaja Baidar, 12 jeribs, ownergrower, Barakzai)

The government is not able to provide services and assistance to the people. We are very poor. What can I say about this government (Khwaja Baidar, 15 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Barakzai)

We are unhappy with the government as they do not allow our people to grow poppy but in the Dashte there is too much [poppy]. [The government] should ban poppy everywhere or allow our people to grow (Khwaja Baidar, 11 jeribs, ownergrower, Noorzai)

Because the government banned poppy I F*** their mothers. If I had power I will kill them these pimps. They don't build a school here for our children they just ban poppy. I have not had a good day since Gulab Mangal 'Kharkus' came to Helmand (Khwaja Baidar, 8 jeribs, ownergrower, Barakzai)

For the last three years we have had the government in Marjah but we did not see anything from them to improve our lives. There is just one thing to improve our lives here and that is poppy (Marjah F4D5, 17 jeribs, rented, Noorzai)

I can't grow poppy. The pimps and the kafir have destroyed the crop. I want to join the Taliban and fight against the government (Marjah F4D5, 3 jeribs, owner grower, Noorzai)

Now that poppy is banned the people are unhappy with the government. They are not a government but it is our obligation to call them government (Marjah F4D5, 16 jeribs, rented, Noorzai)

This year and last year my crop was destroyed. We are able to buy bread but it is difficult to buy meat or other food as we have no money. I F*** the wife of such a government (Marjah F4D5, 15 jeribs, owner grower, Niazai)

The last two years I have had no poppy, no landi and no money to buy meat. Brothers what do you think about this government as all of them are Kafir and even the kharaji is better than them (Marjah F4D5, 12 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Noorzai)

I don't have interest with the government, there is not good people in this government. If the government does not improve itself the people will go far from them (Marjah F4D5, 12 jeribs, rented, Noorzai)

I don't have any food I just have dry bread and shomrey. If Allah accepts my prayer, I want Allah to destroy this government. No one likes them, they are not good people. (Marjah F4D5, 10 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Alizai)

The government is just by name. They don't have any rule or law; they don't provide any services to the people (Marjah 2A, 4 jeribs, ownercultivator, Wardaki)

The government has taken the income of the people [by banning poppy] and this is the main reason why the people are unhappy with the government (Marjah 2A, 15 jeribs, rented, Alizai)

How is it possible by daily wage and the cultivation of wheat to provide good food and medicine for my family. I don't like this government. They are corrupt people (Marjah 2A, 16 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Kakar)

The government is not good but this is our obligation to accept them. Where will we go to escape them? (Marjah 2A, 8 jeribs, ownercultivator, Wardaki)

Last year my crop was not destroyed and it improved my life. This year I was afraid from the eradication campaign and reduced my crop. Last year I gave them money and my crop was safe. My food is good but it will get worse as my crop was destroyed this year. Allah will destroy this government (Marjah 2A, 5 jeribs, ownercultivator, Noorzai)

This is just a government of pimps. They just play with the people and collect all the benefits for themselves (Marjah 2A, 10 jeribs, ownercultivator, Barakzai)

We are all unhappy with the government as always they threaten the farmer not to grow poppy. We pray for the Taliban to come back as we will be able to cultivate poppy without any problem (Marjah 2A, 8 jeribs, ownercultivator, Niazai)

All the Government are 'murdagow' and if I had power I would kill them all in one day (Khoshal Kalay, 10 Jeribs, 1/4 sharecropper, Noorzai)

The government destroyed my crop - they destroyed my house.¹⁸ If they were a man they would go to the Dashte and destroy the crop there. But they don't have power to go there to destroy the crop. They receive money from the Americans. If they don't destroy the crop how do they answer to their fathers [the Americans] (Khoshal Kalay, 10 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Kharoti)

¹⁸ This is figurative meaning that they destroyed the economy.

I hope next year we don't have the government here and I will cultivate poppy (Khoshal Kalay, 8 Jeribs, ownergrower, Kharoti)

I always pray that this government is destroyed, as they are cruel, and that the mujahidin will come back to this area as they are strong (Khoshal Kalay, 7 Jeribs, ownergrower, Kharoti)

The government announced the ban; last year we paid them some money and they did not destroy my crop. This year they would not accept it. I don't think about the government. When I face the government people my heart tells me to hang them from a tree and cut them with a knife (Khoshal Kalay,6 Jeribs, ownergrower, Kharoti)

The government people destroyed my house and rooms [for the road] but they didn't give me anything just one tent (Aynak, 7 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Laghmani)

I am happy with the government they bring security here. Now everyone is free and can find a way for their family (Aynak, 4 jeribs, ownergrower, Noorzai)

From one side we are poor. From the other it is difficult for the government to solve all our problems. We accept the government but we are unhappy with the poppy ban (Aynak 8 Jeribs, ownergrower, Barakzai)

I am most unhappy with the government, they are corrupt and cruel. If they carry on the same way all the people will join the Taliban and fight the government (Chanjir, 11 Jeribs, Rented, Kharoti)

My food is good because we have money. My son always brings meat and fruit from Lashkar Gah (where he has a shop)and sometimes we buy [it] here in the village. I want the government to provide good security for the people and bring peace to the country (Chanjir, 3 Jeribs, ownergrower, Barakzai)

The government only has interest in a small number of people. These people support the government and get benefit from the government. These people tell us not to grow poppy and that it is illegal but these people grow it in the Dashte. I now sit here with an empty hand. It is impossible for me to provide my children with food. They destroyed my crop. I have now banned my children from school (Chanjir, 12 jeribs, Rented, Kharoti).

My life is worse, my food is worse. My son is still sick and I don't have money to treat him. My poverty is because of this government. Because I can't grow poppy we face a lot of problems (Aqajan Kalay, 9 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Noorzai).

Because of this government we have a good life. The Taliban is gone. The fighting is finished and we are happy now (Aqajan Kalay, 4 jeribs, ownergrower, Noorzai).

Now I am happy about the government. They provide a job for my son. I am thinking our security forces have brought security here. We are happy with them (Aqajan Kalay, 5 jeribs, ownergrower, Akarkhel).

Because of this government we lost everything. What do we do with security when we don't have food for my family (Malgir, 8 Jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Kakar)

I F*** the mother of this government. It is not a government. And also the people who work in the government are not the sons of humans (Zarghun Kalay, 6 jeribs, ownercultivator, Daftani).

My life is good, I can buy meat, my children go to school. I am happy with the government as they provide a lot of development assistance and bring security to the area. We don't want to destroy our government again (Chanjir, 8 jeribs, ownercultivator, Alkozai).

Please listen! The government is in the hands of the donkey. What is the job of the donkey? It is to kick people (Khwaja Babar, 10 Jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Noorzai)

We hope that the government will change. This is not a proper government, they do not provide a service to the people. The people are poor and the government cannot help them (Khwaja Babar, 10 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Barakzai)

The government is cruel. Even the dogs in this area don't like this government (Khwaja Babar, 16 Jeribs, sharecropper (1/4), Popalzai)

I pray to Allah that he will bury the Governor in a deep hole because he banned poppy here (Loy Bagh, 7 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Mullarkhel)

The people who do not care about my children (the government)? I will F*** their wife! (Loy Bagh, 16 Jeribs, sharecropper, Kakar)

The government changed my crop for soil. They have just this plan and didn't do any more (Loy Bagh, 10 Jeribs, ownercultivator, Alikhel)

My interest in the government finished when they banned poppy. There is no income for farmers and the price of everything is so high (Shin Kalay, 8 jeribs, ownercultivator, Alikhel)

The government is bala (a large snake that eats everything). It has been sent by Allah to punish us (Shin Kalay, 7 jeribs, ownercultivator, Mullarkhel)

The government just searches for the way that destroys the economy of the farmer and implements the order of the foreigners (Doh Bandi, 10 jeribs, ownercultivator, Barakzai)

We spent a lot of money, we did a lot of work but in the end the kafir destroyed [our poppy crop]. They just destroy the crop and escape they don't ask about our economic situation (Doh Bandi, 10 jeribs, ownercultivator, Noorzai)

The stomach of the Governor and other government people are filled with dollars and they don't know about the stomachs of the poor people' (Koshal Kalay, 20 jeribs, sharecropper (1/5), Mullarkhel)

This is a temporary government. They will move from this area. Now they are here only by the force of foreigners (Koshal Kalay, 8 jeribs, ownercultivator, Kharoti)

ANNEX 2

Table 1a: Actual costs of agricultural production in area north of the Boghra Canal, 2011/12 growing season						
	Description	Units	Price (PR)	Total (PR)	(PR)	Notes
1. Land Purchase						
a. Land		18	10,000	180,000		purchased in 2007. Tenant initial plan to cultivate 12 jeribs increased to 18 jeribs.
b. Bribes	Initial land acquisition			10,000		Payable in area between Naquilabad and Marjah. Irregular payments of between 5000 PR to 25,000 PR
Sub Total					190,000	Costs to Landowner
2. Tubewell						
a. Generator		1	50,000	50,000		
b. Dynamo		1	55,000	55,000		
c. Waterpump	Mahey	1	80,000	80,000		80 metre deep need 6 inch pump
d. Miscellaneous	labour, mechanic, pipes etc			55,000		
Sub total					240,000	Costs to Tenant
3. Annual Inputs						
a. Tractor	Hour	12	2,000	24,000		
b. Urea	50 Kg bag	24	2,200	52,800		

Table 1a: Actual costs of agricultural production in area north of the Boghra Canal, 2011/12 growing season						
	Description	Units	Price (PR)	Total (PR)	(PR)	Notes
c. DAP	50 Kg bag	24	5,000	120,000		Was 5,000 PR but fell to ,3500 PR during wheat seed/fertiliser distribution programme
d. Manure	Trailer	12	3,500	42,000		
e. Diesel	Bailer (200 litres)	10	22,000	220,000		3 Bailer required for first two irrigations. 10-12 irrigations required but dynamo reduces the need for running the generator and therefore saves on fuel costs
Sub total					458,800	Costs to Tenant
4. Labour						
a. Sharecropper		1/4 of final crop				See Returns
b. Harvesters		1/4 of final crop				See Returns
Sub total					0	Costs to Tenant
5. Total costs to Tenant (2+3+4)					698,800	

Table 1b: Actual returns to different stakeholders involved in opium production North of the Boghra Canal, 2011/12 growing season							
Stakeholder		Share	Amount (man)	Total Amount (man)	Price (PR)	Returns (PR)	Notes
1. Mullah	Ushr	0.05	12	0.6	55,000	33,000	1/20 of final yield of all crops. Sale price at harvest time May 2012
2. Taliban	Payment on opium	18	0.05	0.9	55,000	49,500	Payment of 2 khord per jerb of opium. One khord equals 1/40 man equals 112.5 grams. Sale price at harvest time May 2012
Sub total				1.5			
3. Sharecropper	1/4 of yield	0.25	10.5	2.625	55,000	144,375	After ushr and payment on opium is paid. Sharecropper does not pay any costs for agricultural production. Sale price at harvest time May 2012
4. Landowner	Tubewell					240,000	The agreement is landowner will get to keep tubewell if the harvest is not eradicated; if not the tenant keeps the tubewell.
5. Harvesters	1/4 of yield	0.25	10.5	2.625	55,000	144,375	Pay in share of crop rather than in cash. Sale price at harvest time May 2012
6. Tenant	1/2 of yield	0.50	10.5	5.25	55,000	288,750	After ushr and payment on opium to Taliban
	Net loss to Tenant					(410,050)	Gross Returns minus Table 1a: 5. Net loss divided 50:50 between tenant and business partner.
	Net loss per jerb					(22,781)	Net returns divided by 18 jeribs