

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

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UNDP Released the First Ever Survey on Police Perception

December 08, 2009, Kabul—UNDP released the first ever survey on police perception today. In recognition of the fact that no comprehensive survey on police performance has been conducted to date, UNDP undertook the project of a public survey of the police, “Police Perception Survey 2009 - The Afghan Perspective.”

The Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) provided facilitation for the project. It was done against the backdrop of the strengthened police reform and development agenda of the Ministry of Interior, over the last year. The objective was to gather first-hand information of a large sample of the Afghan people, representative of all the regions, on a variety of police related issues so that the survey results can serve as a useful resource base for policy makers, opinion shapers within and outside the government, as well as the broader Afghan public. The survey result can form the baseline of future annual surveys on police performance indicators and outputs.

The survey was conducted by the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR), which has established itself as a major provider of quantitative and qualitative research in Afghanistan. ACSOR interviewed 5,156 Afghans (2,827 males and 2,329 females), age 18 or older, across all 34 provinces of the country. The survey, consisting of 59 substantive questions, dwelt on a wide variety of issues, directly or indirectly related to police performance.

The main results of the survey showed more positive trends about the police performance than generally perceived. Almost half of Afghans (49%) think the police in their area are controlling crime and 42% strongly agree that the police performance has improved over the past year. 67% of respondents believe that if better trained, police performance is very likely to improve, 65% believe that it is very likely that having better knowledge of the law will lead to improvement, and 58% believe that it is very likely that an increase in pay would improve performance. Under the current circumstances, 34% somewhat agree that police officers should receive higher salaries than teachers.

Afghans are hopeful that improvements in the police force are both possible and forthcoming. Respondents also answered affirmatively that interaction between officers and the public are ways to improve police performance, with 65% saying that community meetings between police and local residents would improve security, as would police assistance in the development of “watch groups” (54%). Moreover, 52-54% of Afghans would like to see more female law enforcement officers, particularly to address crimes against women and children.

On the negative side, Afghans still believe that corruption is widely present in the police force, in particular amongst those respondents in the Central/Kabul region where 27% of respondents say “a lot” of police misuse their authority, compared to 21% nationwide. There was also a 42% pervasive response, particularly among shop keepers, that gifts and bribes are necessary when interacting with officers. About half of Afghans (51%) think that when performing their duties, police officers in their area are partial in favor of their tribe; however, 52% think that when it comes to recruiting new police cadets, high-ranking police officers are not partial. Regarding security in general, most Afghans (80%) reported that the security situation in their area is good; of this, 96%

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among those living in Kabul and surrounding provinces. However, respondents in the East and South, as well as rural respondents in general, were less likely to view security as good.

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