



Sergeant Rahmat Gul helps a citizen at Information Desk of Police District 5 in Kabul. P.2 Photo: Rafi Rafiq/UNDP Afghanistan

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Information Desks Bridge Gap Between Community and Police



Sergeant Rahmat Gul, Information Desk PD5, Kabul.

Sergeant Rahmat Gul, arrives at Police District 5 (PD5) Information Desk each day at 8:30. One of 17 desks in Kabul city, it is located in a modified shipping container painted white set up on concrete blocks. The office is dark, the furnishings old and worn. A small heater on the floor in one corner of the office provides meager warmth. The air conditioner is idle and a single table consisted of a desktop screen and registration book.

"People start coming with their complaints, seeking information and guidance," says the 23-year Gul. "I receive them politely, help them and guide them to the relevant offices and authorities. I try my best in order to gain our people's trust towards the Afghan National Police."

The young officer is firm with the public, yet moderates his approach depending on the recipient. Today this includes a burqa-clad middle-aged woman seeking help with her drug-addicted son, who is becoming uncontrollable. The young officer responded with compassion and competence, no doubt having honed his listening and non-judgmental approach through his full-time role at the Information Desk. The fact that a female had arrived, on her own to a police station, to report her son to police for petty stealing, use of force, and a heroin addiction, speaks volumes for the respect that at least some members of the community genuinely have for the police.

"It has been more than a year and two months since we started this information desk. People came here with their problems, we helped them and they went and praised police services to their community elders, who came and personally thanked me" says Sergeant Gul.

Rahmat Gul has been working with ANP for almost two years, and he attended a 6 months training at Sivas Police Training

Center for Afghanistan (SPTC-A) in Turkey supported by UNDP administered Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA). So far more than 2000 male and 330 female cadets and officers have participated in an advanced police training programme at SPTC-A. This is the longest residential training partnership between MoIA, the Government of Turkey, NTM-A and the Government of Japan supported by LOTFA.

During the past decade, the Afghan National Police (ANP) needed to focus their efforts on counter insurgency, which unintentionally created a gap between the community and police. As a result of improvements in the country's security situation, the ANP is working to transform itself into a civilian-focused police force, one that effectively enforces the rule of law, fights crime, provides security to Afghan women and men and most importantly is trusted by the people it serves.

"Sergeant Rahmat Gul is a young, dedicated and hard-working officer," says Colonel Mangal, Rahmat Guls supervisor. "The Afghan National Police are trying to win the people's trust and reduce the gap between the police and community to reduce crime and help citizens."

Through the Police-e-Mardumi initiative, LOTFA works with community leaders, the public, police and local governance councils to help build trust between police and the community. This trust is vital so that citizens can freely contact the police in emergencies and to report crimes.

LOTFA supports six police 119 Emergency Call Centre service in Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Helmand provinces and 31 information desks throughout Afghanistan; 17 in Kabul, 7 in Herat and 7 in Nangarhar, which are available 24 hours per day, every day of the year for citizens to request police assistance.



Information Desk, Police District 5, Kabul.

"This policing is a new and very good policing model, helping and guiding people with a professional and friendly manner," says Sayed Latif, who recently visited PD5 for help with his stolen car.

"Serving people gives me a very good feeling and makes me proud of myself. I will continue serving my people." says Sergeant Gul.

Afghan National Police UNiTE to fight violence against police women

Changing negative attitudes towards police women in the Afghan National Police (ANP), coupled with reducing the cases of violence against policewomen by their male colleagues, will set an example for the general community about the importance of eliminating violence against women in the country.

This was the message from H.E. Jamal Nasir Sediqi, Deputy Minister for Public Protection of the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA), at the launch of LOTFA's celebration of the annual UNiTE to End Violence Campaign. H.E. Sediqi also noted that ensuring a safe and secure workplace for women police is not only important for the ANP's current female officers, it is a vital tool for recruiting future cadets.

The launch event, which was attended by approximately 150 key officials from MoIA and its national and international partners, opened with a recitation of verses from the Holy Quran and involved a screening of a film on violence against women, including forced marriage, the cutting of women's faces and harassment. All participants wore orange scarfs, which were contributed by UNWomen, as a mark of solidarity for the victims of gender violence. Participants also shared their experiences as a way of strengthening ties among themselves and their solidarity to the cause.

UNDP/LOTFA's UNiTE campaign involved a mix of outreach events at MoIA headquarters and provincial police headquarters and the dissemination of information to police as well as to political, religious and community leaders. LOTFA and MoIA delegations travelled together throughout the provinces of Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar and Balkh, where they addressed issues of gender based violence with the police officers and provincial authorities. The materials were provided by UNDP/LOTFA partners including, UNWomen, UNFPA, UNAMA, UNDP's Gender Equality Project (GEP) and International Development of Law Organization (IDLO).

The goals of the campaign were two-fold. First was to promote greater acceptance of women as equal and valued colleagues within the ANP thus resulting in behavioral change—primarily through the improved treatment of Afghan policewomen by their male colleagues. The second key goal was changing attitudes towards female police within ANP's hierarchy.

Securing high-level commitment to the overarching goals at the top will help to reduce incidences of violence against female police personnel, improve the prospects for the professional development and advancement of female police personnel, and stress the important role female police play in reducing gender violence as a whole.

Women currently comprise less than 2 percent of ANP personnel. The barriers to attracting more women to join the national police force include the poor reputation of police (although this is changing); the dangerous nature of police work; concerns over the treatment of policewomen by certain segments of the community, especially men; and prevailing negative attitudes towards female police personnel.

While public opinion surveys consistently reveal that support for enrolling women in the ANP has grown over time, families still hesitate to allow their daughters, sisters or wives to join the police. Yet policewomen have a vital role to play in enabling Afghan women and girls to report crimes and access justice. For this reason, the government has set a target of recruiting 10,000 female police personnel by 2016.

In 2013, Afghanistan signed the Elimination of Violence against Women law which was submitted to the Parliament. It states that rape and various forms of harassment against women are crimes.

The campaigns were jointly undertaken by the LOTFA project office, the MoIA Media Department and the MoIA General Directorate of Human Rights, Children and Women's Affairs and the MoIA Community Policing/*Police-e-Mardumi*.

Launched in 2008, the United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign aims to raise public awareness and increase political will and resources for preventing and ending all forms of violence against women and girls in all parts of the world.

The United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign calls on all governments, civil society, women's organizations, men, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system to join forces in addressing this global pandemic.



Police-Community Committee, an Initiative to Bring Communities Closer to the Police

Looking into the recent years, there has been no specific difference between the tasks and duties the Afghan National Army (ANA) carried out and what the Afghan National Police (ANP) did. The ANP either deliberately or unenviably was involved in anti-insurgent battles in approximately all parts of the country. An interaction gap existed between the communities and the ANP, as a result of which the people were not supportive to their police as much as it had been expected.

Following the establishment of the *Police-e-Mardumi* or Community Policing Directorate (PeMD) in 2010, the PeMD started to shrink the gap and work on shaping the ANP in a new model aiming to bring the people closer to their police through the development of a Community Civilian Policing Model (CCPM) targeting the Afghan Uniform Police (AUP); a department under the ANP.

UNDP administered Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) supported the PeMD of Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA) to establish the Police-Community Committees in Herat through a transparent and inclusive approach. Hence as articulated in the CCPM, the PeMD's Two-Year work-plan and in accordance with the MoIA's Five Years Strategic Plan; UNDP in partnership with UNAMA, UNDP's Justice and Human Rights for Afghanistan Program, UNICEF and EUPOL supported the establishment of Police-Community Committees led by PeMD-Herat and this way the first police-community committees were established in Herat's Gozara and PD1 districts on 2nd and 5th November 2014. These committees are comprised of representatives of police, prosecutors, district governor office, community elders, religious scholars, youth and women.

Besides the local authorities of AUP and PeMD, the religious scholars, community elders, government officials, NGOs; women's, youths' and Civil Society Organizations' representatives were also among the participants of a two day workshop conducted for the establishment of police-community committees in Gozara and PD1 Districts of Herat province.

The floor was briefed by the LOTFA and PeMD regarding the concept of community policing and the role and importance of police-community committees. Abdul Rawouf, a community elder and a participant of the workshop said, "I hope this committee brings success for us. I request all the elders to work hard to make this committee as a model in bringing peace for our people".

The main objectives of these committees are to build a relationship, trust, and partnership between police and communities with the aim of improving safety and security; to develop and implement the district safety and security plan in partnership with police, prosecutors and communities; and to improve the communication, rate of reporting the incidents and offences to the police, thus to contribute towards dwindling crime rates.

"During the history of Afghanistan, women have performed incredible roles in most of the aspects of social life. The women used to go to war fields and have supported the men", a woman participant, Nafas Gul, said during the workshop.

These Committees are composed of 18 % women membership who will be directly involved in planning and decision making at district level.



Police-Community Committee elected members of Gozara district, Herat. Photo: UNDP Afghanistan



Police - Community Committee Establishment



Community elders support Police-Community committee.

More on LOTFA: Contributions from donor governments are used to: pay the salaries of Afghan National Police personnel and Central Prison Department guards; build vital police infrastructure; sponsor capacity development; further institutional reform of MoIA; support gender-responsive policing and the empowerment of female police personnel, and promote community-oriented policing.

LOTFA donors since the mechanism was created in 2002 are: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, European Union, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland, South Korea, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

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About UNDP: UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in over 170 countries and territories, UNDP offers global perspective and local insight to empower lives and build resilient nations.

About MoIA: Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior Affairs oversees the Afghan National Police and leads efforts to improve the professionalism and strengthen the capacity of police so they can better serve their people and country. Its four deputy secretaries cover: security, administration and support, counter narcotics and policy and strategy.



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LOTFA Akheri to prepare for transition to Government

The Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA) of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and UNDP have agreed to extend the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), which, since 2002 has partnered with the MoIA to support a comprehensive programme for paying the salaries of the nation's police and providing professional development for the MoIA and the country's policemen and women, through June 2015. LOTFA Phase VII, or LOTFA *Akheri*, marks the beginning of a transition phase during which the project's activities will be transitioned to the Government.

While significant security challenges remain, the Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Army (ANA) successfully took over full responsibility for security from the international coalition forces in 2014. As a logical follow-on to that accomplishment, the Government will assume full control of core functions, such as payroll management and the coordination and management of activities aimed at the MoIA institutional development, prison and corrections officers' professional development, and improved police service delivery.

UNDP's focus in these final six months will be to position the GIROA to assume ownership with minimal disruption to police payroll, maintain crucial monitoring systems that provide for internal transparency and accountability, provide all required technical advice and guidance as requested and sustain momentum for the GIROA to continue its priority developmental activities.

LOTFA was originally established as a mechanism for the international community to mobilize resources for the establishment, salary payment, infrastructure creation, capacity development and gender empowerment of the police force of Afghanistan. In the intervening years the programme has made significant progress in the development and implementation of an electronic payment system for salaries and professional development for the ANP's 157,000 policemen and women. Approximately 85 percent of the ANP and 97 percent of corrections officers are now paid through electronic funds transfer. LOTFA is providing support to more than 100 Family Response Units which facilitate the investigation of domestic violence cases, as well as 50 Gender Mainstreaming Units which ensure MoIA's gender-related interventions, including recruitment of women police, are implemented at both the provincial and district level. As the ANP's work has shifted from fighting insurgency to civil and community policing, LOTFA has supported both capacity building as well as strengthening oversight and accountability within ANP and MoIA. Infrastructure support has improved living conditions for prisoners as well as provided a safer working environment for women police, a key component for successful recruitment.



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