

OUR WORLD. VIEWS FROM THE FIELD.

AFGHANISTAN

OPINION SURVEY AND IN-DEPTH RESEARCH, 2009



Our world is in a mess.
It's time to make your move.

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AFGHANISTAN

OPINION SURVEY AND IN-DEPTH RESEARCH, 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was undertaken in eight countries that were experiencing or had experienced armed conflict or other situations of armed violence. These were: Afghanistan; Colombia; Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Georgia; Haiti; Lebanon; Liberia and the Philippines.¹ The aim was to develop a better understanding of people's needs and expectations, to gather views and opinions, and to give a voice to those who had been adversely affected by armed conflict and other situations of armed violence.

This research was commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) within the framework of the **Our world. Your move.** campaign. Launched in 2009, the campaign's goal was to draw public attention to the vulnerability and ongoing suffering of people around the world. The intention was to emphasize the importance of humanitarian action and to convince individuals that they had the ability to make a difference and reduce suffering.

2009 was an important year for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, with three significant anniversaries (the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Solferino, the 90th anniversary of the founding of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions).

In 1999, the ICRC had undertaken a similar survey entitled *People on War*, which served as a basis for comparison and as a means of highlighting trends in opinions 10 years on.

This report encompasses two types of research: an opinion survey and in-depth research.

OPINION SURVEY

The Impact of Armed Conflict

Forms of violence/suffering and their consequences

Very few people in Afghanistan have been unaffected by the armed conflict there. Those with direct personal experience make up 60% of the population, and most others also report suffering a range of serious hardships. In total, almost everyone (96%) has been affected in some way – either personally or owing to the wider consequences of armed conflict.

- Of those with direct experience, most have had to leave their homes (76%), suffered serious property damage (66%), lost contact with a close relative (61%), lost their means of income (60%) or seen the area where they lived come under enemy control (56%).
- Of those without direct experience, most have nevertheless had to make do with limited (or no) supplies of water/electricity (56%) or health care (59%).

However, there are some signs that the situation has improved marginally since 1999. Fewer now report having their homes looted (down from 51% to 33%), having to leave their homes (down from 83% to 60%), or losing a family member (from 53% to 35%).

People's fears include economic hardship (37%), 'uncertainty' (36%), displacement (34%), losing a loved one (25%), losing property (22%), and losing contact with a loved one (16%).

¹ Respondents in seven of the eight countries were asked about 'armed conflict'. Please note that respondents in Haiti were asked about 'armed violence'.

Needs and assistance

During armed conflict, people need ‘the basics’ most of all – food, shelter, protection and medical treatment – but they also say they need ‘conflict resolution’. Which groups or organizations should meet these needs?

Those ‘closest to home’ – local communities and families – are most often called on. Other help comes both from within Afghanistan (from the government, the Afghan Red Crescent Society, religious entities or NGOs) and from elsewhere (the ICRC, the UN or the military). A third of the respondents (34%) have received help from the Afghan Red Crescent or the ICRC.

Obstacles to receiving help

The main barriers to receiving aid are corruption (52%), the black market (28%) and social status/discrimination (34%).

Sometimes, people do not know that help is available to them (21%), or cannot reach it (20%). Some decline help for fear of social rejection (14%). Only 2% say help is not needed.

Reducing suffering

To ‘reduce suffering during armed conflict’, people initially look to their own communities (to religious leaders – 23%) and outside (to international humanitarian groups – 21%).

Other assistance providers that are often mentioned, although seldom first, include the UN (mentioned by 37%), the ICRC (22%) and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (17% – total Red Cross/Red Crescent mentions being 36%).

The international community

People in Afghanistan are ready to support direct international involvement – whether through emergency aid (52%), peacekeepers (44%) or military intervention (34%). They also see a role for ‘people living outside the conflict zones’ (i.e. citizens in other countries) involving the use of political pressure and the donation of goods (52% each).

Behaviour during Armed Conflict

Acceptable behaviour

Most people in Afghanistan (78%) cite some behaviour that is not acceptable during armed conflict.

As in 1999, people are widely opposed to attacking religious or historical monuments (93% say it is ‘not OK’ in 2009, 92% in 1999).

Regarding the taking of civilian hostages, 89% are opposed and 87% are against the planting of landmines which could potentially kill civilians, or attacking enemy combatants in civilian towns/villages (86%).

However, more people now see civilians who voluntarily help the enemy as acceptable targets. Forty-five per cent think it is ‘OK’ to attack those who ‘transport ammunition for the enemy’ (up from 31% in 1999), and 43% say this of those who ‘give food and shelter to the enemy’ (against 21% in 1999).

Almost everyone (93%) says that civilians should be left alone or avoided as much as possible in times of armed conflict. Opinions are divided on whether civilians should be spared in all circumstances, or simply ‘as much as possible’ (46% and 47%). Since 1999, people’s views have

shifted towards the latter. Very few people (6%) see civilians as equally acceptable targets as combatants – but the figure has risen from 3% in 1999.

Health workers, ambulances and the right to health care

There is a general consensus that health workers (65%) and ambulances (60%) should not be targeted in any circumstances.

A quarter (27%) and a third of respondents (32%) respectively say health workers and ambulances can sometimes be acceptable targets for combatants – and often for similar reasons. Firstly, people and vehicles involved in the delivery of health care must be clearly identified as such. Secondly, they must be neutral. Whether it is enemy combatants or civilians who receive treatment is less of an issue.

Similarly, most people (84%) say that health workers should treat wounded civilians from all sides in a conflict. Nine people in 10 (91%) agree that ‘everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care’.

The Geneva Conventions

One person in three (31%) has heard of the Geneva Conventions. Most of them (70%) feel the Geneva Conventions can be effective ‘on the ground’ in limiting civilian suffering in times of war.

IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

The Impact of Armed Conflict

Respondents have been so much affected by armed conflict that they find it difficult to express the impact that it has had on their lives. Indeed, some claim that they are ‘allergic’ to the word war, as just thinking of what they have been through brings back too many painful memories.

On further discussion, respondents spontaneously speak of the negative impact of armed conflict, including the loss of loved ones, as well as the destruction of the fabric of their society.

Personal experience of armed conflict

Respondents report how armed conflict affects them in a variety of ways. Initially, they tend to speak of the physical effects of armed conflict; the loss of loved ones and the injuries they personally have sustained. This, however, leads to them consider the emotional scars left by armed conflict: the grief at losing those close to them, as well as living in constant fear of an attack.

Respondents do, however, look beyond personal experience and consider the impact of armed conflict on Afghanistan as a whole. They speak freely of the economic consequences, which they feel will last long into the future as the country will continue to suffer in view of the fact that a whole generation has had its education disrupted. Furthermore, they discuss the cultural impact of the armed conflict and the way it increases distrust in society.

Civilians’ needs

Respondents report that armed conflict forces them to reassess their needs. Those factors that were once taken for granted, such as access to food, water and shelter are now a daily concern. Given this, respondents feel that it is of the utmost importance that basic needs are met.

Beyond this, they also believe their key need is for uninhibited access to health care. Indeed, some stress that this should be free, so great is their need of it.

Respondents also report a need for effective means of communication to be in place so they can be assured of the safety of their loved ones at all times.

Humanitarian assistance

Given the number of basic needs that respondents have, and the struggles they face in meeting these, the provision of humanitarian assistance is essential. Indeed, in many cases, respondents report that the provision of such assistance means the difference between life and death. Consequently, they are grateful for all assistance provided to them.

Frequently, respondents speak of the provision of food aid. While the quality of this is, at times, criticized, they do recognize that it provides them with a basic level of sustenance. Similar sentiments are expressed in relation to the shelter they have been given to live in; while they appreciate that they have accommodation, its standard is questioned.

Respondents also mention the work conducted by humanitarian organizations to find information about members of their family they have become separated from. While the news received as part of this process is often bad, respondents at least have the reassurance of knowing what has happened to them and having a definite outcome.

Respondents also mention how the humanitarian organizations are working to help secure Afghanistan's economic future. They mention that they are being equipped with new skills, such as tailoring, to help them earn an income.

Regarding the humanitarian organizations working in Afghanistan, the ICRC and the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society are the most frequently mentioned. They are felt to offer a wide range of support services and are perceived as offering help to anyone who needs it; respondents are convinced that they do not offer support based on religious, ethnic or political lines. Furthermore, respondents are gratified to note that the ICRC plans to remain in the country for some time and believe that the longevity of its support will help them rebuild in the future.

However, while the humanitarian assistance received from humanitarian organizations is appreciated, respondents suggest improvements that can be made both in terms of the kind of support offered and how it can be delivered. For instance, some respondents suspect that more assistance is given to those who have contacts or are well connected, meaning that the help does not always reach those most in need. Additionally, some believe that help is predominantly distributed in urban areas, leaving those who live in more isolated places vulnerable.

Finally, some believe that the provision of assistance to the people of Afghanistan will be greatly improved if those working for humanitarian organizations are protected and spared from attack.

Complementing the work of humanitarian organizations, respondents speak of individual acts of kindness and humanitarian gestures from friends, neighbours and strangers. These individual humanitarian gestures improve the quality of people's lives and provide hope for the future.

Behaviour during Armed Conflict

Rules of conflict

All agree on the importance of rules governing behaviour during an armed conflict. Indeed, respondents are particularly keen that this should be the case given their experiences of armed conflict on a daily basis. In short, they feel that civilians should be spared from armed conflict.

Respondents feel that this could be achieved by waging the conflict away from the areas in which civilians live. They believe that sites used for religious and social gatherings, such as mosques and market places, should not be targeted. Finally, they also state that those who have been injured should be protected and should be able to travel to obtain medical treatment without hindrance.

However, while respondents have clear ideas as to what rules governing behaviour in conflict should cover, they have little idea that such laws actually exist and, even if they did, little hope that these laws would be respected.

Right to health care

Given that respondents see access to health care as a fundamental need, it follows that they have strong views on access to health care and respect and protection of health workers.

In the first instance, all agree that everyone, regardless of political affiliation, ethnic origin or religious beliefs, should have access to health care. This view even extends to those who they see as perpetrating the violence in Afghanistan. Indeed, some suggest that everyone should be entitled to free health care to ensure that those suffering from poverty can access the assistance they need.

All respondents also believe that health workers should be protected during armed conflict. They say that this point is particularly valid in relation to those health practitioners working in Afghanistan in a voluntary capacity.

However, in spite of this support for the protection of health workers, first responders discuss how they have frequently been hindered in their work to assist the injured. Such experiences range from their vehicles being stopped until they can provide identification through to health workers being arrested. Indeed, some mention how they have been caught up in the fighting, which not only poses a risk to their own lives but also prevents them from helping others.

The Geneva Conventions

Few respondents report knowing about the Geneva Conventions, perhaps because of the low levels of education and literacy in Afghanistan. Indeed, awareness tends to be restricted to first responders, who feel it is their duty to understand the provisions of this law.

However, in spite of this low level of awareness, clear associations are made with the Geneva Conventions. Respondents believe they are related to the ICRC, and that they exist to help enforce peace – particularly in developing nations.

All respondents agree with the aims of the Geneva Conventions – perhaps not surprisingly, given what they have experienced – and their provisions on how people should conduct themselves in a conflict. However, some are sceptical as to how likely it is that such rules can be enforced.

First responders feel that education programmes designed to raise awareness and understanding about the Geneva Conventions will help ensure that, in future, they are better respected.

Conclusions: priority actions

In spite of all that they have been through, respondents remain optimistic about the future of Afghanistan. However, they are of the opinion that their future security will be considerably helped if key messages are communicated to the wider world.

In the first instance, they are keen that what they have experienced should be communicated to the wider world. They believe that if this happens, it is not only less likely that future conflicts will occur, given the heightened awareness of the ramifications, but, furthermore, that they will be more likely to receive the vital humanitarian assistance they need.

Building on this, respondents wish to convey that while they remain grateful for the assistance given to them thus far, more still needs to be done. Respondents believe that by telling their story, they will be more likely to receive targeted and sustained programmes of assistance and support.

Furthermore, they believe that those who have left Afghanistan and have positions of power and influence should be encouraged to donate to their former country. In this, they want to strengthen the bonds between fellow citizens.

Finally, first responders have specific messages they feel should be communicated: that international law governing behaviour in conflict should be respected; that they are doing their best to make a difference under the trying conditions in which they work; and, finally, that in spite of all their efforts, the scale of the conflict is such that they require further assistance to bring about the positive change that the people of Afghanistan require.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Solferinos of today

To raise awareness of the impact of armed conflict or other situations of armed violence on civilians, the ICRC decided to launch a vast research programme. This research focused on some of the most troubled places in the world – the Solferinos of today – which are either experiencing situations of armed conflict or armed violence or suffering their aftermath:

- Afghanistan (covered in this report)
- Colombia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
- Georgia
- Haiti
- Lebanon
- Liberia
- The Philippines

Research

The ICRC commissioned Ipsos, an international research agency, to conduct an opinion survey (statistical, quantitative research) and to design and analyse in-depth (qualitative) research in eight countries.

For the **opinion survey**, a broadly representative sample of the adult general public was interviewed, either in person or by telephone, in each country. Fieldwork was conducted by Ipsos and its international partners. The specific sampling methods and any groups/areas excluded are described in the Appendices. The questionnaire was designed to determine whether the respondents had personal experience of armed conflict/violence and, if so, the specific impact it had on them. Questions also explored respondents' views on what conduct was acceptable for combatants, the effectiveness of various groups and organizations in helping to reduce suffering during armed conflict or armed violence, the actions expected of the international community, awareness of the Geneva Conventions, and the role of health workers during armed conflict or armed violence.

The **in-depth research** was conducted through focus groups and one-to-one in-depth interviews in each country. Ipsos designed, analysed and reported on the findings, with ICRC staff conducting the qualitative fieldwork. The discussion guide was designed to complement the opinion survey and to enable the ICRC to deepen its understanding of the values, motivations, fears and aspirations of those who have been direct victims of armed conflict or armed violence. These included people separated from their families, internally displaced persons, first responders and others directly affected by armed conflict or armed violence.

Further details of the coverage and scope of the research in Afghanistan are given in the section on 'Research Methodology'. The questionnaire used in the opinion survey (marked-up with overall results) and the discussion guide used in the in-depth research are included in the Appendices.

In 1999, ICRC carried out broadly similar opinion research as part of its *People on War* project. The programme covered some of the countries reported on in 2009 – including Afghanistan

– and several of the 1999 questions have therefore been revisited in order to provide trendlines. These are highlighted in the report where applicable.

Background and objectives

The year 2009 had great significance for the ICRC and the entire International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement ('the Movement'), as two major anniversaries in the history of humanitarian work took place:

- The 150th anniversary of the Battle of Solferino. On 24 June 1859, Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman, happened to witness the aftermath of one of the most brutal battles of the 19th century – at Solferino, in what is now northern Italy – and the carnage left on the battlefield. The suffering he saw there prompted him to take the first steps towards the creation of the Movement. His book *A Memory of Solferino* led to the founding of the ICRC in 1863. In recognition of his work, Dunant was the joint first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1901.
- The 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions (12 August 1949). The four Geneva Conventions are the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. They protect, respectively, wounded and sick members of armed forces on the battlefield; wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of armed forces at sea; prisoners of war; and civilians in time of war.

To mark these anniversaries, as well as the 90th anniversary of the founding of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Movement launched a campaign – **Our world. Your move.** – to remind everyone of their individual responsibility to relieve human suffering.

The campaign was based on the premise that **Our world** faces unprecedented challenges, from armed conflict and mass displacement to climate change and migration; and it contends that **Your move** reminds us of our collective responsibility to make the world a better place. Like Henry Dunant, we can all make a difference, even through the simplest of gestures.

Throughout 2009, the ICRC undertook various activities to mark these historic milestones by highlighting the ongoing plight of people – particularly the most vulnerable – caught up in armed conflict or armed violence around the world.

Afghanistan – research methodology

OPINION SURVEY

A total of 535 people aged 18 or over were interviewed in person (face-to-face) during the month of February 2009. Random probability sampling was used to ensure that the final sample would be broadly representative of the Afghan population (aged 18 years or over) as a whole. In addition, the results have been statistically 'weighted' to correct for any discrepancies between the sample profile and that of the equivalent population.

According to 2009 estimates, Afghanistan's population was around 33,000,000. It was heavily skewed towards younger people (the median age was just 18 years, life expectancy was 45 years for both men and women – and those aged 14 or below made up almost half the population (45%)). By contrast, those aged 65 or over made up just 2% of the population.

On this basis, this survey of people aged 18 and over is representative of approximately 15,000,000 people.

Because a sample was interviewed – not the whole population – the results are subject to 'sampling tolerances'. These show how accurately a result from the sample reflects the result that would have been obtained from the whole population had it been interviewed.

Please see the Appendices for details on sampling tolerances.

On the charts, a '**' sign refers to a percentage of less than 0.5%, but greater than zero.

IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

The purpose of the research in each country was to understand the deeper values, motivations, fears and aspirations of those who had been direct victims of armed conflict or armed violence. The research was carried out through focus groups and one-to-one in-depth interviews, carried out by ICRC staff. The combination of these qualitative research methods was used to allow both interactive debate and personal narrative to emerge from the conversations.

The sample was organized according to a number of groups who were particularly affected in times of armed conflict or armed violence, namely:

- **Internally displaced persons.** At the time of writing, it was estimated that more than 26 million people around the globe were displaced within their own countries owing to armed conflict, violence and persecution. The internally displaced make up what has been described as the single largest group of vulnerable people in the world. Internal displacement is one of the most serious consequences of armed conflict; people are forced from their homes and suffer extreme hardship.
- **Members of separated families.** War, disasters and migration lead to many thousands of families being separated. The suffering created by such situations is not always visible to others. This global problem is mostly a silent tragedy. Needing to know what happened to a loved one is as great a humanitarian need as food, water or shelter. Too many victims of armed conflict and armed violence around the world remain without news of missing family members.
- **First responders.** A 'first responder' is most often considered as the first health worker to arrive at the scene of an emergency. However, a first responder is much more – it is anyone who provides a helping hand or a shoulder to cry on.

These groups were used to recruit participants in seven of the eight contexts to be able to draw some comparisons on a global level. In Haiti these groups were first responders and victims of violence, including sexual violence.

In addition, a specific group was selected for each country to cover an issue particular to that country. In Afghanistan, mines are a widespread threat, therefore a number of the respondents were **mine victims**.

It should be noted that:

- All respondents were civilians (i.e. not combatants) and were selected based on the ICRC's on-the-ground knowledge of the areas most affected by the conflict in Afghanistan.
- Respondents' comments, in their own words, have been included throughout the in-depth research chapters of this report, accompanied by a brief indication of their backgrounds. In order to protect identities, the names used in this report have been changed, but other facts about individuals are real. Respondents' ages are sometimes omitted when they could not be verified, but have generally been provided. These respondents' comments were selected by Ipsos and do not reflect the opinions of the ICRC.
- Respondents were often affected in multiple ways by the armed conflict. As such, for example, someone who was invited to share their experiences of being an internally displaced person may also have commented on their experiences of having been a cluster munitions victim.

- Likewise, the division between first responders and other types of civilian is not always easy to define. First responders included: ordinary civilians thrust into giving humanitarian assistance because of the conflict affecting their town, community or family; health workers; and members of humanitarian organizations, including the ICRC. Comments in this report sometimes reflect this range of experiences by individual respondents.
- Interviews were conducted and group discussions moderated by ICRC staff in Afghanistan. Although the interviewers were trained in qualitative research, the fact that they were from the ICRC introduced the possibility of bias in what respondents were prepared to share and how they expressed it. However, interviewers were working to an interview guide designed by Ipsos and the analysis was also undertaken by Ipsos.

In Afghanistan, three group discussions were carried out, lasting between 90 and 120 minutes each, one with each of the following groups:

- **Internally displaced persons.** This group consisted of four men, all of them between 30 and 65 years of age who had been forced to move from Helmand Province to Kandahar.
- **Members of separated families.** This group was made up of four men aged between 27 and 57 and drawn from across the different provinces of Afghanistan.
- **Mine victims.** This group was made up of mainly men and one woman, aged between 22 and 42. All the victims were being treated by the ICRC orthopaedic centre.

In addition, ten in-depth qualitative interviews were carried out, lasting 45 minutes to one hour each:

- 3 interviews with internally displaced persons who had had to leave their homes in Helmand Province;
- 2 interviews with relatives of missing persons;
- 2 interviews with mine victims (one man and one woman);
- 3 interviews with first responders.

Report structure

An Executive Summary with the key findings is followed by the main body of the report, covering each broad subject area in turn. The results of the opinion survey among the general public are reported on first, followed by the findings of the in-depth research among victims of armed conflict/armed violence.

The Appendices contain the sample profile and full questionnaire used in the opinion survey, marked-up with the overall country results (including the 1999 trend comparisons where applicable) and the discussion guide used in the in-depth research.

Please note that no country comparisons are made in this report. These can be found in the separate Summary Report covering all eight countries.

Afghanistan in context

At the time of writing, Afghanistan's recent as well as past history had been marked by frequent turmoil. Life in the country had been extremely hard, with the burden of warfare often amplified by periods of drought.

The previous 30 years of war in Afghanistan could be divided into several distinct phases:

- the 1979 invasion of the country by the Soviet Union and the decade of war that followed until the Soviet departure in February 1989;
- three years of armed conflict between the *mujaheddin* (resistance fighters) and the Soviet-supported communist government until its collapse in April 1992;
- two years of civil war between Afghan factions;
- five years of fighting between the Northern Coalition – an alliance of factions drawn mainly from Afghanistan's minority populations – and the Taliban, a conservative Sunnite Pashtun group, that draws its name from a Persian word meaning 'seekers of the truth' (meaning, in Pashto, 'students'). The Taliban forces seized power in Kabul in late September 1996 and were in control of much of Afghanistan until late 2001;
- the armed conflicts initiated in the wake of the attacks on the US on 11 September 2001. After the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, accused by the US of masterminding the bombing of their embassies in Africa in 1998 and the attacks on the US mainland on 11 September 2001, the US military launched aerial attacks that paved the way for Afghan opposition groups to drive the Taliban from power. These events were followed by the Bonn Agreement, the setting-up of a provisional administration, the presidential elections held in October 2004 and won by Hamid Karzai, the ratification of the Afghan Compact (a cooperation framework with the international community replacing the Bonn Agreement), and the official transfer of power to the elected Afghan government;
- the armed conflict pitting Afghan armed forces supported by international military forces against various Afghan armed factions in the country.

In 2009, the armed conflict in Afghanistan was intensifying and affecting more areas of the country. Fighting between armed groups and national and international forces took place regularly in more than half of Afghanistan's territory. Even provinces not directly affected by the fighting endured roadside bombs, targeted killings, suicide bombings and deliberate intimidation of civilians. While the south and the south-east remained the regions hardest hit by the conflict, the security situation had also deteriorated in the eastern and in particular the western provinces.

Military operations by international forces had involved aerial bombardments and night-raid operations in the south, west and east. In the north, which had remained calm in previous years, armed confrontations, rocket attacks, ambushes and explosions of roadside bombs increased sharply at the beginning of spring but calmed down again at the end of April.

The daily lives of people living in areas where the fighting was taking place were being disrupted by air strikes, night raids, suicide attacks, the use of improvised explosive devices, and intimidation by the various parties to the conflict.

At the time of writing, rising food prices had aggravated the already chronic food insecurity faced by many Afghans. In addition, a drought was expected to affect the planting season. Political and military developments in Pakistan had continued to destabilize the region.

The ICRC in Afghanistan

The ICRC had been assisting victims of the Afghan conflict since the 1979 Soviet invasion, initially through its delegation in Pakistan and then through a delegation opened in Afghanistan itself in 1987. It had carried out a broad range of humanitarian activities uninterrupted ever since.

The ICRC continued to respond to the needs of people adversely affected by the armed conflict, though security constraints were still limiting its operational range and hampering its humanitarian work in many areas. Its operations at the time of writing were focused on:

- visiting detainees and submitting reports to the detaining authorities on conditions of detention and treatment. In particular, the ICRC had continued its visits to people held by Afghan and US authorities and by the NATO-led ISAF. Ongoing US and ISAF detention in Afghanistan and the transfer of internees from US and ISAF authority to Afghan custody had been the subject of dialogue with the detaining authorities. These talks had focused on detention conditions, the treatment of detainees and compliance with applicable legal provisions;
- helping detainees to maintain contact with their families, for example through Red Cross messages and – for internees held in one US-run internment facility – video conferencing and face-to-face visits;
- collecting allegations of violations of international humanitarian law concerning the conduct of hostilities and people not or no longer taking direct part in the hostilities, and reminding all parties (Afghan authorities, international military forces and armed opposition groups) of their obligations under international humanitarian law and, when necessary, making confidential representations to the parties concerned regarding specific cases of violations;
- assisting the wounded and disabled. In particular, six ICRC physical rehabilitation centres provided services for the disabled all over the country, with emphasis placed on extending services to and improving accessibility from conflict-affected provinces through enhanced patient referral systems, often involving the Afghan Red Crescent Society;
- supporting hospital care, with emphasis on responding to the needs of conflict casualties and developing, in cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent, a comprehensive approach to medical assistance, ranging from community-based first aid to surgical care; maintaining support for hospitals in several areas; and coordinating medical and physical rehabilitation programmes for conflict victims in the south and east with similar ICRC programmes in Pakistan's border areas;
- improving water and sanitation services – for example, by completing urban water-supply projects which had been handed over to the authorities;
- distributing emergency food and other aid to conflict-affected people;
- promoting accession to and implementation of treaties of international humanitarian law, and compliance by military forces with that body of law;
- meeting with representatives of local *shuras* in conflict-affected areas to discuss humanitarian issues;
- strengthening the Afghan Red Crescent Society through support for first-aid and primary health-care programmes for weapon-wounded patients, and through support for their primary health-care centres in conflict-affected provinces.

At the time of writing, persistent insecurity and the high number of armed confrontations in previous months had continued to seriously impede the ICRC's movements in Afghanistan. Humanitarian aid workers had faced increasing threats to their security, particularly in the south and east, but also in the north, making it difficult for them to carry out their work. Much of southern and eastern Afghanistan, with the exception of the major cities, had remained off limits to ICRC staff, although they had had a greater degree of accessibility elsewhere. The ICRC had relied on an extensive network of Afghan Red Crescent Society volunteers to help the people worst affected by the conflict.

The parties to the armed conflict recognized the ICRC's role and mandate as an impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian organization thanks to the organization's long presence in Afghanistan and the pains it had taken to explain its work. They turned to the ICRC for support and assistance as a neutral intermediary in situations involving the release and handover of prisoners, or the collection, burial and/or repatriation of mortal remains after fighting.

OPINION SURVEY

OPINION SURVEY

The Impact of Armed Conflict

Personal experience of armed conflict

Virtually everyone (96%) in Afghanistan has been affected in some way by the armed conflict there – either through direct personal experience (60%) or due to the wider consequences which are felt beyond those who are immediately affected.

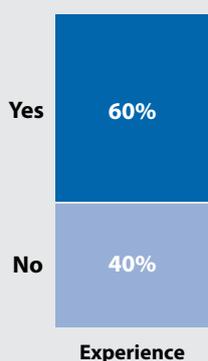
Large numbers who have experienced armed conflict report having to leave their homes (76%), serious damage to their property (66%), limited access to basic necessities (64%), loss of contact with relatives (61%), and loss of livelihood (60%).

People of all age groups face these problems – from young adults to the oldest members of communities.

Understandably, older people have more personal experience of armed conflict than younger people – but 53% of those aged 18-24 report first-hand experience.

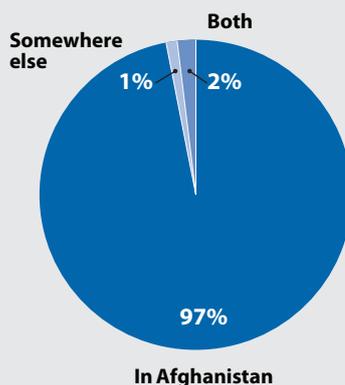
Personal experience of armed conflict

Q1. Have you personally experienced armed conflict, or not?



Base: All respondents (535)

Q2. Was this in Afghanistan or was it somewhere else?



Base: All experiencing armed conflict (320)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Those who have been personally affected by conflict report a wide range of traumatic experiences:

- three-quarters (76%) had to leave their homes to live elsewhere;
- two-thirds (66%) suffered serious damage to their property (more so still – 70% – among the Tajik group);
- similar numbers had 'no or very limited access' to health care (68%) or to basic necessities such as water and electricity (64%);
- three-fifths (60%) lost their means of income (the problem was even more severe among Tajiks than among Pashtuns: 64% vs. 49%).

Significant numbers of people report even more harrowing situations:

- almost half (45%) say that a member of their immediate family was killed (50% among women);
- 43% say they were tortured (55% among men/30% among women);
- a third (35%) were wounded by the fighting (including almost half – 46% – of men);
- one person in five (21%) reports being imprisoned (37% of men report being imprisoned);
- one in eight (13%) says someone they knew well fell victim to ‘sexual violence’;
- one in 10 (9%) was kidnapped or taken hostage.

Personal impact of armed conflict

Q3A. I’m going to ask you about your actual experiences during the armed conflict in Afghanistan. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Afghanistan. For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you.



Base: All who have experienced armed conflict (320)

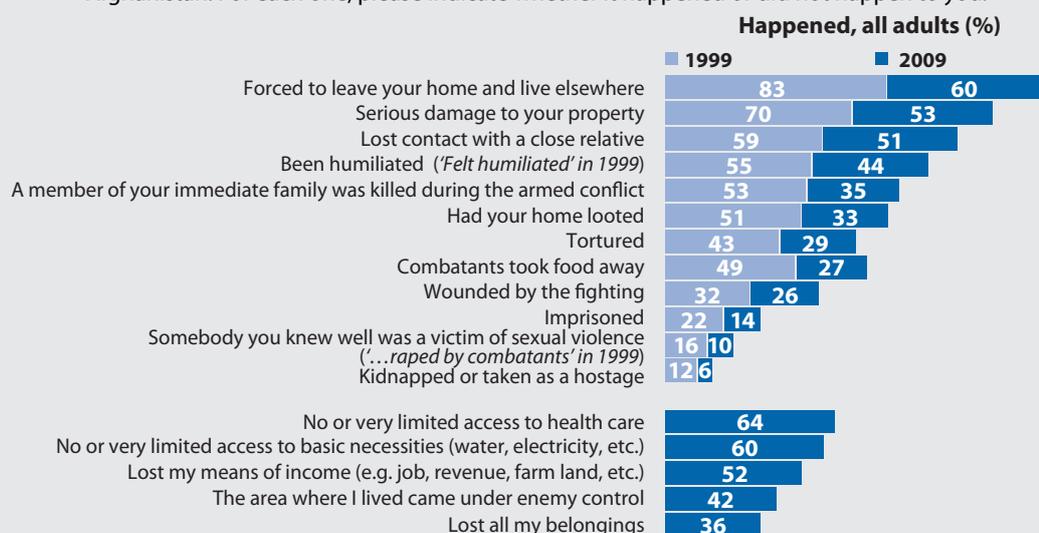
Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of “don’t know” responses

While some of these results represent an improvement on those recorded in 1999 – at least in purely statistical terms – overall the figures remain very high. For example, 60% of people in Afghanistan now say they have been displaced.

- Reported incidents of ‘combatants taking food away’ are down from 49% to 27%.
- Fewer people have had their homes looted: down from 51% to 33%.
- Reported conflict-related deaths in respondents’ families are down from 53% to 35%.
- The number of those having to leave their home is down from 83% to 60%.
- The number of those who report having been tortured is down from 43% to 29%.

Personal impact of armed conflict – over a decade

Q3A/B. I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during (how you yourself have been affected by) the armed conflict in Afghanistan. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Afghanistan. For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you.



Base: All (535 in 2009; 995 in 1999)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

(These comparisons are based on the combined results from those groups which do and do not have direct personal experience of the armed conflict – emphasizing just how widespread the effects still are among all segments of the population (see below). In 1999, these questions were also asked of all respondents.)

Two other (perhaps inter-related) figures emerge from the 2009 survey: just over half (56%) of those with direct personal experience of conflict say that the area where they lived 'came under enemy control', and a very similar proportion – 55% – say they have 'been humiliated' as a result of the conflict. (The latter figure is identical to that recorded among all respondents in 1999 – but this year the figures are even higher among men than women: 66% vs. 44%.)

As noted, those who said they do not have personal experience of armed conflict were nevertheless asked about their experiences relating to the conflict in Afghanistan.

The results suggest that this group has also been hugely affected, in many ways:

- access to 'basic necessities' and 'health care': 56% and 59% respectively report to having had limited access at best;
- people: one person in three has lost contact with a close relative (37%); 22% report that an immediate family member was killed; 5% say someone known well to them has been a victim of sexual violence;
- property: a third of people (34%) report that they suffered serious property damage; 20% had their homes looted; 22% lost all their belongings;
- danger/duress: of those in Afghanistan who say they do not have personal experience of armed conflict, 36% had to leave home and live elsewhere and 21% lived in an area which came under enemy control;
- emotional/psychological: 29% of people feel 'humiliated'.

The pattern of responses between men and women without personal experience of conflict is generally similar to that of men and women with such experience – except that of those without personal experience, the loss of income/livelihood is more common among men (50%) than women (26%). (Among those with first-hand experience, loss of income was suffered equally by men and women (61% and 59%.)

When asked a completely open question where respondents were free to say unprompted whatever is important to them, 18% of all respondents – those with and without personal experience of conflict – mentioned other ways in which armed conflict has had an impact on their lives (this is especially true of women). These include the killing and injuring of innocent people (31%), not being able to continue with an education (12%), a deterioration in living standards (10%) and suicide attacks (6%).

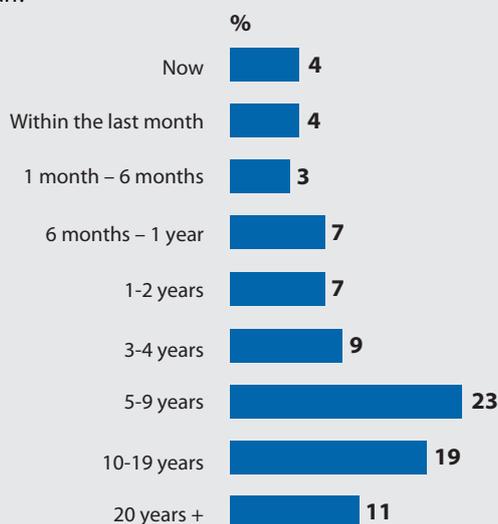
When were people most recently affected by the conflict?
 For many (25%), it was within the last two years.

The figure of 25% includes 4% who are ‘currently’ being affected – while the experiences of the remainder date back fairly evenly, year by year, to the late 1990s, and some further back still to the 1980s and before. (The proportion of Tajiks reporting personal experience of conflict within the last two years is lower, at 17%, than the proportion of Pashtuns (31%.)

These results are a reminder that there has been no interruption in armed conflict in Afghanistan for a very long time.

Recent experiences

Q5. And when were you personally most recently affected by this armed conflict in Afghanistan?



Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way (515)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of “don’t know” responses

People's greatest fears

In Afghanistan, the dangers of conflict-related death, torture, kidnapping and imprisonment are very real – both for the respondents and for their immediate families.

But people's 'greatest fears' are often of being undermined or losing control of their lives – rather than of direct physical harm. A third or more fear economic hardship (37%) and displacement (34%).

- 37% particularly fear losing the ability to earn a living/threats to their livelihoods.
- 36% say 'living with uncertainty'.
- 34% fear having to leave home/becoming displaced/a refugee (41% among 18-24-year-olds).
- One-fifth (21%) fear 'not being able to get an education/go to school' – this is a higher percentage than that of people who fear any of the following: imprisonment, (not) surviving the conflict, injury, being separated from loved ones, or sexual violence.
- One person in six (16%) fears being separated from loved ones.

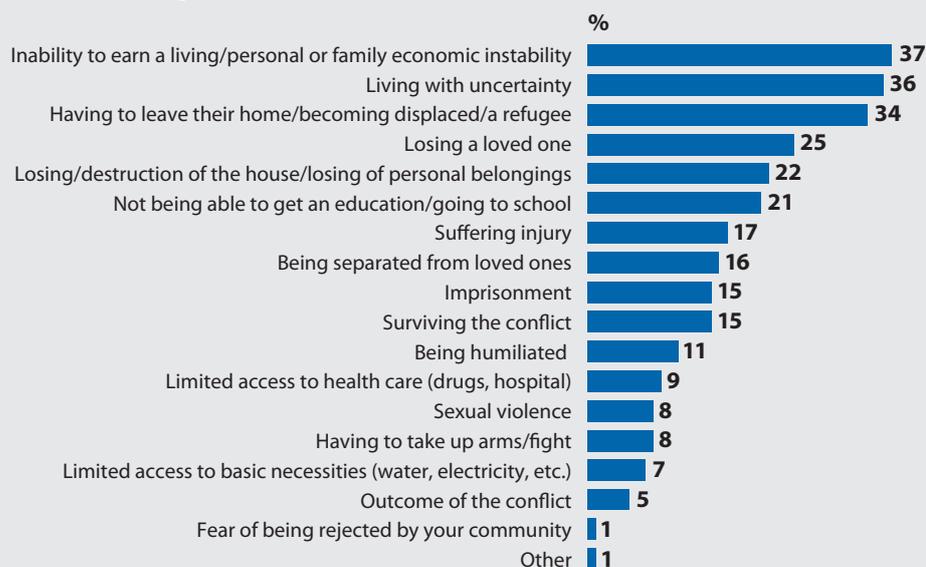
Lack of access to basic necessities such as water, electricity and health care – although among the most widespread genuine problems – features very low on people's list of fears. (In fact, people are if anything more concerned about 'being humiliated'.)

Men and women share basically the same concerns, with any differences being fairly subtle. Men tend to worry more about imprisonment or injury, while women are more concerned about lack of education. (Both groups, however, are equally concerned at the prospect of having to 'take up arms'.)

There are more marked differences between the Pashtun and Tajik groups. The Pashtun people are particularly fearful of imprisonment (22%) and being humiliated (14%); the Tajiks of injury (21%), sexual violence (13%), and being denied an education (24%).

People’s greatest fears

Q6. What do you think are the two or three greatest fears people are facing in a situation of armed conflict in Afghanistan?



Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of “don’t know” responses

Feelings as a consequence of armed conflict

How does armed conflict affect people’s states of mind?

It breeds sadness (for 46%) and anxiety (for 44%) – but also empathy for others (51%).

Overall, the results are slightly mixed. For example, the top two responses are that conflict makes people sadder but also more empathetic towards other people.

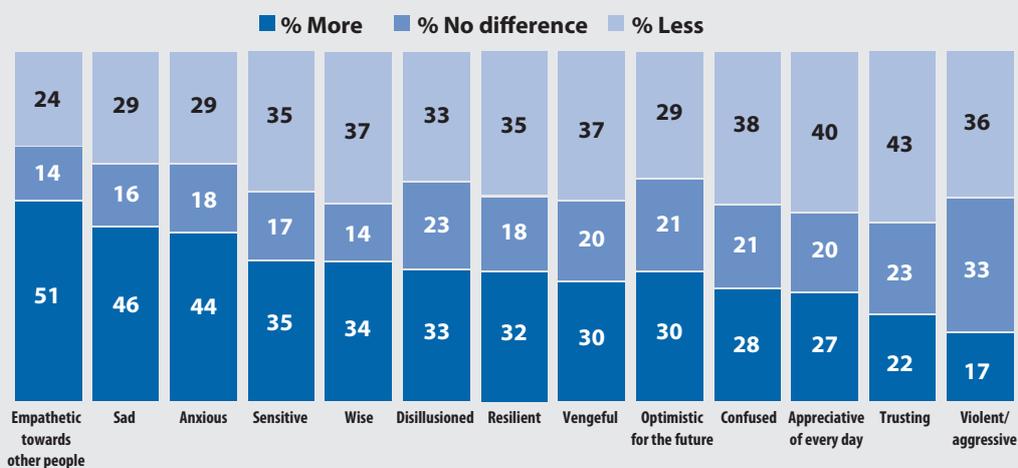
In a similar vein, many people claim that conflict has made them feel personally less aggressive/violent (particularly among men).

Perhaps more realistically, people concede that they are less trusting.

People were also asked whether they felt more ‘appreciative of each day’ as a result of conflict. However, of those who say they are (perhaps in the sense of just being grateful to be alive/relatively unaffected) they are outnumbered by those who feel less appreciative – no doubt in part reflecting the everyday burdens that the conflict has imposed on them.

Feelings as a consequence of armed conflict

Q8. Now I would like to ask you about whether the armed conflict has changed the way you feel. For each description I read out, please say whether the armed conflict has made you feel more this way, less this way, or has it made no real difference. First [...], would you say it has made you more [...], less [...], or has it done neither?



Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way (515)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Nevertheless, the future is not bleak for everyone. Three persons in 10 (30%) are more optimistic about the future (29% are less so). People are split on whether conflict has made them more disillusioned: 33% say it has, while 33% say it has made them less disillusioned. (Tajiks more often describe themselves as 'optimistic about the future' than do Pashtuns (37% vs. 26%))

One-third of the respondents (34%) feel conflict has made them wiser, while a similar number (37%) sense that the opposite is true.

Almost half (44%) report being more anxious as a result of armed conflict, 29% less so.

The results do not differ fundamentally across different age groups. Old and young alike are affected in much the same way.

Civilians' needs in armed conflict

First and foremost, people need 'the basics'. Almost two-thirds mention food as a vital requirement (63%), closely followed by protection/security (53%) and medical treatment/health care (48%).

Civilians' needs are many, with the most important of all being seen to be:

- food (63% choose this from a list as one of the most important requirements for civilians living in conflict areas);
- protection/security (53%);
- medical treatment/health care (48%);
- shelter (46%).

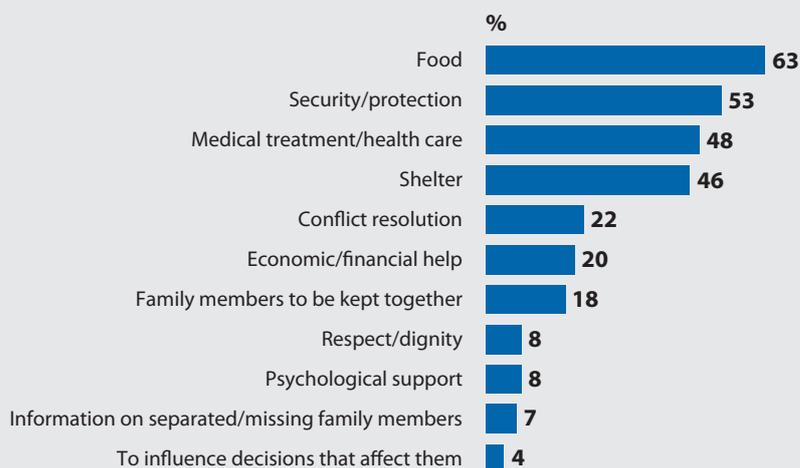
Although not mentioned to the same extent, economic factors are important (20% say financial help is key).

People also mention the need for conflict resolution (22%) but attach less importance to being involved in decisions that affect them (4%).

Eighteen per cent of respondents mention the need to keep family members together, and 7% the need to receive information on those who have become separated/gone missing.

Civilians’ needs

Q7. What do you think civilians who are living in areas of armed conflict need the most? Please select the three most important to you.



Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of “don’t know” responses

Although, as reported earlier, 55% of people who have experienced armed conflict say they have been humiliated and 11% say being humiliated is one of their greatest fears, when needs are considered it is the basics – food (63%), security/protection (53%) and medical treatment/health care (48%) – that are seen as most important. Nevertheless, significant minorities do cite needs that are related to not being humiliated, such as respect/dignity and receiving psychological support (both 8%).

Help and support from entities/institutions

Where do people turn for help during armed conflict?

They turn primarily to their parents and families (66%) or to their immediate communities (37%). These groups are also felt to best understand people’s needs.

However, people also report a range of help from ‘official’ entities – some of which is seen as well-tailored to their needs, some less so.

Among national organizations, ‘government’ provides a good deal of support (31%) – slightly more than ‘religious entities’ (22%). However, in terms of understanding people’s needs the position is reversed: 31% say that religious groups completely understand their needs, while only 23% say that government does.

A third of the respondents (34%) have received help from the ICRC or the Afghan Red Crescent Society.

Other humanitarian organizations – whether local or international – have provided support to 21% of those affected by armed conflict.

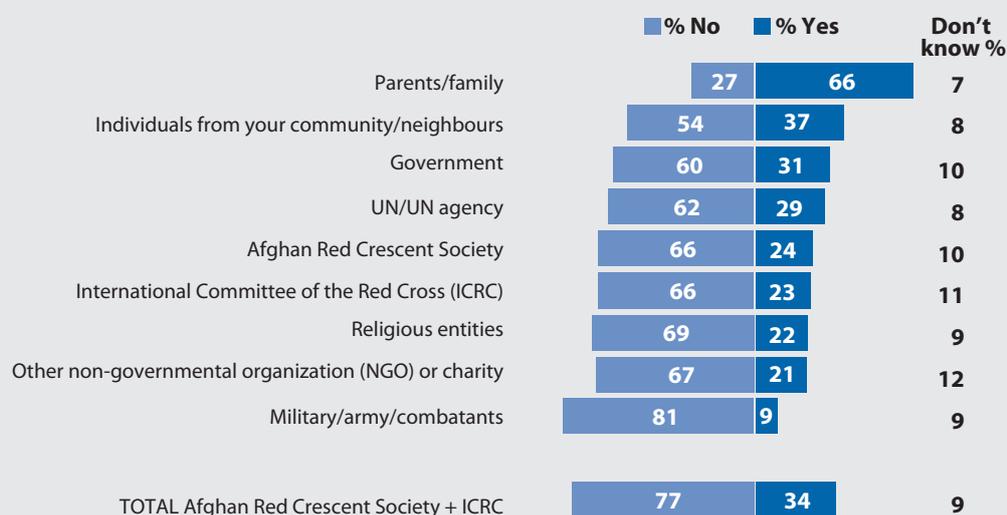
A quarter of the respondents (27%) feel that the ICRC completely understands their needs, and 33% say that the UN does. The corresponding figure for the Afghan Red Crescent Society is 22%, and for NGOs 12%.

Combatants/military rarely provide help/support (9%) – but those few people who have received it often feel it is well-tailored to their needs (36%).

Men and women are equally likely to receive help from the government or from parents/family, but it is often men who are the recipients of support from others (perhaps on behalf of their families).

Help and support

Q9. During the time you experienced or were being affected by armed conflict, did you receive help or support from any of the following?

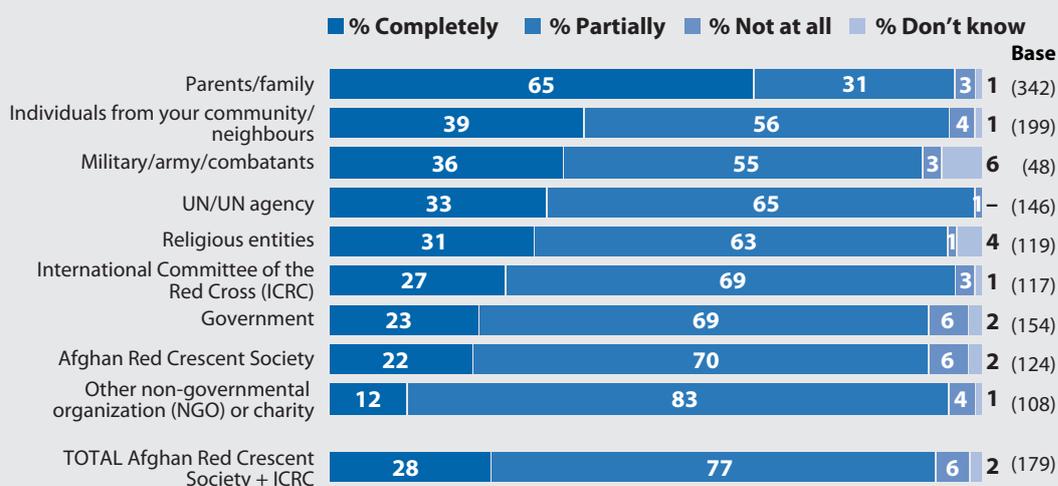


Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way (515)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Help and support

Q10. For each of the types of organizations or people you mentioned receiving help or support from, I would like you to tell me how well you felt they understood your needs. First, the [type of support at Q9]... do you feel your needs were completely understood, partially understood, or not understood at all?



Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Barriers to receiving help

Half (52%) of the people who do not receive support during periods of armed conflict put this down to corruption.

There is a strong sense that social factors such as corruption (52%), discrimination (34%), and the black market (28%) are the main obstacles to receiving support, rather than lack of knowledge (21%), lack of physical access (20%) or failure to meet the criteria (13%).

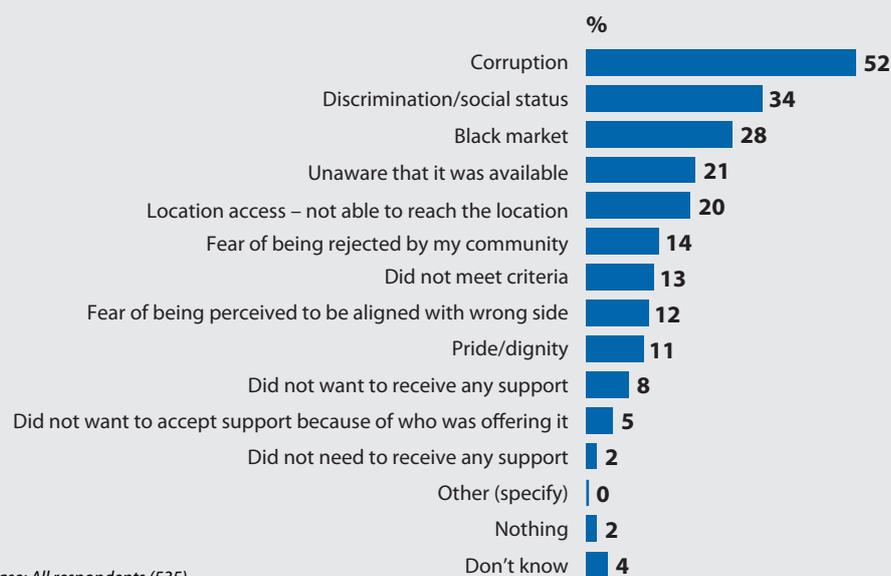
Men and women hold very similar views as to the main barriers, though women more often cite the black market and men the issue of discrimination.

People who 'choose' not to receive help usually have the decision forced on them to some extent (whether out of fear of social rejection (14%) or of being seen as aligned with the wrong side (12%)). 'Pride/dignity' also plays a part (11%, equally for men and women).

Only in very few cases do people appear to feel they have an entirely free hand to decline support (either because it is not needed (2%) or not wanted (8%)).

Barriers to receiving help

Q11. Which, if any, of the following reasons do you think may have prevented people in Afghanistan receiving or accepting help or support during armed conflict?



Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Reducing suffering

People often look beyond their own communities for help in reducing suffering during armed conflict.

Two groups are perceived as most important:

- religious leaders come first to mind for 23% of people (29% men vs. 17% women);
- international humanitarian organizations (generically) do so for 21%.

This mix of local/national and international groups underscores the diversity of groups that play a part.

The military/combatants are also mentioned (by 17%) despite their rarely being seen to offer tangible support/help in such times. Government is mentioned by 10% overall – marginally more so by women than men).

Some groups rarely mentioned first are nevertheless often referred to as other sources of help. The UN, for example, is mentioned by 37% of respondents, the Afghan Red Crescent and the ICRC together by 36%.

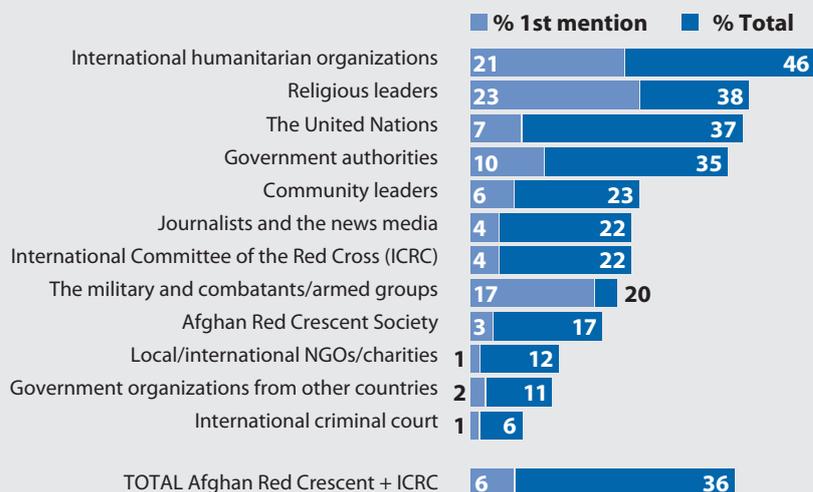
Even the media/journalists are seen to have a potentially important role and marginally more important than that of (local or international) NGOs.

Tajik people first mention international humanitarian organizations, religious leaders, and the military/combatants (despite saying that this last group is virtually never a source of help for them).

Pashtun people have broadly similar views, but place less initial emphasis on international humanitarian groups (15%, against 25% among the Tajiks), and relatively more on government authorities (13%, just 5% among the Tajiks).

Reducing suffering

Q20. I'm now going to describe different kinds of groups and organizations. Please tell me which three of these play the biggest role to help reduce suffering during armed conflict.



Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

The role of external actors

People in Afghanistan want the international community to make its presence felt – especially by delivering emergency aid (52%) and providing peacekeepers (44%).

What people in Afghanistan most want from the international community is aid, peacekeepers and military intervention to stop the armed conflict (34% – 39% among women).

People would rather the international community provide financial support to humanitarian organizations (who by implication can make a difference 'on the ground') than exert political pressure, better enforce laws, or raise awareness of the plight of victims.

Nevertheless, many people would approve of the international community organizing peace talks (25% in favour) or bringing leaders charged with war crimes to trial (27%).

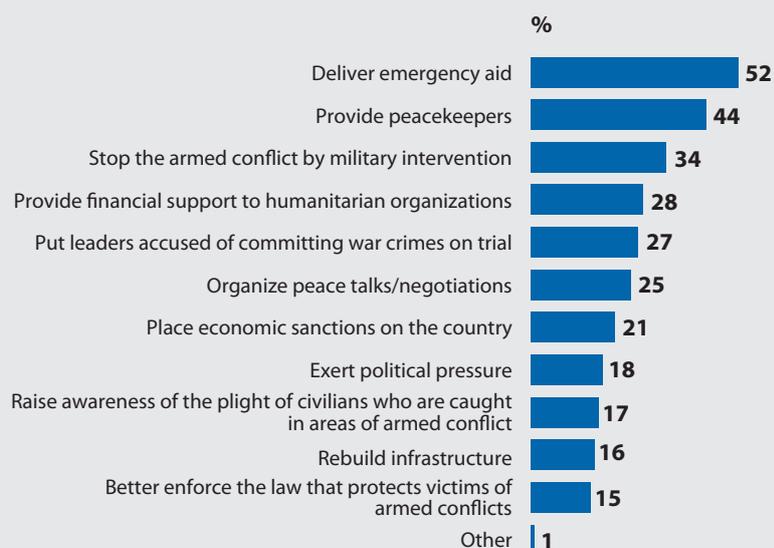
Economic sanctions are mentioned as a suitable action for the international community by one in five respondents (24% of women, 17% of men).

Rebuilding infrastructure is viewed as a priority for the international community; 16% of the respondents.

The two largest ethnic groups – Tajik and Pashtun – suggest a broadly similar range of priorities for the international community.

The role of external actors

Q21. What do you think the international community should do to help civilians who are living in areas of armed conflict?



Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

What should the role of people living outside the conflict zone be in helping victims of armed conflict?

Their role is seen as twofold:

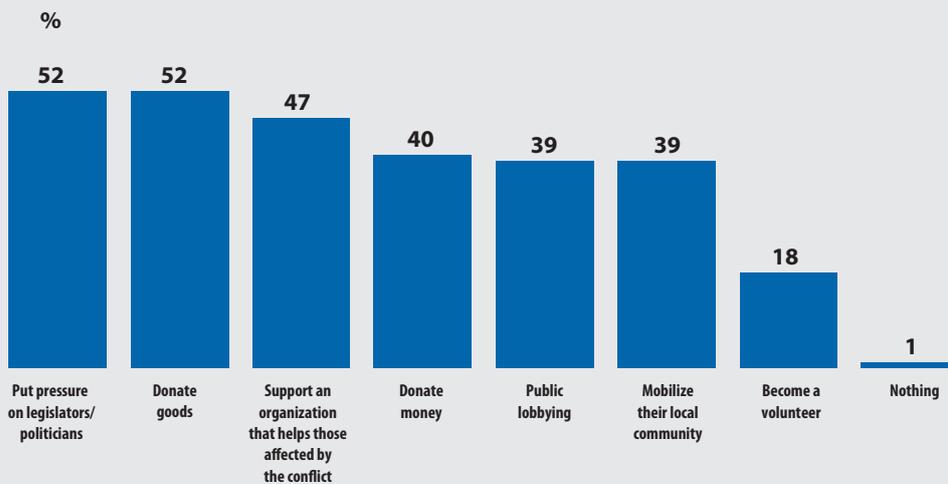
- social: applying political pressure (52%), mobilizing the local community (39%), and engaging in public lobbying (39% – 43% among men);
- practical: donating money (40%), supporting a humanitarian organization (47% – 53% among women), and donating goods (52%).

The two main ethnic groups have slightly differing views here. Tajiks emphasize the need to apply political pressure and mobilize local communities; Pashtuns are more likely to call for financial donations.

The one action that every group agrees is least necessary is to 'become a volunteer'.

Support from the wider world

Q22. What, if anything, do you think people living outside of conflict zones can do that would most help victims of armed conflict in Afghanistan? Please select the three you feel are most important.



Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Behaviour during Armed Conflict

Limits to behaviour

In Afghanistan, around three-quarters of people (78%) say that certain limits should apply to what combatants are allowed to do. Virtually nobody (only 3%) feels that armed conflict should have 'no limits'.

More people than in 1999 feel that there should be limits for combatants in fighting their enemies (up from 63% to 78% in 2009), but the proportion who say nothing is off limits is effectively unchanged (2% in 1999, 3% now). What has changed are the numbers of people who collectively either do not know or who refused to give an answer (down from 35% to 19% in 2009).

Respondents were asked a completely open question, where they were unprompted and free to say whatever came to mind. Of the actions which are felt to be unacceptable, those mentioned the most are 'killing civilians' (cited by 20% of all respondents) and 'killing the innocent' (12%).

One person in five (18%) cites the destruction of buildings/specific areas as unacceptable, and 15% specific types of violence against/injury to people.

What do respondents mention as the basis for imposing limits?

Among those who advocate some limits to behaviour, almost half (48%) say the limits should be imposed on the basis of what is/would be against their religion.

Two-fifths (41%) say that certain actions should be forbidden on grounds of human rights.

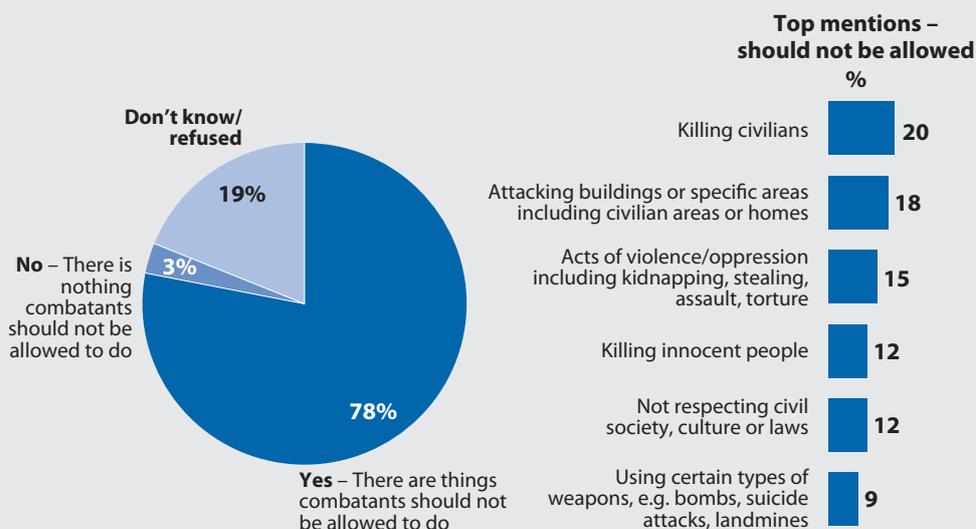
Other bases include the law (37%) and cultural norms (29% – 37% among women).

Personal codes/ethics are mentioned by only 21% of respondents – but are perhaps covered by a combination of the other factors.

Some people feel that certain kinds of behaviour should not be allowed on the basis of the harm they cause. For example, because certain behaviour produces too much destruction (27% say this is a yardstick for actions deemed to be unacceptable) or because it produces too much hate and division (22%).

Limits to behaviour

Q12. Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy?



Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of “don't know” responses

Threats to civilians

In Afghanistan there is clear evidence that attitudes towards civilians who choose to assist the enemy have changed since 1999.

Nevertheless, almost everyone (93%) says that civilians should be left alone or avoided as much as possible.

Respondents were asked if it is acceptable to attack civilians in order to ‘weaken the enemy’.

Ninety-three per cent feel that civilians should be either ‘left alone’ or ‘avoided as much as possible’. Very few people (6%) feel that civilians and combatants are equally acceptable targets. However, this figure has doubled from 3% since 1999.

This trend is also evident in the 47% who feel that civilians should be left alone ‘as much as possible’. This has risen from 32% in 1999.

Correspondingly, far fewer people in 2009 feel that civilians should be entirely ‘off limits’ (46% in 2009, against 62% in 1999).

Women take a somewhat less strong view than men. Nevertheless, over half (53%) now say that civilians should be entirely left alone.

The shift in attitudes towards civilians was also apparent when people were asked (as they were in 1999) about the acceptability of specific behaviour of combatants in fighting the enemy.

Increasingly, civilians who voluntarily support the enemy are seen as acceptable targets:

- 45% say it is ‘OK’ to attack civilians who voluntarily transport ammunition for the enemy. This is up from 31% in 1999;

- 43% say it is 'OK' to attack civilians who voluntarily give food and shelter to the enemy. This has doubled from 21% in 1999.

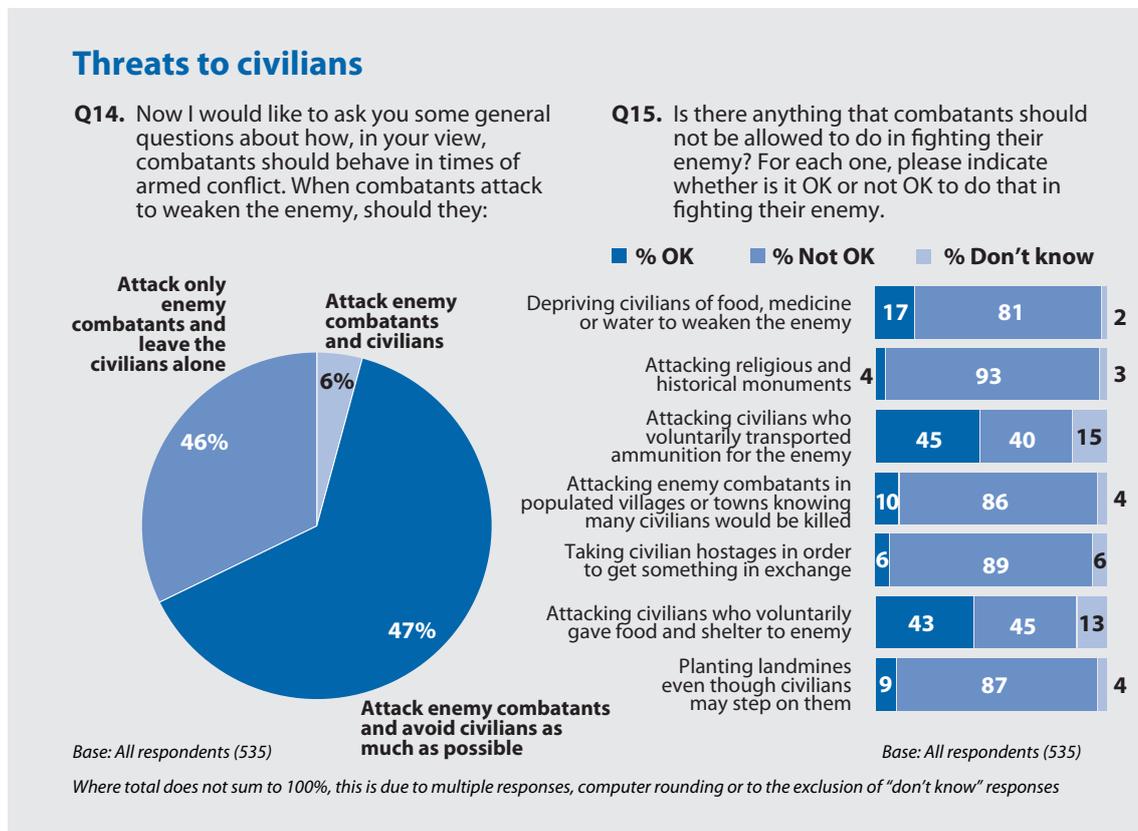
People are also now marginally more willing to see civilians deprived of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy (17% now, 11% in 1999).

It is felt by nearly all that it is unacceptable to:

- attack enemy combatants in villages or towns knowing that many civilians would be killed (86% both in 1999 and 2009);
- plant landmines that may harm civilians (87% in 2009, 86% in 1999).

Almost all respondents are resolute in opposing any attacks on religious and historical monuments: 93% say it is 'not OK' (just 4% say this is 'OK' – exactly the figure recorded in 1999).

Taking civilians hostage in order to get something in exchange is opposed by an overwhelming majority of respondents (89%).



Health workers and ambulances

There is a general consensus that health workers (65%) and ambulances (60%) should not be targeted in any circumstances.

Nevertheless, 27% say that health workers may not be entirely 'off limits' in times of armed conflict, and 32% say that ambulances are not.

Some people (27%) say health workers may sometimes be acceptable targets for combatants. Women are more inclined to take this view (31%, against 22% of men).

Why might health workers be perceived as vulnerable to attack?

Among the respondents who feel that there are circumstances in which it is acceptable to target health workers, it is felt that they are most vulnerable if not clearly identified as such (52%). Any failure to do so is viewed by many people (particularly women) as a justification for their being targeted.

In addition to making their role clear, health workers must also be seen as neutral in any conflict. Indeed, ‘taking sides’ is the single most powerful justification (55%) for their becoming acceptable targets.

37% feel it is not acceptable to target health workers treating sick and wounded enemy combatants – and little distinction is made between treating enemy combatants and enemy civilians (35%).

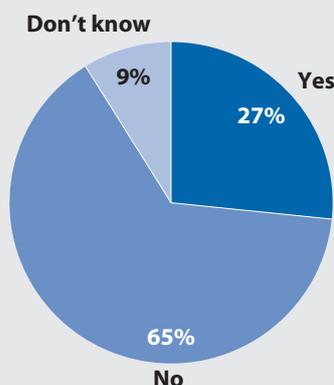
For some people (32%), ambulances might be acceptable targets in times of armed conflict.

Usually, the justification given for targeting an ambulance is if it is used ‘for hostile purposes’ (68%).

However, any ambulance not clearly identified as such is viewed as an acceptable target by 59% of respondents – far more than those justifying attacks on the grounds that they are carrying enemy combatants (39%) or enemy civilians (26%).

Targeting health workers

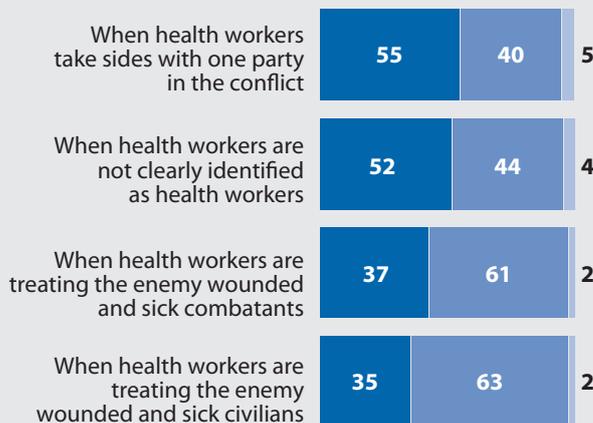
Q16. In a situation of armed conflict, are there any circumstances in which you think it is acceptable for combatants to target health workers?



Base: All respondents (535)

Q17. In which, if any, of the following circumstances do you think this is acceptable?

■ % Acceptable ■ % Not acceptable
■ % Don't know

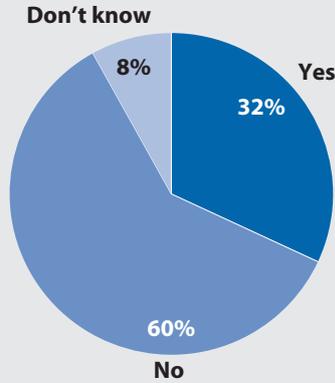


Base: All who think that some circumstances are acceptable to target health workers (145)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of “don't know” responses

Targeting ambulances

Q18. In a situation of armed conflict, are there any circumstances in which you think it is acceptable for combatants to target ambulances?

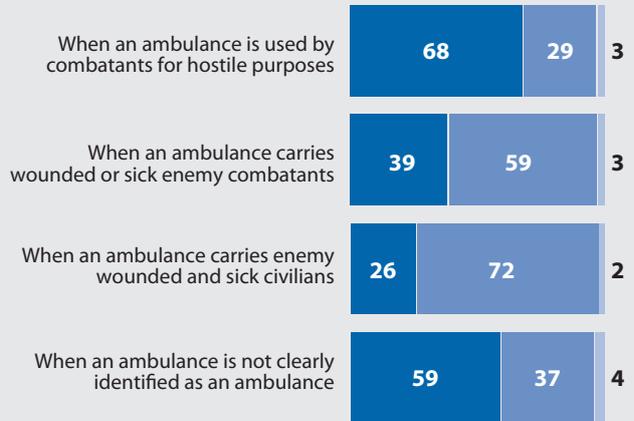


Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Q19. In which, if any, of the following circumstances do you think this is acceptable?

■ % Acceptable ■ % Not acceptable
■ % Don't know



Base: All who think that some circumstances are acceptable to target ambulances (180)

Health workers and services: the right to health care

91% of respondents agree that 'everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care'.

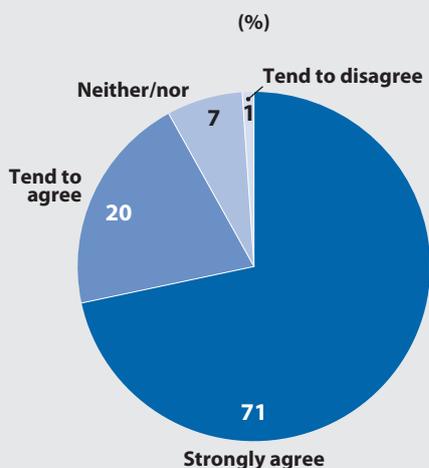
This has to be viewed in the context of a country where lack of health care is a daily reality for many people.

Most people (84%) reject the proposition that health workers should limit themselves to treating only wounded and sick civilians from 'their' side in a conflict. Views are broadly similar among men and women.

Again, the importance of neutrality comes to the fore.

The right to health care

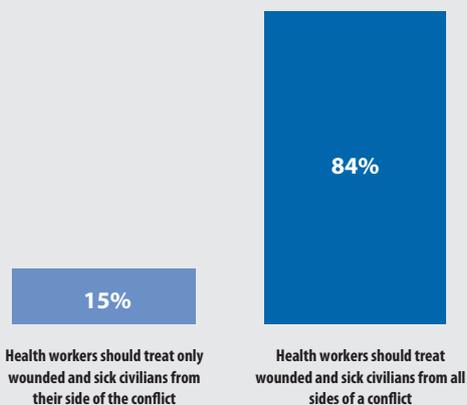
Q25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'Everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care'



Base: All respondents (535)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

Q26. In the context of an armed conflict, what best describes your personal views?



Base: All respondents (535)

The Geneva Conventions

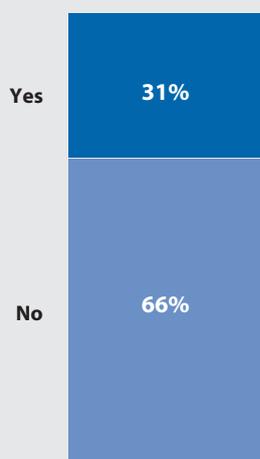
Only one person in three (31%) has heard of the Geneva Conventions – but among those who have heard of the Geneva Conventions, most (70%) feel they have at least some impact in limiting civilian suffering in war.

Most people (66%) have not heard of the Geneva Conventions.

70% of those aware of the Geneva Conventions feel they have at least a fair amount of success in limiting civilian suffering in time of war. By contrast, 8% consider they have no impact at all – and a fifth (21%) not very much.

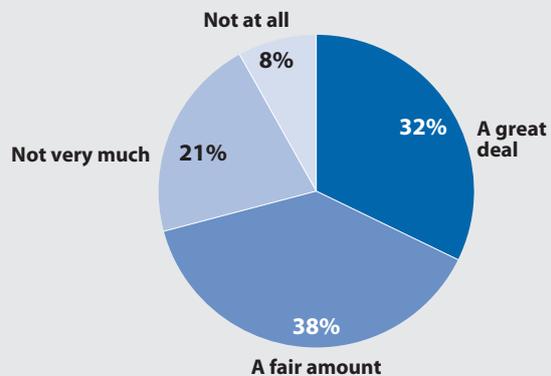
Awareness of the Geneva Conventions

Q23. Have you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?



Base: All respondents (535)

Q24. To what extent do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions limits the suffering of civilians in war time?



Base: All who have heard of the Geneva Conventions (169)

Where total does not sum to 100%, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or to the exclusion of "don't know" responses

IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

The Impact of Armed Conflict

Respondents have been so much affected by armed conflict that they find it difficult to express the impact that it has had on their lives. Indeed, some claim that they are 'allergic' to the word war, as just thinking of what they have been through brings back too many painful memories.

On further discussion, respondents spontaneously speak of the negative impact of armed conflict, including the loss of loved ones, as well as the destruction of the fabric of their society.

When asked about their associations with armed conflict, many at first find their experiences hard to verbalize. The pain of what they have experienced is so great that, at times, they find it difficult to convey what they have gone through, and continue to experience.

My head is going to burst, as you said war, war and war. I can't tolerate to hear the word war. It brings all the bad memories of the past to my eyes. (Karima, 56, member of separated family)

I'm allergic to the word 'war' and it makes me sick. (Nikhat, 50, member of separated family)

On discussing the conflict in more detail, though, respondents immediately recall the impact of armed conflict: the loss of family and friends, the destruction and the emotional and physical pain that they have experienced.

It reminds me of the loss of relatives, sons, daughters, husbands, our injuries. (Zarina, 45, mine victim)

It reminds me of the time when my husband and daughter flew into the air and became dust in front of my eyes...and when I opened my eyes in the hospital I realized that I did not have one leg. (Habiba, 38, mine victim)

While, in the first instance, respondents focus on the physical effects of the armed conflict, and the emotional trauma these bring with them, they are also quick to state that the effects go well beyond the individual sphere. They strongly believe that the conflict has not only affected the people of Afghanistan but also the development of the country as a whole.

It doesn't only destroy a family but it also destroys a country. It destroys the infrastructure and economy of a country. (Suraya, 45, mine victim)

In spite of everything they have experienced, however, respondents still have hope for the future. More than anything, the risks that they face on a daily basis make them value their own lives more. Consequently, the conflict has provoked a strong survival instinct in respondents and they are willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure they make it through the conflict.

It's like we are in a jungle and a lion is behind us and we want to escape and save our lives. (Abdul, 40, internally displaced person)

This determination to survive helps explain why respondents have been able to endure so much – displacement and loss in particular – throughout the course of the conflict.

There is a sense that respondents have lost faith in authority and those figures and institutions which, traditionally, have been there to protect them and support their development. They very much hold those in positions of power responsible for the damage caused and suffering

endured and believe that they, rather than the people of Afghanistan, have provoked the conflict.

They should in fact help us to help our brothers and sisters instead of making us fight with each other and shed our own blood. (Abdul, 40, internally displaced person)

That they have done this was seen to be a result of the low levels of education in Afghanistan. Respondents simply believe that those in positions of power do not know any better and, as a result, are of the opinion that violence is an acceptable means of securing what they want.

Whatever is going on in Afghanistan is the result of illiteracy in the country. If they have a few friends and Kalashnikovs in their hands then they do whatever they want. (Zafar, internally displaced person)

Furthermore, respondents make the point that there are two kinds of conflict taking place in Afghanistan, each as dangerous as the other, though admittedly in different ways. To illustrate this, respondents mention that there is an active, almost traditional, style of conflict which results in bloodshed and a propaganda war.

There are two types of war. One which is the 'warm' bloody war with weapons, guns and bombardment, and the other which is a 'cold' war of political parties and propaganda. (Nikhat, 50, member of separated family)

Personal experience of armed conflict

Respondents report how armed conflict affects them in a variety of ways. Initially, they tend to speak of the physical effects of armed conflict; the loss of loved ones and the injuries they personally have sustained. This, however, leads to them consider the emotional scars left by armed conflict: the grief at losing those close to them, as well as living in constant fear of an attack.

Respondents do, however, look beyond personal experience and consider the impact of armed conflict on Afghanistan as a whole. They speak freely of the economic consequences, which they feel will last long into the future as the country will continue to suffer in view of the fact that a whole generation has had its education disrupted. Furthermore, they discuss the cultural impact of the armed conflict and the way it increases distrust in society.

On the whole, while it is a struggle for some respondents to discuss what they have been through, at least initially, they are generally able to express their experiences of the conflict in a coherent and detailed manner. Indeed, there is a sense from analysing the data that, for many, actually speaking about these events has been, in some ways, cathartic for them. Of course, this is not the case across the board and some respondents, particularly women who had been separated from their families, find it emotionally difficult to discuss what they have been through.

Respondents were drawn from four main categories: relatives of missing persons or those who have been separated from their families, first responders, internally displaced persons and victims of mines. Given their very different backgrounds, respondents were able to draw on myriad experiences when discussing their personal experiences of armed conflict.

However, the boundaries between the different groups are more blurred. For instance, mine victims also report being separated from their families, while first responders also ran the risk of being caught up in the fighting and so spoke about their experiences as victims as well. Therefore, it is important to take into account that throughout this report, respondents give their opinion from a number of different perspectives.

The physical impact of the armed conflict

The scale and duration of the armed conflict in Afghanistan mean that many have either experienced injury themselves, have lost family members and loved ones or are in the position of caring for them because their injuries prevent them from doing so themselves. Indeed, the impact of armed conflict is all too apparent when talking to respondents about its physical effects; many had lost their entire families – often in one single attack.

My husband was blown up by a mine. My child was also with him – he was six. My daughter was seven and she was with me. There was dust. I wanted to dive onto the other side but I was blown up with another mine as well. My child that was with me was hit by that mine. (Shukira, mine victim)

First the war took my husband and now I don't have my son and daughter-in-law anymore – they were blown up in the car. (Mehreen, 60, mine victim)

It is very difficult to separate the emotional impact of the armed conflict from the physical effects. To illustrate this, those who have been injured as a result of the conflict often feel helpless and lack self worth and confidence. This is particularly true of victims of mines who have had to undergo amputations as a result of the severity of their injuries. Consequently, they find it hard to care for the surviving members of their family. This may in turn result in feelings of guilt about their perceived inadequacies in this respect.

I'm sitting in one corner of the house seeing my children not getting enough basic amenities. I feel so helpless! Sometimes I wish that my husband was alive, he could have taken care of my children. (Suraya, 45, mine victim)

As the quote above illustrates, the physical impact of armed conflict is far reaching. Injuries caused by shelling and particularly by mines may be particularly severe. This is exacerbated by limited access to health care and medical aid; many speak of how, having lost limbs, they are unable to secure even the most basic of prosthetics. The result is that the injured are often confined to their homes and, consequently, unable to source food or aid easily. Their injuries also prevent them from working, which leaves them without the necessary means to provide for themselves or their families.

The emotional impact of the armed conflict

Understandably, the physical effects of armed conflict also translate into an emotional response. In particular, respondents speak of the immense grief they feel as a result of losing family members and loved ones. That so many of the respondents had lost their whole family obviously exacerbated this finding.

The ways in which their family members died, and the fatal injuries that were inflicted on them, had a lasting emotional effect on those left behind. This is particularly true of those who lost loved ones as a result of mines. They speak of how the damage inflicted by these weapons is so great that few physical remains are left behind. This is, of course, not only horrifying to witness but leaves a lasting psychological impact, as few can forget what they had seen.

Our house was bombed and my family members were completely blown apart and we could only find their fingers and shoes and sandals... after this episode my mother-in-law went insane and she cut her plaits to pay tribute to her dead son and daughter-in-law. (Suraya, 45 years, mine victim)

Furthermore, given the devastating nature of these munitions, some were left unable to bury the dead – simply because there was nothing left of them to bury.

We have seen such times when on the streets there are fights and bombs and you can see only dust and smoke in the air... And once calm returns there is nothing left of people, you cannot even recognize them, you see charred, battered and unrecognizable bodies on the roads – some don't have hands and legs,

sometimes you just recognize the shoes of the dead person. (Mohammad, mine victim)

The constant threat of an attack also makes many fearful for their own and their families' safety. This manifests itself in how respondents behave. Some choose to stay indoors, often underground where it is believed that there is a greater degree of shelter, only going out when absolutely essential. Others find it difficult to live normally, and are particularly fearful about the wellbeing of their loved ones and require frequent reassurances that they are safe.

I call my children ten times until returning to home. Asking them ... is there any suicide attack? Are you safe? Even ... going for shopping is too risky. (Nikhat, 50, member of separated family)

Many, particularly women, also report feeling guilty about the situation that they and their families are in as a result of the conflict. This is especially the case for those who have been injured in the conflict and, subsequently, are unable to provide for themselves. They contrast the fortunes of their families with those who still have an income and can still afford some luxuries, however small.

My daughters are growing up and they see other kids wearing good clothes, etc. and I feel sad that I cannot provide them with good clothes, bags and shoes, etc., even they must be feeling sad. (Suraya, 45, mine victim)

Finally, many are angry about the way in which they are living. They feel that the suffering and hardship they experience is not their fault and they do not believe they will benefit in any way from the conflict.

Displacement and loss

The scale of the conflict in Afghanistan means that many have been forced from their homes; either to find shelter and a safe place to live or because their homes and wider community have been destroyed.

This displacement has a number of knock-on effects. In the first instance, in the rush to flee their homes many lose contact with other family members and loved ones. This, of course, causes a great deal of concern and worry. Respondents are unsure as to the fate of those they have been separated from and this uncertainty is, for some, as hard to bear as knowing that someone has died or been injured.

Furthermore, while many fled in order to find safety, the actual process of leaving often exposes respondents to increased levels of danger. Indeed, many speak of how, when travelling to a new place to live, they lost family members to gunfire, rocket attacks or mines, or were injured themselves. More generally, given the harsh geographical terrain and the extreme weather conditions, respondents speak of being exposed, and struggling to complete the journey to their new homes.

Displacement also has a broader emotional impact on respondents. Many had to leave the home in which they had lived all their lives and, indeed, had often built. Therefore, by leaving, their links with their past and their community are severed.

The village where we were living was bombarded and all the elders and children were killed. From the rest of the houses the survivors could leave and left everything behind. (Janan, 45, internally displaced person)

Furthermore, respondents' sense of identity and personal history is also affected as they are forced to leave behind personal possessions and belongings with sentimental value.

Respondents also speak about the economic effects of displacement. Many previously relied on subsistence-level farming to get by. They typically worked the small plots of land that they

owned and used most of what they grew, selling any surplus. Others, prior to being displaced, had jobs in the communities in which they lived which provided an income for themselves and their families. Displacement has therefore not only removed them from their homes but has also rendered them unable to provide for themselves and their family financially. This, in turn, leaves them dependent on aid – either that provided by humanitarian organizations or by individuals.

Many times we eat only rice and nothing else. We don't have clothes or shoes to wear. (Janan, 45, internally displaced person)

Finally, as a result of displacement, many are left living in makeshift and often substandard accommodation which, they feel, places them in a more vulnerable position than if they had stayed in their homes, which were at least solid structures. This complaint is typically raised by those living in camps for the displaced, where the accommodation is mainly tented.

Sometimes I'm so concerned that this tent will fall on us and we will be hit by a rocket. I look at my wife and children and I feel so worried about their future. (Janan, 35, internally displaced person)

You see we are now in these tents under the rain and snow. (Zafar, internally displaced person)

The economic impact of the armed conflict

Those who are displaced as a result of the conflict often suffer financially. The economic effects of the armed conflict are not, however, restricted to this group alone.

More broadly, some fear that the armed conflict will have a lasting economic effect on Afghanistan and its people. For instance, they speak of how the conflict has disrupted their children's education and about their concern as to whether they will be equipped with the skills needed to secure a reasonable income in later life.

War is dangerous – it even damages our children's future. (Shukira, mine victim)

Similarly, some discuss how the infrastructure of the country has been destroyed by the fighting; markets that were once busy are now little more than a few stalls as there is limited produce to sell, while the frequent bombing has left roads impassable. Consequently, it is thought that there will need to be a great deal of reconstruction work before Afghanistan can have a stable economy and the necessary conditions for people to work in securely.

Indeed, such is the economic impact of the conflict that some are forced to beg for assistance to get by – they simply have no other means of accessing the provisions they need to support themselves and their families.

There is no water where I live now. I go to people and beg for water. (Abdul, 36, internally displaced person)

Some feel ashamed at having to rely on the generosity of others to get by but, at the same time, feel that they would do whatever is needed in order to survive.

Increasing distrust

Respondents recognize that one of the ramifications of living in an area affected by conflict is that everyone automatically falls under the suspicion of being a potential combatant. As a result, respondents report that it is increasingly difficult for them to live a normal life. For instance, they speak of how they are hindered by the authorities when trying to buy food or taking the injured to hospital for treatment. At worst, respondents speak of how they have been victims of a mistaken identity and subsequently imprisoned.

When I was trying to get the people from Panjawee district to the hospital, they detained me and did not let my taxi go further. At another time they have even put me behind the bars for many number of days. (Zarima, 39, first responder)

This not only prevents those trying to assist people in need from undertaking their work as efficiently as possible but, for the general population, serves as a constant reminder that day-to-day living is completely disrupted.

The cultural impact of armed conflict

Finally, because of the age of many of the respondents, when asked to speak about their experiences of armed conflict they not only do so in relation to the most recent conflict between the Taliban and the US-led coalition but also discuss their memories of the armed conflict against Russia.

When recalling armed conflict, respondents feel that their way of life is threatened. They are proud of their heritage and thus are keen to protect what they feel are key elements of their identity.

However, a few note how the conflict not only destroyed important cultural buildings and monuments (such as mosques and places of interest) but, additionally, made some fearful of continuing to practise their old traditions in case they were targeted because of this.

This issue is felt to be less prevalent in the most current conflict – respondents very much identify it as being a military action against the Taliban, rather than the people of Afghanistan or Islam. However, in spite of this, damage to places of cultural significance and the potential curtailment of cultural and religious practices is highlighted as being one of the key impacts of armed conflict.

Civilians' needs in armed conflict

Respondents report that armed conflict forces them to reassess their needs. Those factors that were once taken for granted, such as access to food, water and shelter, are now a daily concern. Given this, respondents feel that it is of the utmost importance that basic needs are met.

Beyond this, they also believe their key need is for uninhibited access to health care. Indeed, some stress that this should be free, so great is their need of it.

Respondents also report a need for effective means of communication to be in place so they can be assured of the safety of their loved ones at all times.

The fundamentals of life become paramount for respondents in a situation of armed conflict. Whereas food, water and shelter may be taken for granted by others, and indeed by respondents themselves before they felt the impact of armed conflict, they have become the priorities in life for many in Afghanistan. Additionally, while they may wish for a better standard of living, and spare money to afford 'luxuries' like new clothes or shoes, respondents tend to recognize that these items could no longer be seen as 'essentials'.

In the first instance, respondents state that their greatest need is for security. They believe they are constantly at risk from attack and this ever-present threat, in turn, affects how they live their lives. Many, for instance, are reluctant to leave their homes or shelter as they fear that doing so will expose them and leave them vulnerable to injury or death. Consequently, they feel that without peaceful conditions, it will be impossible for them to live a normal life or for Afghanistan to develop economically and culturally.

I want the war to be eliminated in Afghanistan. (Karima, 56, relative of missing person)

We are poor people, neither the Government nor the Talibs think about us. We say first give us security since we can be bombarded from anywhere, any bullet can come and strike us, any rocket can strike us. We need safety. (Zaheer, 45, internally displaced person)

Building on this, respondents state that they need a sustained period of peace. This point is particularly pertinent for the older respondents, who also recall their experiences of living through the previous conflicts. While they feel it important to defend their way of life and the causes they are fighting for, they disagree that the way to do this is through armed conflict, given the impact on lives that they – and many others they know – have endured as a result.

However, there is a sense that respondents recognize that, given their country's history, these needs are perhaps not going to be met in the near future. Consequently, they tend to focus on their more immediate and most pressing needs. All respondents speak of needing a constant supply of food and water. The conflict has prevented them from cultivating their own food, as their land has been destroyed, they have been forced to leave their homes and accompanying plots of land, or their injuries mean they are unable to undertake physical work.

Beyond this, respondents speak of needing shelter. Many have had their homes destroyed in the conflict or have had to leave them and, as a result, feel unable to put down roots, in view of the temporary nature of their accommodation. Furthermore, while all are grateful for the assistance afforded to them by humanitarian organizations, some state that the tents they now live in are so flimsy that they feel more vulnerable than they did in their homes. Furthermore, some query whether these tents are sturdy enough to protect them from the harsh weather conditions experienced during the winter months.

Our need is shelter for us to live in because we don't have shelter to live our lives. There is no water where I live now. I go to people and beg for water. (Abdul, 36, internally displaced person)

We are thinking about our life under these tents in this cold winter. We are worrying that the tent will fall on us in the night. We do not have anything of warmth in the tents nor food to eat. When it is raining the tents are leaking and the ground is wet. (Abdullah, 30+, internally displaced person)

A common need mentioned by a number of respondents is the ability to communicate with others. As a result of the conflict, many families have become separated and communities torn apart. This, in turn, causes great concern; respondents are unsure as to the fate of their loved ones and seek reassurances that they are safe. They suggest that an improved communications network would meet their needs in this regard.

Respondents also speak about their need for health care. They recognize that this is a fundamental need at all times but one which assumes a heightened importance during armed conflicts in view of the increased risk of wounding and injury. Indeed, such is the severity of the injuries described by respondents that medical assistance not only ensures survival but, furthermore, raises the chances of the victims being able to live a relatively normal life afterwards.

Finally, while respondents spontaneously speak of their immediate needs, they recognize that their needs will change on the cessation of hostilities. For instance, some discuss how, once peace has been restored, they will need assistance in retraining to enable them to earn a living. More broadly, they feel that they will need help in rebuilding Afghanistan and ensuring that its people can come to terms with what they have experienced.

The main need is that my family should have security. They should have food. They should go to school, study and find a job so they don't fight. (Maliha, 30, first responder)

Humanitarian assistance

Given the number of basic needs that respondents have, and the struggles they face in meeting these, the provision of humanitarian assistance is essential. Indeed, in many cases, respondents report that the provision of such assistance means the difference between life and death. Consequently, they are grateful for all humanitarian assistance provided to them.

Frequently, respondents speak of the provision of food aid. While the quality of this is, at times, criticized they recognize that it provides them with a basic level of sustenance. Similar sentiments are expressed in relation to the shelters they have been given to live in; while they appreciate that they have a refuge, the standard of the tented accommodation is questioned.

Respondents mention the work conducted by humanitarian organizations to find information about members of their family they have become separated from. While the news received as part of this process is often bad, respondents at least have the reassurance of knowing what has happened and having a definite outcome.

Respondents also mention how the humanitarian organizations are working to help secure Afghanistan's economic future. They mention that they are being equipped with new skills, such as tailoring, to help them earn an income.

Regarding the humanitarian organizations working in Afghanistan, the ICRC and the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society are the most frequently mentioned. They are felt to offer a wide range of support services and are perceived as offering help to anyone who needs it; respondents are convinced that they do not offer support based on religious, ethnic or political lines. Furthermore, respondents are gratified to note that the ICRC plans to remain in the country for some time and believe that the longevity of its support will help them rebuild in the future.

However, while the humanitarian assistance from humanitarian organizations received is appreciated, respondents suggest improvements that can be made both in terms of the kind of support offered and how it can be delivered. For instance, some respondents suspect that more assistance is given to those who have contacts or are well connected, meaning that the help does not always reach those most in need. Additionally, some believe that help is predominantly distributed in urban areas, leaving those who live in more isolated places vulnerable.

Finally, some believe that the provision of assistance to the people of Afghanistan will be greatly improved if those working for humanitarian organizations are protected and spared from attack.

The provision of humanitarian assistance often means the difference between respondents being able to meet their basic needs for survival, or struggling to get by.

However, perhaps because the stakes are so high in relation to the impact that receiving humanitarian assistance can have, respondents are at times critical both of the kind of assistance that is available to them, and the way it is delivered.

The importance of assistance

Given the constraints and privations to which many respondents and their families are subject, humanitarian assistance often proves the difference between surviving or not. The kind of assistance which respondents typically speak about is that which helps them to meet their basic needs. In the first instance, they discuss the provision of food. While there are a few complaints as to the quality of these supplies, with some suggesting that even their livestock found the grain they were given unpalatable, most recognize that food assistance is the only means by which they are able to get the sustenance they need to survive.

They [the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society] donated rice and beans. Rice is not good. We eat it because we have to. It is difficult to pass the time on rice and beans. Anyway, we thank the Red Crescent who donated to us. Those who received donations are very happy because they can live a good life for a few days. (Abdul, 35, internally displaced person)

There were some people who didn't have water to drink and food to eat. The Red Crescent went to them and helped them. It helps the people whose financial position is not good. (Maliha, 30, first responder)

Similar sentiments are expressed about the provision of shelter. While none of those respondents who have been displaced would have chosen to live in tented accommodation, they are grateful that they have been provided with somewhere to live. Furthermore, the tented communities often afford them easier access to aid which, of course, is appreciated.

While the provision of health care and medical assistance is limited, respondents express much gratitude for the treatment they are given. This is particularly true of mine victims who, as a result of their injuries, have had limbs amputated. The provision of prostheses liberates them to a great extent and allows them to live as normal a life as possible.

I tell you the best thing in the world that they did for me is to give me an artificial leg. It may not be original but I can at least go about my work normally and so much so that I can run like and I can actually even go to the gym! Thanks to them that they have changed my life completely. (Abdul, 45, mine victim)

Many respondents wish to be able to communicate with their families and loved ones to determine whether they are safe. To this end, the humanitarian organizations that work in Afghanistan with separated families and displaced persons to help find out what has happened to those they have lost contact with are appreciated. Given the severity of the conflict, the news was often not what had been hoped for as sometimes the family member is dead. However, respondents speak of the relief of at least knowing for sure what has happened to their relatives and friends, as this knowledge provides them with some closure and enables them to move on with their lives.

Furthermore, as a direct result of the assistance respondents are given, separated families are sometimes reunited. For instance, one respondent had lost touch with her son and through working with the ICRC the respondent discovered that her son is now living abroad and is safe and, as a result, they began to communicate again.

While this section demonstrates how respondents' immediate needs are being met through the provision of humanitarian assistance, there is also evidence to suggest that the help they are being given now will stand them in good stead for the future. This is especially the case for women who have either been separated from their husbands, or who have been widowed as a result of the conflict. While this, of course, has a great emotional impact on the women concerned, it also affects them economically, given that their husbands were very often solely responsible for bringing in the families' income.

In recognition of this, some female respondents in this situation have been equipped with vocational skills to enable them to make their own living and provide for themselves and their family. For instance, a few of the women who participated in this research speak of how they have undertaken a tailoring course and feel that these new skills will enable them to bring in some money and support themselves in the future.

Humanitarian assistance from organizations

Respondents speak of a number of humanitarian organizations which work in Afghanistan to provide them with help and assistance, including the ICRC, the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society, CARE and UNHCR. Of these, the ICRC and the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society are the most frequently mentioned and highly regarded. This is partly because of the distinctive

red cross and red crescent emblems. Given that many respondents are illiterate, the high levels of recognition of the emblems ensure that they know who is offering them assistance and, importantly, that this help can be trusted.

We are illiterate, but we knew that there was the Red Cross sign when it gave us wheat... It was written on the beans packet. It was written on everything they gave us. (Shukira, mine victim)

The ICRC and the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society are believed to offer a wide range of support services to people in Afghanistan. For instance, respondents speak of how they meet their basic needs through the provision of food and water, shelter and medical assistance. Regarding health care, first responders describe how ICRC and Afghanistan Red Crescent personnel work in difficult conditions but, in recognition of the severity of the conflict, seek to ensure that all those who need medical aid are able to access it. To do this, clinics and hospitals are kept open all day every day and serve everyone, irrespective of their political or religious affiliation.

Our clinic was open to everybody and my father was in the service of people always at night and day. He was distributing the medicine to all the people. (Zarima, 39, first responder)

The ICRC clinics are also mentioned by mine victims as providing them with essential treatment. This is particularly the case for those who have had amputations and were then provided with prosthetic limbs by the ICRC. This treatment helps build the confidence of such respondents and enables them to live more normally.

Again, the Red Cross has helped. I didn't have one of my legs and walked with a walking stick. Right now I walk like a healthy person and people don't know whether I am crippled or not. This is a big change... I don't feel the lack of a leg and I am very happy with this. (Ahmad, mine victim)

Beyond this, respondents report that the ICRC and the Afghanistan Red Crescent work closely with separated families and internally displaced persons to help reunite them with family members and loved ones. Of course, in undertaking this kind of work, it was often the case that the ICRC and the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society discovered that some had died as a result of the conflict. In these instances, the organizations worked with the families to recover the bodies and help with their burial. While, of course, respondents express their grief at this outcome they are nonetheless relieved that, in the first instance, they have answers to the questions about the fate of their family members. Secondly, and equally importantly, the fact that they are able to bury their loved ones and subsequently have a place of memorial for them, enables them to achieve some kind of closure to what they have experienced.

ICRC helped me in carrying my dead daughter from home to hospital, check up in the hospital and then back to home and then helping with burying her. (Zeenat, 45, member of separated family)

It is not just the kind of assistance that the ICRC and the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society provide that is appreciated by respondents but, furthermore, the sense that the organizations will be there for as long as needed. Respondents speak critically of some organizations that only helped out for a short time and did not recognize that such was the level of destruction that the people of Afghanistan would need help and support for many years to come. In contrast, the ICRC is noted as having been working in the country for a number of years, which gives respondents hope that it will remain.

Other organizations are also singled out by respondents as having provided them with assistance during the conflict. CARE, for instance, is highlighted as having provided education and skills training to those affected by the armed conflict and, in particular, women. Given respondents' concerns about their future potential and ability to earn an income and provide

for themselves and their families, this practical and forward-looking support is particularly welcomed.

They enrolled me in a tailoring course...they didn't pay a salary, but said that we should learn tailoring and become self-sufficient. They gave us three rolls of cloth and they said that we should make children's clothes to sell. (Karima, 56, member of separated family)

Respondents are often critical that they have not been assisted as much as they should. While improvements into both how and what assistance is delivered are covered in the next section it is worth mentioning here that respondents feel a number of international organizations are notable by their perceived absence in Afghanistan.

We lived in a very bad condition and I did not receive assistance from anyone – United Nations, governments and other NGOs. We lost loved ones and no one assisted us. (Zafar, internally displaced person)

Overall there is a strong sense that, given how long the armed conflict has lasted in Afghanistan, and the high levels of awareness internationally about its impact, the amount of help given should be greater.

Desired improvements to assistance

While all respondents appreciate the assistance they are given by the various humanitarian organizations working in Afghanistan and recognize that this often makes the difference between them surviving or not, this is not to say that they do not believe that both the kind of help they are given, and the way it is distributed, cannot be improved.

In the first instance, respondents suggest that some individuals working for some of the humanitarian organizations are corrupt and tend to offer greater levels of help to those they know. As a result, there is a strong sense that the aid available is not fairly distributed and it is not necessarily the most deserving who receive help and support. That this point is reiterated by first responders themselves lends this viewpoint much credibility.

Good people should lead the assistance. They should have conscience because a person without conscience cannot do anything correctly. One of our relatives was working in an office. He gave to his family more than 30 cards. I was witness of this. (Zarina, 39, first responder)

In this connection, there is a sense that individuals with money or who had previously held positions of power are also able to receive more than they deserve. Respondents feel that this is in contrast to ordinary citizens who receive only minimal support, if any at all.

Unless you are a first class citizen or powerful or have contacts you will not have assistance. (Suraya, 45, mine victim)

The point is also raised by respondents that the assistance available tends to be distributed in urban areas. The upshot of this is that those living in rural areas feel that they have not received their fair share. There may, of course, be reasons for this; as discussed elsewhere in this report, respondents recognize that the conflict has damaged the infrastructure of Afghanistan, with many roads being destroyed and, consequently, villages cut off. Furthermore, respondents themselves recognize that by virtue of their isolation, the rural areas tend to be less secure. However, this still causes consternation, with those living in rural areas believing that their needs are overlooked in favour of urban dwellers.

The only reasons was security problems that those offices couldn't dare go to the remote villages and districts, so we didn't receive any help. If we lived in a city, maybe we would've received help. (Mohammed, mine victim)

To rectify these issues, some respondents suggest that the people of Afghanistan should be surveyed so as to accurately assess their needs. On analysing this data, the available assistance can then be distributed accordingly, with appointed trusted ‘agents’ ensuring that the supplies reach those for whom they are intended.

Respondents also suggest that the programmes of help and support be in place for longer so the benefits can be felt. This is felt to be particularly important given the wide-ranging and far-reaching effects of the conflict in Afghanistan. Respondents believe that their problems cannot be remedied by receiving help for a few days at a time and, if they and their families are to recover from what they have experienced, a long and sustained system of assistance needs to be implemented.

It solves problems for only a few days and besides we are about 770 families – we need more help and want the world to help us. (Abdul, 48, internally displaced person)

Finally, respondents feel strongly that the provision of aid and assistance will be improved if first responders are spared from attack and protected at all times in the conflict. Currently, it is believed that they are hindered from doing their work by needless bureaucratic checks on their status, arrests and being caught up in the fighting. While respondents express a great deal of sympathy for the first responders in their plight, they also recognize that they themselves and their families suffer as a result.

Humanitarian gestures

While all respondents appreciate the work of the humanitarian organizations in Afghanistan, they also speak of the positive impact made to the quality of their lives by the individual acts of kindness they experienced from their countrymen and -women. Few are surprised that such acts are committed regularly; showing compassion to one’s fellow human being is considered a central tenet of Islam.

In particular, they speak of how individuals provide them with financial assistance through gifts or loans. This money is either put towards the purchase of everyday items, such as food, or to help fund one-off emergency payments such as medical care.

Beyond this, though, respondents mention how they had been provided with food and shelter. This help is always appreciated and, furthermore, it serves to provide respondents with hope that there are solid, humane foundations for Afghanistan to build on to help create a stable future.

Complementing the help and support provided by the different humanitarian organizations working in Afghanistan, respondents also appreciate, and rely on, the assistance of their neighbours and, in extreme conditions, strangers to enable them to survive. Respondents are, however, not surprised that such help has been afforded to them by their fellow citizens – even when they often have as little as those they were assisting as they believe that the values of kindness and generosity are particular characteristics of the people of Afghanistan and, indeed, central to Islam.

*We have given shelter to such people who have come here from conflict areas.
We have helped this person, protected him – giving him wheat or an animal.
I surely helped them – they are Muslim. This is humanitarian help. (Hajji, 65,
internally displaced person)*

Many respondents speak of how individuals known to them have helped them financially during the armed conflict. The conflict has had a profound economic impact on many of the respondents and their families. Injury and displacement, for example, are just two of the factors which prevent them from earning an income. This, coupled with the perceived sporadic nature of the distribution of humanitarian aid, means that respondents often turn to other

members of their family and their friends, as well as notable figures in the community, for financial assistance.

These loans or gifts are used for a number of purposes. Some use the money to simply enable them to get by and provide their families with food and clothes. Others put the money towards larger, emergency needs such as hospital treatment or building shelter following the destruction of their homes.

Doctor Bayat also helped me. He lent me 10,000 Afghanis [200 USD]. We rebuilt the house which my cousin gave us. (Suraya, mine victim)

Yesterday I borrowed 3,000 Afghanis [60 USD] and went to the doctor. My wife was sick...In all, I have borrowed about 50,000 Afghanis [1,000 USD]. I thank my friends who have helped me and given me money. (Abdul, 36, internally displaced person)

Beyond this, respondents report numerous acts of kindness which they experienced at the hands of their fellow countrymen and -women. These range from providing shelter, sustenance and transport through to helping others find and bury the dead.

Only dear Rahmani helped us somehow. He gave us some rice, some beans, some oil and some blankets. He has helped us with such things and we are very grateful. (Abdul, 36, internally displaced person)

These acts are not only useful and appreciated in their own right but, furthermore, provide respondents with the hope that in spite of all they have endured, the moral foundations of their country are strong enough to rebuild a decent and civilized society once the armed conflict has ceased.

Behaviour during Armed Conflict

Rules of conflict

All agree on the importance of rules governing behaviour during an armed conflict. Indeed, respondents are particularly keen that this should be the case given their experiences of armed conflict on a daily basis. In short, they feel that civilians should be spared from armed conflict.

Respondents feel that this could be achieved by waging the conflict away from the areas in which civilians live. In this connection, they believe that sites used for religious and social gatherings, such as mosques and market places, should not be targeted. Finally, they also state that those who have been injured should be protected and should be able to travel to obtain medical treatment without hindrance.

However, while respondents have clear ideas as to what rules governing behaviour in conflict should cover, they have little idea that such laws actually exist and, even if they did, little hope that these laws would be respected.

Given all they have experienced, respondents strongly agree on the importance of having rules to govern the behaviour of combatants in an armed conflict. Broadly, all feel that civilians should not be affected by the fighting and, in particular, women and children should be protected. They believe this could be achieved by ensuring that conflict zones are located some distance away from towns and villages.

In this connection, there is strong agreement that places used for religious and social gatherings such as mosques and markets should not be targeted in the fighting. Respondents state that if armed conflict cannot be restricted to a certain area, then at least provision should be made for civilians to continue as normal a life as possible. This point is particularly made by first responders who, in their line of work, have seen a number of social occasions disrupted by the conflict.

We cannot put on the lights during a wedding since if they see any lighting they will attack the place. (Zarima, 39, first responder)

Many also comment that injured civilians should be protected. This is an issue that, again, is often raised by first responders, alongside other respondents. They mention how they had witnessed injured and vulnerable civilians being targeted in the conflict and feel that this behaviour is unacceptable, given that they could not protect themselves.

Why should they kill him? They should give him medicine. (Hajji, 65 internally displaced person)

However, in spite of the fact that respondents have strong views as to what the rules of conflict should be, few know that such laws exist or, even if they do, have any hope that they will be respected. In making this point, respondents draw on what they have experienced. They feel that, given what they have seen and been through, they have no evidence to suggest that people involved in fighting in the armed conflict will behave in line with the rules.

Right to health care and protecting health workers

Given that respondents see access to health care as a fundamental need, it follows that they have strong views on access to health care and respect and protection of health workers.

In the first instance, all agree that everyone, regardless of political affiliation, ethnic origin or religious beliefs, should have access to health care. This view even extends to those who they see as perpetrating the violence in Afghanistan. Indeed, some suggest that everyone should be entitled to free health care to ensure that those suffering from poverty can access the assistance they need.

All respondents also believe that health workers should be protected during armed conflict. They say that this point is particularly valid in relation to those health practitioners working in Afghanistan in a voluntary capacity.

However, in spite of this support for the protection of health workers, first responders discuss how they have frequently been hindered in their work to assist the injured. Such experiences range from their vehicles being stopped until they can provide identification through to health workers being arrested. Indeed, some mention how they have been caught up in the fighting, which not only poses a risk to their own lives but also prevents them from helping others.

Right to health care

Respondents see health care as being a primary need and one which is essential for life. This attitude, therefore, drives their views on the right to health care and medical assistance.

All respondents believe that everyone, regardless of their political views, ethnicity or religion, is entitled to health care. This includes combatants in the armed conflict. Even though respondents recognize that this group has inflicted great pain on them and their families, they still believe that such groups should have the right to access medical aid as and when it is needed.

It doesn't matter whether he is a civilian or a combatant, they should have access to medicines and to aid. (Shukira, mine victim)

Some even extend this view further and feel that people should be entitled to free medical health care. This is particularly mentioned by those who have had to borrow money in order to pay for medical treatment in the past.

Protecting health workers

Given that all respondents agree that everyone should be entitled to health care, and that being able to access medical assistance is one of their key needs during armed conflict, it is perhaps not surprising that all also agree that health workers should be protected. This is felt to be a particularly valid point, given that respondents recognize that a number of health workers are in Afghanistan in a voluntary capacity. They state that as they are donating their time and expertise to help in the conflict, they should not be adversely affected by its negative ramifications.

These people are neutral they don't belong to any party and yet they are not only at risk but also have to ask for permission and then go to the battlefield to collect the wounded! (Javed, 35, mine victim)

Why should doctors and health workers be killed? They should be protected because they serve the people. (Shukira, mine victim)

It is believed that ICRC and Afghanistan Red Crescent Society health personnel are protected more than others. Respondents feel that this is in no small part due to the high level of recognition on all sides of the distinctive red cross and red crescent emblems, and the associations that these emblems carry.

However, in spite of this, a number of first responders speak of how they are hindered from conducting their work in the field. This may involve simply being prevented from working with the speed and urgency sometimes required. For instance, first responders often mention requiring permission to travel to areas where the fighting is particularly intense to provide assistance and, additionally, that they have to complete a great deal of paperwork and provide proof of their identity to be allowed to work. Similarly, others report that they are sometimes not allowed to take the injured to hospital to get the treatment they need. Others speak of how, in undertaking their work, they have actually been caught up in the fighting. This not only poses a risk to their own lives but, furthermore, means they are unable to help those in need.

The Geneva Conventions

Few respondents report knowing about the Geneva Conventions, perhaps because of the low levels of education and literacy in Afghanistan. Indeed, awareness tends to be restricted to first responders, who feel it is their duty to understand the provisions of this law.

However, in spite of this low level of awareness, clear associations are made with the Geneva Conventions. Respondents believe they are related to the ICRC, and that they exist to help enforce peace – particularly in developing nations.

All respondents agree with the aims of the Geneva Conventions – perhaps not surprisingly, given what they have experienced – and their provisions on how people should conduct themselves in a conflict. However, some are sceptical as to how likely it is that such rules can be enforced.

First responders feel that education programmes designed to raise awareness and understanding about the Geneva Conventions will help ensure that, in future, they are better respected.

It is perhaps not surprising that, given the low literacy levels among respondents, there is a lack of awareness about the existence and content of the Geneva Conventions.

We are illiterate people and do not know what it is. (Zafar, internally displaced person)

Typically, knowledge about them tends to be restricted to first responders. That said, a few respondents make clear associations with the Geneva Conventions. The Geneva Conventions are often associated with the ICRC and there is a strong sense that these rules exist to help enforce peace. Respondents believe that they give the ICRC the authority it needs to work during the conflict.

They work in making it better for humans. (Muhalem, mine victim)

However, given respondents' strong beliefs in the importance of rules governing conduct in armed conflict, it is understandable that, on learning about the Geneva Conventions, all endorse them. They believe that human rights should be respected, even during time of conflict, and that the Geneva Conventions provide an ideal vehicle for ensuring that this happens. In spite of these opinions, though, there is some scepticism on the part of respondents that such rules will be respected. They had witnessed such terrible things during the armed conflict that they lack the hope that it is possible to govern behaviour, even with the existence of such laws.

After hearing about it, it's great but it should be applied. If these rules are there then no one can harm prisoners of war, children and women and also us. (Zarima, 39, first responder)

As mentioned above, first responders tend to be more aware and knowledgeable about the content and scope of the Geneva Conventions. There is a sense that, given their role, it is their duty to understand these rules and their history.

Yes, I have heard of Geneva Conventions, at the origin there was a man who devoted his entire life to help people in the wars; especially he helped the wounded people. From that date onwards, ICRC was founded and it still works in this field. (Zarima, 39, first responder)

However, like the ordinary citizens of Afghanistan, they are very uncertain as to whether the Geneva Conventions have the positive impact during a conflict that they should. To mitigate this, they suggest that greater efforts should be channelled into raising awareness of the Geneva Conventions through, for example, educational programmes in schools. They feel that if more people understand the aims of these laws then greater efforts will be made to abide by them.

Conclusions: priority actions

In spite of all that they have been through, respondents remain optimistic about the future of Afghanistan. However, they are of the opinion that their future security will be considerably helped if key messages are communicated to the wider world.

In the first instance, they are keen that what they have experienced should be communicated to the wider world. They believe that if this happens, it is not only less likely that future conflicts will occur, given the heightened awareness of the ramifications, but, furthermore, that they will be more likely to receive the vital humanitarian assistance they need.

Building on this, respondents wish to convey that while they remain grateful for the assistance given to them thus far, more still needs to be done. Respondents believe that by telling their story, they will be more likely to receive targeted and sustained programmes of assistance and support.

Furthermore, they believe that those who have left Afghanistan – the Diaspora – and have positions of power and influence should be encouraged to donate to their former country. In this, they want to strengthen the bonds between fellow citizens.

Finally, first responders have specific messages they feel should be communicated: that international law governing behaviour in conflict should be respected; that they are doing their best to make a difference under the trying conditions in which they work; and, finally, that in spite of all their efforts, the scale of the conflict is such that they require further assistance to bring about the positive change that the people of Afghanistan require.

Respondents in Afghanistan have gone through a great deal and continue to do so. However, they have not lost hope. Indeed, they remain optimistic that in view of the nature of the people in Afghanistan, and with help, there are solid foundations in place to help provide for a stable and prosperous future.

In my opinion, promotion of the cultural and economic level of our country can be effective... we are in poor conditions now. When we are helped, we can organize our education, build good roads, buildings and some other things. (Abeda, 45, member of separated family)

However, given all that they have endured, respondents are eager that the rest of the world understands the plight of the people of Afghanistan and, more broadly, the negative effects of armed conflict. They believe that if awareness is raised on such issues then future conflicts will be less likely to occur, as those in positions of power will understand the full range of consequences that will arise as a result of this course of action. They also speak from the perspective of self-interest here and feel that if awareness is raised, then they will be more likely to receive additional assistance and support from the international community.

I expect the world community to try and help for peace and security in this country. (Hajji, 65, internally displaced person)

Building on this, respondents are keen to communicate to the rest of the world that while they appreciate the humanitarian assistance they have received thus far, there remains much more that can, and should, be done for them. They feel that by reporting their situation and needs, it is more likely that they will receive the help they need and that it will make a tangible difference in the years to come.

And beside that, my message for the countries that are involved in the assistances for Afghanistan is this – that they should find a way by which the assistance should be helpful. (Abdul, 36, internally displaced person)

Indeed, some are keen to send a message to the Diaspora Afghan population that, as they have links to Afghanistan, they should now use their power, wealth and influence to bring about a positive change in the country. They feel that by emphasizing the bonds of shared nationality, it will help overcome other differences in the future.

Our message for the Afghan businessmen and rich people abroad is that we really have a lot of problems in everything. We have problems in education, in water, in poverty, in health. Clinics should be built. There are a lot of problems. (Mohammad, 36, internally displaced person)

First responders have specific messages that they believe should be communicated. In the first instance, they request that international law governing the rule of conduct in war be respected. Secondly, they would like it to be known that they are doing their best given the very trying conditions in which they are working. Finally, they think it ought to be reported that even though the international organizations remain in Afghanistan, the scale of the conflict is such that the task facing them with regard to assisting people on a day-to-day basis, let alone the country's future reconstruction, is immense. With this in mind, they are keen to convey the fact that more assistance is needed so as to help the people of Afghanistan live as normal a life as possible until such time as peace is restored to the country, when the focus can shift towards rebuilding.

Specific trends for different groups

Internally displaced persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement is a common result of armed conflict in Afghanistan and there is a lot of overlap between displaced persons and other groups in this research (for example, separated families and mine victims). The common effects of displacement are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those who have been displaced often find it very hard to get by financially, and to provide for their families; • the accommodation provided for them is often of a poor standard, meaning they are exposed to the often extreme climatic elements; • given their precarious situation, they depend on the work of humanitarian organizations and the provision of food and other assistance to survive; • the loss of personal belongings and sentimental objects can cause some to lose their sense of identity; • they are continuously worried about their safety and are unconvinced that the shelter they have been provided with will afford them the protection they need from the armed conflict.
Members of separated families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the missing have been taken prisoner or kidnapped during the conflict. Most commonly, respondents say that families are separated when fleeing the areas of fighting. • The psychological effect of being separated from loved ones is great. Respondents report being constantly concerned as to the safety of missing persons and say that not knowing their whereabouts is as hard to bear as if they received the news that they had been killed. • Given the impact that being separated from a family member can have, many report that they do not feel that they have been helped enough by the various humanitarian organizations working in Afghanistan. To help mitigate their concerns, they suggest that communication networks should be improved to enable them to more easily trace, and keep in contact with, those they have lost. • These respondents also feel that greater knowledge of the Geneva Conventions would help ensure that others do not face a similar situation in the future.
First responders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First responders see the armed conflict from two perspectives: as those who are trying to assist the people of Afghanistan and from their standpoint of being themselves subject to the negative effects of armed conflict. • In spite of the difficulties they face in conducting their work, first responders speak of a sense of fulfilment from having helped people and saved lives. • However, the conditions in which they work, coupled with the fact that they know they cannot help all those who need assistance, has a damaging effect on their morale. • First responders speak of feeling unsafe and report that they are hindered when conducting their work. For instance, they report being stopped, detained and their vehicles being attacked, which prevents them from carrying out their work effectively. • First responders feel strongly that the Geneva Conventions are not being respected in Afghanistan and believe that greater levels of awareness of the content of these laws will help mitigate against this in the future.
Mine victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group tends to be the most physically effected and emotionally traumatized given the gravity of what they have experienced, and the ramifications this has for their future quality of life. • Their physical injuries prevent them from earning a living and, therefore, supporting their families. This, in turn, causes them to feel a great deal of guilt and provokes the sense that they are letting their loved ones down. • Because of this, they are more likely to rely on the assistance of humanitarian organizations to support them and their families to meet their basic needs. • Their experiences also lead them to believe strongly that civilians should be spared the effects of armed conflict.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

OPINION SURVEY

Sample profile

Afghanistan (Weighted profile)		
	Number	%
Total	535	100
Gender		
Male	273	51
Female	262	49
Age		
18-24	167	31
25-29	64	12
30-34	68	13
35-39	52	10
40-44	58	11
45-49	40	8
50-64	63	12
65 or over	22	4
Ethnicity		
Pashtun	241	45
Tajik	194	36
Uzbek	31	6
Turkmen	8	2
Hazara	43	8
Baloch	5	1
Nuristani	2	*
Arab	11	2
Area		
Urban	115	22
Rural	420	78
Education		
Illiterate	332	62
Up to 5 years	38	7
6-10 years	80	15
11-12 years	75	14
Graduate/post graduate	10	2

Afghanistan (Weighted profile)		
	Number	%
Province		
Kabul	77	14
Kapisa	9	2
Parwan	14	3
Wardak	12	2
Logar	8	2
Ghazni	26	5
Paktia	12	2
Paktika	9	2
Khost	12	2
Nangarhar	31	6
Laghman	9	2
Kunar	10	2
Nooristan	3	1
Badakhshan	20	4
Takhar	20	4
Baghlan	19	3
Kunduz	21	4
Balkh	27	5
Samangan	8	2
Juzjan	11	2
Faryab	21	4
Badghis	10	2
Herat	38	7
Farah	11	2
Nimroz	3	1
Helmand	19	4
Kandahar	25	5
Zabul	6	1
Uruzgan	7	1
Ghor	14	3
Bamyan	10	2
Panjshir	3	1
Dehkundi	10	2

Sampling details

Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the percentage figure concerned. For example, for a question where 50% of the people in the full sample of 535 give a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary by more than 4 percentage points plus or minus (i.e. between 46% and 54%) from the result that would have been obtained from a census of the entire population (using the same procedures).

Some examples of the tolerances that may apply in this report are given in the table below.

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels (at the 95% confidence level)			
<i>Unweighted base (535)</i>	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
Size of sample on which survey result is based			
535 (All respondents)	3	4	4
264 (Men affected by armed conflict)	4	6	6
183 (Tajik people affected by armed conflict)	4	7	7

Source: Ipsos

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results between different elements (sub-groups) of the sample – and between the 1999 and 2009 results. A difference must be of at least a certain size to be statistically significant. The table below shows the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons of sub-groups and between the 1999 and 2009 research.

Differences required for significance at the 95% confidence level at or near these percentages			
<i>Unweighted base (535)</i>	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
Size of 2009 sub-groups and 1999 vs. 2009 samples involved in this survey			
264 (Men affected by armed conflict) vs. 250 (Women affected by armed conflict)	5	8	9
995 (1999 full sample) vs. 535 (2009 full sample)	3	5	5

Source: Ipsos

Marked-up questionnaire

Questionnaire		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interviews with 535 people ● Aged 18+ ● Conducted face-to-face, from 13 February to 21 February 2009 ● Results are weighted ● 'POW' indicates a question also asked in 1999 ● An asterisk (*) indicates a result of less than 1% (but not zero) ● A 'n/a' denotes 'not asked' ● Base for each question is all (535), unless shown otherwise 	
INTRODUCTION		
	<p>Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am from AcSOR, an independent social research agency. We are conducting interviews in this area and would like your help with this. The interview will last around 15 minutes and is about your experiences of and opinions on the armed conflict in Afghanistan.</p>	
AA) ON CONFLICT IN GENERAL		
ASK ALL ↴	Q1. Have you personally experienced armed conflict, or not?	
		%
	Yes	60
	No	40
	Don't know	1
ASK IF 'YES' AT Q1 ↴	Refused	0
	Q2. Was this in Afghanistan, or was it somewhere else?	
	<i>Base: All experiencing armed conflict at Q1-320</i>	%
	In Afghanistan	97
	Somewhere else (specify)	1
	Both	2
Don't know	0	

ASK IF 'YES' AT Q1 ↴

Q3A. I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during the armed conflict in Afghanistan. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Afghanistan? For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you.

ROTATE STATEMENTS. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT

<i>Base: All experiencing armed conflict at Q1-320</i>	Happened	Did not happen	Don't know	Refused
	%	%	%	%
Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere	76	24	*	0
Imprisoned	21	78	1	0
Kidnapped or taken as a hostage	9	90	2	0
Tortured	43	56	1	0
Been humiliated	55	44	1	0
Lost contact with a close relative	61	37	2	0
A member of your immediate family was killed during the armed conflict	45	55	*	0
Serious damage to your property	66	34	*	0
Wounded by the fighting	35	64	*	0
Combatants took food away	34	61	5	0
Had your home looted	42	56	2	0
Somebody you knew well was a victim of sexual violence	13	81	6	0
ROTATE STATEMENTS BELOW HERE SEPARATELY AFTER OTHERS				
No or very limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)	64	28	8	0
No or very limited access to health care	68	25	7	0
Lost all my belongings	47	43	10	0
Lost my means of income (e.g. job, revenue, farm land, etc.)	60	32	8	0
The area where I lived came under enemy control	56	37	7	0

ASK IF NOT 'YES' AT Q1 ↴

Q3B. I'm going to ask you about how you yourself have been affected by the armed conflict in Afghanistan. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Afghanistan? For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you?

ROTATE STATEMENTS. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT

<i>Base: All not experiencing armed conflict at Q1-212</i>	Happened	Did not happen	Don't know	Refused
	%	%	%	%
Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere	36	58	6	0
Imprisoned	4	88	8	0
Kidnapped or taken as a hostage	2	91	7	0
Tortured	9	84	7	0
Been humiliated	29	65	6	0
Lost contact with a close relative	37	55	8	0
A member of your immediate family was killed during the armed conflict	22	71	7	0
Serious damage to your property	34	59	7	0
Wounded by the fighting	12	81	7	0
Combatants took food away	16	76	8	0
Had your home looted	20	69	10	0
Somebody you knew well was a victim of sexual violence	5	83	11	0
ROTATE STATEMENTS BELOW HERE SEPARATELY AFTER OTHERS				
No or very limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)	56	41	3	0
No or very limited access to health care	59	38	3	0
Lost all my belongings	22	70	8	0
Lost my means of income (e.g. job, revenue, farm land, etc.)	38	54	8	0
The area where I lived came under enemy control	21	73	6	0

ALL RESPONDENTS ↓	Q3A/Q3B. I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during the armed conflict in Afghanistan. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the armed conflict in Afghanistan? For each one, please indicate whether it happened or did not happen to you (POW)?				
	Base: All respondents	Happened		Did not happen	Don't know
		1999	2009	2009	2009
		%	%	%	%
	Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere	83	60	37	3
	Imprisoned	22	14	82	4
	Kidnapped or taken as a hostage	12	6	90	4
	Tortured	43	29	67	4
	Been humiliated ('Felt humiliated' in 1999)	55	44	52	3
	Lost contact with a close relative	59	51	44	5
	A member of your immediate family was killed during the armed conflict	53	35	61	3
	Serious damage to your property	70	53	44	3
	Wounded by the fighting	32	26	71	3
	Combatants took food away	49	27	67	6
	Had your home looted	51	33	61	5
	Somebody you knew well was a victim of sexual violence ('...raped by combatants' in 1999)	16	10	81	9
	ROTATE STATEMENTS BELOW HERE SEPARATELY AFTER OTHERS				
	No or very limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)	n/a	60	33	6
	No or very limited access to health care	n/a	64	30	5
	Lost all my belongings	n/a	36	54	10
	Lost my means of income (e.g. job, revenue, farm land, etc.)	n/a	52	41	8
	The area where I lived came under enemy control	n/a	42	51	7
ASK ALL ↓	Q4. And have you been affected by armed conflict in Afghanistan in any other ways? What ways were those?				
	SINGLE CODE				
					%
		Yes – specify			18
		No			76
		Don't know			6
		Refused			*
		YES – SPECIFY: TOP MENTIONS (> 5% of respondents)			YES
		Base: All who have been affected by armed conflict in any other ways at Q4-89			
					%
		TOTAL MENTIONS – PEOPLE ARE KILLED/INJURED			31
		Innocent people killed/injured (unspecified)			12
		Civilians killed/injured			6
		Relatives are killed/injured			6
		TOTAL MENTIONS – TYPES OF VIOLENCE/ATTACKS			20
		Suicide attacks			6
		TOTAL MENTIONS – PERSONAL SUFFERING			19
		I could not continue my education			12
		I was injured			5
		TOTAL MENTIONS – BUILDINGS ATTACKED/DESTROYED			17
		People's homes			5
		TOTAL MENTIONS – INTERNAL FIGHTING			13
		Fighting between tribes (unspecified)			6
	TOTAL MENTIONS – DETERIORATION IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING			10	

<p>ASK ALL WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED CONFLICT – ‘YES’ AT Q1 AND ‘YES’ AT Q2/ CODE 1 (IN AFGHANISTAN) OR ANY ‘HAPPENED’ RESPONSE AT Q3, OR ANY ‘YES’ RESPONSE AT Q4 ↓</p>	<p>Q5. And when were you personally most recently affected by this armed conflict in Afghanistan?</p>	
	<p>SINGLE CODE</p>	
	<p><i>Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way, as defined above-515</i></p>	<p>%</p>
	<p>Now/currently experiencing</p>	<p>4</p>
	<p>Within the last month</p>	<p>4</p>
	<p>More than one month ago, but less than six months</p>	<p>3</p>
	<p>Six months ago to within the last year</p>	<p>7</p>
	<p>1-2 years</p>	<p>7</p>
	<p>3-4 years</p>	<p>9</p>
	<p>5-9 years</p>	<p>23</p>
	<p>10-19 years</p>	<p>19</p>
	<p>20 years +</p>	<p>11</p>
	<p>Don't know</p>	<p>12</p>
	<p>Refused</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>ASK ALL ↓</p>	<p>Q6. What do you think are the two or three greatest fears people are facing in a situation of armed conflict in Afghanistan?</p>	
	<p>DO NOT READ OUT. INTERVIEWER TO CODE A MAXIMUM OF THREE RESPONSES</p>	
		<p>%</p>
	<p>Inability to earn a living/personal or family economic instability</p>	<p>37</p>
	<p>Losing a loved one</p>	<p>25</p>
	<p>Being separated from loved ones</p>	<p>16</p>
	<p>Losing/destruction of the house/losing of personal belongings</p>	<p>22</p>
	<p>Living with uncertainty</p>	<p>36</p>
	<p>Having to leave their home/becoming displaced/a refugee</p>	<p>34</p>
	<p>Imprisonment</p>	<p>15</p>
	<p>Surviving the conflict</p>	<p>15</p>
	<p>Suffering injury</p>	<p>17</p>
	<p>Sexual violence</p>	<p>8</p>
	<p>Not being able to get an education/going to school</p>	<p>21</p>
	<p>Fear of being rejected by your community</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Having to take up arms/fight</p>	<p>8</p>
	<p>Being humiliated</p>	<p>11</p>
	<p>Limited access to basic necessities (water, electricity, etc.)</p>	<p>7</p>
	<p>Limited access to health care (drugs, hospital)</p>	<p>9</p>
	<p>Outcome of the conflict</p>	<p>5</p>
	<p>Other (specify)</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Nothing</p>	<p>0</p>	
<p>Don't know</p>	<p>*</p>	
<p>Refused</p>	<p>0</p>	

<p>ASK ALL ↴</p>	<p>Q7. What do you think civilians who are living in areas of armed conflict need the most? Please select the three most important to you.</p> <p>ROTATE STATEMENTS. READ THE LIST AND ASK RESPONDENTS TO SELECT ONE ANSWER. REPEAT THE LIST IF NECESSARY. THEN READ THE LIST AGAIN WITHOUT MENTIONING THE FIRST ANSWER AND ASK THE RESPONDENT TO SELECT ANOTHER ANSWER. REPEAT AGAIN.</p>																																																																																										
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BB) HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE/NEEDS						
ASK ALL WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED CONFLICT – ‘YES’ AT Q1 AND ‘YES’ AT Q2/ CODE 1 (IN AFGHANISTAN) OR ANY ‘HAPPENED’ RESPONSE AT Q3, OR ANY ‘YES’ RESPONSE AT Q4 ↴	Q9. During the time you experienced or were being affected by armed conflict, did you receive help or support from any of the following? READ OUT.					
	<i>Base: All who have experienced/been affected by conflict in any way, as defined above-515</i>					
		Yes	No	Don't know	Can't remember	
		%	%	%	%	
	UN/UN agency	29	62	8	0	
	Afghan Red Crescent Society	24	66	10	0	
	ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross)	23	66	11	0	
	Other non-governmental organization (NGO) or charity (local or international)	21	67	12	0	
	Government	31	60	10	0	
	Individuals from your community/neighbours	37	54	8	0	
	Religious entities	22	69	9	0	
	Military/army/combatants	9	81	9	0	
	Parents/family	66	27	7	0	
Other (specify)	0	100	0	0		
Combination: Afghan Red Crescent Society/ICRC	34	77	9	0		
ASK IF ‘YES’ AT Q9 ↴	Q10. For each of the types of organizations or people you mentioned receiving help or support from, I would like you to tell me how well you felt they understood your needs. First, the [type of support at Q9]... do you feel your needs were completely understood, partially understood, or not understood at all? SINGLE CODE FOR EACH SOURCE OF SUPPORT MENTIONED AT Q9					
	<i>Base: All who did receive support/help from each organization at Q9</i>					
		Completely	Partially	Not at all	Don't know	Refused
		%	%	%	%	%
	UN/UN agency (146)	33	65	1	0	0
	Afghan Red Crescent Society (124)	22	70	6	2	0
	ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) (117)	27	69	3	1	0
	Other non-governmental organization (NGO) or charity (local or international) (108)	12	83	4	1	0
	Government (154)	23	69	6	2	0
	Individuals from your community/neighbours (199)	39	56	4	1	0
	Religious entities (119)	31	63	1	4	0
	Military/army/combatants (48)*	36	55	3	6	0
	Parents/family (342)	65	31	3	1	0
Combination: Afghan Red Crescent Society/ICRC (179)	28	77	6	2	0	
* Low base						

ASK ALL ↓	Q11. Which, if any, of the following reasons do you think may have prevented people in Afghanistan receiving or accepting help or support during armed conflict?	
	READ OUT LIST. ROTATE ORDER. MULTICODE OK	
		YES
		%
	Corruption	52
	Black market	28
	Discrimination/social status	34
	Location access – not able to reach the location	20
	Unaware that it was available	21
	Fear of being rejected by my community	14
	Fear of being perceived to be aligned with wrong side	12
	Pride/dignity	11
	Did not meet criteria	13
	Did not want to receive any support	8
	Did not need to receive any support	2
	Did not want to accept support because of who was offering it	5
	Other (specify)	0
Nothing	2	
Don't know	4	
Refused	0	

CC) WARFARE/COMBATANTS

ASK ALL ↓	Q12. Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy?	
	And what else?	
	OPEN-ENDED QUESTION. DO NOT PROMPT – BUT PROBE FULLY.	
	TOP MENTIONS (> 5% of respondents)	YES
		%
	TOTAL MENTIONS – KILLING/TARGETING CERTAIN KINDS OF PEOPLE	37
	Kill civilians	20
	Kill the innocent (unspecified)	12
	TOTAL MENTIONS – ATTACK BUILDINGS/DESTROY SPECIFIC AREAS	18
	Attack civilian areas	5
	Attack civilians' homes	5
	TOTAL MENTIONS – TYPES OF VIOLENCE/OPPRESSION	15
	TOTAL MENTIONS – NOT RESPECT CIVIL SOCIETY/CULTURE/SOCIETY/LAWS	12
	TOTAL MENTIONS – INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES DAMAGED	10
	Should be able to get food/shouldn't attack food lines/block food/water	5
	TOTAL MENTIONS – TYPES OF WEAPONS	9
	Use bombs	5
		%
	There is nothing they should not be allowed to do	3
	(Any answer indicating that some action/s should be allowed)	78
	Don't know	19
	Refused	0

<p>ASK ALL WHO ANSWER SOMETHING AT QUESTION 12 ↓</p>	<p>Q13. And why do you think that combatants should not be allowed to do this? Is that because it...?</p> <p>READ OUT. ROTATE ORDER. MULTICODE OK</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="659 226 1444 622"> <tr> <td><i>Base: All who identify some action/s that combatants should not be allowed to do-409</i></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Is against your religion</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Is against your personal code/ethics</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Is against the law</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Is against your culture</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Is against human rights</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Produces too much hate and division</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Produces too much destruction</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (specify)</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Refused</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>						<i>Base: All who identify some action/s that combatants should not be allowed to do-409</i>					%	Is against your religion					48	Is against your personal code/ethics					21	Is against the law					37	Is against your culture					29	Is against human rights					41	Produces too much hate and division					22	Produces too much destruction					27	Other (specify)					0	Don't know					9	Refused					0		
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<p>ASK ALL ↓</p>	<p>Q14. Now I would like to ask you some general questions about how, in your view, combatants should behave in times of armed conflict. When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they (POW):</p> <p>READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="659 775 1444 1014"> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="2">1999</td> <td colspan="2">2009</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="2">%</td> <td colspan="2">%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attack enemy combatants and civilians</td> <td colspan="2">3</td> <td colspan="2">6</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible</td> <td colspan="2">32</td> <td colspan="2">47</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attack only enemy combatants and leave the civilians alone</td> <td colspan="2">62</td> <td colspan="2">46</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td colspan="2">3</td> <td colspan="2">1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Refused</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2">0</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>							1999		2009				%		%			Attack enemy combatants and civilians	3		6			Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible	32		47			Attack only enemy combatants and leave the civilians alone	62		46			Don't know	3		1			Refused			0																												
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<p>ASK ALL ↓</p>	<p>Q15. Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? For each one, please indicate whether it is OK or not OK to do that in fighting their enemy (POW):</p> <p>READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="659 1167 1444 2087"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="3"></th> <th colspan="2">OK</th> <th colspan="2">Not OK</th> <th>Don't know</th> <th>Refused</th> </tr> <tr> <th>1999</th> <th>2009</th> <th>1999</th> <th>2009</th> <th>2009</th> <th>2009</th> </tr> <tr> <th>%</th> <th>%</th> <th>%</th> <th>%</th> <th>%</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Depriving civilians of food, medicine or water to weaken the enemy <i>(‘Depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water to weaken the enemy’ in 1999)</i></td> <td>11</td> <td>17</td> <td>84</td> <td>81</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attacking religious and historical monuments <i>(‘Attacking religious and historical during the fighting’ in 1999)</i></td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>92</td> <td>93</td> <td>3</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attacking civilians who voluntarily transported ammunition for the enemy</td> <td>31</td> <td>45</td> <td>64</td> <td>40</td> <td>15</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many civilians* would be killed <i>(*... civilians/women and children’ in 1999)</i></td> <td>8</td> <td>10</td> <td>86</td> <td>86</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange <i>(not asked in 1999)</i></td> <td>n/a</td> <td>6</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>89</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy* <i>(*... to enemy combatants’ in 1999)</i></td> <td>21</td> <td>43</td> <td>74</td> <td>45</td> <td>13</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planting landmines even though civilians may step on them</td> <td>11</td> <td>9</td> <td>86</td> <td>87</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>							OK		Not OK		Don't know	Refused	1999	2009	1999	2009	2009	2009	%	%	%	%	%	%	Depriving civilians of food, medicine or water to weaken the enemy <i>(‘Depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water to weaken the enemy’ in 1999)</i>	11	17	84	81	2	0	Attacking religious and historical monuments <i>(‘Attacking religious and historical during the fighting’ in 1999)</i>	4	4	92	93	3	0	Attacking civilians who voluntarily transported ammunition for the enemy	31	45	64	40	15	0	Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many civilians* would be killed <i>(*... civilians/women and children’ in 1999)</i>	8	10	86	86	4	0	Taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange <i>(not asked in 1999)</i>	n/a	6	n/a	89	6	0	Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy* <i>(*... to enemy combatants’ in 1999)</i>	21	43	74	45	13	0	Planting landmines even though civilians may step on them	11	9	86	87	4	0
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ASK ALL ↓	Q16. In a situation of armed conflict, are there any circumstances in which you think it is acceptable for combatants to target health workers?				
	SINGLE CODE ONLY				
					%
	Yes				27
	No				65
	Don't know				9
	Refused				0
ASK IF 'YES' AT Q16 ↓	Q17. In which, if any, of the following circumstances do you think this is acceptable?				
	READ OUT EACH STATEMENT. ROTATE ORDER. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT				
	<i>Base: All who think it is sometimes acceptable to target health workers-145</i>	Yes, acceptable	No, not acceptable	Don't know	Refused
		%	%	%	%
	When health workers are treating the enemy wounded and sick civilians	35	63	2	0
	When health workers are treating the enemy wounded and sick combatants	37	61	2	0
ASK ALL ↓	Q18. In a situation of armed conflict, are there any circumstances in which you think it is acceptable for combatants to target ambulances?				
	SINGLE CODE ONLY				
					%
	Yes				32
	No				60
	Don't know				8
	Refused				0
ASK IF 'YES' AT Q18 ↓	Q19. In which, if any, of the following circumstances do you think this is acceptable?				
	READ OUT EACH STATEMENT. ROTATE ORDER. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT				
	<i>Base: All who think it is sometimes acceptable to target ambulances-180</i>	Yes, acceptable	No, not acceptable	Don't know	Refused
		%	%	%	%
	When an ambulance is used by combatants for hostile purposes	68	29	3	0
When an ambulance carries wounded or sick enemy combatants	39	59	3	0	
When an ambulance carries enemy wounded and sick civilians	26	72	2	0	
When an ambulance is not clearly identified as an ambulance	59	37	4	0	

DD) HUMANITARIAN GESTURES				
ASK ALL ↴	Q20. I'm now going to describe different kinds of groups and organizations. Please tell me which three of these play the biggest role to help reduce suffering during armed conflict?			
	READ OUT LIST AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE ANSWER. THEN READ LIST AGAIN AND ASK RESPONDENT FOR TWO MORE ANSWERS. REPEAT IF NECESSARY.			
		First mention	Other mentions	TOTAL
		%	%	%
	The military and combatants/armed groups	17	3	20
	Religious leaders	23	15	38
	International humanitarian organizations	21	26	46
	Journalists and the news media	4	17	22
	The United Nations	7	30	37
	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	4	18	22
	Afghan Red Crescent Society	3	15	17
	Government authorities	10	25	35
	Government organizations from other countries	2	9	11
	International criminal court	1	6	6
	Local/international NGOs/charities	1	11	12
	Community leaders	6	17	23
Other (specify)	0	*	*	
None of these	2	0	2	
Don't know	1	2	1	
Refused	0	0	0	
Combination: Afghan Red Crescent Society/ICRC	6	30	36	
ASK ALL ↴	Q21. What do you think the international community should do to help civilians who are living in areas of armed conflict?			
	ROTATE STATEMENTS. READ THE LIST AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE ANSWER. THEN READ THE LIST AGAIN WITHOUT MENTIONING THE FIRST ANSWER AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ANOTHER ANSWER(S).			
	REPEAT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE THREE.			
				%
	Stop the armed conflict by military intervention			34
	Exert political pressure			18
	Deliver emergency aid			52
	Provide peacekeepers			44
	Provide financial support to humanitarian organizations			28
	Put leaders accused of committing war crimes on trial			27
	Place economic sanctions on the country			21
	Raise awareness of the plight of civilians who are caught in areas of armed conflict			17
	Rebuild infrastructure			16
	Organize peace talks/negotiations			25
	Better enforce the law that protects victims of armed conflicts			15
	Other (specify)			1
Nothing			*	
Don't know			*	
Refused			0	

ASK ALL ↴	Q22. What, if anything, do you think people living outside of conflict zones can do that would most help victims of armed conflict in Afghanistan? Please select the three you feel are most important.	
	ROTATE STATEMENTS. READ THE LIST AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ONE ANSWER. THEN READ THE LIST AGAIN WITHOUT MENTIONING THE FIRST ANSWER AND ASK RESPONDENT TO SELECT ANOTHER ANSWER(S). REPEAT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE THREE.	
		%
	Put pressure on legislators/politicians	52
	Public lobbying	39
	Become a volunteer	18
	Donate money	40
	Support an organization that helps those affected by the conflict	47
	Mobilize their local community	39
	Donate goods	52
	Other (specify)	*
	Nothing	1
Don't know	1	
Refused	0	
EE) GENEVA CONVENTIONS		
ASK ALL ↴	Q23. Have you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?	
	SINGLE CODE ONLY	
		%
	Yes	31
	No	66
Don't know	4	
Refused	0	
ASK IF 'YES' AT Q23 ↴	Q24. To what extent do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions limits the suffering of civilians in war time?	
	SINGLE CODE ONLY	
	<i>Base: All who have heard of the Geneva Conventions-169</i>	%
	A great deal	32
	A fair amount	38
	Not very much	21
	Not at all	8
	Don't know	1
Refused	0	
FF) MEDICAL MISSION		
ASK ALL ↴	Q25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?	
	READ OUT STATEMENT. SINGLE CODE ONLY	
	Everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care	
		%
	Strongly agree	71
	Tend to agree	20
	Neither agree nor disagree	7
	Tend to disagree	1
	Strongly disagree	*
	Don't know	1
Refused	0	

ASK ALL ↴	Q26. In the context of an armed conflict, what best describes your personal views? READ OUT STATEMENTS. ROTATE ORDER. SINGLE CODE ONLY.	
		%
	Health workers should treat only wounded and sick civilians from their side of the conflict	15
	Health workers should treat wounded and sick civilians from all sides of a conflict	84
	Don't know	1
	Refused	0
Demographics		
ASK ALL ↴	Respondent's gender	
		%
	Male	51
	Female	49
ASK ALL ↴	Respondent's age	
		%
	18-24	31
	25-29	12
	30-34	13
	35-39	10
	40-44	11
	45-49	8
	50-64	12
	65 or over	4
ASK ALL ↴	Education level	
		%
	Illiterate	62
	Up to 5 Years	7
	6-8 Years	8
	9-10 Years	7
	11-12 Years	14
	College graduate	1
	Post-graduate	1

ASK ALL ↓	Province	
		%
	Kabul	14
	Kapisa	2
	Parwan	3
	Wardak	2
	Logar	2
	Ghazni	5
	Paktia	2
	Paktika	2
	Khost	2
	Nangarhar	6
	Laghman	2
	Kunar	2
	Nooristan	1
	Badakhshan	4
	Takhar	4
	Baghlan	3
	Kunduz	4
	Balkh	5
	Samangan	2
	Juzjan	2
	Faryab	4
	Badghis	2
	Herat	7
	Farah	2
	Nimroz	1
	Helmand	4
	Kandahar	5
	Zabul	1
	Uruzgan	1
	Ghor	3
	Bamyan	2
	Panjshir	1
	Dehkundi	2
ASK ALL ↓	Area	
		%
	Urban	22
	Rural	78
ASK ALL ↓	Ethnicity	
		%
	Pashtun	45
	Tajik	36
	Uzbek	6
	Turkmen	2
	Hazara	8
	Baloch	1
	Nuristani	*
	Arab	2

IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

Discussion guide

This guide was used for the group discussions. A very similar guide was used for in-depth interviews.

Introduction	
1. Your own experience of armed conflict/violence (armed violence, urban violence if necessary)	• What experiences have you had of armed conflict/violence?
	– When was it?
	– Where?
	– What happened?
	• How you were/are – personally – affected? Your family/friends?
	• What were/are your feelings and thoughts about this armed conflict/violence?
	– How much did you understand about the armed conflict/violence? Why did it happen the way it did?
	• How do you feel (now) about what happened? How are you affected today, if at all?
– What, if anything, has changed about you as a result of the armed conflict/violence?	
2. On armed conflict/violence in general	• We've talked about armed conflict/violence – can we go further into that. So when we say armed conflict/violence... can you describe to me in detail what you mean by this.
	• Associations: what words come to your mind when I say 'armed conflict/violence'... Which words best describe armed conflict/violence for you?
	• During times of armed conflict/violence what would you say are/were your greatest concerns? (E.g. losing a loved one, your own security, surviving the conflict/violence, etc.)
	• Do your concerns change over time? (E.g. are some concerns immediate and others only occurring later on? Are some concerns short term, and others longer term for the future?) How would you divide these concerns we talked about up into immediate concerns and longer-term ones? Persistent ones and ones which fade or are resolved?
	• So when you/others are confronted with these situations what do you feel are the things you/they need the most help for/with. Why do you say that?
	• If you could, what would you like to communicate to the world?
	– What would you like to tell people about your needs? What is most important?
	– And what would you like to tell people about the way you feel?
– And to help prioritize these messages in the minds of others, which are the most important issues in terms of your needs? Are there some things you can deal with on your own during these times? And are there some things you just cannot manage on your own without help?	
3. On international community/humanitarian support	• During these times – when you have faced these kinds of situations – have you received any support?
	– Have you ever received any support from any international organizations?
	• IF YES – RECEIVED HELP FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO DATE: What kind (s) of help did you receive? How did they help you? Were they able to address any of your key areas of concern in any ways – which ones?
	• IF NO – NOT RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO DATE: Do you have any views on why you may not have received any support from international organizations to date?
	• Who played the biggest role (amongst different kinds of people and organizations) to help reduce your suffering (e.g. religious leaders, UN, local NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent, ICRC, other international NGOs, neighbours, etc.)?
	– Why would you say their role (s) were biggest?
	– Who else played biggest roles?
	• What do you think the international community should do to help victims?
• If there is something that an international humanitarian organization could do better, what would it be?	

<p>4. On humanitarian actions/gestures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And what is a ‘humanitarian action’, for you? Can you give me some examples? • Thinking of the armed conflict/violence you witnessed, can you recall any gestures or acts of kindness/humanity that made a difference in yours or others lives? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Could you tell me about them? – What difference (s) did this (these) make? – Who was responsible for this (these) act (s)? • Were you, yourself, able to help someone? If so, how? • If you could have done something to help what would it have been? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do you think you could have made a difference in someone else’s life? If so how? – Thinking back, would you have done anything differently? What could others have done differently? • More generally, what, if anything, do you think individuals can do to help other people (civilians) who are living in areas of armed conflict/violence?
<p>5. On warfare/combatants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to ask you what you think the rules of conflict should be, ideally, to control what combatants can do in war: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? What and why? – Is it ever OK for combatants to involve civilians in conflicts? In what circumstances?
<p>6. On Geneva Conventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before now, had you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions? • Could you tell me what your understanding is of what the Geneva Conventions are about? • Do you believe the Geneva Conventions do adequately protect persons in war time? Why?
<p>7. On health/medical mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think that ambulances operating in situation of armed conflict/violence should always be spared? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How do you identify an ambulance in a situation of armed conflict/violence? – How do you identify a health/medical worker in a situation of armed conflict/violence? • Do you think everyone wounded or sick during an armed conflict/violence should have the right to health/medical care? Both civilians and combatants? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do you think there is anyone in particular who should not have access to health/medical care? Why? • Do you think that in a situation of armed conflict/violence health/medical workers should be protected in all circumstances? In what way... Why? Why not?
<p>8. Wrapping up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your experiences of living in armed conflict/violence? • What would have been useful for you to know in order to alleviate your suffering/improve your situation during armed conflict? Do you think stronger laws would have helped? • What are the main things which helped/would have helped alleviate suffering/improving your situation? • To sum up: what does your experience tell you about the value of humanitarian work in conflict situations? • What are the main messages you would like us to spread in order to try to make this world a safer place for civilians living in situations of armed conflicts/violence?

MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

ABOUT IPSOS

Ipsos is a leading international research agency, with offices in over 60 countries worldwide and global reach.

Established in 1975, it conducts qualitative and quantitative research with the private, public and voluntary sectors. One of its key areas of specialization is in social and opinion research. This includes extensive work with a wide range of national and international NGOs, charities and aid organizations.

This study was coordinated by Ipsos Switzerland, with fieldwork on the opinion survey in Afghanistan conducted by ACSOR Surveys, based in the country.



ICRC