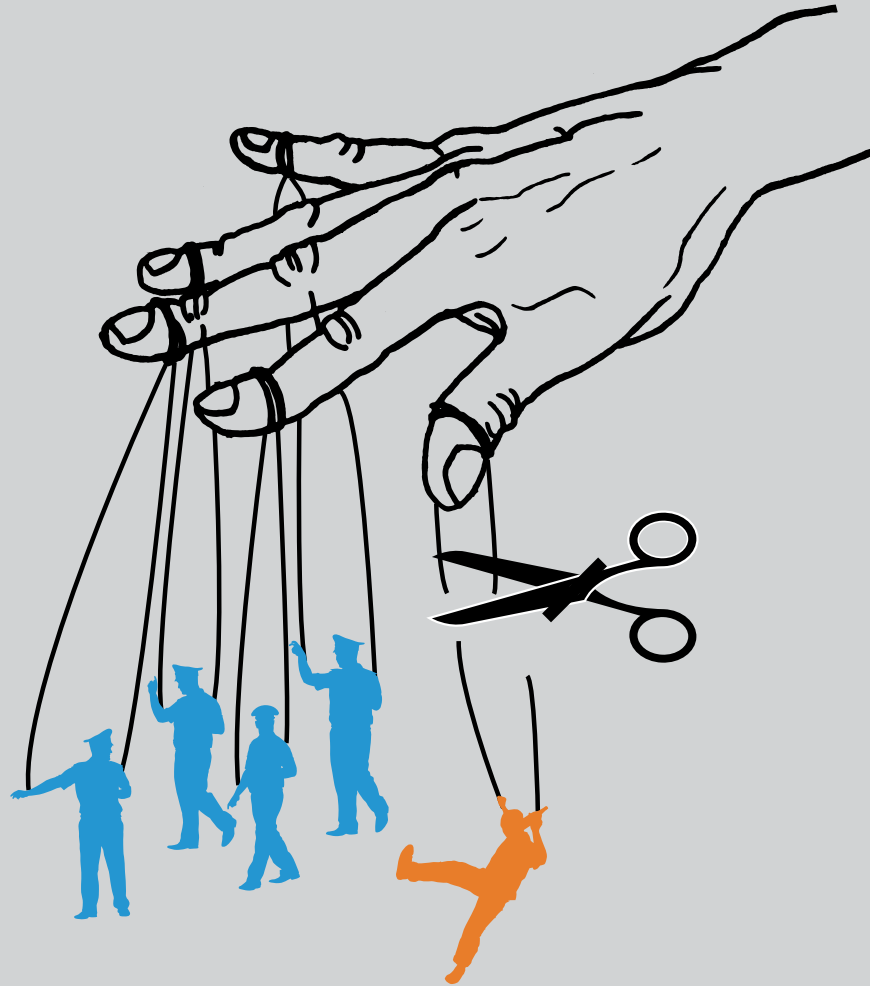




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SENIOR APPOINTMENTS AND CORRUPTION WITHIN KABUL CITY POLICE

Practices and Perceptions

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Practices and Perceptions

Integrity Watch Afghanistan

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Kolola Poshta, Kabul, Afghanistan

Email: info@iwaweb.org

Website: www.iwaweb.org

GLOSSARY

ANA	Afghanistan National Army
ANP	Afghanistan National Police
CoP	Chief of Police
DCoP	District Chief of Police
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission
Gomandan	commander of militia factions fighting the Soviet Union-backed regime
HQ	Headquarter
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund
Moi	Ministry of Interior
MN	Mahkamah Nizami (Military Court)
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan
NCO	Non-Commissioned Offer
PCoP	Provincial Chief of Police
PD	Police District
SN	Saranwali Nizami (Military Attorney Directorate)
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In spite of spending billions of dollars on reforming the Afghanistan National Police (ANP), police reform efforts seem to have largely failed to promote meritocracy even within Kabul city police, which received the most resources of police assistance and was at the centre of police reform. The number of uneducated officers who were connected to militia factions and controlled Kabul police in early years after the fall of the Taliban has declined, and Kabul police looks more representative in terms of ethnic, political and regional background of its leadership. Yet Kabul's police remain to a large extent dominated by officers who are appointed based on connections or other corrupt practices, rather than merit and qualifications.

The mere fact that police officers are professionally trained does not automatically lead to 'professionalism' as such: even professionally trained police may have to appeal to sources of patronage in order to get promoted, and may then indulge in corrupt practices. Although the bulk of the ANP personnel have gone through short-term training and the number of professional officers in Kabul police has increased, Kabul police is still far from a fully professional police force and often acts more as a military organisation rather than a law enforcement agency.

Officers with professional trainings and experience often serve in mid-rank positions while unqualified individuals connected to political factions or corrupt networks are appointed to senior posts and receive promotions, in violation of established rules and procedures.

Militia factions previously exercised the strongest influence over ANP appointments, but now members of the parliament, have also become influential in senior appointments to both MoI and ANP.

As a result of the pervasive corruption underlying appointments and promotions ANP in parts of Kabul have turned into corrupt, pyramidal networks that engage in racketeering and extortion from the population instead of protecting citizens and enforcing the rule of law. This culture of impunity has undermined police morale and accountability, contributing to the continued involvement of Kabul police in criminal and corrupt activities.

Corrupt officers are rarely prosecuted and if action is ever taken in response to violations, they are simply moved from one post to another. With Afghan security forces now having full responsibility for securing the country and protecting citizens, the new government needs to take police professionalism seriously and end the culture of corruption and impunity, which is inimical to the establishment of rule of law and long-term peace in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Afghanistan

- To institutionalize the recent initiatives by the President Ashraf Ghani to fight corruption within the ANP, an independent commission should be established within the ANP, similar to the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission, to process merit-based appointments and promotions. The commission should process petitions for promotions and appointments based on a transparent procedures and mechanism.
- Establish clear guidelines and procedures for appointments and promotions within the ANP based on transparency and meritocracy in order to limit the discretion enjoyed by the commission. Adopt a clear appeal process and a board of appeal need to be put in place to allow the ANP personnel who have not received due promotion or appointments to have their case reviewed by the board.
- The commission should also reassess the educational backgrounds and qualifications of senior officers serving in Kabul police, the top ranks below Chief of Police. Those who are unqualified or received promotions contrary to Afghan government rules and procedures should be removed from senior posts and their ranks to be re-evaluated and downgraded to match their educational background and work experience.
- Establish clear guidelines and procedures for processing corruption-related complains through 119 hotline and invest the power to investigate such complaints in a body that is autonomous from the Mol and the ANP.
- Strong external oversight mechanism must be arranged for the police payroll management as the Afghan government assumes this responsibility from the UNDP.
- The existing Office of Police Ombudsman, as part of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, needs to be strengthened and supported so that it can effectively investigate complaints about the police and publish a report regularly to the public.
- Create a specialized taskforce within the Attorney General's Office empowered to investigate and prosecute cases of high-level police corruption.
- Require public, annual declarations of wealth, assets, and sources of income of Kabul police leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over \$15 billion has been spent on, and many countries have taken part in, reforming the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) since 2003 with the aim of forming a professional, accountable and effective police force.¹ Although the ANP grew to a large force with almost 150,000 personnel, it is viewed as “inadequate”, “riddled with corruption”, and the “weak link in the security chain.”² Its ability to enforce the rule of law and protect Afghan citizens in the absence of the international forces is questionable. The present report follows up from a similar one, produced by IWA in 2014 on Police appointments in Afghanistan. Like that projects, this one aims at examining one of the key pillars of police reform in Afghanistan, that is, dynamics of senior appointments within the Ministry of Interior and the Afghanistan National Police. While the previous report covered eight provinces, this one focuses on Kabul city. It looks at corruption and nepotism in senior appointments, which are inimical to the accountability of the police force and, consequently, to the rule of law in Afghanistan. As the international forces are withdrawing from Afghanistan and the demanding tasks of protecting Afghan citizens are also laying on the shoulders of the ANP, the research project intends to shed light on this key aspect of police reform and provide insights for policy makers and the Afghanistan government.

Kabul city has been chosen not only because of the obvious importance of the capital, but also because Kabul has been at the centre of police reform efforts since 2008. While previous police reform assistances concentrated on police forces in the provinces, the international community over the past six years focused on reforming the Ministry of Interior (MoI) since it is responsible for management, oversight, and supervision of the ANP throughout the country.³ Given the direct supervision and oversight of the MoI over Kabul police, Kabul city police could be viewed as the prototype of Afghan police force and harbinger of how Afghanistan’s national police will look like after MoI strengthens its oversight and supervision of the ANP outside Kabul.

The previous project created a database to centralize the information collected through qualitative, interviews on 35 individuals middle rank to senior police officials. The study collected limited quantitative and/or demographic data, which will be included in the database and analysis. The study looked at the officials’ past, qualifications and reputation, current affiliation and the reasons for which they were appointed. The sample was comprehensive enough to provide the very first study of such kind, allowing us to draw a picture of appointment practices and of perceptions of corruption related to them and what all this means for governance and state building in the context of transition.

The long-term impact of the research will hopefully contribute to increased transparency and meritocracy for senior appointments within the ministry of interior and the police ranks, which would contribute to the success of police reform and the improved accountability of police force and the rule of law in Afghanistan.

This report is organized in three parts. Part I examines the dynamics of appointments in the districts and in the HQ. Part II studies perceptions of police professionalism, its prospect and challenges as viewed by the police officers. Part III looks discusses perceptions of police corruption, within the police force itself.

- 1 Donald J. Planty and Robert M. Perito, ‘Police Transition in Afghanistan’, *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report 322, 2013.
- 2 Comments by U.S. special envoy, Richard Holbrook, at German Marshal Fund Conference in Germany on March 21, 2009, see James Neuger, “Corrupt Afghan Police Targeted in U.S. Policy, Holbrooke Says,” Bloomberg News, March 21, 2009, www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=auJx_dJa9TGg
- 3 Robert M. Perito, ‘Afghanistan’s Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform’, *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report 227, 2009, p.12.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on qualitative, semi-structured interviews to collect information about qualifications, ethnic and regional background, political affiliation and the reasons for which senior appointments within the MoI and ANP were made. The senior positions covered by this study included:

- All district chiefs of police of Kabul in November 2014 and one year earlier;
- All chiefs of main departments at the Kabul police HQ level, including the city chief of police, in November 2014 and a year earlier.

The methodology of this research is based on interviews with ‘key informants’. This method is used in social sciences for studying issues about which only a small group within the society has insights or information. Carrying out household surveys or public polls is not an effective method for investigating such topics due to the lack of public information and awareness about them. Dynamics of appointments within an institution are also not disclosed to the public and can be studied only with interviewing those who enjoy such insights.

12 qualitative interviews were conducted in Kabul, in addition to about tens of contacts dedicated to data gathering. Media articles were also used as a source of information about appointments, as often high-level appointments are reported and even discussed in the press. The research team approached police officers in Kabul and interviewed the first 12 who stated their willingness to talk confidentially. The team approached officers in a balanced way, with the aim of achieving six interviews in the districts police stations and six in Kabul City police HQ; in the end it managed to interview seven and five respectively. The district-level interviews were distributed in different districts.

- This type of data allowed to carry out two types of analysis:
- a sociological analysis of appointments, based on objective information such as the regional, ethnic, professional and educational background of the appointees;
- a social and political analysis of perception of appointments and of corruption within the MoI.

The distinction drawn above is an important one as there is limited objective information available in Afghanistan about police corruption.⁴ Very few cases of corruption have gone as far as prosecution and even fewer have resulted in convictions. Therefore, there are no judicial statistics to use. In addition, since conducting research on corruption per se is rarely feasible because corrupt transactions and practices are carried out secretly due to their illegal nature, it has become an international standard to study perceptions of corruption as an indicator of corruption in countries. The perception of corruption is certainly subjective and may not exactly reflect the reality; it nevertheless is worth studying as a good indicator of corruption. This research project similarly examines the perceptions of corruption and dynamics of appointments, rather than corruption and appointments per se, within Kabul city police. The findings of this research may not exactly reflect how appointments are made within MoI and ANP, they still provide us insights on what the MoI and ANP personnel think about the dynamics of appointment within the institution that they work. Even if they do not reflect realities, such perceptions are very important and need to be studied since they inform us on how the institution is viewed by insiders, which impacts the performance of the institution and the internal legitimacy of its policies.

4 There have been a number of surveys (such as the Survey of People of Afghanistan by the Asia Foundation and National Corruption Survey by IWA) conducted over the past few years studying police corruption as well. Even these studies, however, are subjective since they make inquiry about people’s perception of police corruption, rather than actual corruption perpetrated by the police.

What is being discussed in this study is therefore not an uncontroversial reality, but the views expressed by police officers about the environment where they work and about their colleagues. Although such an inquiry is not unsusceptible to subjectivity, it offers valuable insights about the police since the respondents enjoy internal insights which outsiders lack. The same interviewees were also asked about their views of appointments in the MoI and what drives them. Their answers were then compared with the objective data we collected about the ethnic, education and regional background as well as political affiliation and experience of these officers.

The sample used for the qualitative interviews was limited in size due to budgetary constraints, as well as to the difficulty of identifying police officers willing to discuss these matters. This is the reason why it was decided to limit the scope of the analysis to perceptions, as opposed as claiming to have carried out a quantitative study of appointments and corruption in Afghanistan's police. The study is more about illustrating certain dynamics, than about quantifying them. However, the study drew strength from the previous IWA study of police appointments, whose findings were in line with this project's.

3. DYNAMICS OF APPOINTMENTS

3.1. Police Reform and Professionalism

After the fall of the Taliban, warlords and Jihadi factions captured the state institutions, including the MoI, and filled the new ANP with their fighters most of whom lacked any policing training or experience. The police reform in Afghanistan, initially led by Germany and later funded and supported by the US, focused on training and equipping the new police personnel, providing short-term trainings and re-establishing the Police Academy.⁵ Rebuilt and funded by Germany, the Police Academy in Kabul offered 4-year university level programs for training and graduating professional officers while the police-training centre, established by the US in Kabul, provided in-service training for the ANP personnel serving the capital. The Kabul training centre became the model for another seven training centres built in regional centres outside the capital. The training centres offered eight-week course for literate non-commissioned officers and patrolmen, five-week course for illiterate patrolmen, and a fifteen-day training for policemen with extensive experience. From the outset, the short-term courses were viewed ineffective for being too short and focusing more on counterinsurgency needs, rather than policing skills.⁶ In addition, because more than 70 percent of trainees were illiterate, they received 15 days to 5 weeks of training and were not able to absorb the course materials.⁷

In response, another pillar of police reform aimed at restructuring the MoI and the ANP by replacing non-professional officers and officials, mostly connected to civil war factions, with graduates of Police Academy or those with high performance on a pay and rank reform test.⁸ However, this pay and rank reform had limited success. Although almost half of the 17,800 senior officers screened for pay and rank reform failed the test, a large proportion of them continued working in senior positions.⁹ Those with connections enjoyed working in senior posts regardless of their performance on the test. One of the interviewees for this research stated:

In 1385 [20]¹⁰, when there was police reform carried out under pressure from foreigners, I took the reform examination and got a score of 68. I was appointed to a remote district. When I went there, the police in that area was under the command of a local militia who did not accept me to join them. So I came back to Kabul, but I was not appointed to any post and was told that there was no vacancy. I was jobless for very long time. But at the same time, I learned that a person who got score of 28 in the reform exam and failed the exam since the passing score was 50 was appointed to a post in Baghlan police. He was relative of one of the senior officials at the MoI and got an appointment letter from the ministry stating 'to be appointed regardless of reform examination score'. So he got an appointment right away in spite of having failed the reform exam while I did not have a job for very long time in spite of having passed the exam. This story shows how important personal connections are for securing positions within the ANP [8].

The following sections examine the progress of professionalization within the Kabul police, and discuss the widespread belief among police officers that despite reform efforts, significant levels of nepotism and corruption afflict senior level police appointments, which in turn feeds corrupt and extortionary police behaviour.

5 'Reforming the Afghanistan National Police', The Royal United Services Institute, A joint Report of the Royal United Services Institute (London) and the Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2009, p. 8.

6 Perito 2009, p. 4.

7 Ibid.

8 'Reforming the Afghanistan National Police', p. 10.

9 Ibid.

10 Numbers in brackets refer to the unique IDs of interviews conducted for this research.

3.2. Too Few 'Professional' Police

Of the 38 top positions in Kabul police, as of 2014 over 80% were police academy graduates, although the percentage was down somewhat on the 2013 figure (86.8%) (Table 7). In some of the more professional units like the criminal police department, non-professional police officers have by now been replaced by professionally educated ones, even if NCOs and patrolmen are still typically poorly educated and sometimes even illiterate [10]. While in Kabul the average patrolman is better educated than in the provinces, the quality of human resources still leaves to be desired according to one of the interviewees:

These courses are not very effective. Most of the people who join the police now are with low literacy, 9th or 10th grade. The courses should prepare them for working in the police but they are not well designed. They are inexperienced and when joining the police they do not know how to treat the public. They misuse their power. They are often illiterate and juvenile gang members who join the police. They just learn how to use guns and what is the police system, not more. The courses are too short to change them into skilful policemen [10, Criminal dept]

An alternative, but not incompatible assessment, was that 40% of the officers are professionally-trained (that is have completed full courses at the police academy), rising to 60% in the HQ [6, 8]. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these figures are realistic ones. The University Protection Battalion, for example, was well below those estimates in November 2014, with seven professionally educated officers out of 30, the rest having received only short term training or no training at all [7]. In PD 5 and 6, by contrast, it was believed that most officers had been trained at the Police Academy, including most recent appointments [4, 5].

In contrast to the provinces, in Kabul city, most professionals are recent graduates from the police academy, as 1970s and 1980s graduates have mostly retired or left the police, or have been sent to the provinces [6]. Gen Zahir (Kabul city CoP until November 2014) was credited for trying to bring more professionals into Kabul's police; some interviewees credited his predecessor Ayub Salangi for trying the same, even if he was not a professional police officer himself [6].

Despite these improvements, there are indications that nepotistic practices still shape the face of Kabul police today. Two of the 16 PD chiefs are brothers of MPs [10], one is a relative of another MP [7], one is the brother of a Mol head of department [7] and one is a cousin of former vice president [9]. One of the districts CoP is said to be even unable to read and write [11]. Some of these appointees might have sufficient qualifications for the job, but others do not:

On the other hand, the Chief of PD [...] was appointed based on personal connections. He is relative of a female MP in Wolesi Jirga. He used to be a low-rank officer in Criminal Investigation Division. He had never worked in a supervisory post. He does not have experience of supervisory or acting as a police chief, Qumandan. However, since he had connections in the parliament, he was right away appointed as chief of PD X [7].

Head of PD X, XXX, is brother of YYY of Mol. He used to be a doctor/nurse during jihad and did not receive any training in policing, not even a short-term course [7].

There is in fact even a recent admission by the Mol spokesman, that most police officers of Police Stations (hawza) and heads of department in Kabul provincial police have been appointed through personal and political relations and that the matter is being investigated [1, 3, 4, 5]. The position of district CoP is influential and therefore the object of strong pressure when appointments are made. As a result perhaps a single district CoP in the city of Kabul has been appointed merely on the basis of merit. Similarly as far as Kabul Police HQ is concerned there is a belief that rarely purely meritocratic appointments take place. The interviewees could provide just a single example of a head of department who was 'a very competent officer who worked his way up in Kabul police' [7].

It is worth noting that the top positions in Kabul police seem to be rotating much faster than it should be the case. According to Mol rules, rotation could occur every three years. In 2013, the average length of time spent on the job for the 38 top officials was 350 days. In 2014 this had gone up to 428 days (Table 5), indicating a slowing down in rotation, but this was largely because of the paralysis in appointments caused by

the presidential electoral campaign and the subsequent political crisis (April 2014 onwards). The fast pace of rotations might be an indicator of undue pressures on the Mol. As of 2014 the two best-represented provinces within Kabul's police were Kabul and Kapisa, but there were major changes over 2014, again suggesting very rapid fluctuations (Table 2).

3.3. Factors affecting appointments

Political connections: Since its early stages, police reform efforts tried depoliticizing the Mol and ANP and ending the influence of political factions over these institutions through promoting merit-based appointments and promotions.¹¹ While nepotistic connections are easier to document (see Dynamics of Appointments above), political connections are more difficult to confirm and remain largely the realm of rumours. So it is widely held, for example, that 3 PD Chiefs in west Kabul are connected to various factions of a certain political party [5, 7].

While civil war factions seemed to have the most influence over ANP appointments till 2010, members of the parliament, even those without affiliation to organised political factions, seem to have become influential, over the recent years, in senior appointments to Mol and ANP. Many senior appointments, particularly in Kabul, are said to be the result of networks of MPs approaching the Mol and lobbying it. Other appointments to lucrative positions (such as logistics) are reportedly more likely to be bought for cash

You could mobilize support of 5 or 7 MPs from you area and go to minister and ask to be appointed as a Chief of PD in Kabul. You will be appointed right away, regardless of your educational or experience background. The second-tier appointments, such as director of criminal sections or other mid-rank posts within PDs, are based on buying in cash [9].

A serious discussion about the influence of parliamentarians over ANP appointments emerged after the dismissal of Minister Interior, Mujtaba Patang, by the parliament in July 2013. Being voted out of office by the parliament, Patang claimed to have received 15,000 request letters from MPs, many of whom asked him to appoint their uneducated relatives to senior posts or promote them to the rank of general.¹² When asked to rate the reasons why appointments were being decided, on average the interviewees indicated that political connections were the most important reason, followed by nepotism, cash payments, professionalism and merit, with ethnic connections rated as the least important reason (Table 1).

Some interviewees even believed that clientelism and nepotism had got worse since the 2010 parliamentary elections, perhaps because the MPs themselves had to invest unprecedented amounts of money in order to get elected:

It has become worse since the appointments over the last 3 years were all done based on personal or political connections. Before that, parliament and MPs did not intervene in police appointments. But with the inauguration of the second parliament, MPs became much more influential and involved in appointments within Mol and ANP, including Kabul police. Right now, 80% of senior appointments are based on recommendations from MPs [9, also 7].

When I was in Police Academy, Patang was our teacher. He used to say that we have inflation of Generals, similar to inflation of money, and we need to reduce the number of Generals in the ANP and the Mol. When he became minister, however, he promoted more than 100 individuals to the rank of Generals by the time he left office. Even he could not resist the pressure from influential politicians and powerful people [6].

It is also standard practice for new appointees to senior positions to bring in their own, regardless of their qualifications:

[When] XXX became assistant of Daudzai, one day later his brother XXX was appointed as deputy

11 'Reforming the Afghanistan National Police', p. 8.

12 Sean Carberry, 'An Afghan Minister Fires Back At Impeachment Attempt', *National Public Radio*, July 23, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2013/07/23/204766731/an-afghan-minister-fires-back-at-impeachment-attempt>

of YYY [...] and on the same day was promoted to the rank of General, while according to formal procedures he needed to work at least one year in that position before getting a promotion. He was Colonel when he was appointed as deputy and just the same day, he became a General [9].

3.4. Foreign influence

Before 2014 foreign embassies and international organisations sometimes would get professional police officers appointed in important positions in the past. While a signal of institutional weakness and of weak sovereignty, this type of pressure brought more professionally trained police officers into the police. For example, in 2006, Human Rights Watch called on President Karzai to stop appointing human rights abusers, affiliated with powerful political factions, to senior ANP posts. President Karzai finally gave in to the pressures from international community and donors and rescinded many appointments.¹³ By 2014, however, international actors seemed to have lost such an influence over appointments. The only recent appointment in Kabul police reportedly influenced by foreigners was that of the head of PD 1, a policewoman [9]. The declining role of foreign embassies and organisations in influencing appointments to the police is well shown by the struggling Family Response Units, whose creation was advocated exactly by international actors. The MoI has struggled to even staff the six Family Response Units of Kabul city. Although all six units are headed by female police officers, only the Family Response Unit of district 4 (Shahr-e Naw – Kolola Pushta) is adequately staffed with 30 policewomen, while the other five Units in Dar-ul-Aman (2), Kart-e Parwan (2) and Qalay Fataullah only had five policewomen each as of January 2015. Of these 55 policewomen, moreover, only a handful are educated at the police academy, the rest having only taken short 2-3 week courses. In fact only the district 4 Unit was fully functional, while the other units were barely being used by the public.

These units offer protection to women suffering from household violence and other physical threats. 280 women's cases were being dealt with by these units as of January 2015, but funding by UNDP and NGOs is already in decline and demand for accommodation is growing. Without strong pressure from abroad, the Family Response Units might already be in doomed. Professional policewomen reportedly do not like being posted to the Family Response Units, due to the strong prevailing cultural attitudes, which view the Units as violating local tradition and interfering in the business of private households. Female police officers often come under pressure from their own families not to serve in such Units. As international attention has been fading, so the popularity of the Units: 'no longer want freshly graduated police officers want to come here' [12]. In practice the bulk of the 3,000 or so policewomen serving in Kabul city are used for house checks and for administrative tasks. An officer serving their comments:

of course these FPU's are imported from the west and they do not have any real role in Afghanistan. Therefore, the people do not give any importance to them. [12]14

As 'foreigners are no longer influential in appointment' [9], one driver of meritocratic appointments was removed.

3.5. Ethnic bias

There is no obvious indicator of ethnic bias in appointments, as suggested also in the interviews (Table 1), except for some under-representation of Hazaras relative to the composition of Kabul's population. This is a major improvement in comparison to the early years after the fall of the Taliban when the senior leadership of MoI and ANP was dominated by ethnic Tajiks, mainly belonging to civil war factions from the North.¹⁵ In both 2013 and 2014 Tajiks accounted for around 50% of top positions in Kabul police, with Pashtuns accounting for almost 40% (Table 9), roughly reflecting the population share of the two ethnic groups in Kabul.

13 'Reforming the Afghanistan National Police', p. 7.

14 On this topic see also 'Women and The Afghan Police', Oxford : Oxfam, 2013, and 'Women in Afghan National police', Kabul : APPRO, 2014.

15 'Reforming the Afghanistan National Police', p. 8.

The following tables summarize our findings about the educational, regional and ethnic background of the leadership of Kabul city police.

Table 1: Rating of reasons for appointments to the police in Kabul, by interviewed police officers, on a scale of 1-4 (4 most important)

Reasons for appointments	
Political connections	3.7
Nepotism	3.3
Cash payments	2.5
Professionalism and merit	2.4
Ethnic connections	2.0

Table 2: Key positions in Kabul police by province of origins, as perceived by interviewed police officers (all district CoP and 22 top positions in Kabul Police HQ)

Province	2014 (actuals)	2013 (actuals)	2014 (%)	2013 (%)
Kabul	9	11	24.3	28.9
Kapisa	8	3	21.6	7.9
Panjshir	3	4	8.1	10.5
Parwan	3	3	8.1	7.9
Laghman	2	1	5.4	2.6
Paktia	4	2	10.8	5.3
Wardak	2	1	5.4	2.6
Badakhshan	1	3	2.7	7.9
Kandahar	2	3	5.4	7.9
Helmand	1	1	2.7	2.6
Logar	2	3	5.4	7.9
Takhar	0	1	0.0	2.6
Uruzgan	0	1	0.0	2.6
Kunduz	0	1	0.0	2.6

Table 3: Key positions in Kabul police by educational background, as perceived by interviewed police officers (all district CoP and 22 top positions in Kabul Police HQ)

Professional education	2014	2013
Police academy	80.6	86.8
Police NCO training	2.8	0.0
High school	11.1	7.9
Jihadi commander	0.0	5.3
Incomplete high school	5.6	0.0

Table 4: Key positions in Kabul police by ethnicity, as perceived by interviewed police officers (all district CoP and 22 top positions in Kabul Police HQ)

Ethnicity	%	
	2014	2013
Pashtun	37.8	39.5
Tajik	48.6	50.0
Hazara	10.8	7.9
Turkmen	0.0	2.6
Uzbek	2.7	0.0

Table 5: Key positions in Kabul police, days spent in job, as perceived by interviewed police officers (all district CoP and 22 top positions in Kabul Police HQ)

Time in job	
2013	350.0
2014	428.2

4. PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE PROFESSIONALISM

Despite the growing number of professionally educated police officers in the ranks, the interviewees were largely negative about the impact of that on the professionalism of the police that is on the ability and willingness to follow the code of conduct and in the functionality of the force. At the same time the majority of the interviewees were optimistic about the future.

4.1. Connections over professionalism

It is clear that there were in early 2015 now more professionally educated police officers in Kabul than at any other time since 2001. The widespread belief however is that this has not led to a parallel decline in corruption and nepotism. As in the provinces, many Kabul police officers trained before 2002 complain about having been passed over for promotion by much less qualified (or even completely non-qualified) colleagues with connections to political factions or powerful politicians [8, 10]:

The current commander of XXX is Qomandan YYY. He was a junior officer and led a platoon [military unit of 27 people] and was deputy of a company [military unit of 120]. In one year, he got 3 promotions while each promotion according to the rules requires 3 years of work experience. He was promoted to the rank of Colonel and Commander of XXX. He got these promotions since he is from WWW, same district as ZZZ. On the other hand, I graduated from Police Academy 9 years ago. I should have received 3 promotions till now and should have become Major; however, I am still First Lieutenant since I am not well connected and do not enjoy connections similar to Commander YYY [11].

One consequence of these nepotistic practices is that professional police officers are more abundant in the middle ranks than at the top of the structure:

We have professional and highly skilled officers who are working in junior positions while incompetent officers who are well connected are appointed to senior and leadership position. That is why the police are not that effective [10, also 3].

Afghan Police has improved in comparing of years before, the police became much better then before [...], but unfortunately [...] most of the important positions are given for those officers who have links in the ministry or pay bribes at the ministry [5].

The rising number of professionally-trained police officers in the system does not necessarily imply that they are appointed in a meritocratic way. The views of the 11 police officers interviewed on this issue were that political and personal connections are much more important than anything else in getting jobs in Kabul police. While ethnic connections were mostly viewed not to be of great importance, professionalism and merit were seen to be only marginally more important and slightly less important than cash payments (Table 1). One interviewee claimed that 60% of appointments to criminal police were made on a base of merit, with the rest being determined by nepotism and political connections [10]. Other were more disparaging in their comments. One interviewee claimed that professionalism based appointments were just 5%, 30% being based on personal connections and the rest on a mix of personal connections and cash payments [11]:

If you have cash only, you would have to pay a lot while personal connections, such as MPs or powerful people, can reduce the price of the post. For example, if there is a post that is sold for \$100,000 if a person relies on 4 or 5 MPs to put pressure on the minister, he can secure the same job for \$50,000. [...] We do not have any person just based on professionalism only. Even professional officers need personal connections [11, also 6, 7].

Another put his estimate at 20% of meritocratic appointments, 60% being based on personal connections and 20% being based on cash payments [9]. None of these estimates based on personal views can provide a reliable estimate of the extent to which appointment are meritocratic or not. The purpose is instead to

show how perceptions of non-meritocratic appointments are widespread, but also uneven. However, all interviewees agreed that based on their long experience and that of colleagues, nepotism and corruption was widespread in senior police appointments.

Bribery is reportedly not limited to non-professional officers. Educated, professionals also appear to routinely pay bribes for positions.

Money is very important and then professionalism. In fact the officers who use their political connection, personal connection and money for making appointments are mostly professional officers, they are not uneducated person but they use these ways to speed up their process and get the position soon [5].

Once appointed, a person would get money and then pay every month or every 2 months to avoid being rotated to other positions or dismissed and sent home. Even those who are professional and appointed based on merit will have to make payments every one or two months to keep their posts. Otherwise, they will be moved to remote province or districts [9].

According to interviewees in the police, senior officers are often expected to provide regular bribes to MOI officials to remain in their positions. If they do not pay, they're removed:

There was an experienced and professional officer who was head of PD X for very long time, even during Dr. Najibullah. But since he did not make regular payments to the persons at the top, he was removed from his post. In general, if a person does not make payments to the top, different unsubstantiated justifications are used to remove him from his post and send him to remote districts or to lower positions [8].

Payment must be made in the beginning and every one or two months. Otherwise, you will be dismissed from your post or moved to other districts or provinces. If you do not pay, you will not be able to keep your post unless you have powerful connections. In that case, no one will be able to demand money from you. You can keep your post without making payments [9].

Although the majority of interviewees (63.6%) believed that Kabul police was becoming more professional, only a minority believed that nepotism and political connections were becoming less important (45.5%, Table 6). This apparent contradiction can be explained with the growing tendency towards both professionalism and nepotism, that is to limit appointments to professionally educated police, but still on the basis of personal recommendations by powerful individuals.

Before most of the leadership of the MOI was former Jihad commanders who studied some short term courses and were leading the ministry but now most of the leadership might have political connection or not but they are professionally educated police. One thing never changed in the police, which is corruption and lack of recognition for hard working and honest police [5].

4.2. Counter-terrorism over civilian policing: the debate over Gen. Zahir

The appointment of Gen. Zahir Zahir at the head of Kabul police was evaluated in different ways by our interviewees. He was the first Kabul Chief of Police with a strong background in a specialization that was not paramilitary. Everybody acknowledged Zahir's professionalism and there was a general rejection of allegations of ethnic partiality in his work:

Zaher Zaher was relatively successful although some people complained about him because of ethnic bigotry. I am Pushton myself but appreciate his efforts and hard work to improve the Kabul police [8].

However many interviewees hinted that Zahir's main successes were in criminal policing, as opposed to counter-terrorism:

There is one change and that is the police performance. The police performance has improved over the last one year. The oversight of the police has become better. If someone calls 119 complaints are investigated and taken seriously. General Zaher Zaher worked hard to make the police more accountable. For instance, if a car was stolen, General Zaher used to arrest the head of Criminal Division of the police department in that area for negligence [6].

Zaher Zaher was an outstanding professional officer since he had network of operative officers who could help him in discovering crimes and criminals. He served a lot in Kabul in terms of discovering many criminal networks [10].

The argument of the critics was that the tasks of Kabul's CoP are much greater than just dealing with criminality. Quite a few interviewees believed that while he was effective in countering crime, he lacked the experience and management skills to protect Kabul from the other threats it faces, namely terrorism.

Zaher Zaher is a professional criminal investigation but he was not a good manager [11].

Zaher Zaher was very good but his expertise was in criminal investigation. He is not qualified as police chief. He does not have management and leadership experience and is not competent enough as provincial police chief [7].

The criticism faced by Zahir is representative of what any police professional in Kabul struggles with. The priority job of the police by 2014 was even in Kabul to contain terrorist activities and there was little time and energy left for anything else [7]:

The police have been exhausted and tired. We have been working very hard for very long time and the police find it very difficult to secure the capital now after having been working so hard for such a long time. Look at the recent attacks in Kabul. We are under tremendous pressure to set up checkpoints and improve security [10].

Elections made the police too busy for one year. Providing security for campaigns, campaigns offices, elections offices, etc, took all the time and energy of the police. They were not able to pay attention to other tasks [9].

4.3. Optimism about the future

Running on anti-corruption platform, President Ashraf Ghani demonstrated his determination to tackle corruption within the Police. Three months after being sworn in as president, he dismissed 15 police chiefs and five border police commanders in Herat, who were accused of corruption or incompetency.¹⁶ Three months later, he sacked 17 district police chiefs in Kabul and many officers in the counter-narcotics department, whose integrity was also questionable.¹⁷ These drastic moves proved his resilience in fighting corruption and enhanced optimism among police officers.

The large majority (over 80%) of interviewees were optimistic about the immediate future (Table 3). One noticed how President Ashraf Ghani seemed to be already on the case:

As we know, President Ashraf Ghani called serving generals to have a discussion with them. He wants to make sure first that these people deserve the rank of general or not [4].

The fact that salaries in Kabul are mostly now paid on time might have contributed to these optimistic views (Table 8). Some interviewees could even see changes already occurring in the few months which had elapsed from the presidential inauguration:

Recently, tens of officials are being hired by MOI, but as long as I know, the numbers of people who are being appointed by personal and political connections have been decreased. In my view, recently, most appointments are done according to professionalism and merit [1].

16 Ghafoor Saboory, 'Ghani Sacks Officials in Herat Visit', *Tolo News*, 28 December 2014, <http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/17635-ghani-sacks-off>.

17 'Afghan President Sacks Kabul Police Chiefs', *BBC News*, 2 March 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-31698760>

This optimism was held even by those who denied any improvement in the policy of appointments of the last year [2]. As a cautionary tale, however, it should be mentioned that the pressure of patronage networks was not relenting:

Yesterday a person who was a soldier was introduced by General XXX to become the head of criminal investigation unit in PD 10. He replaced an officer who was professional. This signals what is going to happen once the cabinet is formed. Even from now, they have started making non-professional appointments [6].

Of course, the local powerful people are still trying their best to appoint their people into positions, and they can do this to some extent, but it is not happening like before [4].

In fact the arrival of Ghani and of the coalition government appears to have disrupted this pattern of making appointments, but not eliminated it yet. The case of Gen. Zaher Zaher, who was dismissed in December 2014 after a wave of suicide attacks, is exemplary. A day later the Minister of Interior, Daudzai, was himself dismissed by Ghani and his deputy Salangi became acting minister, immediately trying to bring back his protégé Zaher even if a new Chief of Police had already been appointed by Daduzai before leaving [9].¹⁸ It took some time before Ghani was able to remove Zaher Zaher and appoint General Rahimi as Kabul police chief.

In addition, the case of Herat demonstrated the limits of Ghani’s approach to tackle corruption without strong institutions. It took longer than four months before he was able to introduce replacements for the dismissed police chiefs in Kabul. During this period, Herat police force was led by acting police chiefs with very limited authority.

Another challenge facing Ghani’s fight against corruption is the management of ANP payroll. The funds for paying police salaries have been managed, since 2002, by the UNDP through Law and Order Trust Fund (LOTFA). However, the management of the fund became under scrutiny and its integrity was questioned after it was revealed that millions of dollars were used for covering overhead costs or wasted for paying salaries of ghost officers whose existence could not be substantiated.¹⁹ In early 2015, President Ghani decided to transfer the management of the fund from UNDP to Afghanistan government. Given the rampant corruption within the government and Mol, ensuring that the new management does not become corrupt is even a more strenuous task for the president.

Table 6: Assessment of trends in police appointments in Kabul, by interviewed police officers

Question: Over the last year, do you think the importance of professionalism and merit has increased within the police in Kabul city?

%	Police getting more professional?	Nepotism reducing?
Yes	63.6	45.5
No	27.3	54.5
No answer	9.1	

18 See also on this “Kabul police chief returns to work”, *Mandegar*, 2 December 2014. The compromise was in the end the appointment of Gen. Zaher as head of department at the ministerial level (National Afghanistan TV, Kabul, in Dari 1530 gmt 3 Dec 14).

19 ‘The Afghan President’s Overreach’, *The New York Times*, January 3, 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1rPN6pe>.

Table 7: Future expectations of police officers, interviewed for the project

Question: What do you expect for the next year? Do you think professionalism will increase or decrease?

Optimistic?	%
Yes	81.8
No	9.1
No answer	9.1

Table 8: Police officers interviewed and salaries

Salaries paid on time?	%
Yes	90.9
No	9.1

4.4. Training improves, but with little impact

One important aspect of perceived trends in police professionalism is the quality of the training being imparted. From the beginning, short-term training was criticized for being inadequate and ineffective in preparing the ANP for policing and law enforcement. Having been managed and implemented since 2005 by the US Department of Defence (DoD), the short-term trainings focused on weapon use, survival strategies and counterinsurgency operations, instead of policing skills and law enforcement needs. Out of billions of dollars spent on police training, only \$7 million was spent on civilian policing. Moreover, the training courses were too short to allow trainees understand and absorb civilian policing principles.²⁰ Instead, the training prepared a paramilitary force more tuned toward fighting the insurgency rather than civilian policing.

Police is supposed to provide security. Fighting insurgents has made the ANP more violent and undermined their relationship with people. In other countries, the most sophisticated weapon that the police have is a pepper spray but in Afghanistan they are fully armed. This makes the police violent and incapable of building good relations with the public [6].

In addition, the effectiveness of the training was viewed to be very limited as the trainees, after the completion of the course, joined colleagues and superior officers who were often untrained and corrupt. To overcome this problem, the US adopted a Focused District Development (FDD) program whereas all uniformed police in a district were trained at once in order to improve the working environment of those who finish the short-term course. However, the US was not able to recruit the required number of mentors and instructors for FDD program.²¹ Over the past two years, new trainees are sent to Turkey for a six-month training and mentoring courses.

The views of short term training imparted in Afghanistan still remains mostly negative [4, 6, Table 9], but the new courses in Turkey get raving reviews by the interviewees:

We used to have 6-month training courses [...] These 6-month courses were run for two years but were stopped and no longer take place. Instead those recently joining the police are now sent to Turkey for 6 months. [...] The quality of Turkish trainings is much better than those that were run in Afghanistan [6, post-2001 academy graduate].

By 2014, 1,300 police officers had been trained in Turkey, still a small number compared to the tens of thousands trained by the NATO Training Mission and its predecessors. ²² Even with modest improvements in training, there appears to little effect on corruption. Officers who emerge from training with improved skills and professionalism nevertheless find themselves placed back into a broken system, weighed down by corrupt officers at the top:

20 Planty and Perito 2013, p. 10.

21 Perito 2009, p. 5.

22 M. Yegin and S. Colakoglu, 2014.

there is no mechanism to put into practice what they learn. The people who return from the six-month trainings in Turkey are very proud and take their jobs seriously. They come back with high spirit and wear the same uniform that they are given in Turkey for very long time but have to work under corrupt officers. After some time they get disappointed and become like other police and become corrupt [11].

Police training has always been second fiddle to the imperative of fighting off the insurgency, and little pressure from any quarter has been applied on the police for putting in practice even whatever policing skills were being taught.²³

The training teaches the police personnel about human rights, civilian policing and best practices. However, because of urgency and insurgency, putting in practice what they learn is not taken seriously. Once a trainee is sent to the field, no one monitors his performance or expects him to carry out his duty based on the professional principles that he was taught in the training [8].

Now police is like a private company. 10 or 15 people follow one commander and do not implement what they learn in training. There is no institution. No one is interested in following principles and professionalism [11].

A typical problem of Kabul's police, the weak discipline at checkpoints, seems for example to have continued unabated:

The police personnel can go home every other nights unofficially. They are supposed to stay at checkpoints and PDs all the time. When they go home every other nights, they face the risk of being prosecuted for negligence in case a security incident happens in their area [6].

Table 9: Police officers interviewed, views about police training

Question: What do you think of the new police officers being trained today?

%	Quality of current training good?	Pre-2011 Short-term training good?
Yes	72.7	36.4
No	9.1	54.5
No answer	18.2	9.1

²³ On this point see Bayley and Perito, 2010.

5. PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE CORRUPTION

There are several factors that may assist Kabul police in guarding against the kind or level of corruption that has impacted many other parts of the country. Central control is strong compared to the provinces, there are no major smuggling operations to take place through the capital, and the high-profile nature of terrorist attacks may increase vigilance and political pressure to demonstrate security gains. Perhaps as a sign of the relative progress made in Kabul, there are no reports of ghost policing in Kabul city, which is a major achievement considering that as of early 2015 ghost policing was still reported as being a major problem countrywide.²⁴ As an officer put it, ‘It would be a big shame for the ministry of Interior having ghost police in the capital’ [5].

The greater presence of police professionals in Kabul should also facilitate efforts to contain at least certain forms of corruption. It is not within the scope of this study to make a quantitative assessment of how extensive corruption in Kabul really is, but the perceptions of the officers serving in Kabul differ only in part from what found in the provinces. Almost three quarters of the interviewees admitted to knowing of somebody in Kabul’s police, having been investigated for corruption (Table 10).

Like in the rest of the country opinion is divided about the extent to which any improvement in police oversight has been taking place. While nobody denied the existence of serious corruption, opinions were nonetheless divided among the interviewees with regard to the extent of corruption in Kabul’s police. Some believed corruption was being contained [4]. Others believe that key jobs in Kabul’s police are for sale:

For instance, head of hawza (police station) is sold for over 100,000 USD. Those who are appointed are not dismissed until they get their money back—earn it through corruption [7].

Some on the interviewees believed that ‘there has been more oversight of the police over the past one year. One of the sources claimed that people’s complaints about the ANP have started being seriously investigated [6]. The majority of the interviewees, however, failed to detect any significant change in this regard. This divergence of views illustrates the limitations of research based exclusively on oral evidence. For this reason making a firm assessment of the extent of corruption in Kabul’s police is beyond the scope of this report. It was also not possible to check much of the information against actual police records, nor were the resources for following up on information provided available. In the following paragraphs we first review the evidence of corruption that exists in the Mol system, that is cases reported to internal affairs and/or prosecuted. We then review the mechanisms of corruption, as described by the interviewees. We also discuss what the drivers of corruption appear to be. Finally we look at the police’s expectations of anti-corruption efforts.

5.1. Evidence of prosecution of police officers for corruption

According to the interviewees, some cases of petty corruption and abuse of power are reported to the Inspector General [10]. Because the Mol does not publicise investigations over allegations of corruption, some of the interviewees could not mention a single concrete case of corruption. Others had personal knowledge of colleagues extorting money from the public, but had taken no action to report them [6]. One interviewee could only mention the case of a police officer responsible for a road accident and being prosecuted, but not cases concerning bribe-taking or misuse of public funds [9]. However, another interviewee had reported himself a case of extortion to the Inspector General:

I personally introduced XXX to the Military Attorney Directorate He worked for Kabul highway police and took money from cars and trucks at Tange Abrisham and extorted from people either under the name of Taliban or as police depending on the situation. During daytime, he stopped the cars and got money from drivers. During night-time he took of his uniform off and acted as a Talib and extorted from people. I reported his activities to the Inspector General of Mol [11].

24 SIGAR, 2015.

Typically these cases involve bribes in the range of 5-10,000 Afs. [7] and rarely end in actual prosecution, even more rarely in sentencing:

Thousands of police being persecuted for misuse of public services or bribery but didn't work. The released back after one or two day of inquiry. Even in our department, there are many officers who misuse from the public services, misuse from their position and haven been persecuted but again after one or two days returned back to their work. [...] They will be released back because of using their political connection or personal connection and some of these officers who were arrested because of corruption unfortunately somehow with paying again bribe solve their cases soon [5, also 4, 2, 3].

We found a single exception to this rule, a head of counter-narcotics police in Police District 10, who was arrested and imprisoned for getting paid by a trafficker [9]. The arrest and investigation of senior officers is even rarer and believed to be very difficult to document in the absence of thorough investigations. One specific example mentioned is that of a police officer, who had been dismissed a chief of police in a district, tried and sentenced for having taken a bribe from a criminal, only to be released after two years and appointed as Chief of a Police District in Kabul, allegedly because of the protection he enjoyed by a Member of Parliament [9]. Indeed when accusations are raised, the most that could happen is the accused officer being transferred to another task [7, 8]. Gathering evidence on high profile cases of corruption would require complex investigations. Often bribes are paid in Dubai, or transferred through intermediaries, leaving no obvious trace [10].

As a result there is little record of major episodes of police corruption in Kabul. The last one on record dates back to 2007, when a border police vehicle was stopped in Kabul for carrying 123 kg of heroin, valued almost \$300,000.²⁵

The greater demands that Kabul's police meet western policing standards also creates new forms of corruption. MoI officials are reported to often lobby on behalf of the families to help them get the fugitive women back; allegedly some of these officials are bribed by the families. A source in one of the Family Response Units indicated that there is evidence that at least some of the women returned to their families were then murdered [12].

Table 10: Police officers interviewed and corruption

Question: Has anybody been sacked or arrested for corruption within the police in Kabul city?

%	Knows police officers arrested for corruption?
Yes	72.7
No	27.3

5.2. Mechanisms of corruption, as described by police officers

One of the interviewees related the story of a former trader, who effectively bought his position and was appointed as a police officer despite having no professional education, then being promoted to head the Kabul gateway battalion in just three months. 'It was widely believed that his control of Kabul gateway allowed him to protect his smuggling activities that passed through Kabul'. His successor into the job, a professional officer with a reputation for honesty, was soon removed from the job and replaced by yet another officer, who reportedly 'left the city gates open to the mafia linked to the top circles in the MoI' [11]. This description suggests a tug of war in appointments, where corrupt networks try to insert their men and reformers try to impose theirs.

25 'Reforming the Afghanistan National Police', p. 10.

The interviewees also describe a system of corruption even in Kabul, which is essentially pyramidal in nature:

The leadership of the police and the head of PD X collect around 200,000 Afs every day from that area. Each single seller who sells something on the street has to make payments of 100 or 200 to the police every day. Otherwise, the police would beat him up and would not allow him to sell anything on the street. However, the sellers do not pay the police directly. Each 20 sellers have a representative who collects the money from the sellers. That representative then passes the money to a senior representative who collects money from 4 or 5 representatives. He then passes the money to police soldier, then to police checkpoints and then to the head of PD. The head of PD visits the checkpoints after 9 or 10 pm to collect the money since there is no control or oversight of the police at that time [10].

A sophisticated system of investigation, possibly with the help of advanced technologies would be required to track down this type of corruption. Alternatively the sellers should cooperate with the police. Entire sections of the police have reportedly been perverted to function as extortion machines. This is the case for example of the ‘Neighbourhood Control’ units, which exist in each Police District. These units ‘collect information about the businesses and people living in each neighbourhood in order to foresee any security incidents or discover criminal activities’. In practice, instead, these units are used to identify new building sites, which are then targeted for bribes, lest all work is stopped by the police. Reportedly the ‘Neighbourhood Control’ officers have to pass on up to 60% of their bribe to superior officers [6]. As one interviewee narrated, even enjoying the protection of some of Kabul’s politicians might not be enough from being exempt from extortion.

My friend knew powerful politicians and ask them to contact the officer. When the politician called the officer, he told the politician that he was supposed to get \$200 and pass the remaining \$300 to the “people at the top”. He said that he was willing to forgo his share (\$200) but had to get \$300 and pass it to the people at the top before he could allow construction [6].

5.3. Drivers of corruption, as identified by police officers

The interviewees identified several drives of corruption in Kabul’s police. An obvious one is the wider climate of corruption within Afghan state institutions:

In Kabul police, most of heads of PDs are experienced but the problem is corruption since almost all of them are part of a corrupt network. They see that Attorney General’s office takes money and releases them from prison. So they get disappointed and also get corrupt [8].

The lack of transparency in the police internal justice system, already highlighted in the case of the provinces, is raised as a major issue in Kabul as well [8]. Those honest police and NDS officers, who are trying to fight corruption in the police are demoralised by the widespread belief that corrupt officers benefit from impunity:

Any one who is connected to the top circles, he can do whatever he wants even like treating PDs as his private business. He can order his subordinates to engage in corruption and illegal activities. The subordinate would have to follow his orders. Since he is well connected, he is confident that he will not face any problems because even complaints about him to the top will be ineffective. He is untouchable and can use his post like his private business without having have to worry about punishment [8].

The low salaries of the police are an even greater problem in Kabul city than they are in the provinces, due to the higher cost of living (Table 8).

The highest salaries are 30,000 Afs. And the low-ranking officers are paid 10,000 to 20,000 Afs a month, which is very low. So the police are not willing to fight corruption since they cannot live off their salaries. They take part in it [7].

The low salaries and lack of benefits combine with the uncertainty over the future in the wake of western withdrawal and provide strong negative incentives:

The Chiefs of PDs when we talked with them, they used to say that we have only this year. Make sure you fill up your pockets. After 2014, the foreigners will not help Afghanistan and there will be no money. They were not concerned about security or a political crisis after 2014. They wanted to have sufficient money to take their families out of Afghanistan if something happens in 2015 [9, also 6].

The reality of the vulnerability to western disengagement was driven home by a taste of how things would look like without foreign money

When there was tension between the Afghan government and American over signing the agreement, Americans stopped providing fuel to the ANP. Many police vehicles were stopped and were not operated because of lack of fuel. The number of patrolling police cars declined and police operations were stopped because we did not have fuel. We had to use vehicles for only some of the necessary trips. Many people inside the ANP were panicked that with the withdrawal of foreign forces the police would not have sufficient resources to operate and would collapse. This undermined the police morale [8].

The interviewees might be right or wrong in identifying the drivers of corruption, but the reasons mentioned by seem reasonable ones. It would more difficult for the MoI to secure sufficient resources for higher salaries, given the Afghan government is short of cash already. However, there is certainly nothing to lose in strengthening the transparency of the MoI, as a disincentive for corruption and for covering up cases of misbehaviour.

5.4. Anti-corruption efforts, as viewed by police officers

Two institutions that are responsible for investigating and prosecuting cases of corruption within the police are Military Attorney Directorate (Saronwali Nezami, SN) and the Military Court (Mahkameh Nezami, MN). The SN is authorized to prosecute cases of corruption involving ANP personnel when such cases are reported by the police or by ordinary citizens, or discovered by the Detective Unit of the SN. The SN has 15 days to complete investigating cases and sending them to the Military Court for adjudication. The SN, however, has mainly been processing cases reported by the police although the cases referred to the SN predominantly involve the abuse of police properties such as vehicle or weaponries. Cases of corruption or extortion by the police personnel are rarely referred to the SN. Even when cases of corruption are referred, the attempts to prosecute such cases are often undermined by political factions, senior officials or politicians.²⁶

The same predicament affected the fate of the hotline 119, which received a large volume of anti-corruption complaints. In 2014, the hotline received more than 2000 complaints by citizens of corruption by the police. However, only nine cases were referred for prosecution and no actual judicial prosecution was carried out. The complaints were used by the Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Directorate within MoI to collect ransom from the officers against whom complaints were filed before the cases were dropped completely. In other cases, senior officers protected the corrupt officers and prevented their prosecution.²⁷

The political protection and resulting immunity to corrupt officers has led to resentment and disappointment for honest officers. Those police interviewees who tried to fight back corruption tend to express their frustration about the political protection enjoyed by corrupt officers. Even the security services (NDS) crash against a wall here, according to an anecdote related by an interviewee:

26 Antonio Guistozzi and Mohammad Isaqzadeh, *Policing Afghanistan: The Politics of The Lame Leviathan*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2013, pp. 179-181.

27 Jeffrey Coonjohn 'Assessment Corruption Complaint Process, Afghan Ministry of Interior, UNDP Final Interim Report, UNDP, 2014.

The head of NDS in PD X went to XXX, chief of that PD, and told him that we have reports about your involvement in corruption. You are in trouble. XXX took a batch of blank papers from his desk and gave them to the head of NDS and told him "Go ahead and write your reports about my corruption to the Mol. If you do not have enough papers, even use these papers to write more reports about me. You will see that you cannot do anything." He gets money from each building that is built in his area. He is very corrupt but no one can touch him since he is brother of XXX and has powerful supporters [9].

It is not surprising therefore that the interviewees, when asked about what could unblock the fight against corruption, usually pointed towards the need for determined action at the very top of the structure of the state. The same expectation that the political leadership holds the key to anti-corruption efforts seems to be held by corrupt police officers.

The anti-corruption rhetoric of President Ashraf Ghani led to high expectations of new anti-corruption efforts within the ANP. In practice, however, the initiative did not exceed beyond rumours of surprise visits by the President and fell short of establishing systematic or institutionalized procedures for fighting corruption. His few surprise visits, nevertheless, did unleash panic among corrupt police officers:

Ashraf Ghani visited few Kabul PDs since he has been elected as President. The Police are now afraid. His surprise visit has itself reduced corruption by 40%, simply because of fear of his surprise visit [7, also 5, 11].

Police personnel are now more careful about their performance since there are rumours that Ashraf Ghani may carry out surprise visits of police checkpoints. In our kitchen the cooks now wear a uniform and heads of PDs stay until late evening fearing that Ashraf Ghani may do a surprise visit. They now feel more responsible [8].

In fact the surprise night visits were a matter of myth and never occurred, as confirmed by the Provincial Headquarter of the police, which only has records of a day visit to Kabul's police headquarter, which was arranged in advance [6]. This only makes the panicky reaction of the police all the more remarkable. Inevitably by December 2014 the wave of fear was petering out, as the rumours of Ghani's flash visits started dissipating [11]. A single interviewee wisely pointed out that in any case even if they had happened a few inspections from the new president would not have a long term impact:

You cannot keep the police responsible by few surprise visits. You need to build institutions and procedures for the oversight of the police. How many nights could he visit PD and how many PDs? We need a system for oversight of the police rather than personal surprise visit of the police [10].

6. CONCLUSION

With the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan and the assumption of security responsibilities by the Afghan security forces, professionalism and meritocracy becomes more urgent than ever for enhancing the capacity of the ANP to enforce the rule of law and protect Afghan citizens. One decade of police reform efforts in Afghanistan seem to have achieved relatively little in creating an accountable police force even in Kabul. Here the reform process should have created a model police force for the rest of the country, given the abundant resources and police assistances allocated to Kabul.

Some changes have occurred in recent years: Kabul's police is more ethnically balanced and there are more professionals serving within it. However, on the whole adopting the strategy of 'equipping and training' the police force while ignoring the politics of appointments and promotions, the US and its allies mostly failed in promoting the professionalization of the police force. Even in Kabul, the leadership of city police are mostly dominated by those appointed based on political or personal connections or outright purchase of positions. The new government needs to take meritocracy very seriously and put an end to non-meritocratic appointments since such appointments have contributed to the emergence of pyramidal corrupt networks within the police and the engagement of the police in extortion and predatory activities against the population.

Ending police impunity and its engagement in corrupt practices is highly urgent in order to improve the capacity of Kabul police to protect citizens and enforce the rule of law. As the capital of the country has become more vulnerable than ever to insurgent attacks, improving public trust in the police is essential for improving the security of the capital.

In addition, since the insurgency has grown very strong and capable of challenging the authority of the state, police professionalism is necessary for fighting the insurgency and bringing sustainable peace to the country. Being under direct oversight of the MoI, Kabul police must become the prototype of reformed police force and as a model for the provincial police forces. This objective cannot be achieved without increased transparency and meritocracy for senior appointments within the ministry of interior and the police ranks, which would contribute to the success of police reform and the improved accountability of police force and the rule of law in Afghanistan.

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Kolola Poshta,
Kabul, Afghanistan
info@iwaweb.org
www.iwaweb.org