

# RAPID ASSESSMENT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN HERAT, AFGHANISTAN

DISPLACEMENT PROFILE, APRIL 2015

## INTRODUCTION

This displacement profile provides an overview of the situation of an estimated 920 households<sup>1</sup> in three informal sites in the city of Herat, Afghanistan.

As of January 2015, there was a projected caseload of 765,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> Internal displacement across the country has been caused by multiple factors, including ongoing conflict, insecurity and natural hazards.<sup>3</sup> As a result, many IDPs have fled to urban centres, such as Herat, in search of protection and assistance.

As a result of periodic rapid assessments of displacement sites, humanitarian actors identified the need for further detailed information about the situation in three sites in Herat: Jol Sultani, Karizak, Ghar Shaidai (also spelled Shaydai). In order to fill this information gap, this small pilot assessment was led by REACH, with a view to informing similar more detailed key informant assessments in IDP sites elsewhere in Afghanistan.

Data collection was conducted in March 2015 to provide information to humanitarian actors about the origin and displacement history of IDPs in these sites, as well as their ability to access basic services, including the extent water, shelter and education.

This profile begins with an explanation of the methodology for this assessment, followed by an overview of displacement trends. The following section describes the current situation for IDPs in the three sites, comparing access to shelter, water and sanitation, livelihoods, health, and education to minimum humanitarian standards. Key priority needs and recommended interventions are highlighted in the conclusion.

## METHODOLOGY

The rapid assessment aimed at collecting additional information on displacement patterns and access to basic services in three displacement sites. Information gaps, particularly with regard to Shelter, Water and Sanitation, Livelihoods, Health and Education had been identified in previous assessments, including ACTED's Rapid Assessment Form,<sup>4</sup> and through a review of secondary data.

The collection methodology and tools were designed accordingly to provide the required information.

Primary data was collected on 17-18 March 2015 from Key Informants (KIs) in each of the three camps. The sample was purposively selected to include representatives of IDP communities with different ethnicities, and that arrived in the camps at different times. A total of 9 key informants were selected: 2 in Jol Sultani, 1 in Karizak and 6 in Ghar Shaidai.

Collected data was triangulated with analysis of satellite imagery and previous available data collected by ACTED through the Rapid Assessment Form (RAF), which is a standard tool used by humanitarian actors in Afghanistan. In addition, findings were verified by aid actors' national staff who had been recently operating in these camps.

Data has been collected through purposively sampled key informants and therefore cannot be generalized throughout the entire population of IDPs in the three camps. In addition, the majority of key informants were men, which means that the dataset provides limited opportunities to conduct an in-depth gender analysis of identified needs.

## KEY FINDINGS

IDPs arrived from several different parts of Afghanistan, most displaced for the first time. The majority had agricultural livelihoods prior to displacement, which for most IDPs, had provided both the primary source of food and household income. Having fled their pre-displacement homes, IDPs chose to come to Herat due to the presence of livelihood opportunities and humanitarian aid. In all three sites, no IDPs were reported to take part in agricultural cultivation, and the majority reported having insufficient money and resources to purchase food and other basic household items. As a result, IDPs in all three sites face difficulties in accessing their basic needs, particularly with regard to shelter, water, sanitation and education.

The assessment found that displaced households in all three informal sites face precarious living conditions. IDPs at each site face different challenges related to a lack of secure of tenure, but are all negatively affected by the 'temporary' nature of their displacement site which will continue to limit

<sup>1</sup> ACTED, Rapid Assessment Form, February 2015

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, [UNHCR planning figures for Afghanistan](#), 2015

<sup>3</sup> A total of 242 natural disaster incidents were recorded as affecting population flows in Afghanistan in 2013. IOM & Samuel Hall, [IDP Movement Tracking, Needs & Vulnerability Analysis in Herat and Helmand](#), 2014

<sup>4</sup> ACTED, note 1 *supra*.

the provision of anything other than lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

Of the estimated 920 households living across the three sites, approximately 10% of households are reportedly headed by a woman. Key informants reported the presence of individuals with specific needs, including 55 severely disabled individuals, 54 accompanied minors and 26 chronically ill individuals.

## DISPLACEMENT

IDPs are reported to have arrived from from Faryab (Qaisar district) Badghis (Ghomash, Jawasnd, Cadis and Balamurghab districts), Ghor (Sharak, Dolayna and Pasaband districts) and Ghazni (Muqur and Nawa districts) provinces. IDPs from all areas of origin can be found in each of the displacement sites, with the exception of Jol Sultani, where according the KIs, the majority of IDPs are from Badghis province only.

**The majority of IDPs arrived directly from their area of origin**, with a small number of cases of secondary displacement in Ghar Shaidai, and multiple displacement in Jol Sultani. Two main waves of arrivals have been identified: the first in May 2014, which accounted for almost 60% of IDPs across the three sites, and the second in November 2014.

All key informants reported that community members had been left behind and that some them are likely to join their family in the coming months. KIs were not able to estimate the number of these eventual new arrivals.

The main reported reasons for IDP communities to settle in their current location was the prospect of accessing livelihood opportunities in the areas surrounding Herat, or in host communities. However, half of the KIs reported that humanitarian assistance from aid agencies assistance had also been a pull factor. KIs did not report previous bonds with either the displaced or host communities as affecting their decision to move to their current displacement site. All KIs reported that host communities had provided assistance to the displaced households, but noted that this has been limited and it is unlikely to continue over time. No IDP community is currently considering moving from its current location, neither to return to their area of origin, nor to move to a new settlement.

The majority of IDPs households have been registered or are in the process of registering themselves as IDPs with local authorities and government agencies.

## SHELTER

Through available satellite imagery from 15<sup>th</sup> February 2015, REACH conducted a shelter count in the three major IDPs settlements. A total of 586 shelters have been clearly identified, but because of the low resolution of the imagery, it is fair to assume that more shelters could be present in these areas. As a result, it is likely that the total number of IDP shelters is somewhere between 586 and 705.

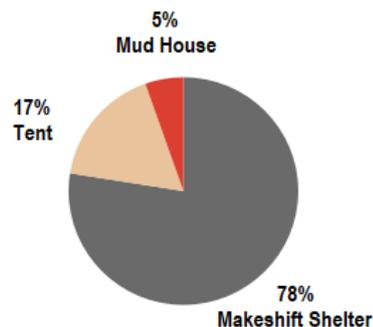
Table 1: Number of shelters identified through remote sensing

Settlement	Number of shelters identified	Number of HHs (RAF) <sup>5</sup>
Jol Sultani	179	177
Karizak	267	517
Ghar Shaidai	140	226
<b>Total shelters:</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>920</b>

The above analysis does not take in to calculation mud houses that according to KIs (see figure 1) could host up to 5% of the IDP households in the area. If this is the case, it is possible to estimate that in all three settlements, **we may have a total IDP population of between 600 and 740 households.**

Regarding shelter typology, KIs reported that most IDP households live in makeshift shelters, usually improvised tents made out of plastic sheeting, rags and other materials. According to KIs, a much smaller number of IDPs live in a tent that has been provided by aid actors and measures at least 2.5x2.5m. A very small percentage of IDPs is reportedly hosted for free in mud houses. KIs also reported that some IDPs are living in open air but this information has not been verified and did not match with previous assessments and site visits undertaken by UNICEF and ACTED in March 2015. **IDPs living in makeshift shelters are in dire need of shelter support and shelter assistance should be considered a priority intervention from aid actors.**

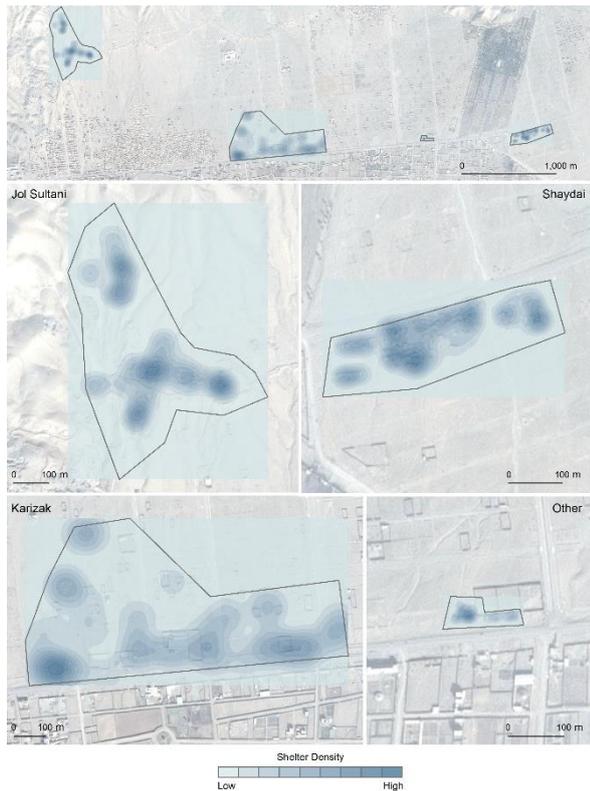
Figure 1: Type of shelter reported by KIs



<sup>5</sup> ACTED, Rapid Assessment Form (RAF) February 2015

An examination of shelter density (see figure 2) shows that Jol Sultani and Ghar Shaidai register a higher density of shelters. In Jol Sultani, shelter density is uneven due to the physical characteristics of the site: shelters are located next to each other in between irrigation canals that come down from the surroundings hills. In Ghar Shaidai, shelter density is more homogenous across the settlement site but appears overcrowded in comparison to minimum humanitarian standards for settlements.<sup>6</sup> High shelter density in displacement site is usually a good proxy indicator for risks related to health and protection, as well as fire hazards.

Figure 2: Shelter density in Herat IDP settlements



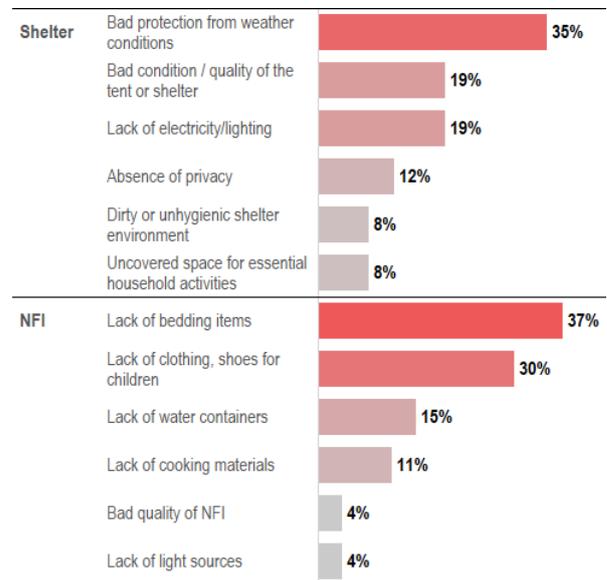
Reported concerns about shelter (figure 3) were primarily related to protection from the weather, or to the inadequate condition of the shelter or tent. A lack of lighting is among the most reported priorities, which is obviously linked with protection issues and personal security, especially for the most vulnerable individuals in the displaced community.

Regarding the provision of non-food items (NFIs), KIs from the displaced community reported that the major concern within their community was related to a lack of bedding items and lack of clothing for children. Lack of water storage and cooking material have also been reported, suggesting that **the provision of household NFIs would be an appropriate**

<sup>6</sup> SPHERE minimum standards for humanitarian response state that sites should provide at least 35m<sup>2</sup> of open area per individual, and 3.5m<sup>2</sup> of covered floor area.

**response for the majority of IDP households in all three targeted settlements.** All the items reported above are available in local markets, but it was reported that IDPs are unable to access these due to limited resources and income.

Figure 3: Shelter & NFI issues reported by KIs



In terms of Housing, Land and Property rights, (HLP) the situation differs from settlement to settlement. Jol Sultani and Ghar Shaidai are situated on government land and no rental fee is currently paid by the IDPs. Displaced households settled here without prior approval from local authorities, and their future remains unclear. Moreover, Jol Sultani is located at the end of a slope, adjacent to irrigation canals, leaving the whole settlement exposed to flood risks. To the contrary, Karizak settlement is located on a flat, privately owned land. While IDPs in Karizak pay no rental fees, the landlords have denied permission for any interventions—including temporary measures—that could lead to a protracted stay for IDP households. In all sites, providing improved security of tenure for IDPs remains a key challenge, which is unlikely to be resolved in the short term.

## WASH

The primary water sources used by IDP households are boreholes, *karizes* (local irrigation canals used for agricultural purposes) and water tanks. Water sources differ from settlement to settlement:

- In Jol Sultani, IDPs are located between 1250m and 1750m from the closest protected water source: a gas station borehole. Therefore IDPs are currently collecting water from nearby *karizes*. Water is apparently not being treated. Previously, IDPs in Jol Sultani were assisted by

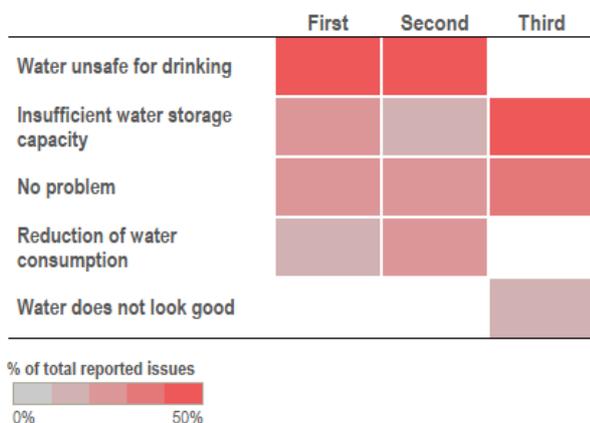
DRC through water trucking but this service was interrupted towards the end of 2014.

- In Karizak, the majority of IDPs collect water from a borehole located within the settlement “boundaries”. This borehole is less than 500m away from the furthest IDP shelter. The borehole is privately owned and is located within a plot currently under construction. Access to the borehole depends on the presence of the landlord or another affiliated person. In addition, IDPs have access to a borehole located in the nearby gas station (approximately 1000 to 1500m away) and in the nearby Mosque (100 to 1500m away).
- In Ghar Shaidai, UNICEF reports that the majority of IDPs fetch water from a nearby stone factory. Some IDPs also use a borehole at the mosque, which is located 1500m to 2000m away from the settlement.

Generally speaking, IDPs are able to access water free of charge. However, access may be occasionally limited by the owners of the private boreholes, based on their own priority.

When asked about concerns related to drinking water, most KIs reported that primary concerns were that water was somehow considered unsafe for drinking, or that there was insufficient capacity to store water within the community.

Figure 4: Most commonly reported concerns related to water, reported by KIs



Access to water for IDPs in Karizak and Ghar Shaidai settlements is less problematic than for those in Jol Sultani. IDPs in Karizak and Ghar Shaidai settlements have access to water from boreholes and the quantity of available water has not been reported as a prominent concern by KIs. However, access to water depends on the willingness of the private owners of these water sources and therefore cannot be fully predictable. In the long term, if displacement becomes protracted for these IDPs, continued use of host community resources may not be sustainable, causing tensions to arise between IDPs and host communities.

In Jol Sultani settlement the situation is radically different: the primary source of drinking water is from irrigation canals and KIs reported a limited capacity to treat water in an appropriate

manner. **IDPs living in Jol Sultani are therefore highly at risk because of their access to an unsafe water source, and humanitarian actors should provide appropriate assistance as soon as possible.**

It should be noted that the current assessment could not identify the average number of litres of water available per IDP per day, or for instance the average queuing time at water sources. The only SPHERE standard that could be assisted is related to the maximum distance from any household to the nearest water point which should be a maximum of 500 meters.

Table 2: IDP shelter distance from water sources

Camp	Shelters within 500m distance	Shelter beyond 500m distance
Jol Sultani	0	179
Karizak	233	34
Ghar Shaidai	0	140
<b>Total:</b>	233	353

As illustrated in table 2, only 40% of identified shelters are within 500m distance from the nearest water source.

**The situation in terms of sanitation services and facilities is below SPHERE standards in almost all of the IDP settlements assessed.**

Although NRC did provide four emergency (pre-made) latrines in Jol Sultani and 12 similar latrines in Ghar Shaidai settlement, most IDP households have no or limited access to any sanitation facility and open defecation is a common practice. In addition, those IDPs located on privately owned land (Karizak settlement) did not receive permission from the landlord to dig any pit latrines. Table 3 outlines the gaps in access to latrines in each settlement, according to minimum SPHERE standards.

It worth mentioning that latrines should also be gender specific, including specific facilities for disabled IDPs.

No dedicated facility for personal hygiene is available in any of the settlements. That may lead to IDPs using the NRC latrines as showers and, by doing so, filling up the pit sooner than expected.

Table 3: Latrine gap analysis - as per SPHERE standards<sup>7</sup>

Camp	HHs (RAF)	Available latrines	Target	Gap
Jol Sultani	177	4	62	58
Karizak	517	0	181	181
Ghar Shaidai	226	12	79	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>306</b>

Finally no formal or informal solid waste management system has been recorded. However, further assessments are needed to determine IDPs knowledge and practices on solid waste management.

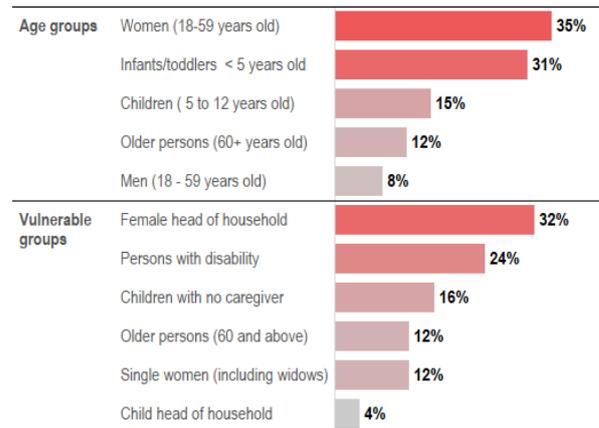
### HEALTH

Based on the ACTED Rapid Assessment Form (RAF) conducted in February 2015, the nearest health care facility is the children’s hospital (see reference map) which is located close to the IDP settlements. The distance to this facility varies from 500 meters to 4 kilometres, according to the settlement. Moreover, two private pharmacies have been identified in the area and are accessible to IDPs. An ambulance service is available, but IDPs lack of knowledge on how to access and benefit from it.

In addition to the RAF, the survey conducted by REACH asked to IDP key informants to identify age groups and other vulnerable groups that are the most at risk of health concerns within the communities. Unsurprisingly, women (between 18 and 59) and children (between 0 and twelve) are the population groups that have been indicated as most at risk. When asked about vulnerable groups within the community, KIs indicated that female headed households, people living with disabilities and children with no caregiver were the most vulnerable categories.

Most urgent health concerns reported by KIs are linked to diarrhoea, vomiting and dehydration. Very few cases of respiratory diseases are also reported by KIs.

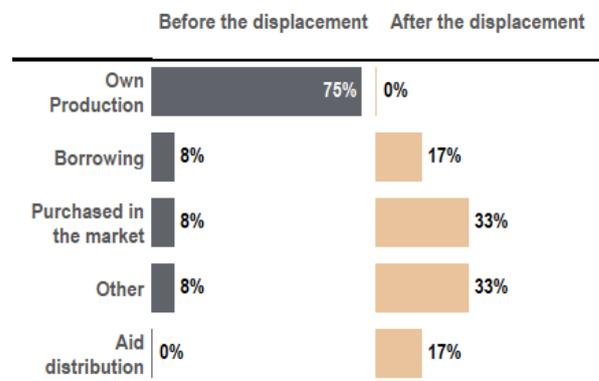
Figure 5: Population groups most at risk from health concerns



### FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS

All KIs report that food availability has decreased in their community since their arrival in Herat district. In their area of origin, the primary food source was their own (agricultural) production. Few KIs reported that they also purchased food in local markets as a primary food source. **This pattern has clearly changed after the displacement with no IDP communities reportedly able to produce food for their own consumption**, relying instead on markets, borrowing food from neighbours or from host community.

Figure 6: Primary food source before and after displacement



No KI reported any issue in terms of food availability in the local markets. Food is present with enough quantity and diversity, and no concerns have been reported relating to IDPs ability to access markets. The main and unique reported issue in terms of food access is the lack of purchasing power of IDP households. The same issue affect IDPs’ ability to purchase non-food items and other commodities. Most required items are available in local markets but IDPs cannot access them due to limited resources and lack of income.

<sup>7</sup> SPHERE standards state that a maximum of 20 individuals should use each toilet. Calculations were based on an average estimated household size of 7 (ACTED, RAF 2015)

When asked about how IDPs manage when unable to access sufficient food, **KIs reported that the most widespread coping strategy within their community was to rely on less preferred or less expensive foods.** This was followed by a reduction in the number of meals, or sending household members to beg. Although most of the reported coping strategies are reversible, in the long term these are all harmful practices which are interlinked with protection, health and nutrition concerns.

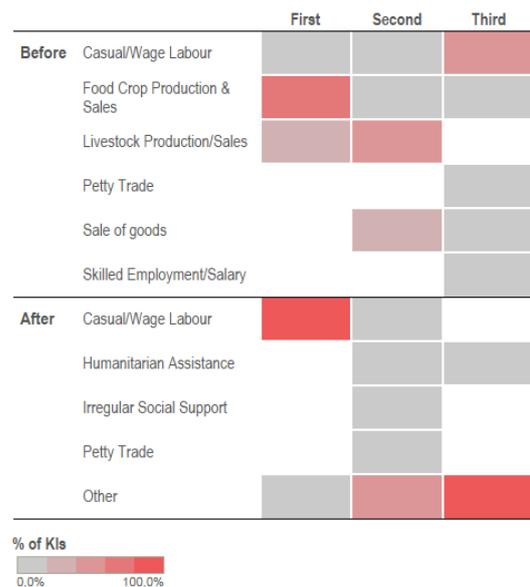
**Table 4: Most reported copying strategy amongst IDP KIs**

Rely on less preferred and less expensive foods	<b>18%</b>
Send household members to beg	<b>14%</b>
Reduce number of meals eaten in a day	<b>14%</b>
Skip entire days without eating	<b>11%</b>
Restrict consumption by adults in order for small children to eat	<b>11%</b>
Limit portion size at mealtimes	<b>11%</b>
Borrow food, or rely on help from a friend or relative	<b>11%</b>
Feed working members of HH at the expense of non-working members	<b>7%</b>
Other	<b>4%</b>

When asked about their primary sources of income prior to displacement, findings closely match those related to food-production. Most of IDPs used to get their primary income through food crop production and sales, with some additional income from livestock and casual labour. As expected, sources of incomes have changed drastically since displacement. Casual labour is currently the primary, if not only source of income, together with other sources of income such as begging or spinning wool. As a result, IDP households secure their basic needs through unsustainable income sources that increase their vulnerability to both external and internal shocks.

In terms of expenses, findings are straightforward. There was found to be consensus among all KIs that food and health services were the primary and secondary expenditures in the assessed IDP communities, followed by cooking fuel and other NFIs.

**Figure 7: Most reported sources of income before and after displacement**

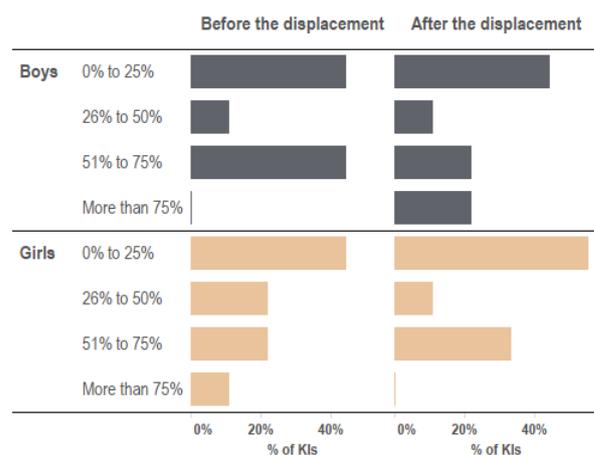


## EDUCATION

Based on KI interviews, it seems that there are two different patterns in terms of the enrolment of IDP children in primary school.

Access to education for boys appears to have been less affected by the displacement, with current levels of enrolment found to be very similar to that prior to displacement. However, half of the KIs reported that less than 25% of boys were enrolled in primary school prior to displacement, a rate which remained low at the time of assessment.

**Figure 8: Reported enrolment in primary school according to key informants**



To the contrary, **the enrolment of girls in primary schools is reported to have decreased since displacement.** The majority of KIs (5) report that currently less than 25% girls of primary school age are able to attend school. Only 2 key informants believed that more than one girl out of two in their community was able to access primary education.

Figure 9: Obstacles reported by KIs to affect the enrolment of boys and girls in primary school



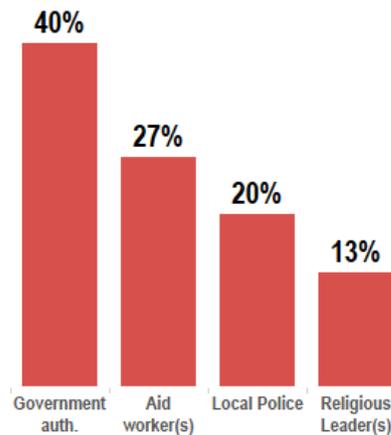
Prior the displacement, the main obstacles for children attending to school were related to security concerns and a lack of school facilities and materials. Since arrival in Herat, the main obstacles have now completely changed, although the lack of school materials remains an issue. While security was no longer reported to be an issue that prevents children from attending classes, the most commonly reported obstacles to primary education include the need for children to help with households tasks during the day—including some child labour practices—and a lack of resources to support education costs.

In light of these findings, any emergency education interventions should consider to creating synergies with parallel livelihoods support to IDP households in order to maximise the impact and sustainability of such an intervention. In addition, due to the presence of school facilities within the host community, education activities could be carried out through existing education services providers. If such support strategy is implemented, this could lead to improved relationships between the IDP and host communities, improve the capacity of education services in the medium and long term and include vulnerable households from host communities too.

## COMMUNICATION WITH AFFECTED POPULATION

In order to understand how to communicate most effectively with the affected population, KIs were asked to rate the information sources they trusted. The highest proportion of IDPs reported that they trusted information from government authorities, with much lower percentage reporting that they trust aid workers, police or religious leaders.

Figure 10: Most trusted sources of information by IDP KIs



## CONCLUSION

This assessment was conducted at the request of aid actors to provide a more detailed understanding of the humanitarian situation of displaced households in three main displacement sites in Herat. Particular focus was placed on comparing conditions in displacement sites with minimum SPHERE standards, in order to identify gaps in the existing provision of assistance and services and to identify priority lifesaving interventions.

All three sites were informally settled, with no tenure agreement. While none of the displaced communities were reportedly paying rent at the time of assessment, all IDPs can be considered vulnerable due to their lack of tenure security, which will prevent the establishment of formal sites in these locations, at least in the short term. One settlement, Jol Sultani, is particularly vulnerable to flooding, while landlords have refused prior humanitarian interventions at Karizak settlement, which is privately owned.

With a lack of secure land tenure, humanitarian intervention should focus primarily on providing lifesaving assistance to meet key identified needs in shelter, water and sanitation, which in turn would address some identified concerns related to protection. In the medium term, further negotiation should be encouraged with local authorities to identify safe alternative sites for these displaced families, and if possible to regularise the existing situation in Ghar Shaidai. In parallel, interventions to improve service provision within host communities should be considered to address other identified needs, particularly relating to health, education, and livelihoods. Interventions that strengthen existing services are likely to benefit both IDPs and their hosts, and to reduce community tensions if displacement were to become increasingly protracted.

Since the majority of IDPs live in makeshift structures in poor condition that offer inadequate protection, shelter actors should consider emergency shelter assistance for these IDPs, such as winterised tents and non-food items.

To address insufficient access to clean water for IDPs, especially in Jol Sultani where most IDPs use untreated water from irrigation channels, water trucking, bladders and treatment should be considered to improve the situation in the short term. Distributions of safe water storage containers would likely benefit all IDPs, who reported this as a priority concern.

To address the lack of sanitation facilities, at least 306 additional latrines should be provided across these settlements, in order to meet emergency SPHERE standards.

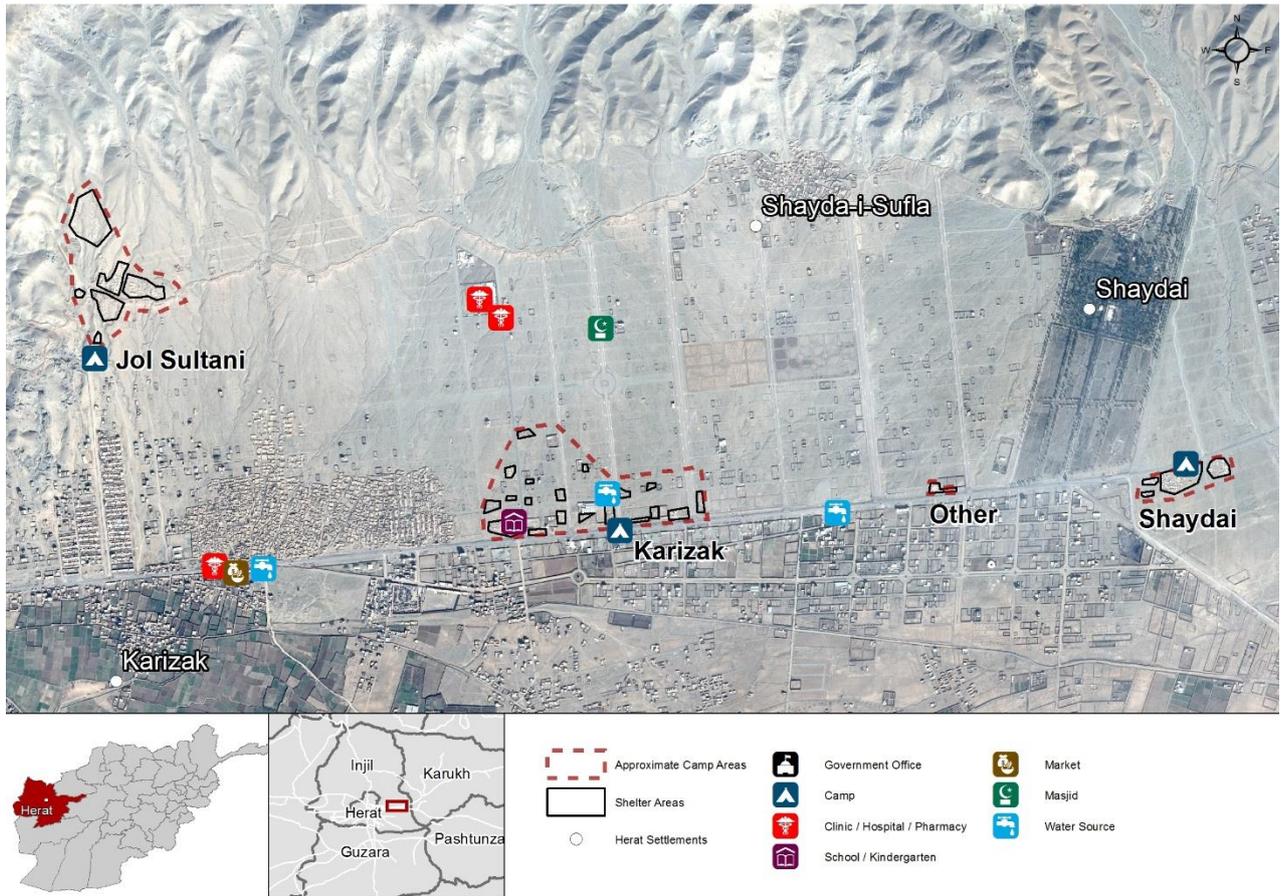
Longer term interventions to address other identified needs include investment in local schools, water infrastructure and healthcare provision, and the negotiation of shared facilities for IDPs, particularly to provide educational support to IDP children. The benefits of such an approach would include the mitigation of concerns related to social cohesion, the guarantee of service provision for IDPs in the longer term, and the increased sustainability of service provision in the host community.

### About REACH

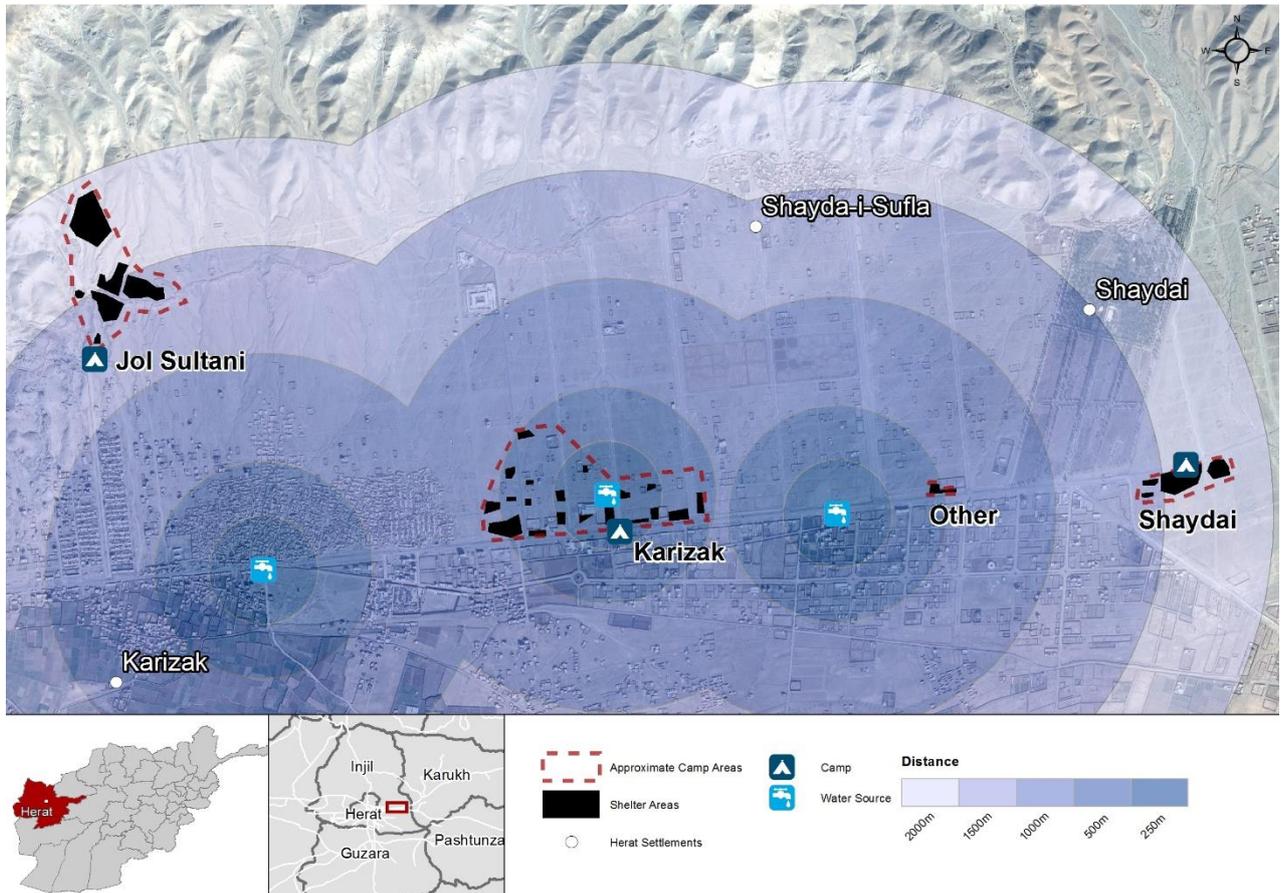
REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH's mission is to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. All resources are available on the REACH Resource Centre: [www.reachresourcecentre.info](http://www.reachresourcecentre.info) For more information please visit our website: [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org)

You can contact us directly at: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) and follow us on Twitter @REACH\_info.

**MAP 1: LOCATION OF ASSESSED DISPLACEMENT SITES IN HERAT**



**MAP 2: DISTANCE TO WATER POINTS FROM IDP SHELTERS IN HERAT**



**MAP 3: REPORTED AREAS OF ORIGIN OF IDPS IN DISPLACEMENT SITES IN HERAT**

