

KEY ISSUES

In April 2020, the HAG recorded 77 incidents impacting access for humanitarians, compared to 85 incidents in March¹. Even when taking into account that 30 incidents were linked to C-19 and its response, the remaining 47 incidents remain a significant increase to the 35 incidents recorded in April 2019, indicating a continuing challenging access environment for humanitarian organizations.

Access Impediments Related to C-19 outbreak and its response

By 17 April, 33 out of 34 provinces had imposed lockdown measures, varying across provinces. Despite OCHA advocating for a nation-wide solution to facilitate humanitarian movement, provincial authorities were given the authority to define their lockdown measures, including potential solutions to allow for uninterrupted humanitarian activities. In the absence of a unified approach, the OCHA regional offices played an essential role in engaging provincial authorities and providing ad-hoc support for organizations stuck at checkpoints. At the example of Jalalabad City the positive outcomes of such engagement can be highlighted: while a strict implementation of the lockdown initially resulted in serious movement restrictions for humanitarian organizations, continued outreach led to provincial authorities issuing permits to facilitate movement and the establishment of a direct hotline to the Chief of Police to resolve ad-hoc movement issues.

With the start of Ramadan, a number of provinces have announced relaxations to their lockdown measures, including in Kandahar, Helmand and Ghazni provinces, while in Badakhshan, provincial authorities even fully lifted lockdown measures as of 25 April. However, such relaxations are likely only temporary, with the continued increase in infection numbers demanding for continued lockdown measures.

More information on the C-19 related access impediments can be found in the C-19 Access Impediment Report.

Military Operations and Kinetic Activity

On 24 April, NSAG-TB publically rejected a call by the Afghan government for a ceasefire, with their spokesperson stating that a ceasefire was currently not 'rational' or 'convincing', accusing the Afghan government of delaying the prisoner exchange. This means that in addition to C-19 related access impediments, humanitarian activities also continued to be impeded by ongoing fighting, resulting in nine access constraints this month. Conflict activity prevented organizations from conducting assessments in Baghlan and Badghis provinces and impeded access due to road closures in Ghor, Logar and Baghlan provinces, with one organization caught in crossfire in Hilmand Province. ANSF authored activity collaterally impacted NGO facilities on three occasions: In Faryab Province, two NGO-supported schools were collaterally damaged through mortar rounds and an AAF airstrike respectively, while another AAF airstrike impacted near an NGO compound in Zabul Province, shattering its windows.

Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities

In April, the HAG logged nine incidents of interferences with humanitarian activities, out of which NSAG-TB authored four and government and ANSF members the other five. In eastern region, local authorities attempted to pressure an organization to intervene against their will in a quarantine camp, while in the southern region local authorities requested access to an organization's beneficiary list, with another organization reporting of interference with their recruitment process. In the northeast, an organization felt so threatened by district officials that they gave in to pressure to change the beneficiary list, subsequently raising the issue with the OCHA regional office. Meanwhile, NSAG-TB representatives in Paktya Province requested for an organization to suspend their activities until they had reached out to the provincial NSAG-TB focal point and in Zabul Province, NSAG-TB members asked an organization to temporarily suspend a staff member, claiming that there was an ongoing investigation against this individual.

Levy Requests

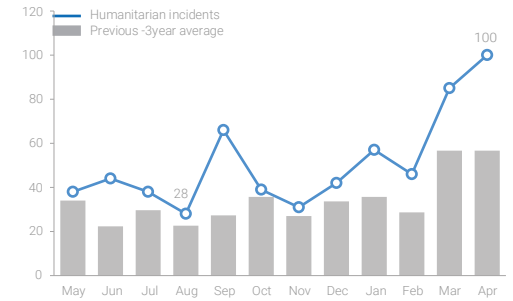
In April, the HAG logged another six levy requests, compared to eight requests recorded in the first three months of 2020. Five out of the six incidents were authored by NSAG-TB, with this month's developments highlighting the issue of indirect levies paid to NSAG-TB through transport companies. In Ghazni Province, Muqur District, along the Kabul-Kandahar Road, NSAG-TB maintain a long-term checkpoint and stopped on two different occasions commercial trucks transporting NFIs for humanitarian organizations. In both cases, NSAG-TB requested a 'road levy' from the companies, with the humanitarian organizations getting involved and attempting to negotiate an exemption on behalf of the transport companies. However, with the negotiations taking several days, the transport companies opted to pay the 'road levy' in order to continue their movement.

Also this month, an organization expressed concerns about a significant increase of transport costs, likely due to transport companies factoring in potential 'road levies' into the overall budget. This assessment is supported by reports of another organization who - in discussion with their transport company - realized that the company had indeed included a potential 'road levy' into their overall costs.

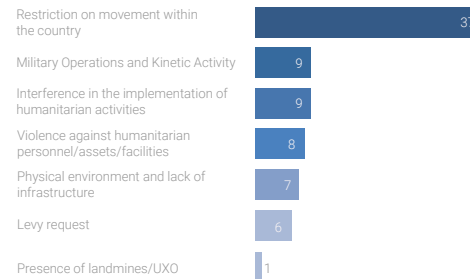
KEY FIGURES

IN APRIL	IN 2020	
77	266	total number of access incidents
4	23	total incidents related to health workers or facilities
0	8	aid workers killed
1	12	aid workers injured
2	18	aid workers abducted
30	62	Access incidents related to COVID-19

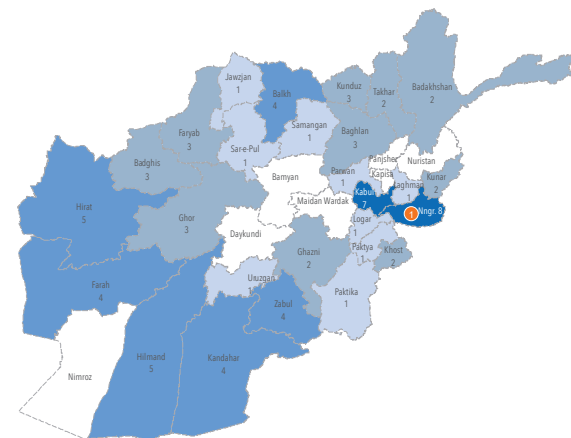
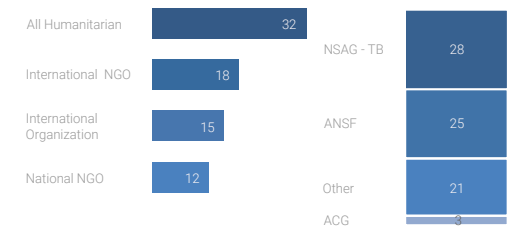
MONTHLY TREND



ACCESS CONSTRAINTS



IMPACTED GROUP/AUTHORED BY



Number of incidents by province



Incidents related to health workers and facilities
Total incidents

¹In addition to the 79 incidents reported in the March snapshot, the HAG received late reports of an additional six incidents in March.

Disclaimers: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Creation date: 7 May 2020 **Data sources:** Conflict/Access Constrains/Humanitarian Incidents (Various, as of 5 May 2020). These numbers are expected to change as new information becomes available.

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