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Government of Afghanistan
Ministry of Counter Narcotics

AFGHANISTAN

Drug Use Survey 2005



Executive Summary
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The following individuals contributed to this national assessment of drug use in Afghanistan, and to the preparation of the present survey report:

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The field interviews were conducted by field workers of the Drug Dependency Treatment Center of the Mental Health Hospital in Kabul and GTZ/IDPA, and by the Demand Reduction Action teams (DRATs) composed of the staff from the Ministries of Public Health and Education, in addition to UNODC field surveyors.

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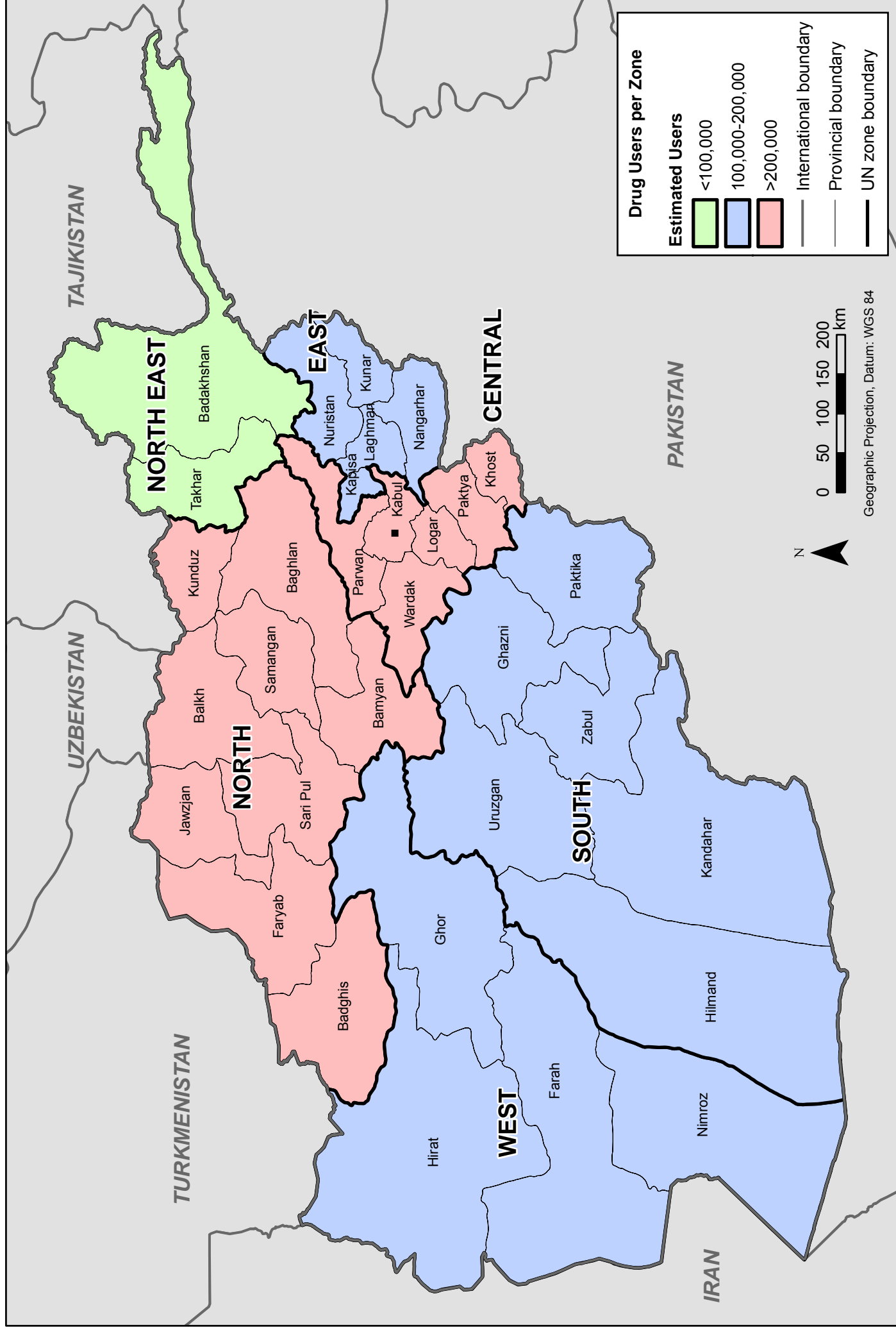
FACT SHEET - AFGHANISTAN DRUG USE SURVEY 2005

Estimated number of drug users as percent of total population (23,850,000)	920,000 3.8%
Estimated number of adult male drug users as percent of total adult male population (6,062,000)	740,000 12.1%
Estimated number of adult female drug users as percent of total adult female population (5,825,000)	120,000 2.1%
Estimated number of child drug users as percent of total child population (11,963,000)	60,000 0.7%
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Estimated number of opium users as percent of total population	150,000 0.6%
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Estimated number of heroin users as percent of total population	50,000 0.2%
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Estimated number of hashish users as percent of total population	520,000 2.2%
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Estimated number of pharmaceutical drug users as percent of total population	180,000 0.8%
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Estimated number of alcohol users as percent of total population	160,000 0.7%
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Estimated number of other drug users ¹ as percent of total population	200,000 0.9%

Note: Estimates of drug use are based on results from 1480 key informant and 1393 drug user interviews

1. Other drugs include preparations made from the cannabis plant and opium poppy capsule, as well as solvents

Afghanistan: Estimated Drug Users by zone



Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

1. Introduction

The survey was carried out from April to August 2005 in 32 provincial capitals¹, 30 district centres and 152 villages in Afghanistan. District centres and villages were randomly chosen from the AIMS² Settlements Database, with the number of interviews conducted based on the estimated population in each location.

A total of 1480 key informants and 1393 drug users were interviewed in provincial capitals, district centers and villages. People identified as having knowledge of drug use in their communities, such as community leaders, health care workers, police officers and teachers, were selected as key informants. They were asked a series of questions regarding their estimate of number and demographics of drug users in their area, as well as questions on types of drugs used and drug use trends. Key informants, as well as other sources, introduced the interviewers to problem drug users in their communities. The drug users were asked the same questions as the key informants, as well as further questions regarding their own drug use history.

2. Summary of Results

Each key informant or drug user was asked to give an estimate of male, female and child drug use in their communities for each of six drug categories, namely: opium, heroin, hashish, pharmaceuticals, alcohol and other drugs. The estimates of the level of drug use in individual communities were extrapolated to give an estimate of the number of drug users across Afghanistan.

2.1 General Findings

Before estimating the total number of drug users in Afghanistan it was necessary to consider poly-drug use³. Drug users were asked a series of questions regarding the combination, if any, of drug types they currently use.

No. of illicit drug types used	% of drug users interviewed
1 only	53%
2 only	27%
3 only	13%
4 only	5%
5 only	2%
all 6	1%

Table 1. Poly-drug use from drug users own patterns of use

Their answers indicated poly-drug use was common amongst urban and rural drug users, and that nearly half of all adult drug users use more than one illicit drug type (see Table 1). The estimate of the number of all drug users was reduced by approximately 30% to account for drug users who have been included in the estimates of more than 1 drug type (see Table 2a&2b)⁴.

¹ New province of Day Kundi is included in Uruzgan Province, new province of Panshir is included in Parwan Province

² AIMS: Afghanistan Information Management Service

³ Poly-drug users are defined as drug users who take more than one psychoactive drug either simultaneously or at separate times.

⁴ See methodology section for full details

Drug Type	Urban			Rural			National Total
	Male	Female	Child ¹	Male	Female	Child ¹	
Opium	27,036	5,847	510	105,172	10,682	3,624	152,869
Heroin	19,698	1,968	13	26,103	1,500	256	49,536
Hashish	82,930	2,135	41	428,294	5,948	2,738	522,084
Pharmaceuticals	9,418	6,140	1,585	82,458	51,304	28,042	178,945
Alcohol	79,940	9,123	984	63,854	9,476	0	163,376
Other Drugs	6,826	4,015	1,688	86,310	60,003	44,597	203,437
Total	225,846	29,227	4,819	792,189	138,911	79,255	1,270,247
Total, adjusted for poly-drug use²	164,000	21,000	3,000	575,000	100,000	57,000	920,000

Table 2a. Estimated number of urban and rural drug users, based on interviews with 1480 key informants and 1393 drug users.

Drug Type	Urban			Rural			Total
	Male	Female	Child ¹	Male	Female	Child ¹	
Opium	18%	4%	<1%	69%	7%	2%	100%
Heroin	40%	4%	<1%	53%	3%	1%	100%
Hashish	16%	<1%	<1%	82%	1%	1%	100%
Pharmaceuticals	5%	3%	1%	46%	29%	16%	100%
Alcohol	49%	6%	1%	39%	6%	<1%	100%
Other Drugs	3%	2%	1%	42%	29%	22%	100%

Table 2b. Urban and rural drug users as % of users of each drug type.

The use of illicit drugs is ubiquitous in Afghanistan. Based on key informants and drug users' estimates there are a total of 1.25 million drug users. Adjusting this figure to allow for the rates of poly-drug use ie a single user could have been counted two or more times, it is estimated that there are **920,000 illicit drug users in Afghanistan**. This figure represents 3.8% of the total population.

In discussions with workers in drug treatment centres and other experienced drug demand reduction workers it was noted that women's drug use patterns are less public than men's. Most women's pharmaceutical and opium use occurs at home, and women typically ingest opium rather than smoking it, making their drug use less visible to other members of the community. In light of this the key informants and drug users interviewed may have had less knowledge about female drug use than male drug use in their communities and that their estimates of the level of female drug use underestimate the true amount.

2.2 Regional Findings

The estimated level of drug use of most drug types is much higher in Central and Northern Zones than other areas of Afghanistan (see tables 3a&b) for both men and women. The highest level of drug use in the Central Zone is found in Kabul City and surrounding rural areas. In the

¹ Children are less than 15 years old

². Rounded figures

Northern Zone the highest estimated levels of drug use occur in provinces bordering Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In other regional zones, drug use is more evenly distributed across provinces, with higher levels found in provinces that border Iran or Pakistan.

UN Zone	Opium	Heroin	Hashish	Ph	Alcohol	Other	Total	Total adjusted for poly-drug use
Central	38,733	22,476	153,452	89,058	90,278	55,686	449,682	326469
East	9,101	1,124	53,211	23,882	1,123	25,730	114,169	82887
North	50,823	9,997	134,733	47,053	27,513	49,640	319,757	232144
North East	7,365	1,286	20,935	59	35,985	14,791	80,420	58385
South	20,196	7,526	99,590	2,726	322	1,014	131,371	95376
West	26,652	7,128	60,165	16,169	8,157	56,578	174,847	126939
TOTAL	152,869	49,536	522,084	178,945	163,376	203,437	1,270,247	920,000

Table 3a. Number of illicit drug users in Afghanistan by zone¹
(Ph = Pharmaceuticals)

UN Zone	Opium	Heroin	Hashish	Ph	Alcohol	Other	Total
Central	25%	45%	29%	50%	55%	27%	35%
East	6%	2%	10%	13%	1%	13%	9%
North	33%	20%	26%	26%	17%	24%	25%
North East	5%	3%	4%	0%	22%	7%	6%
South	13%	15%	19%	2%	0%	0%	10%
West	17%	14%	12%	9%	5%	28%	15%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3b. Percentage of users of each drug type in Afghanistan by zone¹
(Ph = Pharmaceuticals)

¹ See Table 4 for list of provinces in each zone

Opium Use



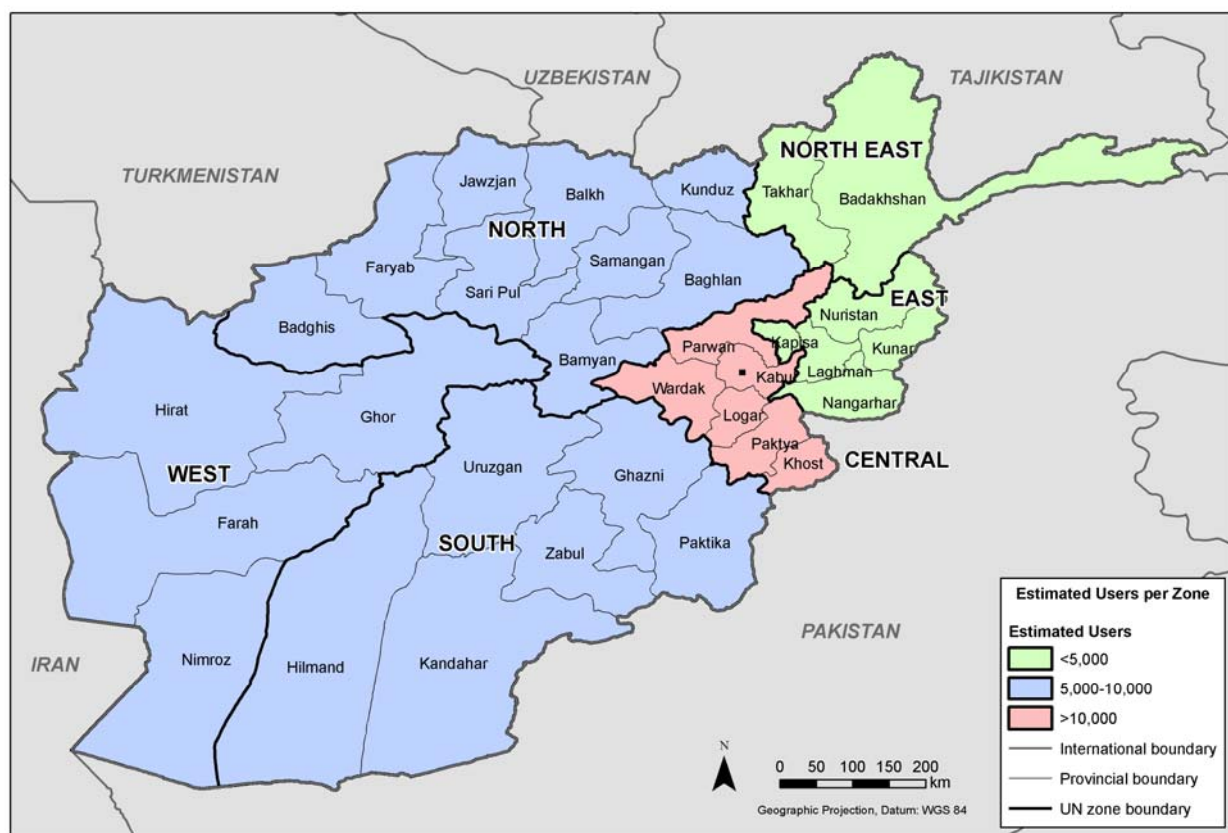
Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Figure 1. Estimated number of opium users by zone.

- Approximately 35% of male and 25% of female users first used opium as refugees outside of Afghanistan, particularly in Iran.
- Most users (86%) consume opium every day, and spend between 50 and 75 Afs¹ per day on opium.
- Most (80%) male opium users also use other drugs, especially hashish.
- About half of female opium users also use other drugs, mostly heroin in urban areas and pharmaceuticals in rural areas.
- About 25% of opium users reported other family members also used opium.
- Outside of Kabul, the highest estimated rates of opium use in both men and women occur in the Northern Zone, particularly in provinces that border Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- Approximately 66 metric tons (mt) of opium is consumed by opium users in Afghanistan each year.
- 10% of opium users grow their own opium poppies

¹ 50 Afs equal 1 US Dollar (Nov/2005)

Heroin Use

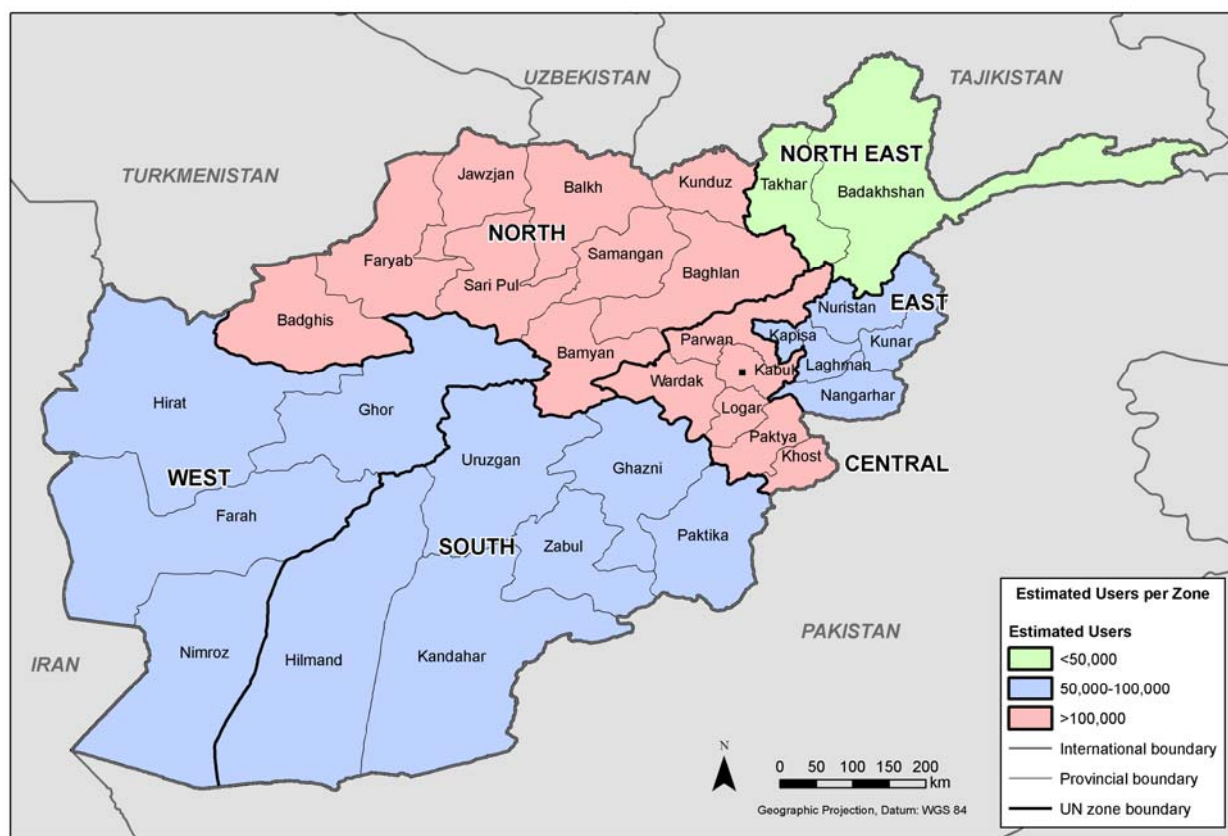


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Figure 2. Estimated number of heroin users by zone.

- Nearly 50% of both male and female users reported first using heroin as refugees, particularly in Iran.
- Most users (86%) consume heroin every day, and spend between 60 and 100 Afs per day on heroin.
- Men consume heroin in greater amounts and more often than women.
- 60% of male heroin users also consume hashish and opium.
- 60% of female heroin users also consume opium.
- Approximately 15% of male users inject heroin, no female users reported injecting heroin. However reports from drug treatment centre staff indicate some female users do inject heroin in Kabul but at a very low rate (<1% of users).
- Outside of Kabul, the highest rates of heroin use for both men and women occur in the Northern Zone, though high male rates are also found in parts of the South Zone.
- Approximately 20 mt of heroin (133 mt of opium equivalent) is consumed by heroin users in Afghanistan each year.

Hashish Use



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Figure 3. Estimated number of hashish users by zone.

- Nearly 25% of hashish users first started using hashish outside Afghanistan as refugees, mostly in Pakistan.
- About 90% of users consume hashish at least once a day, spending between 25 and 50 Afs per day on hashish.
- Approximately 50% of hashish users do not consume other drugs, though nearly 20% also consume opium.
- Hashish use is most common in the Northern Zone, but was reported in all locations surveyed.
- Between 400 and 550 mt of hashish are consumed in Afghanistan each year.

Pharmaceutical Use (Pharmaceutical use refers to the non-prescribed use of psychoactive, pharmaceutical drugs)



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Figure 4. Estimated number of pharmaceutical users by zone.

- Pharmaceutical drugs include a wide variety of anxiolytic drugs, painkillers and hypnotics.
- About 20% of pharmaceutical users first started using these drugs outside Afghanistan as refugees, in Iran and Pakistan.
- Approximately 80% of users consume pharmaceutical drugs at least daily, spending between 25 and 50 Afs per day on these drugs.
- Nearly 50% of pharmaceutical users, both male and female, also use opium.
- Pharmaceutical drug use is most common in the Central Zone.

Alcohol Use



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Figure 5. Estimated number of alcohol users byzone.

- 30% of alcohol users drink locally produced alcohol (home brew).
- About 20% of alcohol users first started using alcohol as refugees outside of Afghanistan, mostly in Iran.
- Nearly 40% of users drink twice a week or less, with most users spending between 100 and 200 Afs per day on alcohol.
- 55% of male alcohol users also consume hashish
- Alcohol use is most common in the Central Zone

Other Drug Use



Figure 6: Estimated number of other drug users by zone.

- The most commonly reported drugs that fall into the ‘other drug’ category are various preparations from the cannabis plant and opium poppy capsules, for example *barsh*, *bhangawa* and *majun*; volatile liquids such as petrol and glues, both inhaled and consumed; and a variety of locally sourced drugs such as preparations made from dried scorpion and snake.
- About 10% of other drug users started using these drugs outside of Afghanistan as refugees.
- 80% of other drug users consume the drugs on a daily basis, spending less than 50 Afs per day on these drugs.
- Over 95% of other drug users are poly-drug users, especially opium (50%).

3. Survey Methodology

The survey was carried out in 32 provincial capitals, 30 district centres (10% of all district centres) and 152 villages (0.5% of all villages) in Afghanistan. District centres and villages were randomly chosen from the AIMS Settlements Database, with the number of interviews conducted based on the estimated population in each location.

A total of 1480 key informants and 1393 drug users were interviewed in provincial capitals, district centers and villages (see Table 4 and Figure 7).

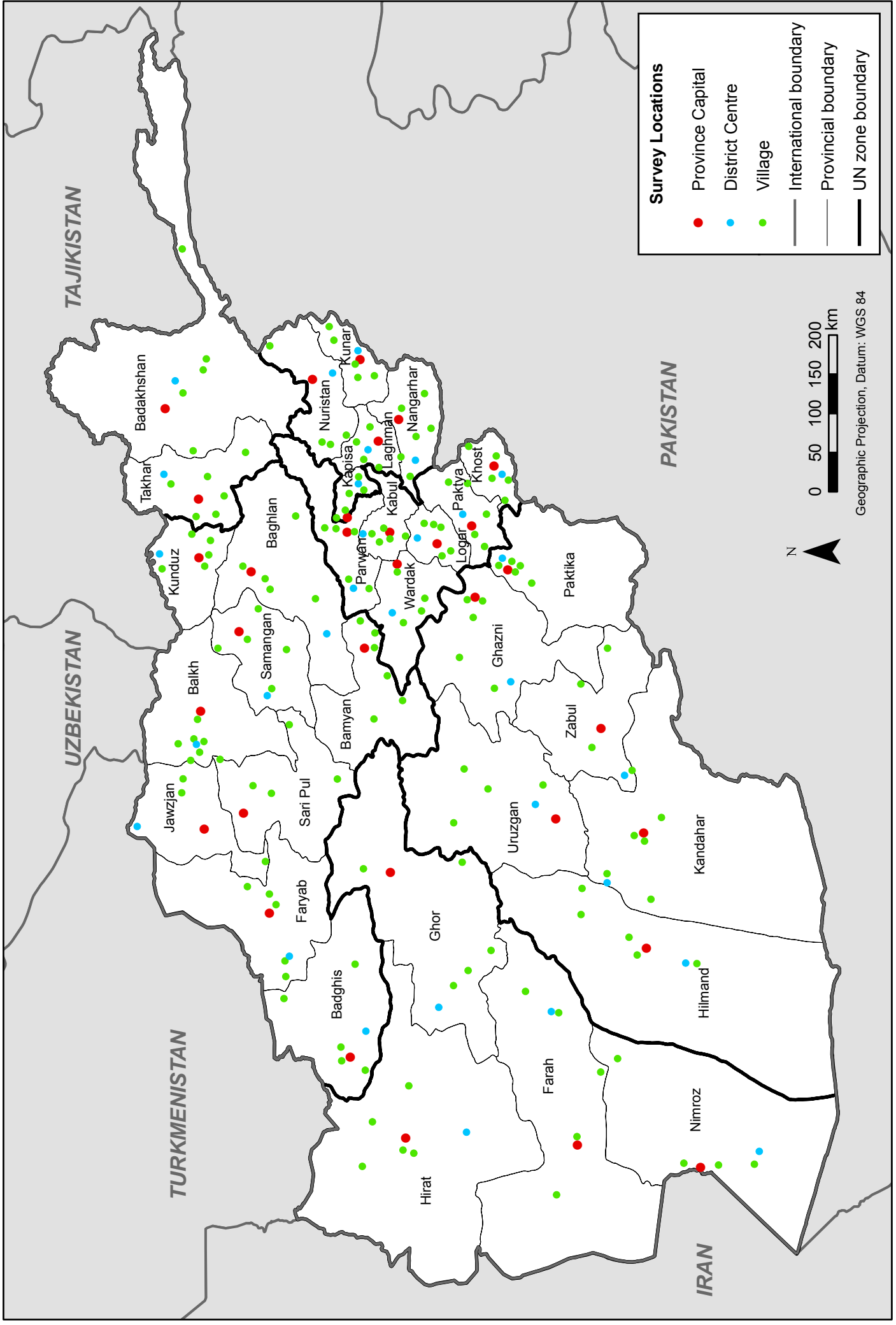
UN Zpone	Province	Provincial Capital		District Centre		Villages		
		KIs	DUs	KIs	DUs	KIs	DUs	No of Villages
Central	Kabul	63	81	4	5	27	18	4
	Khost	10	10	5	5	25	25	5
	Logar	10	10	5	5	23	23	5
	Paktya	14	16	4	6	25	25	5
	Parwan	25	25	5	5	25	25	5
	Wardak	15	8	5	8	25	17	4
East	Kapisa	9	9	4	2	25	31	5
	Kunar	10	10	5	5	25	25	5
	Laghman	20	20	5	5	25	25	5
	Nangarhar	25	25	5	5	25	25	5
	Nuristan	5	5	5	5	20	19	4
North East	Badakhshan	25	25	10	10	25	20	5
	Takhar	20	20	10	10	30	21	6
North	Badghis	5	3	5	4	25	19	5
	Baghlan	25	25	5	4	27	22	5
	Balkh	15	16	11	11	26	26	5
	Bamyan	10	10	0	0	25	19	5
	Faryab	5	5	10	10	25	25	5
	Jawzjan	20	15	5	1	20	6	4
	Kunduz	20	20	10	10	25	24	5
	Samangan	12	11	9	11	24	24	5
Sari Pul	10	10	0	0	25	25	5	
South	Ghazni	15	15	5	5	25	19	4
	Hilmand	28	29	10	10	25	20	5
	Kandahar	20	33	5	5	25	25	5
	Paktika	10	10	5	5	25	25	5
	Uruzgan	15	15	5	5	20	19	4
West	Zabul	10	10	5	5	20	10	3
	Farah	5	5	5	3	25	17	5
	Ghor	15	14	5	3	25	16	5
	Herat	10	10	10	10	25	25	5
	Nimroz	10	10	5	5	20	15	4
	Total	511	530	187	183	782	680	152

Table 4: Number of key informants and drug users interviewed by province.
(KIs = Key Informants, DUs = Drug Users)

Both male (n=1250) and female (n=155) key informants, as well as male (n=1228) and female (n=122) drug users were interviewed.¹

¹ Gender of key informant or drug user was not always recorded

Figure 7. Afghanistan: Drug Use Survey Locations



Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

3.1 Estimation of the Number of Drug Users

Estimations of the number of drug users were calculated using both key informants and drug users' reports. A simple average of the key informants and drug users' estimates was used to minimize the likelihood of over or under estimation (see Table 5)

Drug Type	Key Informant estimates				Drug User estimates				Average			
	Male	Female	Child	Total	Male	Female	Child	Total	Male	Female	Child	Total
Opium	149,062	21,123	5,842	176,027	115,352	11,934	1,707	128,992	132,207	16,528	3,774	152,510
Heroin	52,556	3,677	514	56,747	39,046	3,257	22	42,325	45,801	3,467	268	49,536
Hashish	500,069	10,917	3,750	514,736	522,378	5,248	1,806	529,432	511,224	8,083	2,778	522,084
Pharmaceuticals	101,037	63,433	41,467	205,937	82,713	51,455	17,785	151,953	91,875	57,444	29,626	178,945
Alcohol	161,430	8,439	0	169,869	126,157	28,758	1,968	156,883	143,794	18,599	984	163,376
Other	103,892	74,552	57,184	235,628	82,378	51,676	33,563	167,617	93,135	63,114	45,374	201,623
Total	1,068,046	182,141	108,757	1,358,944	968,024	152,328	56,851	1,177,202	1,018,035	167,234	82,804	1,268,073

Table 5: Comparison between estimates of drug use provided by key informants, estimates provided by drug users, and average estimates.

As all 32 province centers were visited by surveyors, no extrapolation is needed for urban figures given by drug users or key informants. For rural areas (districts and villages) drug user estimations were done at UN zone level for each drug type using:

$$DU_i = (\bar{x}_i * D)_i + (\bar{y}_i * V_i) \quad \text{equation (1)}$$

Where

DU_i = Estimated number of drug users in zone i

\bar{x}_i = Average number of users of drug i in sampled district centre

D_i = Total number of districts in zone i

\bar{y}_i = Average number of users of drug i in sampled villages

V_i = Total number of villages in zone i

The population of villages and district centres vary across each zone. Therefore a 'boot strap technique' was used to calculate the total number of users for each drug category. This means, equation (1) was iterated 10,000 times and the average of all iterations was used to derive the final estimation figures.

3.2 Adjustment for Poly-Drug Users

By simply combining the total number of users of each drug type to arrive at an overall total number of drug users over represents the number of drug users, since an individual drug user may have been counted in the figures for more than one drug type (e.g. an opium user who also uses hashish and alcohol would be included three times in the combined total figure). Based on drug user's answers regarding their personal drug use patterns it was found that 54% of all drug users take only one drug type, and 27% of all drug users take a combination of 2 drug types.

Table 1 gives the percentage of all drug users that reported using combinations of 1 or more drug types.

Using these percentages, the following formula was applied to the estimated total number of drug users, the estimated total number of male drug users, the estimated total number of female drug users and the estimated total number of child drug users:

$$AT = DU * 0.53 + \frac{DU * 0.27}{2} + \frac{DU * 0.13}{3} + \frac{DU * 0.05}{4} + \frac{DU * 0.02}{5} + \frac{DU * 0.01}{6}$$
$$= DU * 0.727 \quad \text{equation (2)}$$

Where

AT = adjusted estimate of drug users

DU = total estimate of drug users

While male and female drug users reported using different combinations of drug types, overall the percentages using one or more drug types were not significantly different.