

## **Conflict Legacy Holds Back Afghanistan's Farmers**

**Author:** [IWPR](#)

Decades of warfare and market instability have done ruinous harm.

Afghanistan's agricultural sector has suffered immeasurable damage from decades of conflict, speakers at a series of recent debates organised by IWPR said.

All kinds of farming including fruit-growing, cereal production and animal husbandry have suffered from disrupted market chains, land degradation and failing irrigations systems, all as a consequence of conflict. This has made opium poppy cultivation look all the more attractive.

Speakers at debates held in Ghor, Kabul, Nimruz and Sar-e-Pul provinces called on central government to pay more attention to the plight of farmers across the country.

In Nimruz in southwest Afghanistan, Kang district government chief Mohammed Juma Elmi said conflict had led to the ruination of over 70 per cent of the farmland there.

"The reason for the destruction of agricultural land is the many years of war, as well as flooding from the Helmand river," he said.

One debate participant noted a long-standing problem with getting water for irrigation, and asked when this was going to be addressed. Elmi replied that infrastructure projects were under way, and promised that "once the Kamal Khan dam is built, no farmer in Nimruz will complain of water shortages", although he acknowledged that waterworks refurbishment was taking a long time.

In Sar-e-Pul, local vet Nasrin highlighted the poor health of cattle and sheep in this northern province.

"War has led to livestock in the province being infected with various diseases," she said, explaining that studies showed that destruction of pastureland and pollution of water sources were major factors in animal health.

In the western province of Ghor, civil society activist Fatima Ehsani said that with armed militias roaming the countryside and government security forces confined to their bases, people were reluctant to invest too much in farming.

"All the money that the government pays for agricultural and horticultural projects through the community councils goes to these armed men," she said.

Provincial council member Anisa Ghayur added that "the presence of warlords means that most economic and agricultural projects stall before they can be completed".

*This report is based on an ongoing series of debates conducted as part of the IWPR programme **Afghan Reconciliation: Promoting Peace and Building Trust by Engaging Civil Society**.*

**Location:** [Afghanistan](#)

**Topic:** [Economy](#)  
[Conflict](#)

**Focus:** [Afghan Peace and Reconciliation](#)

---

**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/conflict-legacy-holds-back-afghanistans>