

# Where to Aid, Where Not to Aid?

## Introduction

Afghanistan has been in conflict for the last 18 years, and it is uncertain how much longer it will continue. There are two main parties to the conflict; the Taliban on one side, and the United States – Afghan government on the other. The United States first invaded Afghanistan in 2001 to drive Al-Qaeda and their Taliban allies out following the September 11 attacks. While the U.S. forces were successful in toppling their regime, the conflict became a protracted conflict due to a resilient Taliban insurgency, forcing the U.S. and their allies to remain in the country ever since. The security situation continues to deteriorate today, even as the U.S. has spent tons of money and troops to help train the Afghan National Defense Forces and prepare the Afghan government for the day when the U.S. will leave Afghanistan. The addition of a potential peace process throws uncertainty into the future of humanitarian assistance, since peace could lead to the withdrawal of aid. In addition, some recent natural disasters, such as drought, followed by intense flooding, have combined to add to the displacement of Afghan people from all across the country. This has created more populations in need. However, it is unclear whether all populations in need are being reached, especially those most vulnerable. Furthermore, due to conflict and natural disasters the existing infrastructure has been heavily weakened. The increased displacement has placed a heavy burden on the current systems, and therefore it would be helpful to know where future areas of need might be, to better anticipate and get prevention or mitigation measures in place before disaster strikes.

## Methods

### Spatial Questions:

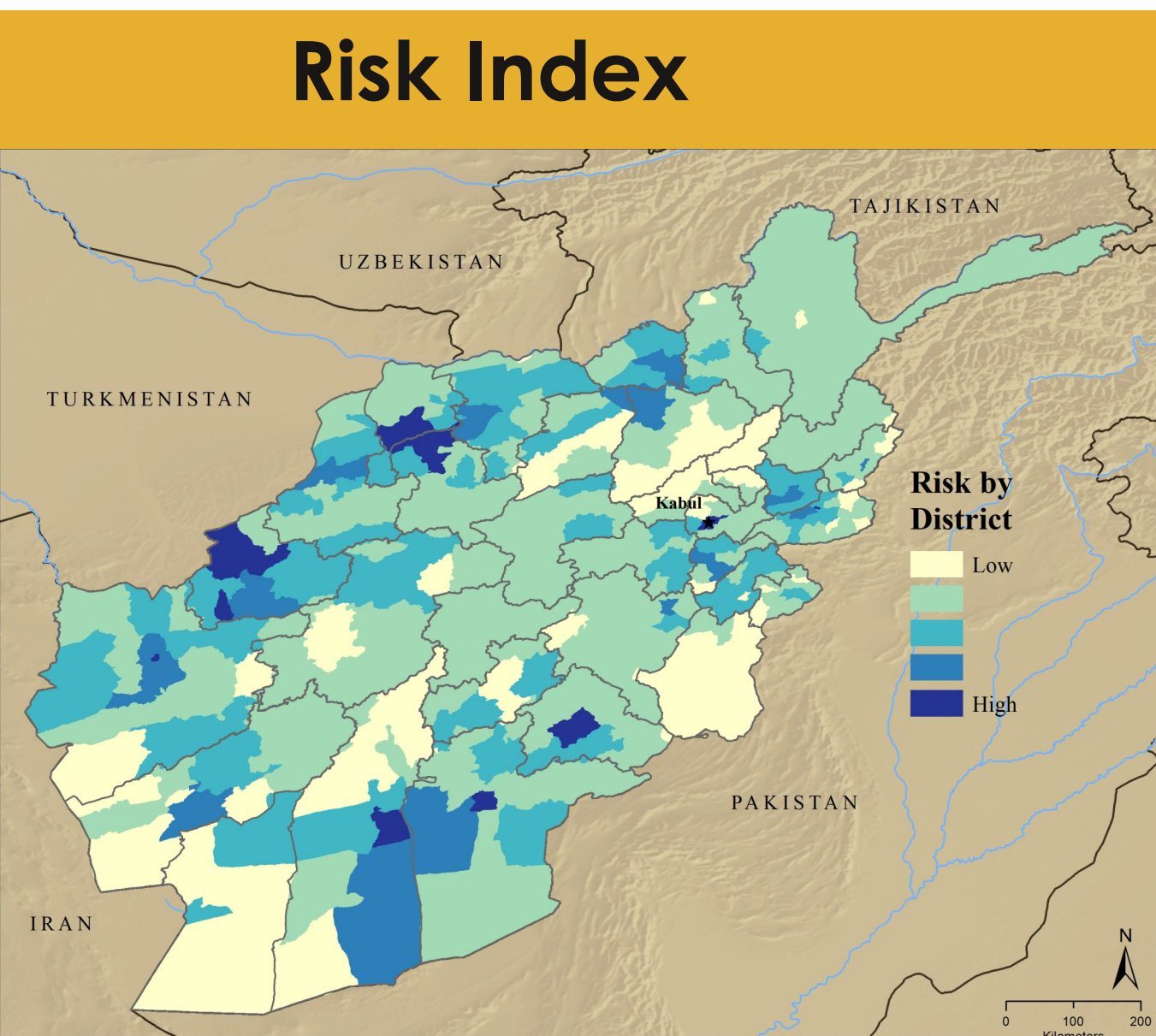
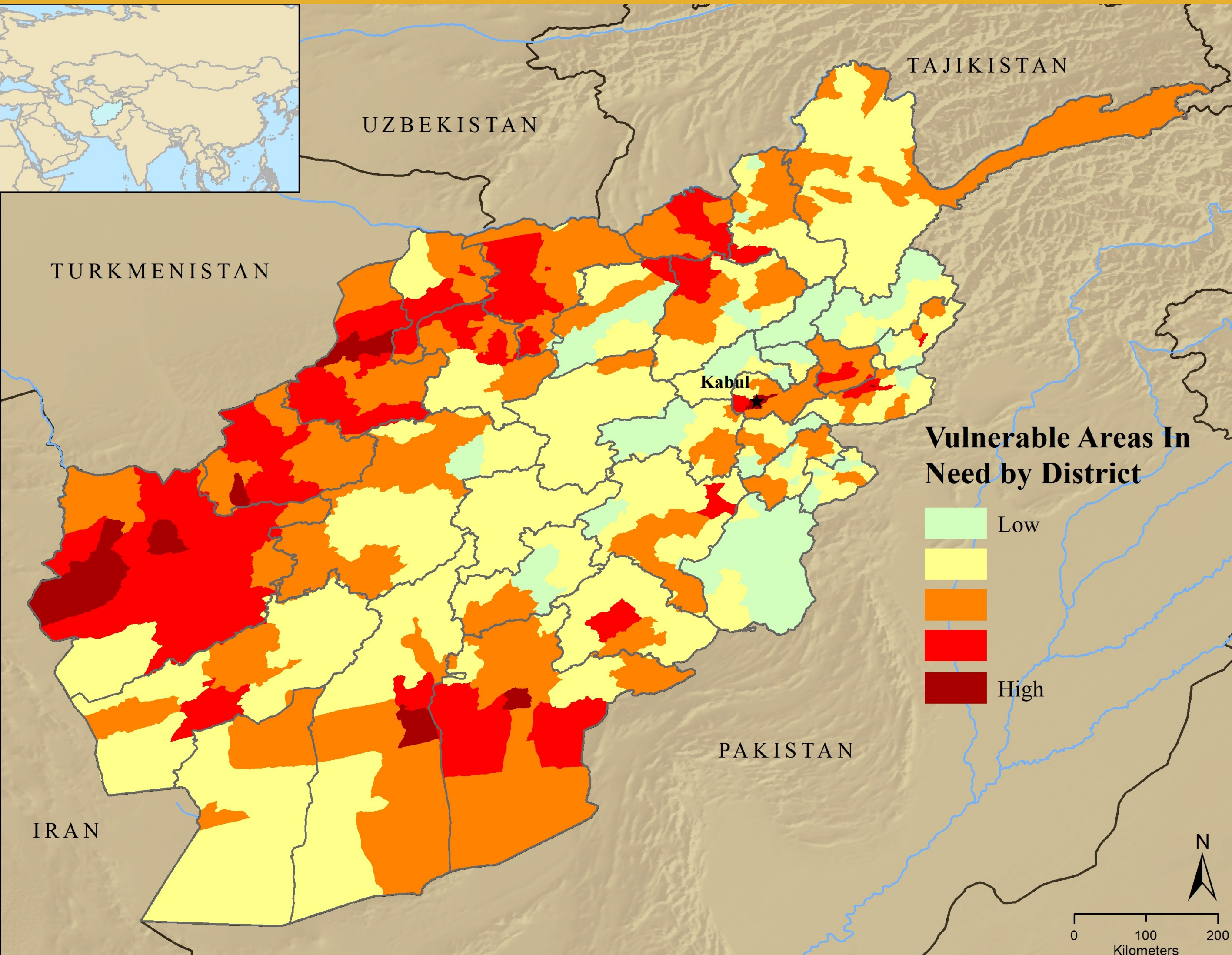
- Which vulnerable areas are not being reached by humanitarian assistance?
- Which areas are likely to be sites of future displacement from conflict and natural disasters?

The method of discovering answers to the above spatial questions are as follows: to discover the extent of vulnerability, we create three indices: one for risk, one for vulnerability, and one for humanitarian assistance. The risk index was composed of 5 factors: conflict, natural disasters, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and food insecurity. For the vulnerability index, we combined the poverty rate (2015-2016), access to health sites, access to airports, and population density. For the humanitarian assistance index, we looked at operational presence (organizations in the area providing services), and operational capacity (those with the potential capacity to gain access or provide services). To answer the first question, we ranked each of these factors, averaged them together within their index, and then averaged the three indices together to get the final answer. For areas of future displacement, I looked at those areas that suffered from both conflict and natural disasters in the past year. And used the similar method for ranking above to find those areas that are at highest risk; based on this information, you can see where the need is, and therefore where the highest displacements are likely to be from; those areas are important sites for further aid and monitoring in case of future incidents.

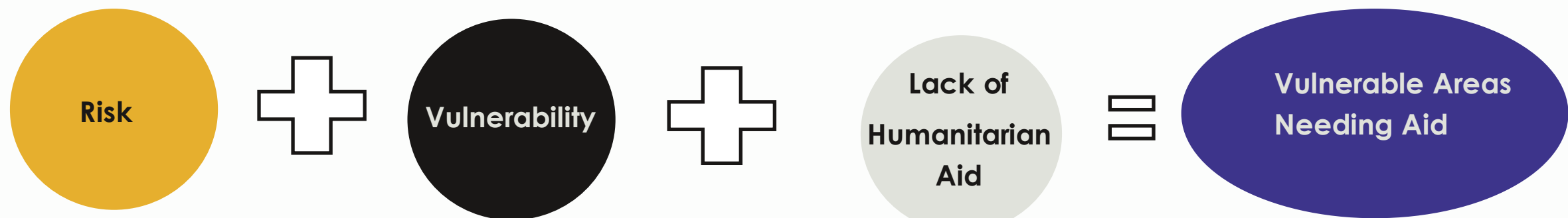
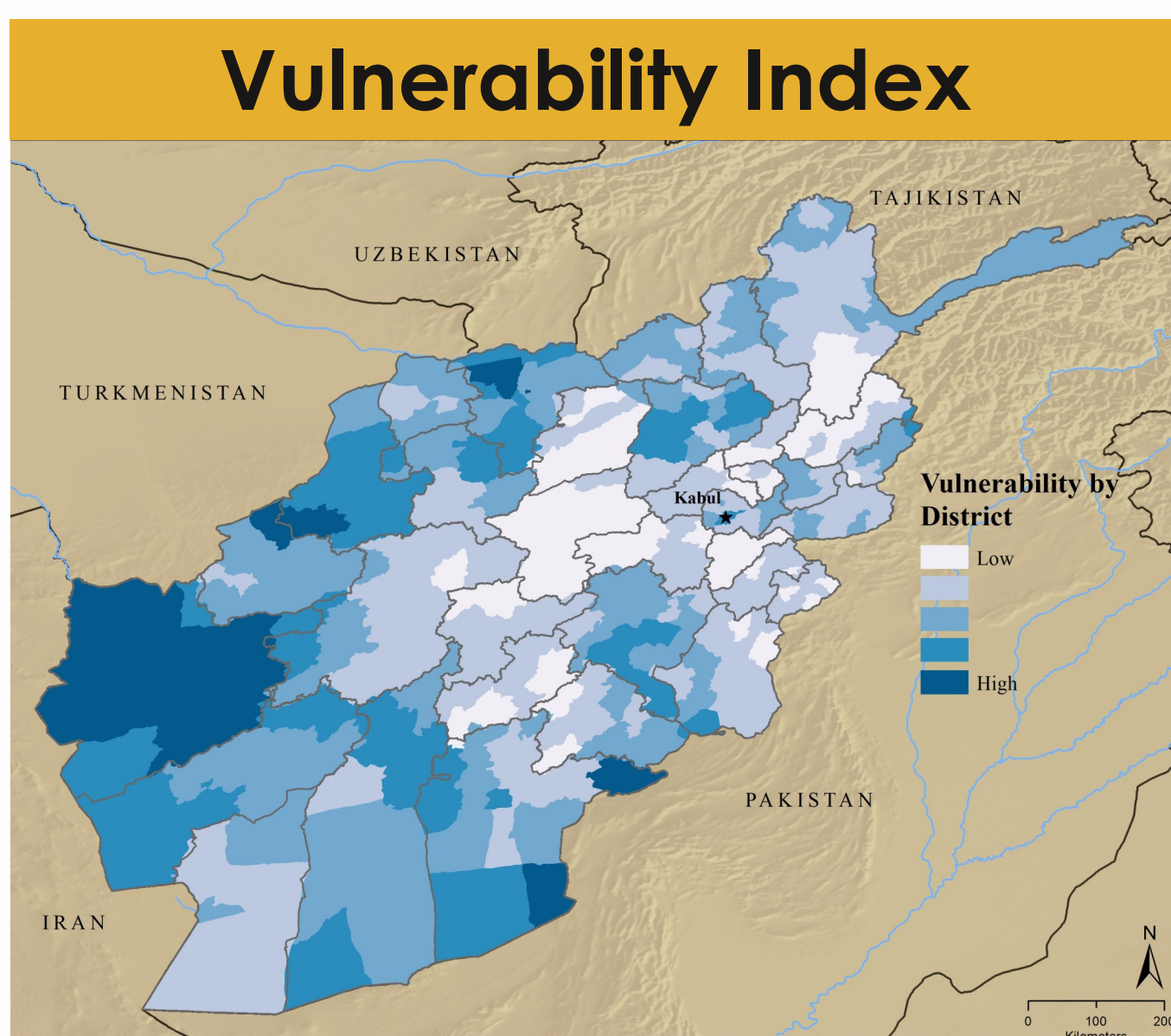
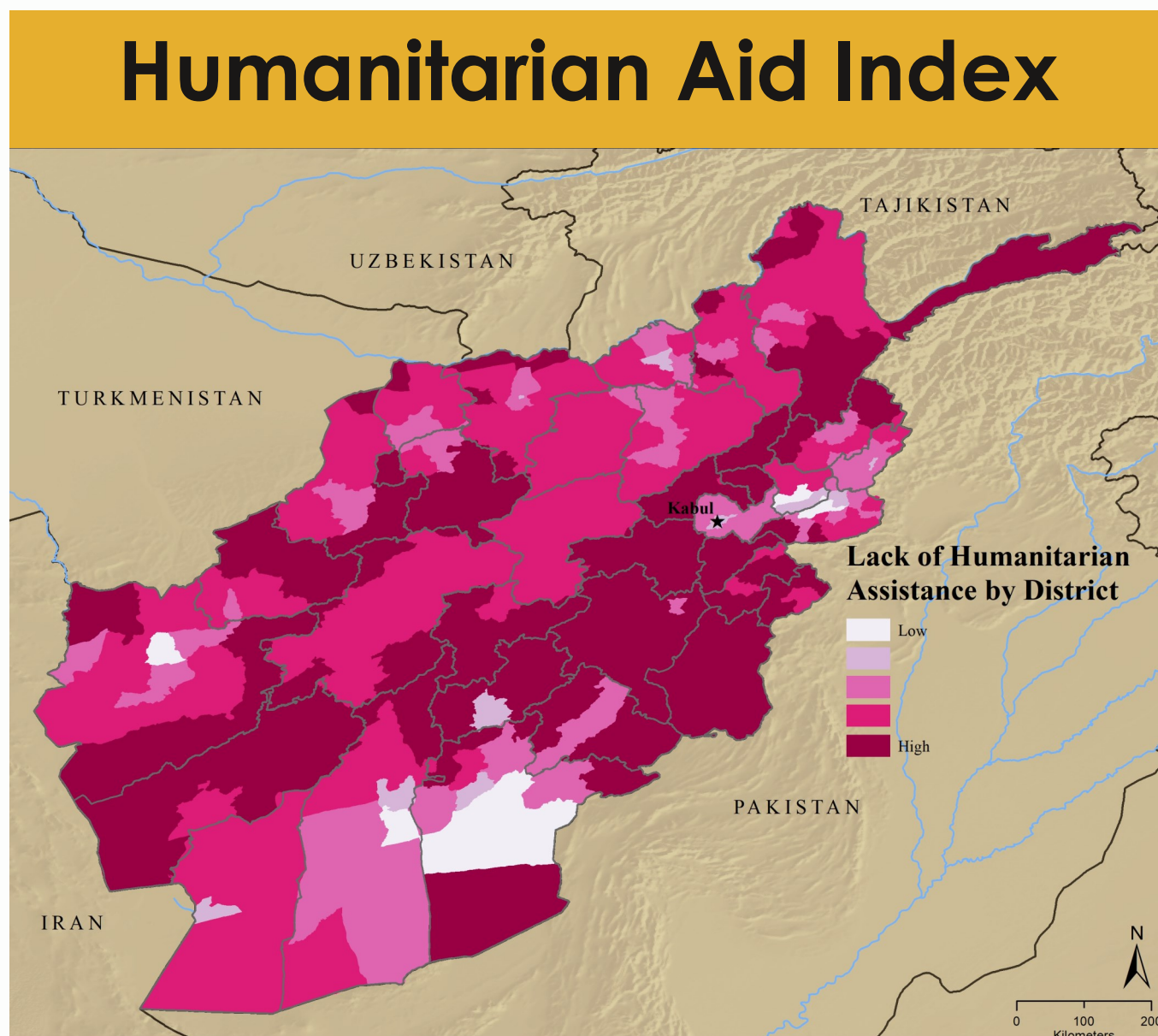
Sources: ACLED, Asian Development Bank, GHMP, IOM-DTM, OCHA, OPHI, Princeton, UN, WFP

Photo from Flickr, [https://www.flickr.com/photos/ntm-a\\_cstc-a/4298532900/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ntm-a_cstc-a/4298532900/), icons from <https://publicdomainvectors.org/en/free-clipart/Medical-icons-crescent/68848.html> and <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/cruz-red-red-cross-symbol-rescue-2349636/>

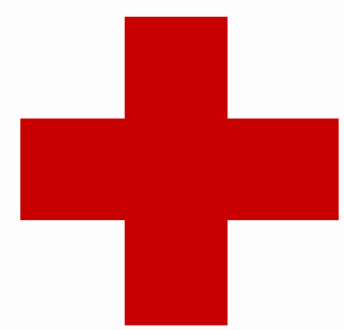
## Vulnerable Areas Needing Aid



Summary of Populations in Need				
Province	District	Population	Humanitarian Presence	Humanitarian Capacity
Balkh	Balkh	124558	5	16
Hirat	Ghoryan	92670	3	18
Hirat	Hirat	491967	30	41
Hirat	Injil	253823	26	31
Nangarhar	Jalalabad	232901	40	44
Kabul	Kabul	3817241	10	58
Kandahar	Kandahar	548645	30	43
Kunduz	Kunduz	323956	24	26
Hilmand	Lashkargah	108174	21	35
Balkh	Mazare-Sharif	415053	24	28
Laghman	Meharlam	134576	25	30
Badghis	Qadis	94406	4	10
Badghis	Qala-e-Naw	68869	14	22
Zabul	Qalat	36951	16	22
Jawzjan	Shiberghan	174927	11	20
Faryab	Shirin Tagab	84526	2	17
Nangarhar	Surkh Rod	125021	28	37
Total		7128264	313	498

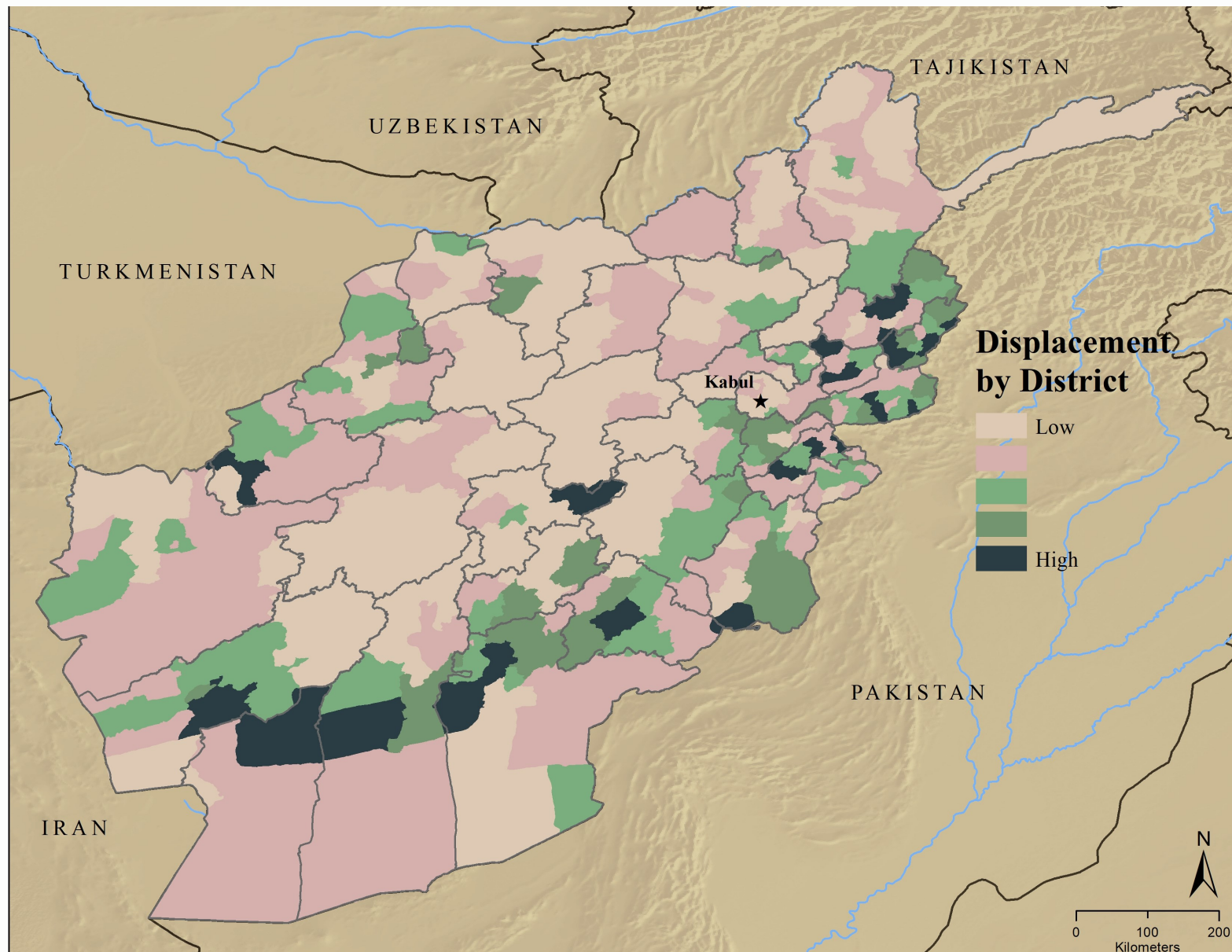


Reaching Populations in Desperate Need of Humanitarian Assistance in Afghanistan



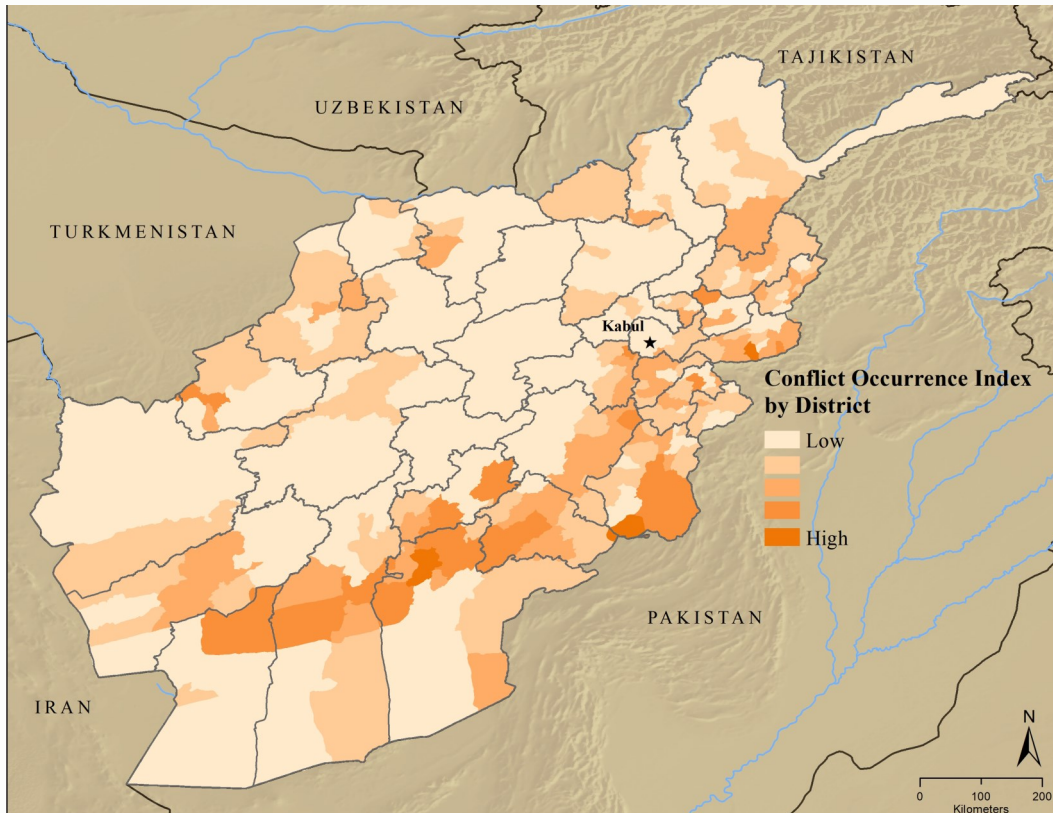
## Sites of Future Displacement

### Displacement Index



Potential Displacement Sites				
Province	District	Population	Conflict Incidents	Natural Disaster Incidents
Badghis	Muqur	24638	108	2
Badghis	Qala-e-Naw	68869	150	6
Daykundi	Miramor	65011	0	20
Farah	Farah	116639	348	30
Hilmand	Nad-e-Ali	94649	534	2
Kandahar	Khakrez	23662	167	0
Kandahar	Maywand	60864	366	1
Kunar	Asad Abad	34889	117	18
Kunar	Chapa Dara	32200	65	3
Kunar	Chawkey	37080	41	7
Kunar	Dangam	17564	43	5
Kunar	Marawara	21223	31	11
Kunar	Nurgal	32810	59	7
Kunar	Sar Kanli	28298	90	6
Laghman	Dawlatshah	34519	150	1
Laghman	Meharlam	134576	325	18
Nangarhar	Chapathar	62572	134	4
Nangarhar	Deh Bala	41836	485	3
Nangarhar	Nazyan	15246	83	1
Nimroz	Khashrod	26346	132	1
Nuristan	Parun	14027	32	8
Paktika	Turwo	2196	38	0
Paktya	Dand Wa Patan	27564	55	3
Paktya	Gardez	87219	296	5
Paktya	Uja Ahmad Khel	23662	148	3
Zabul	Qalat	36951	242	1
Total		1165109	4237	166

### Conflict Index



### Disaster Index

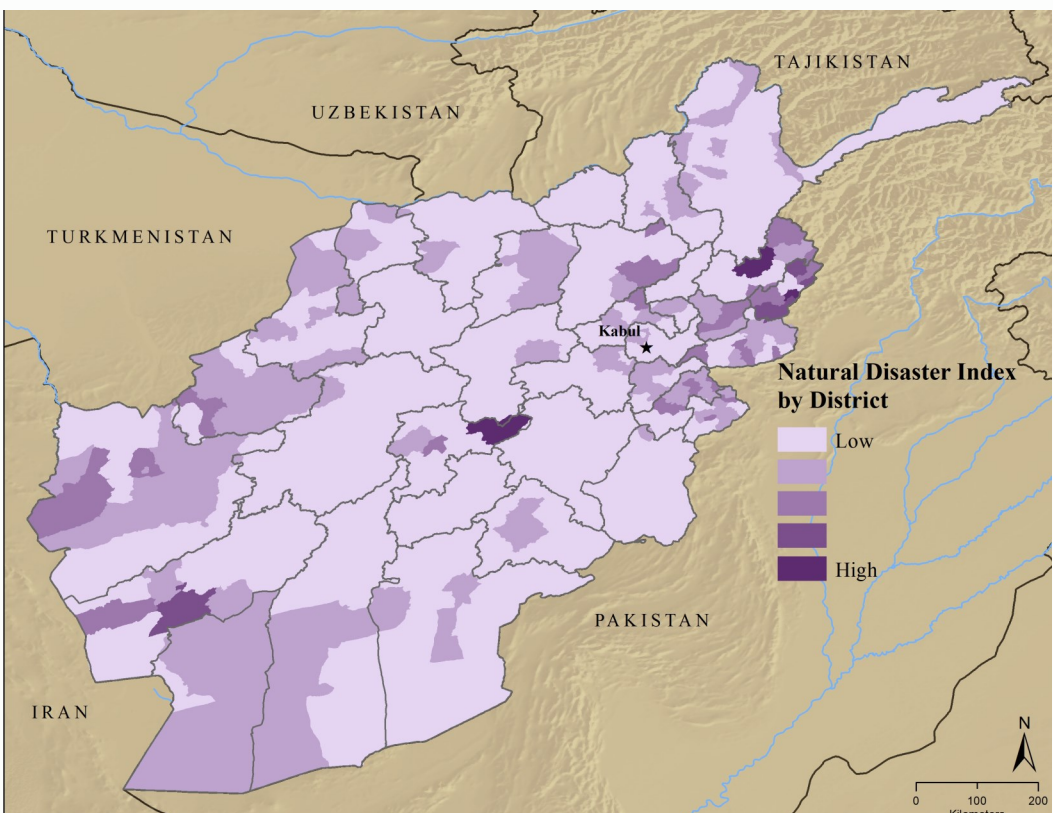


Photo from a NATO Training Mission in Kabul, 2010.

## Results and Limitations

There are 17 districts in 12 provinces that are vulnerable, and where over 7 million people are not being adequately reached by humanitarian assistance. These particular areas are all located in the southern and western provinces of Afghanistan, where the Taliban control much of that territory.<sup>1</sup> For those areas wracked by conflict and natural disasters, I identified 26 districts in 13 provinces where both conditions are true, in which more people could become displaced over the next few months; these danger areas are mainly concentrated in the southern provinces, but also in the eastern provinces.

Due to the availability of existing data, a few datasets were from 2015-2017; poverty (2015-2016), population (2017), and airport data (2008), while the humanitarian data, refugee, and conflict data are current for 2019. The administrative boundaries are from 2017; due to ongoing conflict, it was difficult to find any current data that is not being captured by humanitarian or military actors. Therefore, this project and the conclusions it may reach may not be entirely accurate. It will be important to confirm any assertions or findings with those operating on the ground.

<sup>1</sup> Chughtai, Alia. "Afghanistan: Who Controls What." Al Jazeera. 24 June 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2016/08/afghanistan-controls-160823083528213.html>

## Information

Cartographer: Samantha Chen

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