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Uniformed police operate from new district headquarters in Sangin Qala

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The Afghan Uniformed Police play a critical role in the security of Afghanistan’s civilian population. To bolster the AUP capabilities, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South has completed construction of a district headquarters compound at Sangin Qala in Helmand province.

Initially part of a 22-facility contract awarded in February 2007, which was subsequently downsized to 14 facilities, the Sangin Qala AUP district headquarters compound was completed April 18 at a cost of \$892,174. Thirteen of the 14 AUP facilities are now complete.

“These projects are among the ‘legacy’ projects that AED-South inherited when it was created (in August 2009),” said Michael Chang, project manager, Afghan National Police program. “Since most of the ANP stations fell within Kandahar province, the Kandahar Vicinity Resident Office had responsibility for finishing them.”

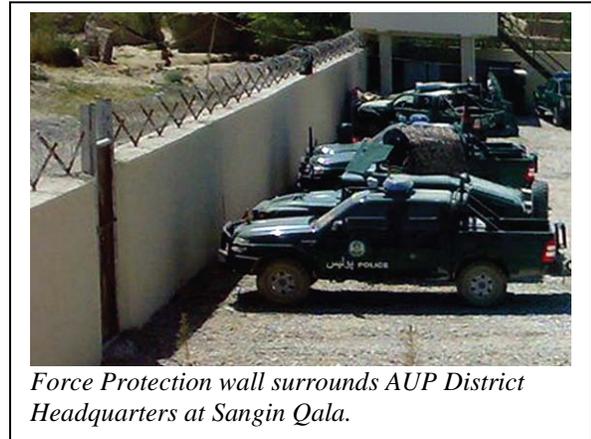
The Sangin Qala AUP district headquarters compound is secured with a force protection wall, guard towers and can accommodate 60 persons. The compound includes a dining facility, berthing areas, offices, an armory and jail cells plus the required electrical, plumbing and water infrastructure and entry control points.

Working with an Afghan contracting company, AED-South built the Sangin Qala facility in a dangerous environment, which prolonged the construction time. Dubbed “the most dangerous place in Afghanistan” by many, Sangin was a Taliban and drug-trafficking stronghold until just recently.

“The construction of Sangin Qala was expected to be completed within a year,” Chang said. “But the contractor had challenges with the location due to security issues. Ongoing drug eradication and combat operations further prolonged the construction period.”

The AUP is the only Afghan National Police presence in the northern Helmand province. The Sangin Qala district headquarters is the most northern and is responsible for a large geographic area. “It was critical to get this facility completed so that the coalition mentors could be co-located with the AUP,” Chang said. The ANP police officers are trained before they’re deployed to an area and once onsite, the coalition mentors work with them to establish the rule of law.

Providing the ANP with permanent structures is critical to developing a competent and trustworthy uniformed police presence in Helmand province. “If the ANSF, specifically the ANP, did not have their own structures, their dependence on the coalition would be prolonged,” stated Marine 1st Lt. Timothy Irish with the Regimental Combat Team-8, currently deployed in the Sangin area. “Our goal is to ensure that we have Afghans lead the area patrols and by doing so, opposition to coalition forces is reduced.”



Force Protection wall surrounds AUP District Headquarters at Sangin Qala.