

**Forum:** Humans Rights Council

**Issue:** Measures to protect human rights violations towards civilians in Afghanistan

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## Introduction

In 2001 an international coalition led by the USA invaded Afghanistan to destroy terrorist organization Al-Qaeda when the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden. British forces went in alongside US troops. Terrorist presence in Afghanistan has made it a hotspot for the international western community. Afghan human rights have been repeatedly violated when it comes to education, human right to food and water, freedom of speech, etc. The terrorist Taliban organization took over power as soon as troops left afghan grounds. Consequently, this has had a huge impact on the safety of national and international civilians that reside in Afghanistan. Some violations include: Imposed strong restrictions on women, performed public executions, and prevented international aid from entering the country for starving civilians. The internal terrorism is currently led by the Taliban sovereign government which has set strict religious extremist laws. This systemic oppression has prevented women and young girls from getting education and even has cut their right to roam free in the streets without one of their male family members. The Taliban's forceful

approach to systematic religious oppression is inspired by their previous constitution from 1964 which supported Islamic core beliefs and extremist views. The Taliban promised a whole new constitution for Afghanistan which could officially lead the country into a nation of pain and imprisonment which can lead to a generational development of women without education and independence.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **The Taliban**

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. It is a brutal, fundamentalist religious group that held power over Afghanistan during the late 1990s and the summer of 2021. The group started as a Pakistani religious school in the mid-90s.

### **Refugee**

A person who has been forced to move out or leave their home or nation due to a natural disaster, war, or conflict.

### **Women's rights**

Women's legal, political, and social rights are equal to those of men. The rights and entitlements claimed for women and girls worldwide.

### **The Taliban rule**

Rules and restrictions against Afghan civilians set by The Taliban as they believe it will turn Afghanistan into a more pure Islamic society.

### **Freedom of speech**

The right to express an individual's opinions without censorship or restraint.

### **Osama bin Laden**

Islamic militant was regarded as the founder of al-Qaeda and the one behind the September 11 terrorist attacks. He went into hiding but was later tracked down and killed by US special forces in Pakistan.

### **September 11 attacks**

Also referred to as the 9/11 attacks, which took place in 2001, a series of airline hijackings and suicide attacks were committed.

### **Right to education**

A fundamental human right in which every individual, irrespective of race, gender, nationality, ethnic or social origin, or religion, is entitled to an education.

### **The Afghanistan war**

A 20-year-long war that began in October 2001 in response to the 9/11 attacks on the United States after The Taliban government refused to hand over Osama Bin Laden.

### **Humanitarian crisis**

A series of events that represents a critical threat to a community's health, safety, or well-being.

## General Overview

Human rights are a basic necessity that is essential to every human being. It should belong to any of us simply because we are human. This includes fairness, dignity, respect, and equality. The circumstances in Afghanistan prove to be seen as otherwise as there have been a series of violations of international humanitarian laws and human rights violations carried out with impunity and abuses towards several civilians.

## The Taliban

The Taliban believe they are a voice of resistance to turning Afghanistan into a more pure Islamic society. They have been fighting Afghanistan's government and its allies for 20 years. As years went by, the Taliban grew, got stronger, adapted their tactics, and got more brutal. Today the Taliban have about 85,000 full-time fighters and training camps across the country. The Taliban controls one-fifth of Afghan districts. On top of that, they have a strong presence throughout other places. The leader of The Taliban is Haibatullah Akhundzada. The control they have has made them rich. They make close to \$1.5 billion a year.



## **1990's**

Afghanistan's guerillas called the mujahideen fought a soviet occupation for nine years and got their weapons and money from the CIA. In 1989 the Soviets pulled out, leading the next few years to be pretty chaotic. In 1992 there was a full-blown civil war with tribal leaders fighting for power. 2 years later, in 1994, a military force called the Taliban started to get attention. Many members of the Taliban had studied in conservative religious schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and some have even fought as mujahideen. Eventually, the Taliban came along from Kandahar from city to city. By 1996 the Taliban had seized the capital. They declared Afghanistan an Islamic emirate and started imposing their strict interpretation of Islamic law, the Taliban rule which over time, started becoming more and more restrictive.

## **9/11 attack**

On September 11, 2001, a following of disturbing events took place. A series of airline hijackings along with suicide attacks were committed in 2001. Just before 9 am in New York, a plane crashed into the north tower of the world trade center, which initially appeared to be an accident, until a second plane crashed into the south tower, making it clear that it was an attack. The third plane crashed into the Pentagon just outside Washington DC, and the fourth plane crashed in rural Pennsylvania. Immediately 3,000 people were killed in these attacks. The hijackers of these aircraft were terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations. Al Qaeda was identified as being responsible for the attacks. US President George W Bush declared a "war on terror," stating that defeating terrorism was now the world's fight.



### **Conflict between the United States and Afghanistan**

The US was after Osama bin Laden. The Taliban government refused to hand over Osama Bin Laden, the terrorist leader, after the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Immediately after, in 2001, an international coalition led by the United States invaded Afghanistan. As the invasion began, America launched air strikes against Afghanistan. Eventually, the Taliban were forced out of power. They lost their leadership and lost control of the country. A new government was formed. During this time, the Taliban had regrouped. They wanted foreigners out, and they wanted to be back in.

Years followed the devastating conflict. More than 40,000 Afghan civilians were killed, more than 64,000 Afghan military and police, and more than 3,500 international soldiers were dead. The group relocated to southern Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2014 when

the US-led coalition ended its combat mission, the Afghan National Security Force was put in charge of Afghanistan's security. However, the force faced significant challenges with holding territory and defending population centers. The Taliban continued attacking rural districts and committing suicide attacks in major cities. As the war continued, the Taliban continued contesting territory, using capitals across the country.

### **Near the end of the Afghanistan war**

After about a year of negotiations, In February 2020, the U.S. government and the Taliban signed a peace agreement that would set a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. The U.S. pledged to draw down their troop to roughly 8,500 within 135 days and complete a full withdrawal within fourteen months. Meanwhile, the Taliban pledged to prevent territory (which was under their control) from being used by terrorist groups. However, during this time, no official end was put in place. Violence across Afghanistan continued in 2020 and 2021. After some time, The Taliban quickly resumed their attacks on Afghan security forces, civilians, and the Afghan government and proceeded to make territorial gains.

On April 14, 2021, Joe Biden announced that the remaining U.S. troops in Afghanistan would be withdrawn by September 11, 2021. A Taliban military offensive overran the provinces and reached Kabul capital, causing the government to collapse and president Ghani to flee the country. The conflict in Afghanistan took a dramatic turn with the collapse of the government, withdrawal of all international troops, and the takeover by the Taliban forces. Afghanistan remains deeply unstable, and the Taliban remains a force to reckon with.

### **The Taliban once again takes over Afghanistan**

After twenty years of conflict of war, The Taliban once again claimed to be in complete control of Afghanistan. Since the U.S withdrawal and the Taliban's take over, the country has endured an increasingly deadly humanitarian crisis. The Taliban was taking territory it hadn't occupied for 20 years.



The Taliban took its first provincial capital. The Taliban continued its offensive, threatening government-controlled urban areas and seizing several border crossings. Eventually, this became a pattern, and the Taliban began capturing more than ten capitals without resistance. A quarter of Afghanistan's most prominent cities were in its control. During this time, Afghanistan made an urgent request to the UN, demanding that the council act and prevent the disastrous incidences of gross human rights violations by the Taliban and their foreign terrorist associate. The Taliban began direct assaults on multiple areas and insisted on the Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

## **Economic Collapse**

Afghanistan has been suffering from what people refer to as a storm. Pre-existing problems such as years of fighting in war, drought, covid-19, and poverty were terrible enough. Under Taliban rule, however, Afghanistan began to suffer a lot more. Afghanistan's economy severely collapsed since the Taliban seized power, turning the country into the world's most humanitarian crisis. Millions of afghans lost their jobs resulting in losing salaries. Millions of dollars of aid that once propped the previous government have vanished, and billions in state assets have been frozen. Afghanistans have recently also been lacking their right to health. Over 90% of the Afghan population faces serious health challenges, including food insecurity, lack of medicine, and the rise of mal-nutrition-related diseases. Over half of all citizens are facing extreme hunger. Markets would be fully stocked; however, prices have increased under the Taliban, and many people cannot afford food for themselves and their families. In the capital, desperate families have gathered furniture on the side of the road in exchange for food. In fact, some families have been forced to sell their babies so they can buy food.



Around other major cities, public hospitals can not afford medical supplies that are very needed and do not have enough money to pay nurses and doctors. Although Afghanistan began getting support internationally, communities have pledged millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, but this assistance has not done enough to ease Afghanistan's severe economic crisis.

### **Women's and girls rights**

Although most citizens in Afghanistan are facing policies restricting fundamental human rights imposed by the Taliban, mostly on women and girls. Before the Taliban takeover, women and girls experienced gender-based discrimination and violence. After the takeover, they lost many of their fundamental human rights. Since The Taliban has taken control, they have imposed rights-violating policies creating barriers to their health and education, freedom of speech, movement, and association and deprived many of their earned income. They prohibited girls in most provinces from attending secondary

school. Women and girls lacked the right to education. During mid-september boys were permitted to return to a safe-learning environment meanwhile the majority of secondary schools remained closed for girls.



The Taliban rule also restricts women from traveling unless accompanied by a male relative. It requires women's faces to be covered in public, thus even including women on TV. Sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls also became recurring. Between January and June, there were 1,518 cases of violence against women, including 33 murders. Beatings, harassment, forced prostitution and forced and early marriages remained the central representations of violence against women.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### United States

As one of the most active and powerful countries in the world, the United States of America is also one of the countries with the most displacements, affecting

As one of the most active and powerful country

### **Iraq**

As one of the mospills, sanitation, pollution, land degradation, lack of river basin management.

### **United Nations**

Human aid role, coordinating humanitarian aid delivery to human rights monitoring and facilitating dialogue among countries to achieve peace.

### **NATO**

Its aim was to provide further training, advice and assistance for the Afghan security forces and institutions. They also supported the government with troops from different countries like Germany as part of ISAF their security assistance program.

### **Taliban**

The Taliban Afghan regime is the current government of Afghanistan and is currently in dominion of the Afghan people. It is currently led by Hibatullah Akhundzada. Taliban has shown extremist islam views similar to terrorism which violate multiple human rights of the people specially women.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
2001	US military invades Afghanistan to fight terrorism
2003	Saddam Hussein is removed
2005	First peaceful parliamentary elections in Afghanistan after 30 years.
2013	Afghan military takes over military and security operations from NATO
2021	Complete troop withdrawal by president Biden

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

With the Taliban government there are multiple concerns for healthcare. Resolution 2611 Security Council reaffirms the UN stance to protect the human rights of the people of Afghanistan, and oppose illicit trafficking of weapons and drugs in the nation. This resolution shows support and solidarity while also opposing said Taliban government. Resolution 48/1 of HRC expresses concern for the young population's education and safety. This resolution calls for a more united government willing to cooperate with the UNHRC in order to improve the humanitarian crisis

The head of UNDP, Achim Steiner, took a trip to Afghanistan to underline the importance of women's and girls' rights in Afghanistan. He said, "**Both boys and girls must be allowed in the classrooms because the future of Afghanistan must be for all Afghans, not just a selected few.**" The UN saw how the lives of women and girls were impacted daily. Since then, the UN has advocated ensuring women's rights are protected and promoted. The UN highlights the challenging situation women and girls

have been going through even while being off camera to raise attention and capture the concerns of individuals in society. UN Women is committed to ensuring that the women in Afghanistan have access to essential life-saving services. They are working with a humanitarian system in Afghanistan to ensure a gender-sensitive humanitarian response to Afghanistan conflicts, providing for the women and girls most impacted. UN Women is constructing a data-driven analysis by releasing monthly survey results that look at the impact of the Taliban's rule on women and girls and its effects on its impacts for women's ability to access humanitarian services and social and gender norms. The UN believes that the most effective way for Afghanistan to navigate these challenges is to ensure that all men and women are on commission, coming jointly to find a way to help guide the way.

The UN agreed that the major economic collapse in Afghanistan would only worsen the circumstances without immediate action. Secretary general António Guterres pledged a large pledging event supporting the humanitarian response in Afghanistan. The UN collected \$1.8 billion from international donors and distributed it to aid groups, assisting 20 million people with life-saving food, healthcare, clean water, education, and shelter. The UN launched an immense single-country aid appeal. The team launched a more than \$5 billion funding appeal for Afghanistan to save lives and essential services throughout 2022. The United States took the lead in the list of pledges committing over \$512 in aid for 2022. Other major co-donors were The UK, Germany, and Qatar. There were 15 pledges for the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund. Spain and Iceland also committed to funding Afghanistan for 2023 and beyond. The team in Afghanistan was satisfied with the results and appreciated the strong solidarity of the donor community. However, the fund-raising so far has only secured 13% of the requirements of the 2022 humanitarian response plan.

## Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The most heavily recognized attempt to resolve this issue has been the United States intervention directly targeting terrorist organizations in Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda. This military approach was successful to a certain extent, but the success of this mission required constant heavy military presence from the USA. President Bush and Obama both kept troops in Afghanistan until 2020 when the Taliban took over most of the Afghan territory. The US and the Afghan government fought hand in hand for sovereignty over the territories and in 2013 control was given to the Afghan government. Doubts always remained about the ability of Afghanistan to maintain control against terror which kept American troops for 6 more years more than President Obama wished for. It would be fair to say that with military intervention from big powers it is possible to fight off the Taliban government, but not without many lives including civilians being lost in a long span of time.

## Possible Solutions

There are possible solutions that could be held to improve the circumstances in Afghanistan. Written reports could be submitted to the UN to prove quality of life and human rights protection. The Security Council must be involved in the resolution to have a legitimate intervention if human rights are repeatedly violated under UN supervision. There could be a more advanced mission than UNAMA, which allows the opportunity for the Afghan youth to have all their humanitarian needs met while also having free access to education provided by the UN. This would mean the Taliban interacting with the UN and having a more sophisticated relationship with the current government.

HRC and UNSC could develop hand in hand resolutions to guarantee the safety of Afghan civilians while having a foreign intervention in order to free Afghanistan from the current Taliban government. An advanced refugee relief program could be created in order for the population to escape the Taliban. Cooperation with neighboring countries around Afghanistan would be necessary in order to provide the proper aid for civilians.

### **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)**

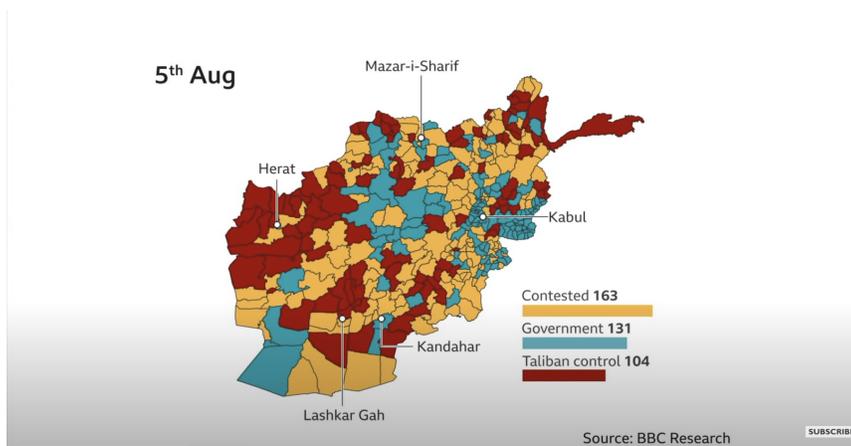
This issue relates to goal number 1 [No Poverty](#). The United Nations has reported that ever since the Taliban takeover, at least half a million Afghans have lost their jobs and up to 90% of citizens living in Afghanistan are living below the poverty line. This has thrown the country into an economic crisis. Citizens can barely afford necessities such as oil and rice. Some Afghans have even gone so far as to sell their daughters and organs to feed themselves and their families. Afghanistan has been one of the poorest countries in the world for a long time. However, ever since the takeover of the Taliban, the economy has collapsed even further, making the country face near-universal poverty. The significant economic collapse has led to extreme hunger and negatively affected many individuals in healthy ways. This leads to a lack of medication and the rise of multiple diseases and sicknesses, the most common mal-nutrition-related illness. Ending poverty in Afghanistan is a significant goal and could be life-changing for many individuals. The extreme poverty in Afghanistan must be reduced before it negatively affects thousands more.

### **Appendix**

- I. This video gives an insight to an every-day struggles and challenges Afghans

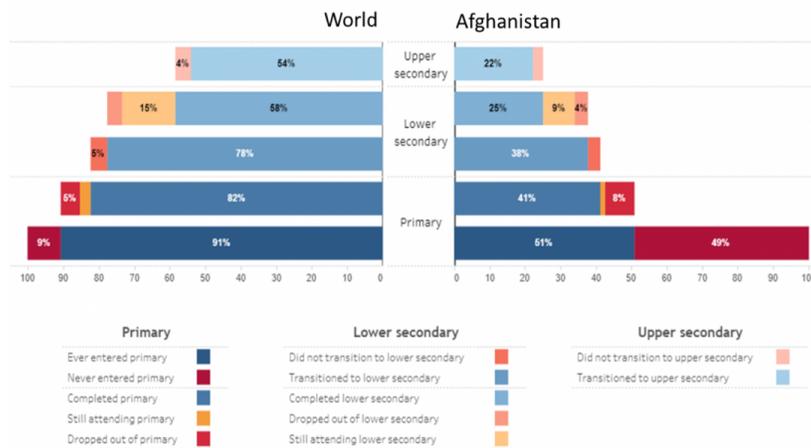
have to face under Taliban rule. <https://youtu.be/z5IKObCAfKQ>

- II. This map shows how The Taliban took control of Afghanistan. The map shows the areas The Taliban had control over in red, the contested territories in yellow, and the regions under government control in blue.



- III. This website includes diagrams and maps showing the control The Taliban had during the war of Afghanistan. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-57933979>
- IV. This video explains and talks in depth about Afghanistan's fall into extreme poverty and its devastating impact <https://youtu.be/PtnISgtNQBE>

- V. This diagram shows an overall analysis of the educational pathway of comparison between world average and Afghanistan girls.



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