

Forum: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Issue: Measures to address the humanitarian crisis of refugees and asylum seekers in Afghanistan

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Introduction

The Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis has proven to be an issue of great concern for the violation of their human rights. Over the past four decades, millions of Afghan people have been displaced due to a variety of reasons. Political instability and war in Afghanistan has fueled the insecurity but recent events have caused a re ignition of refugees and people fleeing the country. Events such as the Covid-19 Pandemic and especially the Taliban takeover are what has reignited the insecurity and chaos in Afghanistan. The people who have fled the country are in desperate need of basic necessities such as shelter, food, water, health services etc. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees works to ensure that the human rights of these refugees are protected and that their safety is ensured.



People of Afghanistan fleeing their country

Definition of Key Terms

Refugee

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

Taliban

A political and religious terrorist organization.

Asylum Seekers

A person who is looking for international protection. In certain countries, it is a legal term used to describe a person applying for a refugee status.

Human Rights

The rights a person is entitled to by simply being a human. These rights are built upon the principles of universal equality and non-discrimination.

Armed conflict

A conflict involving weapons being used between two or more parties

Humanitarian Crisis

A humanitarian emergency is when a significant amount of the population in a country are facing a threat to their health, safety or overall wellbeing

General Overview

Afghan war

The afghan war is originally rooted in the overthrow of the centrist government of President Mohammad Duad Khan in April 1978 by left wing military officers. Following the fall, two Marxist political groups took control, the People's (Khalq) Party and the Banner (Parcham) Party. The new government was heavily unpopular and forged an alliance with the Soviet Union. The government alongside the Soviet Union took harsh measures to silence any negative public opinion and to reform the land, which heavily impacted the Muslim and non-communist community of Afghanistan. Insurgencies began arising amongst the population, this was accompanied by conflicts in the government. The internal conflicts of the country allowed for the Soviet Union to lead an invasion in December 1979 establishing their control. The Soviets soon continued suppressing the rebellions of the Afghan people. The afghan war settled into a stalemate, with about 100,000 soviet troops in Afghanistan. In an attempt to suppress the civilian support of a new party referred to as the mujahideen , the soviets attempted bombing and polluting rural areas. By 1982, approximately 2.8 million Afghans had taken shelter in Pakistan, with some other 1.5 million

escaping to Iran. Via the use of shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles provided by the Soviet Union's Cold War adversary, the United States, the mujahideen were ultimately able to nullify Soviet air power. This along with the diminishing power of the Soviet Union soon allowed for the US, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union signed an agreement in which the latter consented to withdraw its troops (which was completed in 1989), and Afghanistan regained nonaligned status.

Rise and Fall of the Taliban

Following the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the collapse of Afghanistan's communist regime, and the subsequent breakdown in civil order, the Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. It began as a single collective of Afghan religious scholars and students attempting to fight crime and corruption.

In 1994, a group of ex-fighters affiliated with a madrasah in Kandahar province successfully subdued a local warlord and began pacifying



surrounding towns. The faction, which managed to draw popular support with its promise of protection and religious zeal, quickly grew into the movement that is now known as the Taliban. By late 1996, the Taliban had taken control of the capital, Kabul, and effectively two-thirds of the country. By 2001, the Taliban had taken control of everything except a tiny segment of northern Afghanistan,

the government was only acknowledged in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Current crisis in Afghanistan

Now, following the hostile takeover of the Taliban in 2021, the country is once again in peril. The Taliban searched for, threatened, and sometimes executed ex members of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Thousands of people attempted to flee the country as the Taliban entered Kabul on August 15, but chaos and violence at the airports hindered the evacuation. The Taliban victory pushed Afghanistan from humanitarian crisis to disaster, The present situation is unparalleled, well over 24.4 million people in the need of emergency aid to survive. Food security levels have plummeted at an extraordinary speed in such a short period, with half the population facing acute hunger, including 9 a a million people who are experiencing urgent food insecurity – the highest number in the world. Malnutrition is on the rise, and so many people have lost their jobs. Apart from this, there have been recent outbreaks of viruses such as measles and cholera that are threatening the health of the population.

Refugees and Asylum seekers

Afghans make up one of the world's largest refugee populations. There are 2.6 million Afghan refugees worldwide, with 2.2 million of them registered in Iran and Pakistan alone. Another 3.5 million people have fled their homes in search of safety within the country. Given the growing insecurity situation in 2021, the number of people fleeing has certainly increased. Afghanistan has been afflicted by war, environmental catastrophes, widespread poverty, and food shortages for more than four decades.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States

The United States had been involved in military operations against Terrorist groups and the Taliban for multiple years. In 2021, The United States's military retreat is what caused the Taliban to takeover the country. The United States defends its choice to Pull out of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan

In 2021 the Taliban took control of the government in Afghanistan. There is a new wave of refugees going out of the country because of this.

Pakistan

Most of the refugees from Afghanistan have fled to Pakistan. It is estimated that it holds around 1.4 million registered refugees. Pakistan has worked with the UNHCR to give refugees access to health and education services.

Iran

Iran has received over 700,000 refugees from Afghanistan into its borders. It is also implementing programs to help refugees get an education. However, due to Iran's current poor economic state, Iran's ability to maintain supporting refugees may strain.

Turkey

Turkey is a country that helps lots of refugees, not only hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees, but also millions of Syrian refugees. Due to the new wave of refugees caused by the Taliban takeover, Turkey claims that it has fulfilled its responsibilities and can't take any more burden for refugees.

Germany

Germany has taken in lots of refugees from Afghanistan. However, due to the recent refugee crisis in Ukraine, Germany has been displacing and evicting Afghan refugees in order to accommodate new Ukrainian refugees.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
April 1978	Overthrowing of Mohammed Duad Khan's government by left wing military officers.
December 1979	The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan which led to a protracted conflict inside Afghanistan.
1996	Taliban takes control of Kabul
2001	Taliban has almost full control of Afghanistan, also the year when the 9/11 terrorist attacks a happen in New York City.
October 2001	United States declares war on terror and invades Afghanistan due to the 9/11 terrorist attacks.
August 2021	United States withdraws from Afghanistan and Taliban regains control

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UNHRC in Afghanistan aims at protecting the most defenseless and supplying life-saving shelter, food, water, and basic relief supplies to newly displaced Afghans both in Afghanistan and in surrounding countries.

- Since Mid-August 2021 UNHCR has assisted some 700,000 displaced people across the country
- UNHCR has launched a plan to help 28 million people displaced in Afghanistan
- Since October 15 UNHCR has launched a relocation program for refugees in Afghanistan

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

In 2012, Pakistan and Iran formed the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host

Countries (SSAR). Through this and other initiatives both Pakistan and Iran have been supporting Afghan refugees in different ways like providing education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. However, each year thousands of refugees have been sent back to Afghanistan from both Pakistan and Iran. The reason for this forced mass return of refugees is said to be because of political and economical instability.

Possible Solutions

Five crucial features must be present in any solution devised to address Afghan challenges. First, localized bottom-up initiatives that understand Afghanistan's unique character and internal regions and are adapted to solve those specific difficulties. Second, measures must be led by the people of Afghanistan with UN oversight, maintaining Afghanistan responsible for the results. While pursuing essential national interests, the United States and its coalition partners must allow and encourage Afghan efforts. Third, solutions should be long-lasting and scalable. The Afghan government must anticipate a reduction in donor support and develop and implement remedies without relying on excessive US or coalition cash commitments. The solutions should also be adaptive to changes in US and Afghan leadership (military and civilian), policy, political personalities, and other variables.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

This issue is related to the third sustainable development goal which would be Good health and wellbeing, since the issue at hand is about refugees and asylum seekers and how to ensure that they are able to survive even though they fled their original country.

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