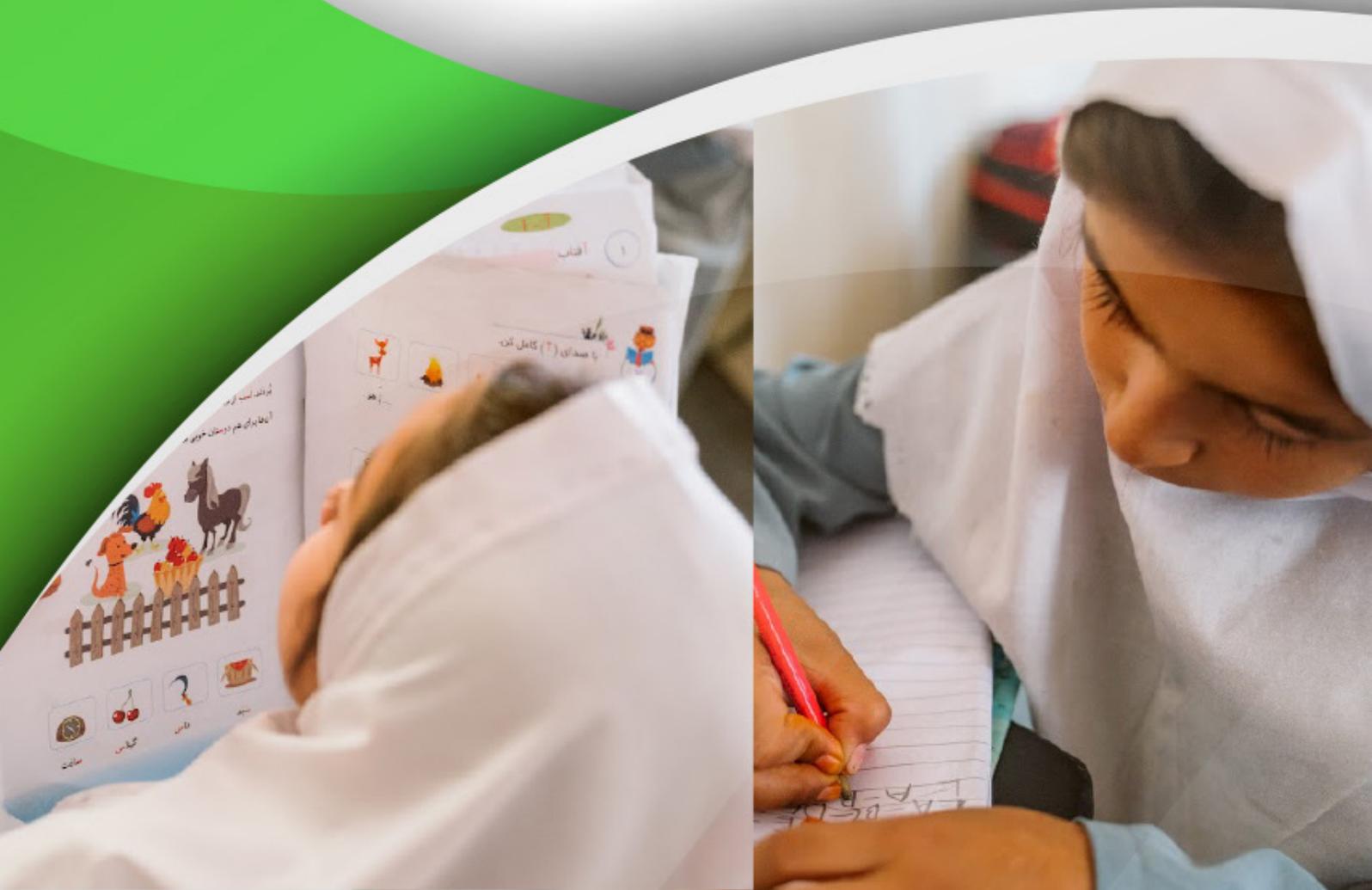




Afghans
For Progressive
Thinking (APT)

One Year After Afghanistan's Fall: What Was Life Like Under the Taliban Rule?



APTYOUTH.ORG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 Introduction**
- 04 Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT)**
- 05 Girls' Education Under the Taliban Regime: What Are the Psychological Impacts of School Closure on Girls?**
- 09 Global Attention to Afghanistan: How Do You Evaluate International Attention to Afghanistan in the Next 1-2 Years?**
- 12 Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan: What is the Status of Living Conditions for the People of Afghanistan in 2022?**
- 15 Taliban Amnesty: What Does Amnesty Mean for Human Rights in Afghanistan?**

Introduction

Access to information about life under the Taliban has been a challenge in the past year. In this booklet, you will learn directly from young Afghan women who are currently residing in Afghanistan. These young leaders completed a two-month mentorship program with Afghans for Progressive Thinking and team-worked to write articles on issues such affecting their lives such as poverty, restrictions on girls' education, targeted assassinations, and the status of Afghanistan on the global agenda.

What distinguishes this collection from other important reporting on Afghanistan is that it is written and compiled not only by Afghans but those women who continue to live inside the country. It is imperative for the international community to hear from people on the ground.

The young women who participated in this program come from diverse geographic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. For most of them, this was the first time to communicate their ideas through writing. This is not a work of pure academic research. Rather, these articles are published so that those watching Afghanistan from the outside can feel the ones inside the country and understand their circumstances beyond their English language abilities.

This booklet became possible because of the tireless efforts of Megan Fitzmaurice, Assistant Professor of Communication and Philanthropy at the University of Texas to train and edit the articles and Sofia Ramyar, M.A. Candidate for Dispute Resolution at Pepperdine University who designed the program and guided the courageous writers.

Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT)

APT is an Afghan youth-led nongovernment organization that works to promote peace and education in Afghanistan. More specifically, APT provides online coaching events for young women who live under the Taliban regime and trauma management sessions for Afghan refugees who have escaped persecution in the country. APT also organizes collegiate debate tournaments, holds leadership development courses, conducts international exchange programs, and continues to run a school for children in Afghanistan. One of APT's major programs has been the selection of the Afghan Youth Representative to the United Nations since 2018.

With members in 34 provinces of Afghanistan and across the world, APT has impacted more than 50,000 youth and children since its inception in 2010. You may read more about APT at www.aptyouth.org.

Girls' Education Under the Taliban Regime: What Are the Psychological Impacts of School Closure on Girls?

Since Afghanistan collapsed on August 15, 2021, many crises occurred, especially in education. Aziz Ahmad Rayan, a spokesman for the Ministry of Education, announced on March 17, 2022: "All schools are going to open to all boys and girls."¹ Despite the announcement, girl students in secondary and high school were not allowed to enter school and those who entered school were sent home on March 23, 2022, by the Taliban leadership's decision.² Although the Taliban government claimed that this decision was made because the school uniforms were not in alignment with Sharia (Sharia is the structure of Islam religion which is based on the sacred scriptures of Islam religion including the Quran and Hadith), experts inside and outside of Afghanistan said that the Taliban's decision to shut schools for girls was not related to Sharia, but because of their ideology.³ The Taliban are an extremist group that ruled Afghanistan for almost six years between 1996 and 2001, and like today, they locked schools for girls. In the same way, it has been nearly 12 months since girls above six grades are at home and not allowed to attend school.

The Taliban leadership has used girls' uniforms as an excuse for the closure of schools.⁴ If the problem was the uniforms, it would not take many months to resolve. This issue could be solved even in one day if the government cared about education. Simply, women's rights are not part of their priorities. As the result, girls are experiencing anxiety, depression, and stress. "It is really hard for me when I think about the fact that I have no freedom, no security, and no basic rights," Rezaei says.⁵ If this continues, it will have a negative long-life impression on girls. Therefore, the international community should play a significant role to support Afghan girls by taking urgent action."

School closure for girls is clearly discrimination and violates their human rights. Moreover, it increases their lack of motivation and hope for the future. According to Jamshid Rasa, an Afghan psychologist, when anyone is eager to learn and is banned from learning based on their gender, this will undoubtedly cause extreme mental depression.⁶ The closure will be deeply felt more by girls who are not allowed to go to school beyond sixth grade, those who have been waiting for months for schools to open, and those who enthusiastically went to school on March 23 but were turned away. School closures make girls feel more limited and restricted even in learning. As one student pointed out, the school

closures prevented many women from pursuing university studies or beginning a career. This will have serious long-term effects on Afghanistan's economy and job force. This student also mentioned that after the Taliban takeover, her mental health was affected so much that she does not see any future for herself and feels depressed. Afghan women have lost all freedom-- they are hardly allowed to go outside and are not allowed to travel alone.

The Salam Times stated that the loss of government jobs and the closure of schools for girls have led to a 7% increase in mental health problems among educated and young people in Herat. According to doctors, between 200 and 250 patients are brought to the hospital's psychiatric ward every day. ⁷

Munaza was a student in 11th grade in one of Parwan province schools before the ban. She told her story of not being able to enter school for 186 days since the first day of the school year in Afghanistan: "One day, thousands of Afghan girls went to school with a great passion after 186 days of waiting to attend their classes-- the Taliban had promised to re-open the schools for all girls and boys regardless of their gender. On the contrary, the Taliban sent the girls back home with tears in their eyes." She added that she had not expected this, and the school closure made her feel pessimistic about her future. Munaza also said: "I am the third child of our family and have struggled with a lot of difficulties in the past eleven years. But I have always continued my education. On Wednesday, I went to school but like other girls, I was not allowed to enter school. We were told that we are banned until the next decision. Upon hearing this, the day turned to night for us." ⁸

Over the past decades, Afghan women and girls have worked to protect their rights in terms of education, work, and political participation. These rights were taken from them. No girl or boy can afford any delay in their education. Dr. Wahid Ahamad Noorzad, Director of the psychiatric ward in Herat Regional Hospital, said that women and girls used to play a big role in society before the collapse of the previous government when they were allowed to work and study. But today, they are at home and doing nothing. He additionally explained that many students visit the hospital because they are concerned about their future and do not know what to do. Experts in human rights and international law believe that when students face long breaks in their education, it causes them to forget previous lessons and hinders their ability to make new progress. ⁹

Despite limitations and the deprivation of girls' education in most of Afghanistan, girls' school reopened in some of the provinces of Afghanistan, including Balkh, Jawzjan, Kunduz and Samangan and Uruzgan and Zabul province, according to UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Omar Abdi who met newly-appointed Minister of Education Sheikh Nurullah Munir in Kabul on 6 October.¹⁰ Although the Taliban did not reveal the reason behind this action, the experts in human rights believe that the Taliban think this may help their government to get recognized by the international community. Indeed, it does not help but create ambiguity. However, these schools are under the supervision of the Taliban, and they are not independent. One student who is currently going to school in Balkh province said that the Taliban enter the school at any time they want. They aim to watch how students and teachers dress, trying to catch them as criminals. They are looking for something to disapprove of, and they threaten students by saying, "You're the reason for the schools to be closed." The way they enter the school creates much fear. Their presence is so frightening that until they leave, students feel like dying and coming back to life every moment.¹¹

The international community could do much to help protect women's rights in Afghanistan. Firstly, they could put pressure on the Taliban to stop violations against women. The Taliban should not be recognized unless they provide everyone equal opportunities regardless of their gender. Secondly, the sponsors must push the Taliban to let women work and study and end extreme policies on girls. Finally, the United States, European Union, and other regional governments should request UNESCO or UNICEF to implement educational projects to promote girls' education.

References

- 1: Taliban to open high schools for girls next week, official says. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-03-17/taliban-to-open-high-schools-for-girls-next-week-official-says>
- 2: Qazizai, F. (2022, March 23). Taliban reverses decision, barring Afghan girls from attending school beyond 6th grade. WUSF Public Media. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/2022-03-23/taliban-reverses-decision-barring-afghan-girls-from-attending-school-beyond-6th-grade>
- 3: Taliban's ban on girls' education in Afghanistan. United States Institute of Peace. (2022, April 1). Retrieved August 10, 2022: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/04/talibans-ban-girls-education-afghanistan>

4: Admin. (2022, March 26). Afghanistan: Taliban order closure of Secondary Schools for Girls. En.ImArabic. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://en.imarabic.com/afghanistan-taliban-order-closure-of-secondary-schools-for-girls/>

5: Synovitz, R., & Azadi, R. F. E. R. L. R. (2021, November 4). 'EmPty Shell': Extreme depression, suicidal thoughts haunt Afghan women under Taliban rule. RFE/RL. Retrieved August 10, 2022: <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/depression-suicide-afghan-women/31546048.html>

6: Ani. (2022, May 4). Experts say Afghan girls banned from schools suffering psychologically. ThePrint. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://theprint.in/world/experts-say-afghan-girls-banned-from-schools-suffering-psychologically/941794/>

7: Omar. (2022, January 31). Unemployment, poverty, and school closures creating Mental Health Crisis. Salaam Times. Retrieved August 2, 2022: https://afghanistan.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_st/features/2022/01/31/feature-01

8: Guardian News and Media. (2022, March 23). Taliban decide against opening schools to girls in Afghanistan beyond age of 11. The Guardian. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/23/girls-in-afghanistan-school-taliban>

9: Billing, L., & Undark. (2022, July 18). Something insidious is happening to the health of Afghanistan's women. Inverse. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.inverse.com/culture/afghanistan-women-health>

10: Who gets to go to school? (1): What people told us about education since the Taleban took over. Afghanistan Analysts Network - English. (2022, February 1). Retrieved August 10, 2022: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/rights-freedom/who-gets-to-go-to-school-1-what-people-told-us-about-education-since-the-taliban-took-over/>

11: Safi, T. N. (n.d.). Girls return to high school in some regions of Afghanistan. Geneva Solutions. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://genevasolutions.news/explorations/dispatches-from-women-in-afghanistan/girls-return-to-high-school-in-some-regions-of-afghanistan>

Authors:

Maryam Ahmadi

Zulikha Afzali

Anahita Salihi

Shiva Bareen Safi

Muzhgan Rastagar

Nabila Hussaini

Global Attention to Afghanistan: How Do You Evaluate International Attention to Afghanistan in the Next 1-2 Years?

Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan have deteriorated with over 24.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance - an increase from 18.4 million in 2021. An estimated 22.8 million people need emergency food assistance more than doubling the March-May 2021 projection. ¹ An updated Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis shows that in the first quarter of 2022, around 23 million people, or 55 percent of the population, are expected to be in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. ² Moreover, Afghan refugees are becoming a critical problem to neighboring and European countries. An estimated 515,000 refugees have been added to the existing 2.8 million Afghan refugees and asylum seekers around the world this year. ³ Along with these crises, the country's overseas assets were frozen, sending the fragile economy into freefall. In this paper, we are going to discuss if the current situation in Afghanistan will lead to increased global attention towards this country in the coming two years. If yes, what are those factors?

The crisis in Afghanistan is becoming a serious global problem. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) Emergency Watchlist ranks Afghanistan as the country most at risk of the worsening humanitarian crisis in 2022. ⁴ According to the United Nations, Afghanistan might reach near-universal poverty by mid-2022, with 97 percent of Afghans destitute. This economic crisis, if not handled, would increase humanitarian demands ranging from food poverty and hunger to health concerns. ⁵ Over 90% of the country's health facilities are projected to close, depriving millions of people of essential treatment, jeopardizing the COVID-19 response, and increasing the risk of disease outbreaks, malnutrition, famine, and other preventable deaths.

Food insecurity is another factor that makes the Afghanistan situation a severe world issue. Nearly 9 million Afghans are in emergency situations, one step short of starvation. Food insecurity is expected to worsen in mid-2022, as the country faces food shortages, rapidly rising food costs, and extended drought. As indicated by IRC evaluations in five provinces in mid-2021, shortage of food and livelihoods were cited as the primary causes for people fleeing their homes. The facts above should be sufficient to convince any organization or government donor to address the crisis in the coming two years. ⁶

The second most important factor in attracting global attention to the Afghanistan crisis is the political interest of the donor governments. Though many people might question why countries would agree to assist Afghanistan, the reality is that this country's issues impact other nations as well. As mentioned above, the humanitarian crisis may lead to large-scale migrations if not addressed. A developing refugee crisis would have the heaviest social and economic repercussions on neighboring countries —particularly Pakistan and Iran, which already host more than 2.2 million registered Afghan refugees and more than 3 million others of varying status. European countries would also be largely affected by any large-scale migration.

With the departure of foreign troops nearly complete, the Taliban and their foreign associates are fighting to turn the country, once again, into a haven for transnational terrorism. As urged by the UNSC permanent representative: "Swift action must be taken to change the current catastrophic trajectory of violence and humanitarian suffering in Afghanistan, otherwise, it will pave the ground for civil war and terrorism in the country which affects the region and the interests of the highest economies such as China, USA, and Russia." ⁷ These reasons would persuade the world to take action for their own interests if not for the well of Afghanistan.

The third factor is the presence of humanitarian NGOs and international organizations. Seventy-Five percent of Afghanistan's budget depends on foreign aid after the collapse of the government. However, Germany, the USA, Canada, and the World Bank have stopped all disbursements of their own resources and the donor-contributed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund money to Afghanistan — including both direct support to the Afghan budget and high-priority development projects such as basic public health and rural development. The Asian Development Bank also has suspended disbursements. These decisions all stem from their refusal to formally recognize the Taliban government. ⁸ To conclude, we believe that international attention toward Afghanistan will increase over the next two years due to the intensity of the crisis in this country, the presence of foreign interest, and the high-scale presence of humanitarian organizations. Even if the Taliban government doesn't get recognized, these factors would alone save Afghanistan from going to the margins of attention.

References

- 1: Humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated, says Sigar. SALAM WATANDAR. (2022, May 5). Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://swa.af/en/2022/05/05/humanitarian-situation-in-afghanistan-has-deteriorated-says-sigar/>
- 2: Afghanistan humanitarian needs overview 2022 (January 2022) - Afghanistan. ReliefWeb. (2022, January 8). Retrieved August 10, 2022: <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2022-january-2022>
- 3: Nasrat Sayed, F. S. (2021, September 2). Will the Taliban's takeover lead to a new refugee crisis from Afghanistan? migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/taliban-takeover-new-refugee-crisis-afghanistan>
- 4: IRC emergency watchlist 2022: Afghanistan TOPS list of countries most at risk in year ahead; IRC finds global "system failure" fueling crises and driving record levels of humanitarian need. The IRC. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/irc-emergency-watchlist-2022-afghanistan-tops-list-countries-most-risk-year-ahead-irc>
- 5: ABC News Network. (n.d.). ABC News. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/report-afghanistan-teeters-brink-universal-poverty-79933659>
- 6: Lalzoy, N. (2022, April 1). Antonio Guterres: 9 million Afghans are at risk of famine. The Khaama Press News Agency. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.khaama.com/antonio-guterres-9-million-afghans-are-at-risk-of-famine-656586/>
- 7: United Nations. (n.d.). As Taliban offensive escalates, Afghanistan at dangerous turning point, special representative warns Security Council amid calls for ceasefire, Aid Access | UN press. United Nations. Retrieved August 3, 2022: <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14596.doc.htm>
- 8: After Taliban takeover, can Afghanistan's economy survive? United States Institute of Peace. (2022, May 16). Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/09/after-taliban-takeover-can-afghanistans-economy-survive>

Authors:

Sodaba Rahraw
Najia Fakhri
Shazia Ibrahimi
Mursal Muzaffar
Shukria Zafar

Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan: What is the Status of Living Conditions for the People of Afghanistan in 2022?

Afghanistan is facing an increased rate of poverty, starvation, malnourishment, and unemployment. According to a United Nations report published in October 2021, “Afghanistan’s combined shocks of drought, violence, the coronavirus pandemic, and an economic catastrophe have left more than half of the population facing a record level of acute famine.”¹ This paper explores how international humanitarian aid can save the lives of millions of starving Afghans and suggests ways to send relief to Afghanistan.

Among the causes that have amplified the level of poverty in Afghanistan after the fall of the republican government, it is fair to mention the dependency of the Afghan economy on international and local humanitarian aid. Throughout the now-collapsed, Western-backed government driven by Ashraf Ghani, 43% of Afghanistan’s GDP came from outside help, according to the World Bank. Almost 75% of open investing was supported by remote grants. Ninety (90) percent of Afghans lived on a salary of less than \$2 a day, and an estimated 18.4 million individuals — about half the country’s population needed humanitarian assistance (World Bank 2021).²

The collapse of domestic banks and the freezing of Afghan bank accounts abroad is another cause of the increase in poverty in Afghanistan. The United States circumscribed access to billions of dollars in Afghan central bank reserves held in the U.S.A right after its troops’ withdrawal. On Aug. 17, the European Union suspended development funding long-term aid that supported projects in healthcare, education, agriculture, and law enforcement, even though they said they would maintain humanitarian aid.³

The non-recognition of the Taliban government in Afghanistan as an acceptable administration with inclusive structures has led to the cessation of many international funds after the fall of the country. No country has formally acknowledged the Taliban government since the insurgents took over Afghanistan in August.

According to the World Food Program, “acute malnutrition in 25 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces is above the emergency threshold and is expected to worsen”. Today, increasing poverty has boosted the market for the trafficking and sale of children, especially girls, in Afghanistan. We have received credible reports that some Afghan families have even given up their 20-day-old daughters

for forced future marriages in exchange for money. UNICEF Executive Director Henry Nafor said in a new statement. “The problems of poverty and disease have multiplied with the fall of the previous government, and women in Afghanistan have become more unemployed than men”.⁴

The closure of public and private institutions, the non-payment of salaries to government employees, and the flight of capital abroad are phenomena that have exacerbated poverty in Afghanistan today. The freezing of the central bank’s reserves abroad has also increased the economic problems of the people in Afghanistan. In general, it can be said that poverty in Afghanistan today puts the lives of more than half of the population at risk of food insecurity, and if the international community does not pay serious attention to get out of this problem in Afghanistan, the crisis will intensify and by mid-2022 it will be possible that 97 percent of the population will live below the poverty line.

The international community can send relief and prevent an entire nation from starvation through the following imperatives:

- 1:** Support women-led initiatives for women in Afghanistan that provide them with working and learning opportunities and eliminate any restrictions on their income-generating activities.
- 2:** Help poor families and individuals across the country with the support of moderate humanitarian organizations inside and outside Afghanistan.
- 3:** Form specific strategic programs solely for providing employment opportunities and assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs) displaced by war and conflict and those who are currently struggling with poor economic conditions.
- 4:** Establish specific, thorough, and cost-effective efforts to combat micronutrient deficiency.

Afghanistan’s humanitarian situation was already the worst in the world before the events of August 15. By the end of 2021, nearly half of the population (approximately 18.4 million individuals) needed emergency and protective assistance. Malnutrition was at a crisis or emergency level for one out of every three Afghans, and more than half of all children under the age of five were expected to suffer from acute malnutrition. By 2022, it is expected that Afghanistan will have reached global poverty (with 97 percent of Afghans living below the poverty line). In the first three months of 2022, more than 13,700 children have already died in Afghanistan.

While the World Food Program, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Aga Khan Development Network have all increased their humanitarian assistance in the last couple of months, many activities require multiple rounds of assistance and ongoing financial support. The international community can offer long-term aid and save an entire nation from famine and poverty by doing the following: providing grants for women initiatives, supporting moderate humanitarian organizations to provide aid to needed people, combat micronutrient deficiency, create job opportunities, and help displaced families.

References

- 1: United Nations. (n.d.). Afghanistan on ‘countdown to catastrophe’ without urgent humanitarian relief | UN news. United Nations. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/10/1103932>
- 2: Public Broadcasting Service. (n.d.). ‘brink of collapse’: How frozen assets & halted foreign aid are impacting the Afghan people. PBS. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/taliban-takeover-how-frozen-assets-foreign-aid-impacts-afghanistan/>
- 3: Overview. World Bank. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview>
- 4: 97 percent of Afghans could plunge into poverty by mid 2022, says UNDP: United Nations Development Programme. UNDP. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/97-percent-afghans-could-plunge-poverty-mid-2022-says-undp>

Authors:

Khujasta Danishjo
Zainab Akbari
Mushtari Danishjo
Hadia Ibrahimkhil
Humaira Amiri
Nazia Amiri

Taliban Amnesty: What Does Amnesty Mean for Human Rights in Afghanistan?

The Taliban announced general amnesty after their takeover of Afghanistan and asked everyone to return to their jobs as usual. They especially called those who worked with the military, ministries, and the former government to resume their jobs. However, there are lots of cases and evidence that clearly show the Taliban are not committed to their promise of amnesty now and in 1996, through interviews and research that this paper has carried out. This article also provides responses to the two questions – whether the Taliban are in the position to extend amnesty and what crime people have committed to being granted amnesty.

Given the Taliban's actions when they ruled 20 years ago, we cannot assume that they have changed and are now trustworthy. In 1996, a commander of the Taliban named Musa also declared amnesty for all Afghans: "The Taliban will not take revenge, we do not have personal rancor if the people find someone responsible for any crime they will be judged by Islamic law." ¹ However, In the hours later after the Taliban took power in 1996, president Dr. Najibullah Ahmadzai and his brother were killed by the Taliban, and their beaten bodies were hanged publicly. ²

A few days after their takeover, the Taliban started searching homes for members of the opposition and soldiers. Meanwhile, the United Nations report shows at least 160 extrajudicial killings of former government and security officials by members of the de facto authorities between 15 August 2021 and 15 June 2022. ³ Though people witnessed such shocking cases, they too disappeared. The Taliban have denied such actions for the sake of making themselves look innocent and legitimizing their government. Thus, the world should not be deceived by their words. There are live examples of people being killed and disappearing because of their involvement with the previous government and serving in the police.

Qasim Qaim Andarabi, who worked with the Ministry of Defense, after the collapse of the previous government, was asked for returning to his job and one day when he went to his workplace their family found their dead body. Mujahid, (Qasim's brother) said, "one day when he was coming home, he was arrested by Taliban soldiers and after a few weeks we received a call from my brother's number to take his murdered body from the hospital". Mujahid added, "the Taliban

shouldn't be recognized as an independent government until they respect human rights." ⁴

Moreover, 13 Hazara were killed by Taliban fighters in Daykundi province. The victims included a 17-year-old girl. According to evidence and eyewitness gathered by Amnesty International, the killings happened in Kahor village of Khidir district on August 30, 2021. Eleven victims of this case were former members of Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF), and two were civilians including a 17-years old girl shot when the Taliban opened fire in a crowd of people, the amnesty international has revealed. ⁵

Saadat's brother said: "Ever since Taliban came to power; they started searching house to house. When they came to our house, they took Saadat with themselves and left." After one month when Saadat came home his eyes were drawn and they pulled his fingernails and even his mind was shocked, and he couldn't speak well because the Taliban tortured him brutally." Then he added "when he came home, he just told us that he must leave the country. Now it has been 5 months that he is gone, and we even do not know where he is living. His wife and children are here with us". Saadat's father added, "the Taliban haven't changed, and general amnesty is empty words".

In fact, the Taliban are the ones who killed innocent people for more than 20 years before the fall of Afghanistan. They are not in the position to announce amnesty for people. It is the Taliban who should be taken into court because they made thousands of children fatherless, widowed thousands of Afghan women, and killed their young sons and daughters. Afghan people will never forget how they brutally killed people after they were thrown from power in 2001. ⁶ Thousands of people immigrated after the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. And those who stayed have been tortured and killed. Not all people have the means to escape.

While there is no easy fix for this human catastrophe, the international community should take urgent action to support Afghanistan and the Afghan people. First, there is need to be a committee to monitor the human rights situation in Afghanistan, consisting of prominent members of various international organizations. Second, the international community must use every available lever to pressure the Taliban government to respect human rights. The UN should put sanctions on the Taliban's relationship with other countries until they respect

and protect human rights in Afghanistan. In another word, they should not be considered independent governments to have a good relationship with other countries. Finally, the United Nations should not give the seat of Afghanistan in the UN to the Taliban.

To conclude, the evidence and reports show that the Taliban are not trustworthy - they have never kept their words. What they say is different than their deeds. If the international community does not act, there will be further execution of innocent people who have done no crime. The suffering of people will continue, and we will be witnessed more people being tortured and disappearing.

References

- 1: Westfall, S. (2021, August 23). Taliban leaders are promising peace, order and amnesty in Afghanistan. they promised that last time, too. The Washington Post. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/08/22/taliban-historical-rhetoric/>
- 2: Roy, S. (2021, August 19). Taliban brutality and death of Mohammad Najibullah in 1996. The News Insight. Retrieved August 10, 2022, from <https://enewsinsight.com/taliban-brutality-and-death-of-mohammad-najibullah-in-1996/> 3: 8am. (2022, April 17). Taliban kills Qasim Qaim Archives. Hasht-e Subh Daily. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://8am.af/eng/tag/taliban-kills-qasim-qaim/>
- 3: Un releases report on human rights in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover. UNAMA. (2022, July 20). Retrieved August 10, 2022: <https://unama.unmissions.org/un-releases-report-human-rights-afghanistan-taliban-takeover>
- 4: 8am. (2022, April 17). Taliban kills Qasim Qaim Archives. Hasht-e Subh Daily. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://8am.af/eng/tag/taliban-kills-qasim-qaim/>
- 5: Afghanistan archives. Amnesty International. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/afghanistan/report-afghanistan/>
- 6: Serhan, Y. (2021, October 16). The Taliban is just as bad as it always was. The Atlantic. Retrieved August 2, 2022: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2021/10/taliban-hasnt-changed-afghanistan/620371/>

Authors:

Madina Sakhizada
Asiea Jamizada
Ramzia Jahish
Hadisa Zahirzai
Fatima Basir