RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

Violation of Human and Women's Rights by the Taliban in Afghanistan

The Taliban's Takeover and its Consequences

Farima Nawabi, RWI Research Fellow
Mentor: Morten Koch Andersen, PhD
Senior Advisor and Researcher

March – December 2022

RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

Violation of Human and Women's Rights by the Taliban in Afghanistan: The Taliban's Takeover and its Consequences

© 2023 Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law

RWI Research Fellow: Farima Nawabi

2022

ISBN: 978-91-86910-88-4

This report was developed as part of the RWI Afghanistan Programme, which is financially supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

The views and opinions expressed in the study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of RWI or the donor.

RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW
Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
Stora Gråbrödersg. 17 B
P.O. Box 1155
SE-221 05 Lund, Sweden

Contents

Summary **4**
Introduction **4**
How has the Taliban's takeover resulted in severe violation of human rights? 6
Methodology **6**
Chapter One: The Taliban **8**
Chapter Two: Political, Economic and Social Collapse **8**
Chapter Three: Terrorists in Charge of the **10**
Extracting Industry in Afghanistan **10**
Chapter Four: The Taliban and Human Rights **11**
Suppression of women's rights defenders 12
Removal of women from the cabinet 13
Banning women from sports 13
Making female employees stay at home 13
Separation of university classes 13
Banning women from traveling abroad 13
Banning women from domestic travel 14
Deprivation of girls from education 14
Separation of school days for female students 14
Preventing women from learning to drive 14
Women forced to wear a burqa 14
Mandatory hijab for female TV presenters 14
Removing women from government offices 15
Further suppression of female protesters 15
Chapter Five: Islam and Taliban **15**
Women and the hijab in Islam 17
Women and education in Islam 20
1. The Quran and education 20
2. Women and the study of science and knowledge 21
Chapter Six: Consequences of the Violations of Human Rights and the Presence of the Taliban in Afghanistan **22**
1. Jihadi education and the spread of extremism and international terrorism 23
2. The cost of depriving girls of education 24
3. Increase in drug production 25
4. The flow of Afghan migrants 27

Conclusion **28**
Recommendations **29**
References **30**

According to Heather Barr, associate women's rights director at Human Rights Watch, "What is happening right now in Afghanistan is the most serious women's rights crisis in the world today."

Summary

Human rights violations in Afghanistan have increased to an unprecedented level since the Taliban takeover. The international community and human rights institutes have failed to prevent the devastating abuses. The Taliban takeover and its brutal violation of human rights in Afghanistan will have serious consequences, not only in Afghanistan but around the world, unless strong and constructive action is taken.

Introduction

This paper highlights the current human rights situation in Afghanistan with special emphasis on women and girls and addresses why and how Afghanistan ended up this way.

On 15 August 2021, Taliban forces entered Kabul. After 20 years of fighting with the government and foreign forces in Afghanistan, the group has revived its "Islamic Emirate" that was overthrown by the United States (US) in October 2001. Taliban troops arrived in Kabul two weeks before US President Joseph Biden's deadline for a full withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan.[1]

On that day, the people of Afghanistan woke up to the brutal reality of losing everything overnight. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan had collapsed into the hands of the Taliban (Thomas Gibbons-Neff, **2021).** Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani escaped to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), along with his national security advisor and chief of staff (Jonathan Schroden, 2021). In reality, the country had started to collapse months before. The system started to fail from the day the Americans signed a deal with the Taliban on 21 February 2021, or maybe even earlier (Hafeez Ullah, Dr Riaz Ahmad, Muhammad Mussa Khan, 2020). The Doha Agreement (State Department – State.gov, 2020) was not only a failure for the Afghan government but also a failure for the US (Lisa Curtis, 2021).

During the US-Taliban peace talks, neither the people nor the government of Afghanistan were involved. Only Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Special Envoy to Afghanistan, updated Ashraf Ghani at certain stages. The whole process was a secret between the Taliban and Americans – but perhaps third-party countries, such as Qatar as a host of the Taliban talks, and Pakistan as a country hosting the Taliban and its families for decades, had some insight. However, no-one was really aware of the peace talks or the agreement, especially the agreement's annexes, which, to this day, are unclear (Rakesh Sood, 2020).

The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) collapsed in August 2021, however, the ANDSF collapse was months – if not years – in the making: the US did not give the ANDSF everything they needed to be

[1] https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2573268/biden-announces-full-us-troop-withdrawal-fromafghanistan-by-sept-11/

independently successful; the ANDSF did put up a fierce fight in many areas; the ANDSF were poorly served by Afghan political leaders; the ANDSF were poorly served by their own commanders; and the Taliban strategy overwhelmed and demoralised the ANDSF, (Jonathan Schroden, 2021).

Both the Trump and Biden administrations underestimated the degree to which the Doha Agreement had weakened the Afghan state and divided the Afghan political elite. The way in which the US handled peace talks in Doha directly contributed to undermining Ashraf Ghani and the Afghan institutions under his charge. The US undercut Ashraf Ghani by simultaneously forcing him to make concessions to the Taliban even as the Taliban continued to press ahead with its military campaign to take the country by force. The Taliban used peace talks to divide Afghan leaders while it was simultaneously assassinating Afghan civilians and attacking the Afghan security forces to weaken their will to keep fighting. It was a recipe for disaster and the collapse of the Republic.

"Former CIA counter-terrorism chief Douglas London explained how the US played into the Taliban strategy, which was to increase the level of violence 'while undercutting the Afghan government's cohesion by negotiating with and paying off regional opponents'. London concluded that, under these circumstances, it should have been obvious to US observers that the Afghan government could collapse 'within days to weeks' (Lisa Curtis, 2021)."

After years of fear and hope, finally, on 15 August 2021, the people of Afghanistan not only fell into the hands of a terrorist group but Afghanistan fell into a black hole. Contrary to the Taliban's repeated claims of respect for human rights based on Islamic teachings, the Taliban is destroying the achievements of the last 20 years in the field of human rights in Afghanistan, most of which has been documented and observed by world leaders.

On Tuesday, 7 June 2022, Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, during a visit to Pakistan, expressed concerns that neighbouring Afghanistan's new Taliban rulers were leading that country into a complete "downfall" and bringing about incredible suffering and hunger. Speaking at a press conference with her Pakistani counterpart, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, she stated, "Since seizing power in mid-August [2022], the Taliban [has] imposed harsh edicts in Afghanistan, harking back to [its] repressive rule during the late 1990s. [The Taliban has] restricted the freedoms and rights of women, who are now barred from going to school beyond the sixth grade, and minorities. The country has plunged into an unprecedented crisis, hurtling towards an economic meltdown as famine and hunger loom."

Since coming to power, the Taliban has been attacking people active in the field of human rights daily, even conducting house-to-house searches for them. The lives of Afghan media workers and journalists are also in danger, with some fleeing the country and others hiding within Afghanistan.

As well as the Taliban "leading the country into a downfall," Annalena Baerbock said Afghan "parents do not know how to feed their children. Girls are deprived of their right to education. Women are almost excluded from participation in public life. Dissenting voices are brutally suppressed. The economy is grinding to a halt."[1]

The violation of human rights by the Taliban has not gone unseen by anyone. The Taliban has committed targeted killings, enforced disappearances and torture of those who used to work with the former government, national defence and security forces, civil society workers, women activists, journalists, and media workers. This paper addresses and examines some of these violations.

[1] https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-politics-bilawal-bhutto-zardari-pakistan-7bdffa29b1d5ee4677999b138869502b

How has the Taliban's takeover resulted in severe violation of human rights?

Under this overarching question, the following themes are addressed in this paper:

- Why and how the Taliban takeover was allowed to happen.
- How the takeover affects human rights in Afghanistan, and how it will affect the lives of women and girls specifically.
- How the Taliban used Islam to justify this violation of human rights.
- What the consequences will be of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan for the region, and the world, focusing mainly on the production of drugs, terrorism, and the consequent creation of refugees.

The paper sheds light on the background of the collapse of the government in Afghanistan, followed by a brief study of the political, economic, and social collapse since August 2021. In addition, the paper explains how Afghanistan fell into the miserable situation it is in today by searching for reasons in history, the faith of previous rulers, the rise of the Taliban, the American invasion, and the past 20 years in general.

The paper highlights how the Taliban misused religion to strip away fundamental rights of women in Afghanistan – that is, social, economic, and cultural rights, such as the right to health, work and education; and civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression, religion and assembly; as well as the right to life, freedom from torture and ill-treatment – based on the group's interpretation of Islam. Finally, the paper looks at the potential consequences of a Taliban takeover on human and women's rights in Afghanistan, as well as for the region and the world if necessary and timely action is not taken.

Methodology

The people of Afghanistan are witnessing a wave of human rights abuses, retaliatory behaviour, restrictions on women's freedom, as well as crackdowns on protests, the media and civil society. This paper highlights various incidents of human rights violations in Afghanistan and foresees the consequences by exploring case studies of violations.

Sources used include various books, the Quran, the UN Special Rapporteur reports, Amnesty International reports, Human rights Watch reports, online articles, and news reports.

- The Taliban decrees regarding women were collected.
- Verses of the Quran regarding the hijab and education were examined, and some sayings of the Prophet are referenced. No Islamic scholars are referenced or quoted.
- I looked at what enabled the Taliban to come back, the group's history, the Doha Agreement, and the location of Afghanistan.
- In terms of consequences, I focused on drug-production, terrorism, migration, and the situation of women and girls if they do not go to school.

I question the interpretation of Islam by the Taliban, and how and why the Taliban's Islam is different that of the Quran, referencing the Quran itself regarding the male argument of equality within Islam. I argue that what the Taliban is doing to Afghan women and girls is neither religious nor cultural. Finally, I identify the future impacts on the lives of millions of people, not only in Afghanistan but in the wider region and the world.

An advantage in the way data was collected was its flexibility in that different types of sources could be used. In addition, I had the flexibility to voice these issues, which is not easy to do within Afghanistan itself, allowing the traditional way of interpreting religion by Islamic scholars to be safely questioned. That said, most Muslim men, and some Muslim women, would not like the idea of boycotting Islamic scholars and using only the Quran as a source.

Chapter One: The Taliban

Those not familiar with the history of Afghanistan and the rise of the Taliban may not be aware how and when it came about as a terrorist group; from where the Taliban got its ideology; and how it became powerful enough to control the whole of Afghanistan.

"The fall of the Najibullah government in 1992 ushered in a period of civil war and warlords between various rivals for power in Afghanistan. While shifting coalitions battled for control of Kabul (centred generally on President Burhanuddin Rabbani's Tajik-dominated party Jamiat-i-Islami on one side, and Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Pashtun-dominated Hezb-i-Islami party on the other), various regional warlords and local commanders controlled different areas of the country. Good governance and the rule of law were often absent from Afghanistan during this period and women suffered not only through the continuation of the war, but in some places became the victims of molestation, abduction, and rape. Indeed, one of the reasons offered by the Taliban for [its] early campaign to capture Kandahar in 1994 was to eliminate local commanders who were committing not only war crimes but also caused harassment to both women and young boys.[3] More realistically, the Taliban was a Pakistani militia bent on stabilising Afghanistan and thus allowing it to become a trade corridor to and from Central Asia. (LP Goodson, 2001)"

Between 1994 and 1998, the Taliban captured almost the whole of Afghanistan, including the capital Kabul, in 1996. Its rule ended in 2001 with the American invasion after 9/11.

After 20 years of fighting the Americans, NATO, and Afghan national security forces, the Taliban gained power again on 15 August 2021. More than a year since the capital of Afghanistan fell into its hands, the Taliban still has no programmes for infrastructure, reconstruction, education, or the economy. The Taliban believes it can rule the country in the traditional way that a village is run in remote areas.

Chapter Two: Political, Economic and Social Collapse

The collapse of the Republic of Afghanistan affected three main areas: political, economic, and social. The people of Afghanistan have been left with the deep fear that there is no-one in charge under the Taliban. Anyone can do whatever they want and no institution is accountable to any structure or system. The Ministry of Interior does not know what the Security Department is doing; the Security Department does not know what the others are doing. Nearly 35-million people[4] in Afghanistan have been left in the hands of a terrorist group.

The big question is why the political system of the Republic collapsed so easily and quickly. Most Afghans and foreigners believe that the only reason for such a rapid collapse was the withdrawal of the Americans; however, this paper will show that this was not the only reason.

Historically, since 1880, that is, since the establishment of Afghanistan (Mohammad Asif Rahimi, 2017), other governments and rulers of Afghanistan, such as Mohammad Ashraf Ghani (the last president of Afghanistan, 2014-2021), have faced rebellion. Among the kings and rulers of Afghanistan, Habibullah (king,1901-1919), son

[3] Sexual abuse of young boys (*Bacha bazi*) in Afghanistan has been an ugly truth for decades.

[4] There is no exact number of the population of Afghanistan. It is said to be between 35-million and 40-million.

of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan (king, 1880-1901); Habibullah Kalakani (king, 17 January to 13 October 1929); Nadir Khan (king, 1929-1933); Sardar Mohammad Dawood (first president of Afghanistan, 1973-1978); Noor Mohammad Taraki (president, 1978-1979); Hafizullah Amin (president, September to December 1979); Dr Mohammad Najibullah (president, 1987-1992); and Burhanuddin Rabbani (president, 1992-2001) all had a bloody

end. Amanullah Khan (king, 1919-1929) and Ashraf Ghani (the former president) managed to escape from the country.

Mohammad Zahir Shah, the last king, was out of the country when the regime change took place, which is why his fate was not the same as his past and future kings (Marjon E Ghasemi, 1998). Only Babrak Karmel (president, 1979-1986) and Sebghatullah Mujadadi (president, April to June 1992) died of natural causes. We do not know what history will do for Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani, the former presidents of Afghanistan who are still alive.

Afghanistan's geographical location, its centralised political system, the Doha Agreement, discrimination, corruption, and interventions by America's regional rivals, also played a part in the country's collapse.

Geographical location and tribal structure have been a bad political fit for Afghanistan's rulers. The country has always been rebellious and marked by insurgents. The history of Afghanistan is the history of tribal wars and rebellions (Mohammad Asif Rahimi, 2017). The fall of the Republic was thus not that strange or unpredictable for those familiar with its history. Before the Republic, there were autocratic monarchies supporting Britishbacked emirs (Abdul Rahman Khan and his son); the first president of the Republic (Sardar Mohammad Dawood); Soviet-backed socialists (People's Democratic Party); the Mujahideen government, Islamists supported by Pakistan, Iran, and other Arab countries (the Taliban); and finally, the Republic supported by America (Karzai and Ghani governments), all were faced with armed opposition and rebellion and ended by the force of the gun (Malou Innocent, 2011). Afghan society has always been a short-term and unstable society, and thus open to foreign interference.

This history shows that all rebellions and armed uprisings in Afghanistan have been victorious. If the Taliban's option, instead of forming a comprehensive national government is to form a mono-ethnic one and, as a result, a monopoly (which is currently the case), it will no doubt face a socio-political antithesis and, for many reasons, one being Afghanistan's history, this opposition to the Taliban might also win.

Thomas Barfield referred to Afghanistan as "the land of eternal rebellions" (Thomas Barfield, 2008). It has always been a politically fragile state.

The economic collapse of Afghanistan happened in parallel with its political collapse. Diagnosing what went wrong in Afghanistan is important not only to understand the country's future trajectory but also to prevent the same foreign-policy mistakes from happening again. Clearly, the government of Afghanistan was deeply corrupt, but that corruption was not rooted in Afghan society or culture. Rather it was incentivised by the rules governing society combined with the absurd amount of money being pumped into an economy that could hardly absorb such sums. By the time the Afghan Republic disappeared, almost 80% of the government's budget came from the US and nearly 40% of the country's GDP from foreign aid.

The US had no clear strategy in Afghanistan. One constant, however, was the billions of dollars in aid it poured into the country to keep the government afloat. However, this huge investment was not subject to monitoring or meaningful constraints on how it was used, and this contributed to corruption and, ultimately, state collapse.

Rather than develop a new approach, the US seemed to bank on resources alone to sustain a government and a military force.

When the Republic fell to the Taliban, the US immediately stopped this aid, devastating the Afghan economy. Afghanistan is now suffering a banking crisis and a humanitarian disaster, as the new regime has stopped paying hundreds of thousands of government employees and famine is sweeping the country. (Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili, 2022). There is a fear that humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan now is getting to the Taliban, which is not letting it get to the people who need it.

Since the Taliban takeover, some forms of humanitarian assistance have kept flowing, but development aid has been cut until the Taliban entrenches human rights and political freedom.

According to Maria Siegmund: "Providing aid to a non-recognised regime like the Taliban, which stands against many of the international norms that Afghanistan had committed to, is a delicate business. Many donors fear that it could be interpreted as diplomatic recognition. Furthermore, given their fungibility, aid flows may end up inadvertently helping the Taliban strengthen its grip on power and solidify current totalitarian structures, retarding democratisation processes."[2]

There are reports from Afghanistan that the Taliban distributes most of the aid to its fighters and their families. Taliban members are very open to admitting that, after 20 years of fighting the international community, it is their turn to enjoy the aid money and give it to their fighters.

Western donors and the organisations, such as the World Food Programme, UNICEF, and other national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) still in the country, must create a mechanism to make sure the aid does not go to the Taliban or its fighters. They must make aid conditional on the Taliban's behaviour towards human rights, the rights of women and girls, and political freedom for all Afghans.

As to the social collapse of Afghanistan, corruption undermined the Afghan Republic because the central government was completely unaccountable to society. It was beholden only to international donors and therefore lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Money cannot win hearts and minds. Gaining trust in Afghanistan did not require vast resources, complicated plans, and sophisticated military strategies. It required treating people with dignity and giving them a role to play as citizens. The US-led, state-building effort prioritised strengthening state capacity but did not bother to establish effective constraints on state power. Constraints are the key to accountability. The Afghan people never had a real say over who ruled them or how.

The US adventure in Afghanistan repeated the mistakes of so many of the country's earlier overseers, who sought to rule from the centre without making society a key pillar of the state. The tragedy is that Afghans were largely left as onlookers, never granted a genuine chance to put their country on a better course, and the future appears as grim as it does familiar (Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili, 2022).

The Republic collapsed for many reasons and Afghans themselves are responsible for this failure. Afghans as a nation failed on many fronts, including not being united. The people of Afghanistan did not manage the money

that came in and had no clear plan for the future of the country. They waited for foreigners to build their nation. Lessons need to be learned from this history.

Civilians have been left devastated and poor. However, the Taliban knows how to grip power and make money in Afghanistan now. One of the main sources of its income is drugs and the country's mines.

Chapter Three: Terrorists in Charge of the Extracting Industry in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is one of the poorest nations in the world, but in 2010, US military officials and geologists revealed that the country, which lies at the crossroads of Central and South Asia, was sitting on mineral deposits worth nearly $1-trillion.

[2] https://devpolicy.org/should-western-donors-provide-aid-to-taliban-controlled-afghanistan-20221021/

"Afghanistan is certainly one of the regions richest in traditional precious metals, but also the metals [needed] for the emerging economy of the 21st century," according to Rod Schoonover, a scientist and security expert who founded the Ecological Futures Group."[6]

In addition, Afghanistan sits atop huge deposits of copper, iron, marble, talc, coal, lithium, chromite, cobalt, gold, lapis lazuli, gemstones, and more – making it one of the world's most resource-rich countries on paper. Supplies of minerals, such as iron, copper and gold, are scattered across provinces. There are also rare-earth minerals and, perhaps most importantly, what could be one of the world's biggest deposits of lithium – an essential but scarce component in rechargeable batteries and other technologies vital to tackling the climate crisis.

Afghanistan's mineral wealth has been well-documented for decades. The Soviets did surveys in the 1970s and 1980s, and the US did plenty of its own during its 20-year stay in the country. Some big contracts were signed, notably a 30-year, $3-billion deal in 2007 with a Chinese consortium to develop a copper deposit near Kabul called Mes Aynak, on which work will start very soon, according to Chinese diplomats in Kabul.

Furthermore, "China, the next-door neighbour, is embarking on a very significant green energy development programme," Rod Schoonover has said. "Lithium and rare-earths are so far irreplaceable because of their density and physical properties. Those minerals factor into [China's] long-term plans."[7]

The Taliban controlled most of the country's mines, trucks, and roads. Now that they're in control of the whole country, the Taliban is touting the mining sector as the country's saviour.

According to Javed Noorani, an independent Afghan researcher and expert on Afghanistan's mining sector, acting Afghan Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani,[8] a sanctioned terrorist and scion of the eponymous terror network, is one of those digging his way to power. He has long had control over an enormous seam of chromite, stretching from near Kabul to Pakistan, so he knows what's under the ground. His grip on what happens above ground is just as important – trucking, roads, taxes, and border duties. Haqqani is tightening his control on the sector, understanding that mining money will fund his own power grab.[9]

[6] https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/18/business/afghanistan-lithium-rare-earths-mining/index.html
[7] https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/18/business/afghanistan-lithium-rare-earths-mining/index.html [8] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haqqani_network

The Haqqani network was one of the main players within the Taliban but will move to centre-stage once it has full control of the mining sector. This will pump a huge amount of money into a terrorist group associated with many attacks on civilians in Afghanistan and see the spread of terrorism to neighbouring countries and the wider world.

Chapter Four: The Taliban and Human Rights

For almost a hundred years, the Taliban has violated human rights like no other ruling group. Since the takeover of Afghanistan, the Taliban has made it clear that it is not serious about protecting or respecting human rights. We have already seen a wave of violations, from retaliatory attacks and restrictions on women to the suppression of protests, the media and civil society.

The Taliban's repressive actions since its takeover in 2021 have consistently undermined human rights gains over the past 20 years. Contrary to the Taliban's repeated claims of respect for the rights of the Afghan people, many reports, such as The Amnesty International report[10] and the UN Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan's first report[11], show that human rights abuses, including the targeted killing of civilians, have happened throughout Afghanistan in large numbers, particularly in the capital Kabul.

According to Yamini Mishra, Amnesty International's South Asia Regional Director: "Arbitrary detentions, torture, disappearances, [and] summary executions have returned as the order of the day. Women and girls have been stripped of their rights and face a bleak future, deprived of education or the possibility of taking part in public life."[12]

Though the Taliban promised amnesty after the takeover, reports suggest that the group has killed dozens of former ANDSF members, former government employees, journalists, civil society members, and human rights activists. The Taliban focuses only on warfare and torturing civilians. It does not have a foreign policy but focuses on recognition and getting a seat in the UN. However, the main force of all its policies and plans for running the country is the social policy toward women. The foundation of Taliban governance is based on the subjugation of women.

The Taliban has enacted extremely severe gender policies and justified them with the claim that the Sharia supports such measures, as do the traditional customs of Afghanistan. Just a short list of their gender policies includes forbidding women to work outside of the home; requiring women to wear a head-to-toe covering when out into public; forbidding girls from attending school; preventing women from going out in public unless

[9] https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/07/11/afghanistan-taliban-mining-resources-rich-minerals/
[10] https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/08/afghanistan-one-year-of-the-talibans-broken-promises-draconianrestrictions-and-violence/
[11] https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ohchr.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2022-09%2FA_HRC_51_6_AdvanceEditedVersion-EN.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK
[12] https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/08/afghanistan-one-year-of-the-talibans-broken-promises-draconianrestrictions-and-violence/

accompanied by a close male family member; preventing women from wearing certain kinds of clothing or jewellery; and applying harsh punishments for fornication and adultery (John Ricardo Irfan Cole, 2003).

The Taliban's brutal policies towards women have greatly affected the country's entire population in every aspect of life. Afghan women have been removed from all parts of public life. The Taliban has literally placed women under house arrest, and women [have] disappeared from workplaces completely (Marjon E Ghasemi, 1998).

The Taliban denies women any sort of individual liberty by forbidding them from being in public unless accompanied by a close male relative. After years of war, women with close male relatives are limited to a rare segment of the population. In Kabul alone, there are about 30,000 widows, and most of them are the sole supporters of their children (Marjon E Ghasemi, 1998).

The biggest achievement of the Taliban is depriving women in Afghanistan of all their rights. According to the UN Women report, 2022, "Women's and girls' lives and prospects are confined to the home."[3] Since it took control, the Taliban has not missed any opportunity to suppress Afghan women and deprive them of their basic rights.

Suppression of women's rights defenders

Three weeks after the establishment of the Taliban in Kabul, on 25 September 2021, a group of women protested in Kabul and Herat in defence of women's rights. The Taliban dispersed the protesting crowd with aerial shots and tear gas and prevented them from continuing their demonstrations. Although, after that, different groups of women did protest; however, the Taliban has arrested and tortured several protesting women in Kabul, making protest even more difficult and dangerous for women.

[3] https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/08/gender-alert-no-2-womens-rights-in-afghanistan-oneyear-after-the-taliban-take-over?gclid=CjwKCAjwm8WZBhBUEiwA178UnNQGw9x9crcxTGP2Ed8RAotAgWHJtukCwkV1XVW7AwtKvVOQIw580RoCllIQAvD_BwE

Removal of women from the cabinet

On 28 September 2021, the Taliban announced its caretaker cabinet, which did not include any women. The cabinet consists of men who have fought and campaigned against women's rights for many years. The announcement of the caretaker cabinet without the presence of women led to serious reactions.[4]

After the announcement of the cabinet, the Taliban pulled down the sign of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, located in Kabul New City, and replaced it with the sign of the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. Taliban forces also changed the Kabul Women's Garden and banned women from all public parks.

Banning women from sports

In an exclusive interview with SBS News, the deputy head of the Taliban's cultural commission, Ahmadullah Wasiq, said that sport is not seen as important for women. On 7 September, the Taliban's cultural commission said that women are not allowed to participate in cricket. He said the reason for banning women from sports is the

appearance of their faces and bodies: "In cricket, [women] are likely to be in a situation where their faces and bodies will not be covered. Islam does not want women to be seen this way."[5]

Making female employees stay at home

On 19 September 2021, the Taliban announced that female employees in government offices should not come to work but should stay at home until a "suitable environment" is provided. Of course, for a small number of women in the health department and places where it is not possible to advance their work with only men, women are allowed to attend the offices. At that time, the Taliban announced that it would consider special offices for women and that it wanted them to work; however, not only is there no news of the implementation of this decision, with many women having been dismissed from their jobs.[6]

Mandatory Taliban hijab

The Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice installed 1,400 large posters in Afghan major cities in the holy month of Ramadan 2021, showing the mandated Taliban hijab. Women are ordered to be diligent in maintaining the hijab according to the Sharia. In the banners, the blue burqa and the black tent were introduced as examples of the Islamic hijab.[7]

Separation of university classes

After opening several private universities, the Taliban ordered the separation of classes for girls and boys. It asked university officials to split both large classes and those with less than 25 students into girls' and boys' sections by using a "curtain of separation."[8]

Banning women from traveling abroad

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's spokesperson, announced in a press conference on 28 March 2021, that women without a mahram – a male guardian – are not allowed to travel abroad. In response to the question of whether girls without a mahram can travel if they have a scholarship, he said that the presence of a mahram on foreign

[4] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/7/taliban-announce-acting-ministers-of-new-government
[5] https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/taliban-say-women-wont-be-allowed-to-play-sport/5gr52gawu
[6] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/19/kabul-governments-female-workers-told-to-stay-at-home-by-taliban
[7] https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/05/how-talibans-hijab-decree-defies-islam
[8] https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/university-classes-resume-in-afghanistan-with-a-curtain-of-separation101630925501362.html

trips is a "Sharia ruling" for women. The Taliban subsequently ordered flight service companies not to sell plane tickets to women without a mahram.

Banning women from domestic travel

Also on 28 March 2021, the Taliban imposed restrictions on women traveling within Afghanistan. The group announced that women cannot travel more than 78km without a Sharia mahram and anyone who does not comply will be questioned. To this end, drivers were also asked not to let women ride in a car without a mahram.

Deprivation of girls from education

On 23 March 2021, the first day of the school year under the Republican regime, the school gates were opened – but within an hour the Taliban closed the schools for girls above grade six, which are still closed with no sign of re-opening.

Separation of school days for female students

Also on 23 March 2021, the Taliban's Ministry of Higher Education separated the academic work days of public universities by gender. According to this order, out of six days of the week, three were reserved for girls and three for boys.[9] Also, the presence of young university professors in the girls' classes was limited. This ill-considered plan has caused many problems for universities.

Preventing women from learning to drive

Local Taliban officials in Herat have told driving instructors to refrain from teaching women and issuing them certificates. In Herat, Afghanistan's third-largest city, women used to drive more than in other cities. The head of Herat traffic police at that time told AFP that this order was communicated to them verbally. Also, Maulvi Sher Ahmad Ammar, deputy governor of the Taliban in Herat, told women drivers in an interview with the Daily Information newspaper that they should wait for the Taliban leadership's opinion on women's rights and refrain from driving in Herat city.[10]

Women forced to wear a burqa

On 6 May 2022, the Taliban's Ministry of Public Affairs made it mandatory for women to wear a burqa as a symbol of Islamic hijab and warned that the family members of women who do not use this veil will be prosecuted. In support of this order, Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban spokesperson, said in a meeting on 7 May 2022: "Women should not leave their homes with make-up like in the time before Islam period, and all women are required to observe the Islamic hijab, and those who are guilty will be dealt with seriously." In the order, it is stated that if a woman does not observe hijab, first, her guardian will be advised and punished; secondly, she will be summoned; thirdly she will be imprisoned for three days; and fourthly she will be taken to court.

Mandatory hijab for female TV presenters

After mandating the burqa as an Islamic covering, the Taliban's Ministry of Public Affairs and Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice informed female TV presenters that they must cover their faces. Although they did not implement it at first, after receiving a warning, they appeared on TV with their faces covered

[9] https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20220429090043804
[10] https://www.rte.ie/news/world/2022/0503/1295668-afghanistan-taliban-latest/

by masks.[11]

Removing women from government offices

In June 2022, the Taliban's Ministry of Finance asked its female employees to nominate a male member of their family to work in their stead. Also, the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice ordered all ministries and departments to not accept female clients without a mahram.

Further suppression of female protesters

Two days before the first anniversary of the fall of the Republic, a group of women protested in front of the Taliban's Ministry of Education and demanded that schools be re-opened. The Taliban disrupted this peaceful demonstration with aerial shots and dispersed the protesting women.

All the decrees and announcements made by the Taliban between September 2021 and May 2022 can be found in the Amnesty International report dated 15 August 2022.[22] The Taliban claims to have made these decisions and edicts based on their interpretation of Islam.

Chapter Five: Islam and Taliban

Due to the Taliban's claims about Islam, it is necessary to explore what Islam says about women's rights when it comes to the hijab and education, and what the saying and practices of the Prophet Mohammad are. The only source referenced here is the Quran. The reason for this is that there are hundreds and thousands of different interpretations of the Quran by people who call themselves "Islamic scholars", most of them men. Many of those interpretations are based on a man's perspective and opinion, which limit and try to control women.

I want to highlight that the only reliable source of reference is the Quran, which was sent to the Prophet Mohammad; the rest are man-made concepts. In addition, the verses I quote are clear and do not need any interpretation from male scholars.

Another reason for not referencing Islamic scholars is due to their deathly silence on the issue of terrorism in Muslim countries, particularly in Afghanistan. The spread of terrorism is one of my main objections to scholars of the Islamic world. Although terrorism is a multi-dimensional, and complex problem, a large part of the problem is related to religion, for which the scholars of the Islamic world consider themselves responsible.

Considering the unprecedented growth of religious terrorism, religious extremism, and the emergence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan, the region, and the world, Islamic scholars could not, or did not want to, take a clear position against these groups. The emergence and spread of terrorism in the Islamic world are not simple or trivial issues. This religious extremism has taken hundreds and thousands of lives.

[11] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/19/taliban-say-female-afghan-tv-presenters-must-cover-face-on-air

Terrorism has taken countless victims from Muslim countries, too, especially Afghanistan. Terrorist groups AlQaeda, ISIS and the Taliban have made the fractured lands of Muslims even more broken and have taken life and vitality from the people. However, Muslim scholars have always either supported these groups or kept a

[22] https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/08/afghanistan-one-year-of-the-talibans-broken-promises-draconianrestrictions-and-violence/

questionable silence about them, or called it a conspiracy of the West and non-Muslim countries, none of which help us understand the issue of terrorism.

Whether with support or silence, religious violence and hatred is mostly studied in religious schools and religious institutions, which are sometimes supported and funded by scholars of the Islamic world. Those who carry out suicide attacks in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere, are often trained by the same scholars who, in some cases, use fatwas and other religious justifications. For example, Yusuf al-Qaradawi has given sharia permission for suicide attacks in the occupied Palestinian territories under certain conditions. The Taliban and its suicide fighters have also used, and still use, the fatwa of the most prominent Muslim scholar by comparing themselves with Palestinian fighters.[12]

Muslim scholars took the opportunity to believe in spirituality and seek God and live a life free of violence by politicising religion and embracing terrorism and fundamentalism. The field of religion is focused on seeking God, austerity and spirituality, while the field of politics is based on power and violence. By mixing the two, Islamic scholars replaced spirituality with violence but, as the Islamic saying goes, people who hurt others in this world will be hurt in the hereafter.

Mullahs, religious scholars and religious guardians have harmed the religion by turning a blind eye to what has happened in Afghanistan over the past four decades. They have made religion work in the service of politics and reduced it to a cheap tool that only serves to gain power and material worth, which is not the purpose of religion. According to the words of the Prophet of Islam, religion has come to fertilise and complete the moral virtues of society.

Today, the people of Afghanistan, a Muslim country, are living without spirituality but with violence. [13] There are suicide attacks in mosques, schools and maternity hospitals – the same attacks that one of the most prominent Muslim scholars allowed in another land so that, as he said, Muslims would win. Today, other fighters have arisen from religious schools and, through their fatwas and other justifications, they hide among women and newborn children to reach 72 virgin girls in paradise.

Muslim scholars have given a fatwa to commit suicide in a corner of the world with special conditions, and their followers, not concerned about the blood, have embedded themselves in formerly safe public, medical or academic spaces to reach heaven. Their thirst for heaven has turned into a strange theology.

A lot of arguments can be made against the scholars of the Islamic world: their lack of planning and their lack of religious consensus about the developments and crises in Muslim countries; the spread of religious terrorism; their justification of the most heinous and inhumane acts of Muslim terrorists; and their absence of spirituality being just some.

Islam was not the first religion on Earth and Muslims were not the first religious people in the world. Before Islam there were many religions. Islam is at least the fourth heavenly religion with a holy book, the Quran, before which three other religions have been revealed to humanity with specific prophets and books. Prophets David with

[12] https://mesbar.org/yusuf-al-qaradawi-false-moderate-and-true-radical/
[13] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/1/kabul-attack-death-toll-rises-to-35-mostly-girls-young-women

Psalms, Moses with the Torah, and Jesus with the Bible introduced other heavenly religions to people before Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam with the Holy Quran.

In my opinion, the purpose of being religious and following any religion is only for the better regulation of human relations with each other on Earth. Islam and every other religion were revealed to humans to follow a series of rules, principles, and regulations to deal with their fellow human beings. The ultimate goal was that people would not harass or cause any harm to others but live in harmony with them in peace and tranquillity.

The basis and origin of the religion of Islam is the Quran, the holy book of Muslims. Every Muslim is obliged to read this book properly and analyse, evaluate, and implement its content after fully understanding it. The Quran is by no means a book that can only be read or memorised in Arabic. Without a deep and complete understanding of the Quran by all members of Muslim society, it is not possible for Islam to be fully and well-practiced.

Unfortunately, in most Muslim societies and Islamic countries, especially in Afghanistan, the Quran is read mostly only in Arabic and the public does not have an accurate understanding of its content and message. Different interpretations by different Islamic countries based on their habits, customs and culture have made it difficult to have a single and accurate understanding of Islam. Various interpretations of the Quran, especially regarding women – the way they dress, their education, and the way they interact with men in society – have always been complicated and have caused many restrictions on Muslim women. Most of these interpretations were made by Muslim men with women not being involved.

However, the Taliban has the worst interpretation of Islam since its beginning. In the entire history of Islam, no other country or nation has been as harsh with restricting Muslim women and removing their rights.

Women and the hijab in Islam

In Afghanistan, the Taliban has misused the concept of the hijab as it appears in the Quran – as have many Muslim men on a broader scale.

On 7 May 2022, the Taliban ordered all women in Afghanistan to cover their faces in public (put on a burka, so full cover from head to toe). The decree makes women's relatives and employers the enforcers. If their faces are seen in public, their male guardians will be fined, then jailed. If a woman goes out uncovered, her relatives who work for the government will be fired. The decree came after other orders that already restricted Afghan women from working in the government, attending school, and travelling alone without a male guardian.[14]

This is the harshest restriction on women since the Taliban seized power. With these restrictions, Afghanistan has become the most totalitarian country for women in the world in the 21st century. Despite, according to Ahmad Rashid, a Pakistani author, writing in his book *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*: "Traditionally, Islam in Afghanistan has been immensely tolerant to other Muslim sects, other religions, and [a] modern lifestyle".

This order literally ensures women do not leave their houses, effectively dismantling half of society. About 15million girls and women have been deprived of all basic rights.

The subject of the hijab and how to interpret it is one of the most controversial issues among Muslims today, and talking about it, except in the context of the official narration, is troublesome, even if it is in accordance with the

[14] https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/in-focus/2022/08/in-focus-women-in-afghanistan-one-year-after-the-talibantakeover?gclid=Cj0KCQjwkOqZBhDNARIsAACsbfJ-aXZ_7AEncAI7i58LDPWWyvHlWCn1xkxdBUTSurtuq5aDAC6Xy0MaAp2EEALw_wcB

Quran, and can provoke a wave of aggression from Muslim men. Though the hijab is a female issue, its shape and form have always been decided by men.

The reason for dispute around the hijab is that, firstly, the choice of cover is part of the basic rights of citizens and depriving them of this right has no reasonable or acceptable justification; secondly, there is no consensus among the jurisprudential religions and current thinking on the issue because there is a difference between the view of the Quran in this regard and a divided view on the history of Muslims. Third, in the age of globalisation, with the rise of internet access and public awareness of the lifestyle and experience of other nations, especially morally, questions have arisen about the function of the hijab, and whether it is immune from these influences. Have women helped raise the level of morality in society or not?

The hijab is not one of the written rules of Islam. Historical studies show that the hijab originated thousands of years before Islam and its roots go back to civilisations before Islam. The beginning of men's involvement in women's clothing and decision-making, of course, has a long history and can be traced back to thousands of years ago, and was always part of the attempt to own women's body. Determining how to cover women, including with the hijab, is part of the legacy of men's power to control women.

Some Arab women before Islam used headscarves, but this use was not necessarily due to the observance of the hijab and related to sexual chastity, but due to customary issues (including gaining recognition and prestige, distinguishing from slaves)[15] or due to climatic conditions (including blocking the sun's rays, and dust), which is why many men also used the same headscarves. Even today, most Arab men wear a headscarf. Based on the quality of the garment one can recognise the caste and class of the man.

In Islam, the word hijab, in the sense it is used today, and which has become popular among Muslims, does not exist in the Quran. The word and its derivatives are used eight times in the Quran, and in none of these times is it about how a woman is dressed.

Verse 45 of Surah Isra; Verse 17 of Surah Maryam; Verse 446 of Surah Al-A`raf; Verse 53 of Surah Ahzab; Verse 32 of Surah Swad; Verse 5 of Surah Fusslat; Verse 51 of Surah Shura; and Verse 15 of Surah Mutaffafen.[27]

None of these verses indicate what the Taliban imposes today. Where the Quran speaks of the covering of women, it does not interpret it as the hijab but issues general, simple and painless instructions. The total number of verses about women's covering is not more than four or five.

Verse 31 of Surah Noor:

وَقُل لِّلۡمُؤۡمِنَٰتِ يَغۡضُضۡنَ مِنۡ أَبۡصَٰرِهِنَّ وَيَحۡفَظۡنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبۡدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنۡهَاۖ وَلۡيَضۡرِبۡنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّۖ وَلَا يُبۡدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوۡ ءَابَآئِهِنَّ أَوۡ ءَابَآءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوۡ أَبۡنَآئِهِنَّ أَوۡ أَبۡنَآءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوۡ إِخۡوَٰنِهِنَّ أَوۡ بَنِيٓ إِخۡوَٰنِهِنَّ أَوۡ بَنِيٓ أَخَوَٰتِهِنَّ أَوۡ نِسَآئِهِنَّ أَوۡ مَا مَلَكَتۡ أَيۡمَٰنُهُنَّ أَوِ ٱلتَّٰبِعِينَ غَيۡرِ أُوْلِي ٱلۡإِرۡبَةِ مِنَ ٱلرِّجَالِ أَوِ ٱلطِّفۡلِ ٱلَّذِينَ لَمۡ يَظۡهَرُواْ عَلَىٰ عَوۡرَٰتِ ٱلنِّسَآءِۖ وَلَا يَضۡرِبۡنَ بِأَرۡجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعۡلَمَ مَا يُخۡفِينَ مِن زِينَتِهِنَّۚ وَتُوبُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُونَ

(31) And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision[990] and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment[991] except that which [necessarily] appears thereof[992] and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment [that is, beauty] except to their husbands, their

[15] In Arab societies before Islam, slave women were not supposed to cover their heads or wear a headscarf. Headscarves were considered a "posh" and royal fashion item for women in high-class families.

[27] آیه 45 سوره اسرا- آیه 17 سوره مري م – آیه 46 سوره اعراف – آیه 53 سوره احزاب – آیه 32 سوره ص – آي ه 32 سوره ص – آیه 5 سوره فصلت – آیه 51 سوره شوری – آیه 15 سوره مطففين

fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess [that is, slaves], or those male attendants having no physical desire,[993] or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ اللَّاتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ ۖ وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage, there is no blame on them if they lay aside their (outer) garments, provided they make not a wanton display of their beauty: but it is best for them to be modest: and Allah is One Who sees and knows all things.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

These are all the commands of the Quran regarding the covering of women, and that is enough. Most of the discussions about the hijab have no Quranic roots and are based on interpretations by Muslim men. The Quran does not tell women to cover their hair; it does not tell women to cover their arms and legs; it does not mandate any shape or colour. Wearing the hijab is not even among the five basic pillars of Islam a Muslim is asked to obey. Since the time Islam emerged, it is still a mystery as to why Muslim men are so obsessed with women's covering and why Muslim women have no authority over their bodies, and why a man should decide how women cover themselves.

The concept of women's covering came thousands of years before Islam. The Holy Quran gives just a few, general recommendations regarding the covering of women and there is no punishment for not wearing a hijab. Thus, the hijab has no Islamic roots and is now used as a political tool for exercising control over other people. Tellingly, this has not improved the level of morality in Muslim societies but has had the opposite effect. Women in modern societies have better rights and more advanced protection and these achievements are in no way comparable to those of Muslim societies, especially that of Afghanistan.

The hijab is also not a part of the Afghan culture. When it comes to Afghan society and the Taliban's decree, I can independently confirm that the Taliban's diktat about the hijab is neither Islamic nor based in Afghan culture. Afghanistan is a diverse country; even if the hijab is the culture of an ethnic group, it cannot be forced as a religious responsibility to be followed by the whole of society.

The hijab, and all women's clothing, should be looked at from the perspective of human rights because the choice of clothing is essentially part of basic human rights. Those women who have a different interpretation of the hijab, and think that they should wear the niqab or who, according to traditional interpretation, believe they must cover their hair, should have their choice respected and consider it part of their rights. They should not be mocked or criticised for this choice.

On the other hand, women who do not hold these views should not be forced to wear the hijab or punished like Afghan women today under Taliban rule. The Taliban's decree regarding the hijab is a clear violation of human rights, which impacts not only women but their male family members too. Importantly, the face is a part of one's identity; by being made to cover it, the Taliban has forced Afghan women to hide their identities.

Women and education in Islam

As the number of female scholars in the history of the Islamic education system has always been less than men, it might be construed that there is a limitation in Islam regarding the education of women and girls. The Islam that the Taliban practises in Afghanistan now, limits education to Muslim men only. While some female scientists have been mentioned in the history of Islam, the number is very small.

1. The Quran and education

In the first verse of the Quran that was revealed to the Prophet, God addressed humans.

ٱقۡرَأۡ بِٱسۡمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ

Read! In the Name of your God Who has created (all that exists).

خَلَقَ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ مِنۡ عَلَقٍ

God has created human from a clot of blood.

ٱقۡرَأۡ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلۡأَكۡرَمُ

Read! And your God is the Most Generous.

ٱلَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِٱلۡقَلَمِ

Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.

عَلَّمَ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ مَا لَمۡ يَعۡلَمۡ

God has taught human that which knew not[16]

In this verse, neither a Muslim woman nor man is mentioned, just "human." In this verse, reading, knowledge and writing are mentioned – not war, killing, violence and oppression.

The source of creation of men and women is the same, and none of them have spiritual superiority over the other, according to Quran.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوباً وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know each other (not that you may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (the one who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).[17]

Islam considers men and women to be equal in managing the affairs of life, as well as learning life's necessities, through will and work. A woman can work independently like a man and own the results of her work and effort. There is no difference between men and women in the issuance of God's command.

[16] Ayaat 1-4, Surat Al-Alaq "سورة العلق" of the Quran
[17] Surah al-Hujurat, سورة الحجرات

2. Women and the study of science and knowledge

All the verses and narrations that refer to the study of science and knowledge are general, and include women. Islam considers knowledge as light, ignorance as darkness; knowledge as sight, ignorance as blindness. This is stated in the Quran:

قل هل يستوى الأعمى والبصير ام هل تستوى الظلمات والنور

Tell me, is the blind eye of the ignorant and the seeing eye of the world the same? Is the darkness of ignorance equal to the fountain of knowledge?[18]

هل يستوى الذين يعلمون والذين لايعلمون انما يتذكر اولوا الألباب

Are those who are equipped with weapons of knowledge equal to those who struggle with ignorance? Only intellectuals understand the difference between these two groups and find their merits. [19]

When knowledge is light and vision in the view of Islam, it is obligatory for every Muslim to seek it. Can it be said that, according to Islam, only men are required to come out of the darkness and reach the light, but women do not have such a duty and must remain in the darkness of ignorance?

Another verse about the Holy Prophet, says:

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

آيه 151 سوره بقره

Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know.[20] There is the saying of Prophet Mohammad:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم و مسلمة

Studying (gaining knowledge) is obligatory for all Muslim men and women.[21]

اطلبوا العلم و لو بالصين

Seek to acquire knowledge even if you go as far as China.

According to these verses of the Quran, and the saying of the Prophet Mohammad, there is no indication of any limit or prohibition for women when it comes to education.

When the first message of God is revealed to the Prophet, the first person to receive this message is Khadijah, the wife of Muhammad. The first brick of Islamic buildings in Mecca is laid in the Prophet's house with Khadijah's large amount of capital.

[18] Surah al-raad, Aya 16, سوريه الرعد آيه ١٦
[19] Surah al-Zamar, Aya 9 سوره الزمر آيه ٩
[20] Surah al-Baqara, Aya 151 سوره البقره آيه ١٥١
[21] https://ensan-kamal-elm.blogsky.com/1390/01

"The first wife of the Prophet Mohammed, Khadijah was a successful businesswoman in her own right who controlled one of the most important caravan trade routes in the region. She was the first Muslim and believed in Mohammed before he believed in himself. Not only was she an extraordinary woman in her own right: strong, successful in business, a mother, and a spiritual woman. Khadijah was the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad and is a shining example of a strong, independent Muslim woman with an entrepreneurial spirit. She was born in Mecca in 556 ACE. Her father was a prosperous businessman and a popular leader of the Quraysh tribe.

"When Muhammad reported his first revelation, Khadijah became the first person to convert to Islam and was always supportive of her husband's prophetic mission. She helped with his work, shared his message, and faced any opposition that arose. She also invested much of the money she had accumulated from her trading endeavours in the mission – providing the ransom for Muslim slaves and feeding the Muslim community.[22]

When the Prophet was asked about his love for Khadijah his response was: *"She believed in me when no one else did; she accepted Islam when people rejected me, and she helped and comforted me when there was no one else to lend me a helping hand."*[23]

These verses, the sayings of the Prophet and his wife, Islam, and the Quran itself, do not condone or even mention treating women differently to men. Rather, it is Muslim men who believe they are better and superior to women and try to suppress women in the name of Islam, through Islamic scholars, and different interpretations of Islam.

The Quran and the teachings of the Prophet show that Islam does not impose any of the restrictions on women that the Taliban does. The Taliban is trying to dismantle half of society so they can use Afghan women as sexual slaves, marry up to four wives and have lots of children.

Chapter Six: Consequences of the Violations of Human Rights and the Presence of the Taliban in Afghanistan

With the fall of the republican system and the domination of the Taliban over the country, the base of the democratic system in Afghanistan has fallen apart. The achievements, 20 years in the making, of the system, as well as the people of Afghanistan in the political, civil, economic, social and cultural fields, are now seriously in peril.

According to UN Special Rapporteur's report,[24] the situation with regard to human rights and compliance with the principles of international human rights in Afghanistan have become unprecedented, serious and worrying. The Taliban has widely, systematically and purposefully violated the human rights of Afghan citizens, especially women.

The Taliban widely violates the human rights and freedoms of women, vulnerable ethnic and religious groups, and former government employees. They target civilians, use extreme violence, torture, arrest civilians illegally, abuse human rights in field trials, usurp people's property, close girls' schools, and censor the Afghan media on a large scale.

The economic situation of the country's citizens is also extremely serious. Poverty and unemployment have increased unprecedentedly and access to public services has been severely limited. ISIS also continues to cruelly

[22] https://www.andantetravels.co.uk/blog/womens-history-monthkhadija/#:~:text=The%20Mother%20of%20Islam%2C%20Khadija,leader%20of%20the%20Quraysh%20tribe.
[23] https://www.andantetravels.co.uk/blog/womens-history-monthkhadija/#:~:text=The%20Mother%20of%20Islam%2C%20Khadija,leader%20of%20the%20Quraysh%20tribe.
[24] https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ohchr.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2022-09%2FA_HRC_51_6_AdvanceEditedVersion-EN.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

target civilians and vulnerable religious groups and has committed major crimes in the country. The Taliban, despite national and international protests, has systematically and purposefully continued with its non-compliance in regard to human rights standards, which has become entrenched in its official programmes and policies.

The single-gender rule of the Taliban is in clear opposition to the demand for women's participation in public life. The Taliban leadership has erased the presence of women in the fields of politics, public administration, the economy and culture. These restrictions are neither based on Islam nor the Afghan culture.

The Taliban has not been able to form the most basic standards of a legitimate government since the takeover. The presence of the Taliban in power, through coercion and tyranny, is a clear violation of international law. The rule of the Taliban is an imposed, political force on the Afghan people, which should not have the right to monopolise power. The lack of capability to form a broad-based government, and the Taliban's gross violation of human rights, will eventually have serious consequences.

1. Jihadi education and the spread of extremism and international terrorism

The Taliban has implemented extensive changes in the Ministry of Education. Dismissals, suspension of duties, transfer of staff, breakdown of discipline in the administration, the appointment of Taliban members, the establishment of jihadi schools, preventing the re-opening of girls' schools, lack of lessons in boys' schools, and plans to change the curriculum are just some of these transformations.

After the Taliban took over, the discipline of government offices fell apart. With the removal of experienced officers and the political assignment of Taliban fighters, the official rules and regulations are in a chaotic state. The Taliban Ministry of Education has integrated several departments and made wide-reaching appointments of people who do not understand how a government department works. For recruitment into the Ministry of Education, priority has been given to people who have "religious teachings according to the Taliban's wishes" and "with traditional clothing along with turban and a long beard."

The test for these ministerial recruits is given only to those Taliban fighters who have "jihad experience against the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Americans."

While the word jihad has several meanings, mostly benign, it is now commonly used in the West, and in most media to references, to mean "a fight against visible enemies", and as condoning, or even promoting, violence on perceived enemies, even within Islam. Jihadi schools, according to the Brookings Institution, "Teach a distorted view of Islam … in which hatred is permissible."

In addition, the Taliban Minister of Education has entrusted his deputy with the task of evaluating Qaris (skilled reciters of the Quran) and Mullahs (Islamic religious scholars and teachers) and awarding them bachelor's and master's degrees.

In 2022, the focus of the Taliban's Ministry of Education has been on the establishment of jihadi schools in different provinces of Afghanistan. According to the ministry's public statements, it is going to establish three to 10 religious schools in each district of Afghanistan.

A decree attributed to Hebatullah Akhundzadeh, the leader of the Taliban, was issued on 17 March 2022, and reveals more details about the formation and expenses of these schools. This document states that each school will have 10 teachers and eight administrative staff and will train 500 to 1,000 students in each training period.

According to this decree, 25,000 afghanis (US$290) for each sheikh al-hadith (outstanding scholars); 20,000 afghanis (US$232) for each professor of Darulhafaz (people who have committed the Quran to memory and/or the places where they lecture); and 15,000 afghanis (US$174) for each teacher. Also, each student at a Jihadi

School receives 150 afghanis (US$1.74) per day. A teacher with a bachelor's degree in public schools earns 9,000 afghanis (US$104).

In some cases, schools have been turned into jihadist schools, and the students who were previously engaged in scientific education in those centres have been abandoned.

According to information published by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) of Afghanistan in August 2017, the country has 375 districts. Therefore, if we assume the Taliban build an average of 6 schools in each district, Afghanistan will soon have 2,250 jihadist schools. About 22,500 people will work as teachers and 18,000 as other staff in these jihadi schools. The Taliban leader states that each school will have 500 to 1,000 students. Therefore, these schools will see an average of 1,686,00 students graduate in each period. The privileges and facilities provided for these schools in the decree will cause teachers and students interested in extreme religious courses to rush to these centres from Pakistan, and South and Central Asia in general. Soon, the region will be filled with radical Islamists.

Due largely to Pakistan's linguistic and cultural differences with Central Asian countries, the schools attributed to the Deobandi Movement – which is "a revivalist movement with two goals: to spread the pure teachings of the Quran and Hadis among Muslims, and to keep the spirit of jihad against foreign rulers alive"[25] – have not been very successful in attracting Central Asian extremists, or Persian, Turkish and Uzbek speakers, from both sides of the Amu River. It will be turned into the preferred training bases of extremist forces interested in jihad and the establishment of the emirate and caliphate in their countries.

In addition to this, the presence of Al Qaeda leaders in Kabul shows that the Taliban still has close ties with that organisation. ISIS is growing due to the Taliban's inability to gain full control over the territory. It is thus clear that Afghanistan is not far away from the hub of international terrorism.

2. The cost of depriving girls of education

When it comes to girls' education, there are so many unanswered questions. What will the societal and economic cost of the ban on girls' education be? Even if schools reopen, what will be taught to the younger generation of Afghanistan? What will the consequences of a Taliban education be? According to the Taliban's Ministry of Education, girls should only learn the "science" of ethics, faith, raising children, and how to take care of their husbands.

The latest figures on the prevention of girls completing secondary education in Afghanistan show that approximately 3-million girls are now out of secondary education. If these girls were able to complete their educations and enter the job market, their contributions to the Afghan economy could be about US$5.4-billion, which could be 2.5% of Afghanistan's GDP. This contribution will now be lost.

Each further year of education at school increases wages on average by 3.9%, and this could rise to 4.7% for those who have completed tertiary education. The financial loss from the girls' school ban is massive and will rapidly increase in the coming years if the Taliban stays in control and schools remain closed.

In addition, in the coming year, Afghan society is facing difficult questions and choices regarding the fate of their children, especially girls, and their education. Some families have decided to migrate so their children have modern educational facilities. However, the fate of the many families who cannot leave their land is a concern. We cannot and must not ignore the quality of education in an institution under Taliban rule. The changes within these institutions will become a tool for promoting the Taliban's ideology. Even if girls get an education up to sixth grade, the quality of that education is based on the what the Taliban deems fit for them and coheres to Taliban ideology.

[25] https://prepp.in/news/e-492-deoband-movement-muslim-socio-religious-reform-movement-modern-india-history-notes

The international community must pressure the Taliban to re-open girls' schools. It is the responsibility of child rights activists, the media, local institutions, parents, Afghan elites, and the international community to make sure that Afghan children get the right form of education.

3. Increase in drug production.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC),[2627] in 2020, Afghanistan accounted for about 85% of global opium production. Under the former Republic, the drug trade was Afghanistan's largest economic sector, providing full-time employment to more than half a million people. The basic component of this drug trade – poppy production – was so prosperous that experts doubted the Taliban's ability to deliver on its promise to ban drugs without immiserating large numbers of Afghans and fomenting resistance against the regime.

According to a report by Rupert Stone[39], an independent journalist working on drugs, security, and geopolitics in Asia: "Soon after taking power, the Taliban vowed to crack down on narcotics. In April [of 2022], they seemed to make good on that promise, issuing a decree that unequivocally banned the production and sale of illicit drugs. Unfortunately, that decree has been inadequately enforced and Afghanistan's drug trade is booming under Taliban rule.

"The record so far strongly suggests that the Taliban has not enforced its narcotics ban. Drug production and trafficking have remained at high levels or increased since the change of regime. The decree itself seems to be a boast to the market, as it came at a time when the cultivation season was over,[28] and helped prices rise to an unprecedented level.

The trafficking of drugs via major highways out of Afghanistan remains high. Along the Balkan Route from Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey to Europe, heroin and meth continue to flow in large quantities, supplying markets throughout and outside Afghanistan's immediate region.

"**South Asia:** At Torkham on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, customs reportedly seized an 'unprecedented' amount of drugs in late 2021 and early 2022, including a record 130kg haul of heroin. October also saw one of the biggest meth busts in Peshawar's history … [drug] trafficking [has] increased since the Taliban took over. Furthermore … Pakistan is not only a transit country for drugs leaving Afghanistan but also a large market for the drug.

"Afghanistan-origin drugs also make their way across South Asia. Sri Lanka, where there have been repeated maritime hauls since the Taliban takeover, seized 325kg of heroin and meth in April [2022]. In July [2022], Nepal recorded an unusually large heroin bust which authorities suspect came from Afghanistan, pointing to a further expansion of the trade.

"India is perhaps the most concerning part of the regional trafficking picture. With a massive population and many opioid users, the country is highly susceptible to Afghanistan-origin drugs ... [The] Taliban takeover could lead to a rise in drug trafficking, which already occurs along established smuggling routes via Punjab (sometimes using drones), or by sea to India's west coast.

"**Iran and Turkey:** Narcotics trafficked from Afghanistan to Europe often travel through Pakistan and then Iran, where there have been massive busts in the southeast near the Afghan border. More than one hundred tons of drugs were seized in the area after the Taliban's takeover ... From Iran, narcotics enter Turkey. Traffickers are reportedly exploiting unprecedented refugee flows to smuggle drugs across the border. Turkish authorities have also reported

[26] https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ohchr.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2022-09%2FA_HRC_51_6_AdvanceEditedVersion-EN.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK
[27] https://www.voanews.com/a/afghan-farmers-continue-growing-opium-poppy-as-taliban-sends-mixed-signals-on-poppyeradication/6349149.html
[28] https://twitter.com/mansfieldintinc/status/1526978121311956992

large seizures, including more than a ton of liquid and crystal meth intercepted in Istanbul in May [2022] and another large bust in July [2022].

"**The broader Middle East and Central Asia:** Afghanistan-origin meth has not only been flowing in large volumes to Iran but also elsewhere in the region. There was an increase in 'seizure events in the Near and Middle East' from 2020-2021, according to the UNODC.

"Iraq has long been a destination for drugs smuggled from Iran, and in December [2022] reported a rise in drugrelated arrests on its eastern border … Then there is the Gulf, where the UAE announced in June that crystal meth was one of the most seized drugs, with large hauls such as a mammoth bust of more than one ton in Dubai [in April 2021]. Oman also intercepted meth [in 2022].

"Central Asia has not escaped the narcotics problem, either. According to the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime, drugs are smuggled through Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and both have reported increased seizures [in 2022] … Continued trafficking from Afghanistan has also been noted by Russia – a key destination for drugs smuggled through Central Asia.

"**Sub-Saharan Africa:** Then there is the Southern Route through Pakistan and Iran to Africa. Recent years have seen heroin and meth from Afghanistan seized in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean as it is trafficked to Mozambique or Tanzania, and then on to South Africa and other countries … At the start of [2022], Britain's Royal Navy intercepted more than a ton of Afghanistan-origin heroin, hashish, and crystal meth in the Gulf of Oman, followed by another 90kg of heroin in May.

"Farther afield, in South Africa, police seized 75kg of heroin and meth in July [2022] and arrested a suspect allegedly connected to an Afghanistan-based drug gang, further evidence that Afghan drugs had penetrated African markets."[29]

Afghanistan's drug economy expanded dramatically after the US- and NATO-led invasion in 2001. The amount of land under poppy cultivation almost tripled between 2002 and 2020, and the country also started to produce cheap methamphetamine using the abundant local plant ephedra.

The future, however, is uncertain. The price of meth and, to a lesser extent, opiates, remains elevated. The Taliban facing sanctions and looking to attract development assistance could potentially move against ephedra (targeting meth production) without causing widespread unemployment. It would be much harder for them to rein in the opiate industry as that would plunge hundreds of thousands of Afghans into deeper poverty.[30]

The money coming from drugs is the major income for the Taliban. According to The Daily Beast,[31] On 19 September 2022, Noorzai, a notorious drug lord and member of the Taliban, was released from prison in the US, where he spent 17 years and six months. Noorzai is not the first drug-smuggler the US has released. About 50 other drug traffickers were released after the Doha Agreement; however, he is certainly the most prominent.

The release of drug dealers clearly indicates that the Taliban's main source of income is drugs, and their trade will increase with the Taliban's continued control of Afghanistan.

[29] https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/southasiasource/afghanistans-drug-trade-is-booming-under-taliban-rule/
[30] https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/southasiasource/afghanistans-drug-trade-is-booming-under-taliban-rule/
[31] https://www.thedailybeast.com/why-america-released-bashir-noorzai-the-pablo-escobar-of-afghanistan?ref=scroll

Furthermore, "The Taliban's new monopoly on taxing the drugs trade is manifest in districts such as Dur Baba in Nangarhar, where they charge taxes of PKR1,000 (£4.28) per seer of opium, PKR500 (£2.14) per kilo of hashish and PKR2,000 (£8.56) per kilo of heroin.

"There are no signs yet that the Taliban will target other parts of the drug business, such as cultivation, refining, trade, and cross-border trafficking … drug cultivation and trafficking … [are] more likely a bargaining chip in their negotiations with the West around funding and recognition … the Taliban have neither the resources nor the inclination to enforce drug bans now. To do so would further impoverish a population already in dire straits and, at the same time, undermine the Taliban's core support base in the poppy-growing areas of the Pashtun south. It would also cut off an important source of revenue to the regime."[32]

According to a research brief from the UNODC: "The 2022 opium crop in Afghanistan is the most profitable in years with cultivation up by nearly one-third and prices soaring, even as the country is gripped by cascading humanitarian and economic crises.

"According to the UNODC findings, opium cultivation in Afghanistan increased by 32% over the previous year to 233,000 hectares – making the 2022 crop the third largest area under cultivation since monitoring began. Cultivation continued to be concentrated in the south-western parts of the country, which accounted for 73% of the total area and saw the largest crop increases. "The income made by farmers from opium sales more than tripled from US$425-million in 2021 to US$1.4-billion in 2022 … Seizure events collected by UNODC's Drugs Monitoring Platform suggest that opiate trafficking from Afghanistan has been ongoing without interruption since August 2021. Afghan opiates supply some 80% of all opiate users in the world."[33]

This drug money is going to strengthen the Taliban's power and will no doubt encourage other terrorist groups to follow the Taliban's path.

4. The flow of Afghan migrants

According to the UN Refugee Agency: "More than 6-million Afghans have been driven out of their homes and their country by conflict, violence, and poverty. It is estimated that 85% of Afghan refugees are living in Pakistan and Iran, which continue to host more than 1.3-million and 780,000 registered Afghan refugees, respectively."[34]

After Syrians, Afghans probably account for the second-largest population of forced migrants worldwide. A portion of this migration has been going on for more than four decades, as the country has been engulfed by a series of wars and invasions, including by the Soviet Union and, more recently, a US-led coalition. Internationally, a key concern is that a major refugee crisis may be imminent, which could swell the numbers of Afghans displaced within and beyond the country's borders during prior decades of war. Already, [in 2021], more than 558,000 Afghans were displaced internally. Under a worst-case scenario, an estimated 515,000 refugees could have been forced out of the country by the end of [2021]. Future flight would add to the [then] existing 2.8-million Afghan

refugees and asylum seekers around the world, who have long been among the planet's largest humanitarian populations.[47]

The inability of the Taliban to form an inclusive government; its violations of human rights, including the rights of women and girls; the closure of girls' schools; the bad quality of its education; its targeting of religious and

[32] https://theconversation.com/afghanistan-heroin-and-human-trafficking-are-the-only-two-sectors-of-the-economy-stillthriving-173367
[33] https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2022/November/afghanistan-opium-cultivation-in-2022-up-by-32-per-cent_unodc-survey.html
[34] https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/afghanistan/

other ethnic groups, such as Hazaras, Hindus, and other ethnic groups; the poor economic state in the country; continued drought; and possibly the world's worst humanitarian situation, are the main factors causing a new wave of Afghan migration to neighbouring countries and Europe.

Conclusion

The devastating crisis in Afghanistan is no secret to the rest of the world. Despite the worsening economic situation, governance challenges, humanitarian crisis and severe human rights abuse, the Taliban seems set to stay in power. Without massive international support, (more than US$40-million per week)[48], support from China under the guise of extracting from mines, and Pakistan as the Taliban's biggest supporter and its birthplace, the Taliban is failing to ensure the livelihood of up to 40-million Afghans.

In addition, the money coming from drug production, mining, and humanitarian aid is going into the hands of the Taliban, which helps the group stay in power and get stronger. The Taliban pays no attention to forming an inclusive government or respecting women and human rights.

Afghans are struggling with an unimaginable situation. The Taliban's totalitarian regime is full of the most regressive kind of barbarism and cruelty that hurts hundreds and thousands of victims every day. What is happening in Afghanistan is ideological fascism under a politico-religious dictatorship. Afghanistan has been ravaged by the most indescribable violence, with religious illiteracy and ignorance serving as an ideological excuse to justify political fascism.

Those who seize power by force of arms without the slightest consultation with the people have no political or democratic legitimacy. Only the people of Afghanistan, the majority of whom are opposed to this group – and especially the women, who are deprived of even their womanhood and sentenced to their homes and live under the mobile prison of the burqa or hijab – understand the sad cost of such a dictatorship.

This harsh and extreme interpretation of Islam has not gone unnoticed, yet no action has been taken either by the international community, including the UN and human rights institutions, or the Islamic countries to stop the Taliban.

[47] https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/will-taliban-s-takeover-lead-new-refugee-crisis-afghanistan [48]

https://8am.media/eng/taliban-receives-the-fourth-aid-package-of-40-million-usd-in-one-week/

https://www.foxnews.com/world/afghanistans-taliban-cash-us-humanitarian-aid/

https://www.khaama.com/talibans-central-bank-receives-another-package-of-aid-40-million-in-cash-74214/

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-11/bags-of-cash-land-in-afghanistan/101716954

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/afghanistan-receives-40-mn-humanitarian-aid-in-cash-forexreserve-soars-122080300144_1.html

Under the control of the Taliban, Afghan women have become lifeless bodies. The Taliban cracks down on protesters and restricts media and civil society. It commits targeted killings and tortures those who used to work with the former government and its security forces. Intellectuals and artists are beaten, imprisoned and tortured to death. All opposition factions must live in secret to survive. All of them are under constant persecution.

And yet the world is ignoring the voices of these victims. Defendants or those convicted by the Taliban are executed without trial and their bodies displayed in public. Poverty, misery and famine are rampant. Poor families who are unable to feed their children, sell them.

The Taliban keeps close ties with other terrorist groups. The death of the Al-Qaeda leader in Kabul is a clear example of that. The Taliban's brutal and unspeakable behaviour is in every way contrary to any worthy civilisation, and Islam itself. The Taliban's interpretation of Islam is an ugly, narrow-minded, criminal and authoritarian tool of power. Afghanistan remains a prison and has become a place where even Muslims themselves are taken hostage. Every day, the Taliban massacres Muslims in sports stadiums and slashes people in public.

It is a great surprise that the international community remains indifferent, without any action taken against the Taliban. How can it overlook such a severe human catastrophe? The international community needs to intervene as soon as possible. The world needs to use every possible tool at its disposal to end this crisis, within the framework of the UN and with the assistance of the European Union, human rights organisations, and Muslim countries. It must impose sanctions and ban the travel of Taliban leaders as an immediate priority.

If the Taliban is left to do as it wishes, Afghanistan will become a haven for terrorist groups.

Recommendations

1. The formation of a commission with the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) and Muslim countries to evaluate the Taliban decrees that violate human rights, especially women's and girls' rights, such as education, employment, and their decision-making role in political and development spheres, whether these decrees are based on the Quran or not.
2. According to the UN Security Council Resolution 2513 (2020), the Taliban is not a legitimate authority. Pressure needs to be put on the Taliban to form an inclusive government elected by the people of Afghanistan based on justice and an internationally accepted political process.
3. A Taliban travel ban must be put in place.
4. The UN must stop giving US$40-million in cash every week to the Taliban controlled bank. Instead, the money should go through international agencies and women's organisations to the women who lost their jobs due to Taliban restrictions; and to those poor families who are facing the worst humanitarian crisis.
5. Public and political pressure must be put on all countries, regions and neighbouring countries which are engaging with the Taliban for short-term commercial and economical gains and thus jeopardising long-term regional stability.
6. Providing international platforms for the Taliban must end.
7. A monitoring mechanism must be established to ensure that international aid is reaching the people of Afghanistan, not the Taliban.

8. The UN, along with the International Criminal Court (ICC), should establish an independent investigating mechanism to monitor, investigate and document human rights violations, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed by the Taliban.

References

1. Gibbons-Neff, T., Use of Force, Arms Control, and Non-Proliferation. New York Times. (2021).
2. Schroden, J. (2021). Lessons from the Collapse of Afghanistan's Security Forces. CTC Sentinel,14(8), 161.
3. Schroden, J. (2021). Lessons from the Collapse of Afghanistan's Security Forces. CTC Sentinel, 14(8), 161.
4. Ullah, H., Ahmad, R., & Khan, M. M. (2020). Afghanistan: US-Taliban Peace Talks: CPEC Perspective. Conflict Studies Quarterly, (32).
5. Curtis, L. (2021). How The Doha Agreement Guaranteed US Failure in Afghanistan. Hoover Institution, 2, 2021.
6. Sood, R. (2020). What the Afghan peace deal means. Observer Research Foundation.
7. US State Department. (2020). Agreement for bringing peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America.
8. Curtis, L. (2021). How The Doha Agreement Guaranteed US Failure In Afghanistan. Hoover Institution, 2, 2021.
9. Barfield, T. (2008). Culture and Custom in Nation-Building: Law in Afghanistan. Maine Law Review, 60, 347.
10. Rahimi, M. R. (2017). State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History. Bloomsbury Publishing.
11. Rahimi, M. R. (2017). State Formation in Afghanistan: A Theoretical and Political History. Bloomsbury Publishing.
12. Innocent, M. (2011). Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History. Cato Journal, 31(1), 154.
13. Murtazashvili, J. B. (2022). The Collapse of Afghanistan. Journal of Democracy, 33(1), 40-54.
14. Murtazashvili, J. B. (2022). The Collapse of Afghanistan. Journal of Democracy, 33(1), 40-54.
15. Ghasemi, M. E. (1998). Islam, International Human Rights, and Women's Equality: Afghan Women Under Taliban Rule. The Southern California Review of Law and Women's Studies, 8, 445.
16. Ghasemi, M. E. (1998). Islam, International Human Rights, and Women's Equality: Afghan Women Under Taliban Rule. The Southern California Review of Law and Women's Studies, 8, 445.
17. Ghasemi, M. E. (1998). Islam, International Human Rights, and Women's Equality: Afghan Women Under Taliban Rule. The Southern California Review of Law and Women's Studies, 8, 445.
18. Cole, J. R. (2003). The Taliban, Women, and the Hegelian Private Sphere. Social Research: An International Quarterly, JHU Press, 70(3), 771-808.
19. Goodson, L. P. (2001). Perverting Islam: Taliban Social Policy Toward Women. Central Asian Survey, 20(4), 415-426.
20. Coll, S. (2005). Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001. London, Great Britain: Penguin Books.
21. Rashid, A. (2022). Taliban: The Power of Militant Islam in Afghanistan and Beyond: London. I.B. Tauris – Bloomsbury Publishing.
22. Dalrymple, W. (2014). Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan. Bloomsbury.
23. Al Saud, P. T. A. (2021). The Afghanistan File. Great Britain. Arabian Publishing.

24. Runion, M. L. (2017).The History of Afghanistan. ABC-CLIO.

RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE

OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

Sweden

Sverige