

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The Question of Situation in Afghanistan

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## Introduction

Afghanistan has been suffering from multiple violent and armed conflicts, invasions, bombings and human right violations. Especially women's rights have not been accomplished. Many countries and nations have been and are still involved with the issues. Working solutions for the problems have not yet been discovered.

Nowadays there is an ongoing armed conflict between Afghan government and Taliban forces which has caused thousands of civilian casualties. Taliban and Afghan National Security Forces have also been using schools as military bases which has made it hard especially for girls to get educated.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Taliban**

Taliban is a hardline islamic movement which ruled a big portion of Afghanistan in 1996-2001. The movement was founded in 1994 by Mohammed Omar and Abdul Ghani Baradar. Today Taliban is still an enormous threat to the Afghan government.

### **Civil war**

An armed conflict between citizens of the same country. Also foreign powers i.e. other countries can interfere with a civil war.

### **Mujahideen groups**

Paramilitary groups who were lead by islamist Afghan fighters. The groups fought in the Soviet-Afghan war and they were supported by for example Pakistan and US.

### **Osama Bin Laden**

A terrorist who died in 2011. He was behind the attacks to the World Trade center in 2001 also known as 9/11. He also founded a terrorist group called Al-Qaeda which opposed foreign presence in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda also collaborated with some other militant Islamist organizations eg. Egypt's Islamic Jihad, and its leaders declared holy war against the United States.

### **Embargo**

An order that restricts or denies the exchange of something or everything with a specific country as a punishment to the country. This happens usually when nations disagree about something or some nation does not follow shared rules.

### **Invasion**

An occasion where a country or an army uses force to take over another country.

### **Human right violation**

When someone breaks rights that all humans deserve eg. right to live, freedom of speech-, freedom from torture and slavery. Also equality and liberty are human rights. There is also the Universal declaration of human rights which is drafted by different humans all around the world. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the declaration in Paris on 10 December 1948 as the standard for all nations.

## **Background**

In 1838 the British forces invaded Afghanistan and caused the first Anglo-Afghan War which lead to many casualties. The war was fought between the British East India Company and the Emirate of Afghanistan. Later on there was a second Anglo-Afghan War in 1878 in which Britain gained the control of Afghan foreign affairs during the second Anglo-Afghan war.

In 1919 the king of Afghanistan called Amanullah Khan proclaimed independence from British rule. Later on in 1926 he presented new social reforms which did not please the civilians. Few years after that he left the country. In 1933 new king of Afghanistan named Zahir Shah was chosen.

In 1953 Afghanistan's prime minister Mohammed Daud asked economic and military assistance from Soviet Union. A few years later he was forced to abdicate from his job as prime minister. In 1978 he was killed in a Soviet coup. The People's Democratic Party comes to power but its power did not last because US supported mujahideen groups that fought against it.

In 1979 there was a Soviet intervention during which the Soviet Union put up a communist government. Many mujahideen groups disagreed with the government and fought against it. The groups were supported by the US, Iran, China, Saudi-Arabia and Pakistan. In 1988 the Soviet Union started pulling troops out after a peace agreement with Afghanistan, Pakistan and the US. Even despite the peace agreement people in Afghanistan still lived controlled by fear and military leaders.

A destructive civil war started in 1992 and it was fought between different mujahideen groups including Taliban. The war caused major damages to Kabul and killed hundreds of thousands of people. Many people had to leave their homes and flee to other countries.

In 1996 Taliban took control over Kabul and started taking hard-lined Islamic actions - for example stoning to death - and restricted the rights of women. One year later in 1997 Taliban was recognized as the legitimate leader of Afghanistan by Pakistan and Saudi-Arabia.

In 1998 there was a conflict between the US and Afghanistan, because the US wanted Osama Bin Laden who was hiding in Afghanistan. When Afghanistan would not give Bin Laden up the UN started to take actions and imposed financial sanctions and an air embargo to Afghanistan. In addition to that the Al-Qaeda had attacked to US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. US reacted to the attacks by launching missile strikes against Al-Qaeda. According to US president Bill Clinton, Osama Bin Laden was the "pre-eminent organizer and financier of international terrorism in the world that day." US felt threatened by the radical groups in Afghanistan.

A series of terrorist attacks also known as the 9/11 committed by Al-Qaeda happened in the United States in 2001. The attacks killed and wounded thousands of people and caused major infrastructural damage. The Taliban regimes gave Osama Bin Laden the opportunity to execute his terrorist activities in Afghanistan. Taliban also offered Bin Laden protection and Bin Laden supported Taliban financially. Taliban and Osama Bin Laden had a dependent alliance. After the terror attacks the US launched an assault on the Taliban regime that offered haven to Osama bin Laden. Soon after that Taliban was driven from power.

In 2002 the first foreign peacekeepers were deployed. Soon after that in 2003 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) took responsibility of the security in Kabul due to the unstable situation caused by the Taliban and other non-governmental groups. A few years after that in 2006 NATO had the responsibility of security in the whole of Afghanistan.

Later on in 2004, presidential elections were held and won by Hamid Karzai. Four years after the Afghan elections the US president George Bush sent 4,500 troops to Afghanistan, but eventually they were not enough and US announced that they would send 17,000 troops more. The Taliban had also started to extend its control into parts of the country that used to be considered stable, such as Wardak and Logar.

After the election of Barack Obama as the new President of US he decided to send reinforcements to Afghanistan in 2009, because the country was still not secured and the civilians were suffering from violence and abuse. The year of 2009 was also the deadliest year for the US troops since the beginning of the war.

2010 was the most violent year of the decade due to the destructive amount of civilians killed. Over 2700 civilians lost their lives in Afghanistan in 2010. Many of them were children. According to the UN 75% of the civilian deaths were caused by the Taliban and only 16% by Nato and Afghan forces. Taliban disagreed strongly with this estimate.

Numerous clashes between Taliban and Nato forces happened in 2011 followed by Afghanistan's military allies informing them that they were going to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan as soon as possible. Afghanistan's own security forces were supposed to take over by 2014. In 2011 there were also parliamentary elections and a near-collapse of the country's largest private bank. The civilian casualties were also rising from 2010.

In 2013 the Afghan army and police forces started to lead the fight against Taliban. Violence against women still had not stopped, and the government was not acting efficiently enough in order to improve women's rights in the country. There were also hundreds of forced marriages, and the girls fleeing from those marriages were seen as criminals. Taliban was still controlling many areas of Afghanistan and abusing civilians. Hundreds of thousands of families had to flee their homes because of the unsafe environment.

Presidential elections were held in 2014 and the outcome was that Ashraf Ghani became the new president of Afghanistan. The elections were full of disagreements between two of the presidential candidates. The conflicts lead to even more instability and distrust among the country and its people. 2014 was marked by preparations by the international troops to withdraw from Afghanistan, while the Afghan troops were suffering casualties in the battles against Taliban and other insurgent forces.

In 2015 Taliban took control over a city called Kunduz, but eventually the Afghan forces won it back with the support of US troops. Taliban and other insurgent groups were causing nearly 70% of the civilian deaths at the time. Both President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah publicly acknowledged the government's commitment to follow human rights, but changes did not happen. It was also revealed that Mullah Omar who had worked as one of the Taliban leaders had died in 2013. Suicide bombings were still a devastating issue.

Suicide attacks continued during 2016 and a terrorist group called Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility for some of them. Torture caused by militia groups was still a problem even though president Ghani had announced a plan to stop it. The UK and the US increased the number of troops in Afghanistan due to the dangerous situation. Because of the severe amount of displaced refugees, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees called for an emergency appeal for Afghanistan, to provide humanitarian assistance. Afghanistan's economy was luckily slowly rising from the previous years.

In 2017 the US increased the use of airstrikes, which caused even more civilian casualties, which were already rising due to the irregular militia forces allowed by the government. In addition to that the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported approximately 2,640 civilian deaths in the first nine months of 2017 caused by the war between the Taliban forces and the Afghan government. Child soldiers were still a devastating issue even though the government had made the military employment of minors illegal.

## Key member states and NGO:s

### United States

The US has been involved with Afghanistan for a long time. They are allies and fight together in order to stop terrorism. Barack Obama, the former president of the United States has designated Afghanistan as a major non-Nato ally in July 2012. Current president Donald Trump thinks that military power will not solve the problems in Afghanistan, but it can help to form a process, which could someday lead to peace.

According to Paulo Casaca, founder and executive director of the Brussels-based South Asia Democratic Forum, the US is facing a tripartite alliance of Russia, Pakistan and China in Afghanistan. It could react to the “challenge” by showing its own alliance with the European Union and India. This is happening because Russia wants to be the leading country in the stabilization of Afghanistan. Due to that desire Russia wants to confront US whenever it is possible.

### Russian Federation

Russia used to have very similar mindset with the US about the right way of handling the situation in Afghanistan, but nowadays their visions differ significantly. US wants to form a working government in Kabul and focus on that, whilst Russia wants to take different actions eg. making its own deal with Afghanistan. Russia has also been criticized by senior U.S. officials, like General John Nicholson and the U.S. Department of State’s Alice Wells for possibly helping Taliban by providing arms. Russia probably wants to establish a leading role in the stabilization of Afghanistan.

### Pakistan

Unstable Afghanistan could threaten Pakistan because of their geographical status. The two countries have been disagreeing and blaming each other about various events. Pakistan has been suspicious for example about Afghanistan's policy regarding India and Afghanistan

has blamed Pakistan for example about providing safe havens for miscreants in Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

### People's Republic of China

Afghanistan and China have friendly relations. China is seen as a mutual friend to Pakistan and Afghanistan. But China's friendship with Afghanistan might have suffered because China is helping Pakistan build infrastructure projects.

China hopes that Afghanistan and Pakistan could improve their relations, because the country has investments in Pakistan and naturally China wants those investments to be safe. China also wants to build infrastructure in Afghanistan to further its own economical interests.

### India

India and Afghanistan have a strong relationship and India has been helping Afghanistan in various ways. They also have the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) which for example helps to build Afghan infrastructure and provides educational assistance.

The partnership agreement has strengthened ties between the two nations. Pakistan does not agree with the good relations between India and Afghanistan due to its own conflicts with India.

### Saudi-Arabia

Afghanistan and Saudi-Arabia have had good relations during the years and Saudi-Arabia has provided aid to Afghanistan. Saudi-Arabia also supported the Afghan Mujahedin and refugees during the Jihad and gained a little influence over some of the mujahideen groups during 1978-2001.

In 2018 Saudi's first deputy chief executive spoke about the importance of the relationship between the two countries. He said that Saudi-Arabia wants to support Afghanistan and help in the process of achieving peace. He also pointed out that Saudi-Arabia cares about the well being of afghans.

Saudi-Arabia was also one of the first nations to recognize Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan in 1996. Later on their visions differed and Saudi-Arabia's Charge of Affairs in Afghanistan Mishari al-Harbi has called Taliban a terrorist group in 2017.

## Timeline of Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of the event</b>
1838	British invasion
1878	Britain gained the control over Afghanistan's foreign affairs
1979	Soviet intervention and a communist government
1992	Civil war starts
1996	Taliban gains control over Kabul
1997	Pakistan and Saudi-Arabia recognize Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan
1988	Osama Bin Laden was hiding in Afghanistan
2001	The terrorist attacks in USA also known as the 9/11
2002	First foreign peacekeepers in Afghanistan
2003	NATO takes responsibility for the Security in Kabul
2004	Hamid Karzai becomes the President of Afghanistan
2004	The US sends almost 20,000 more troops to Afghanistan
2006	NATO takes responsibility for Afghanistan's security
2009	Barack Obama comes up with a new strategy for Afghanistan and sends more troops to Afghanistan
2011	Armed conflicts between NATO forces and the Taliban. The US tells that they are going to withdraw their troops in 2014
2012	Nato endorses the plan to withdraw foreign troops by the end of 2014
2013	Afghan army and police forces start leading the fight against Taliban. The amount of civilian casualties is rising
2014	Taliban does a suicide attack on civilians
2014	Ashraf Ghani is selected as the new president. Civilians were abused by the governments security groups. The preparations for the international troops withdrawal had started.
2015	NATO ends its combat mission in Afghanistan but later the US President Barack Obama tells that the US will hold over its troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. Afghan forces and Taliban start holding informal peace talks

2016 Over one million Afghans have left their homes and are displaced. President Barack Obama announces that over 8,000 US troops are going to stay in Afghanistan into 2017. The security situation remains critical.

2017 Bomb attack in Afghanistan kills six diplomats of the United Arab Emirates. The new US president Donald Trump tells that he is going to sent more troops to fight Taliban.

2018 Ambulance explodes and kills more than 100 people. Taliban said, in a diplomatic meeting in Russia, that they are not ready to negotiate with Kabul. Many attacks have taken place and more civilians have been killed.

## UN documents and resolutions

- The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to dispatch a new mission, UNSMA, to assist with the rapprochement and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, 21 December 1993 (**A/RES/48/208**)
- This resolution was the preparation of a draft convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, 8 December 1988 (**A/RES/43/120**)
- This draft press statement expressed concern about numerous civilian casualties caused by an airstrike in the village of Azizabad, 25 August 2008 (**Draft Press Statement**)
- This was the report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan from 21 to 28 November 2008, 12 December (**2008S/2008/782**)
- This letter contained the International Security Assistance Force report on its operations from 1 May 2013 to 31 July 2013, 17 s (**2013S/2013/558**)
- This was the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation in Afghanistan and on developments in technical assistance in the field of human rights in 2014, 8 January 2015 (**A/HRC/28/48**)
- This was a resolution renewing the mandate of UNAMA for one year, 15 March 2016 (**S/RES/2274**)
- This was the seventh report of the Monitoring Team assisting the Committee on the situation in Afghanistan, 4 October, 2016 (**S/2016/842**)
- This announced the removal of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar from the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list, 3 February 2017(**SC/12705**)
- The Council renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2018, 17 March 2017 (**S/RES/2344**)

- This was a summary of the 2242 Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security meeting on Afghanistan, held on 5 December 2017, 22 December 2017 **(S/2018/11)**
- This was a letter containing the terms of reference for the visiting mission to Afghanistan, 12 January 2018 **(S/2018/37)**
- This presidential statement emphasised the importance of advancing regional, interregional and international cooperation to achieve stability and sustainable development in Afghanistan and the Central Asian region, 19 January 2018 **(S/PRST/2018/2)**
- This was a resolution, unanimously adopted, extending the mandate of UNAMA for another year, welcoming the strategic review of the mission, and calling for implementation of its recommendations, 8 March 2018 **(S/RES/2405)**
- This was the quarterly debate on UNAMA, 26 June 2018 **(S/PV.8294)**
- This was a presidential statement on the electoral process in Afghanistan, following the conclusion of the voter registration process on 18 July for this year's parliamentary and district council elections and for the 2019 presidential elections, 23 July 2018 **(S/PRST/2018/15)**
- This was the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan, 6 June 2018 **(S/2018/539)**
- This was the meeting at which the Council adopted a presidential statement on the electoral process in Afghanistan, 23 July 2018 **(S/PV.8315)**
- Security Council members issued a press statement condemning recent attacks and emphasizing the importance of a secure environment for the elections, 18 October 2018 **(SC/13545)**

## Possible solutions

History and all the attempts to solve the issues with more troops and violence have shown, that the aggressive tactic is not working properly. In order to stabilize the country the safety of civilians must be assured, because without its habitants Afghanistan is just an empty area full of soldiers.

In order to fight a war countries and groups need weapons. It has been claimed that for example Russia is providing arms to Taliban. One of the solutions could be that the case of Russia sending weapons to Taliban would be investigated and proved. After that their collaboration could be stopped by for example with an arms embargo.

The civilians in Afghanistan are not safe and due to the unsafety they are fleeing to other countries. The safety of civilians could be improved by sending more peacekeepers from neutral countries. The negative side of that solution is that the countries that would send the peacekeepers could get too involved with the war.

The legitimate government could be strengthened by other countries publicly giving their support to it. For example different country leaders could publicly speak about the negative sides of the radical groups and the positive sides of the government. This would allow the government to have more power in the eyes of afghans.

Also the corruption of the government should be stopped so that the laws would affect everyone. This would make it harder to do crimes and break human rights. And if somebody did they would be legally punished. In order for all this to be possible the government needs to stop favoring people and treat everyone equally. The UN could threaten Afghan government with sanctions if they would not stop the corruption.

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