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BACKGROUND GUIDE



*UNITED NATIONS: GENERAL
ASSEMBLY*

**POST AFGHAN CRISIS:- CRISIS AFTER
THE CRISIS**



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Table of Contents

Brief History to Afghanistan.....	3
Al Qaeda, 9/11 and the 2001 War in Afghanistan.....	4
International Forces in Afghanistan.....	5
Afghan Government Weakness and Taliban Strength.....	5
Gender reparations under the Taliban regime.....	6
References.....	10



WESMUN 2022

A Brief History of Afghanistan

Afghanistan has encountered a series of political upheavals since gaining independence from the British in 1919 and joining the UN in 1946, including King Zahir Shah's "experiment with democracy" from 1964 to 1973; a military coup in 1973 that led to the formation of a parliamentary democracy; and Marxist coups in 1978 and 1979, followed by an uprising and Soviet intervention. Initially, the Soviet Union supported the new administration. When the government failed to listen to Soviet counsel, the USSR overthrew it, established a new leader, and invaded the nation. The Security Council convened in 1980 to consider (but never enacted owing to the Soviet veto) a draft resolution denouncing Soviet activities. Despite having up to 120,000 troops in Afghanistan, the USSR was only able to control 20% of the nation between 1980 and 1984.

According to the US Department of State, a vast number of Afghans actively or quietly opposed the communist administration. Afghan independence fighters (mujahidin) made it nearly hard for the regime to sustain a local government structure outside of large metropolitan areas. Initially under-armed, the mujahidin started receiving significant help in the form of weaponry and training from the United States and other foreign countries in 1984. By the mid-1980s, the persistent Afghan resistance movement - supported by the US, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and others - was exacting a heavy price from the Soviets, both militarily within Afghanistan and by souring the Soviet Union's ties with much of the Western and Islamic world. Afghanistan was destroyed by the ten-year conflict.

According to the US Department of State, "an estimated one million Afghan lives were lost" between 1979 and 1989. Furthermore, an estimated 4.5 million refugees fled the nation. Three million of them fled to Pakistan, while 1.5 million proceeded to Iran. Afghanistan's economy has come to a halt. Schools, companies, and industrial districts were devastated, as were irrigation infrastructure that delivered water to desert parts across the country. The Taliban rose to power in response to the civil war's damage and instability. In addition to restoring order, the Taliban "imposed an



WESMUN 2022

extremist version of Islam on the entire country centered on the rural Pashtun tribal law and perpetrated major human rights violations," particularly against women, girls, and Afghan ethnic communities. The Taliban also enforced a severe interpretation of Sharia, or Islamic law, which outraged many Afghans and the Muslim world.

The Taliban had banned all girl's schools, and women were rarely allowed to leave their houses, even for shopping. The Taliban outlawed all forms of entertainment, including music, television, video games, cards, kite flying, and most sports and pastimes. The Taliban's version of Islamic fundamentalism appeared to disparage Islam's message of peaceful coexistence, as well as its ability to coexist with other religious and ethnic groups. They were to instill in Pakistan and Central Asia a new fanatical type of fundamentalism that refused to budge with traditional Islamic ideals, social hierarchies, or existing governmental institutions.

Al Qaeda, 9/11 and the 2001 War in Afghanistan

Despite worldwide criticism of the Taliban's numerous breaches of human rights, international armed troops did not enter Afghanistan until after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, which killed 2,974 people, the majority of whom were American civilians. The September 11 attacks were planned and carried out by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda group, a Saudi citizen who engaged in the mujahidin battle against the Soviets in the 1980s and who began operating terrorist training camps in southern Afghanistan in the 1990s.

After Al Qaeda bombed Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the Security Council placed sanctions on the Taliban in an attempt to persuade them to evacuate bin Laden and his gang, but the Taliban refused. Following the September 11 attacks, the Taliban refused to remove Al Qaeda once more, so the US and its "coalition of the willing," that included a variety of Afghan warlords seeking to reclaim their land, assaulted Kabul, forcing the Taliban to evacuate. Although the Security Council did not expressly sanction the military action, it is widely seen as being in compliance with the UN Charter, which allows for the use of



WESMUN 2022

force in self-defense.

International Forces in Afghanistan

After the US-led coalition deposed the Taliban administration in Kabul in 2001, the UN sponsored a meeting in Bonn, Germany, where Afghan groups opposed to the Taliban formed the Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA), with Hamid Karzai as chairman. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was also constituted at the Bonn Conference to defend Karzai and the ATA in Kabul. ISAF began as a tiny peacekeeping force tasked with providing security to the Karzai administration in Kabul, the capital city. ISAF's role grew over time. NATO took over ISAF leadership from the UN in 2003, at the request of the US, and commenced operations in the provinces.

ISAF led foreign military forces against local warlords and Taliban rebels throughout Afghanistan by October 2006. ISAF progressively handed over responsibility for Afghanistan's defense to Afghan forces beginning in 2011. ISAF's mission formally ended in 2014, when it was replaced with a non-combat operation headed by NATO dubbed Resolute Support. In 2017, US President Donald Trump signaled a departure from the Obama Administration's foreign policy. The US will reject "arbitrary timeframes" for departure from Afghanistan under the new strategy, instead continuously assessing the situation in Afghanistan to decide US policy toward the nation.

The Main Security Threats: Afghan Government Weakness and Taliban Strength

NATO officials, including former US President Barack Obama, had initially intended to begin removing troops from Afghanistan in 2011. After ISAF concluded operations in 2014, Obama announced intentions to withdraw all US forces from Afghanistan by 2016. However, these plans were pushed back for two reasons. First, the United States and NATO countries did not want to leave Afghanistan until the Afghan army was strong enough to prevent the Taliban from retaking control of the government and territory.



WESMUN 2022

Thus, ISAF and NATO collaborated with the Afghan government for over a decade to establish and train domestic security forces.

The ANSF forces had around 323,000 personnel at the end of 2011. ANSF force numbers have stayed at this level since NATO began removing troops. The evacuation of troops was also delayed because, despite the ISAF expansion, the Taliban continued to assault Afghan residents, government officials, Afghan military and police, and ISAF soldiers. The United States will end its military presence in Afghanistan on August 31, 2021. Because senior Biden Administration officials failed to plan for this fatal day, hundreds of thousands of Americans, third-country nationals, and Afghans were forced to flee. It left hundreds, if not thousands, of American people dead, tens of thousands of Afghan allies dead, and a record of American betrayal of allies. The Biden Administration neglected numerous intelligence data about the possibility of a quick Taliban takeover of Kabul, decided to abandon Bagram Air Base, dismissed dissent cables from the State, failed to plan a rescue operation till it was too late, and abandoned tens of thousands of Afghan partners in the process.

The government did not reach a decision on evacuations from Afghanistan until a meeting of the National Security Council Deputies Committee on August 14, only hours before Kabul fell. The protection of American citizens abroad is one of the most essential tasks of the United States government. The United States military began a fast departure of soldiers and equipment, and President Biden reduced US backing for Afghan security forces. Within two weeks, the US military had completed around 60 flights to transfer people and equipment, accounting for approximately 5% of the pullout. By July 6, the US Central Command stated that it had completed more than 90% of the disengagement process.

Gender reparations under the Taliban regime

The lengthy Afghanistan conflict quickly gave way to an escalating human rights and humanitarian crises after the Taliban took over the nation in August. The Taliban rapidly reversed improvements in women's rights and media freedom,



WESMUN 2022

two of the most Significant successes of the post-2001 reconstruction effort. Most girls' secondary schools were closed, and women were barred from working in most government occupations and many other fields. Because many journalists had departed the country, the Taliban beat and arrested journalists; several media outfits shuttered or substantially reduced their reporting.

There were no women in the new Taliban government, and no ministers from outside the Taliban's ranks. Both the Taliban and the ISKP murdered people, including government personnel, journalists, and religious leaders. On January 17, 2021, unidentified gunmen killed two female justices working for Afghanistan's Supreme Court and injured their driver. In the weeks following the Taliban takeover, Taliban officials released a regular stream of laws and regulations restricting the rights of women and children. These included policies that severely limited access to work and education, as well as restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly. The Taliban also targeted prominent women and denied them the right to leave their houses.

The Taliban has said that they encourage education for girls and women, but on September 18 they ordered that secondary schools only be reopened for boys. Some secondary schools for girls reopened in a few provinces after that, but the great majority remained closed as of October. Almost all female government officials have also been fired by the Taliban. The Taliban's Ministry of Rural Development ordered only men to return to work in September, claiming women's return to work would be "postponed" until the Taliban created a "system for how they will operate." When women were permitted to return to work, they were subjected to workplace gender segregation restrictions.

The Taliban abolished the Ministry of Women's Affairs in September and repurposed its building as the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, an institution tasked with enforcing rules on citizens' behavior, such as how women dress and when or whether women can leave the house unaccompanied by a male relative. The shelters for women fleeing violence have been dissolved, and some of the women who stayed there have been sent to women's prisons.



WESMUN 2022

Following the Taliban takeover, almost 70% of all Afghan media outlets shuttered, with others working under fear and self-censorship. The Taliban authorities enacted broad limitations on media and free expression in September, including prohibitions on "insulting national figures" and reporting that may have a "negative influence on public opinion." Religion suppression and the dominance of Islam as the main religion under the Taliban. Given the Taliban's history and allegations of executions and targeted assaults in recent months, the United Nations human rights director, Michelle Bachelet, said that "Afghanistan's various ethnic and religious minorities are at risk of violence and persecution." According to a 2019 State Department report on religious freedom, the Taliban has previously targeted and killed individuals based on their beliefs or links to the Afghan government, and religious leaders have been threatened with death for preaching messages contrary to the movement's strict and austere interpretation of Islam.

According to the humanitarian group Minority Rights Group International, the majority of Afghanistan's almost 40 million inhabitants are Sunnis, with Hazaras accounting for around 9% of the overall population. According to the State Department study, other religious groups, including Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians, account for less than 0.3 percent of the population. Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan, like the Hazaras, have endured religious persecution, prejudice, and bloodshed. During the decades of conflict and the establishment of the Taliban in the 1990s, the bulk of the once-thriving community of thousands moved to India, Europe, and America.

According to the State Department, community leaders believe that there are only around 550 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus left. Meanwhile, in recent years, security concerns and a lack of official protection have put the organizations at even greater risk. According to Reuters, gunmen invaded a Sikh religious compound in Kabul last March, murdering 25 people. The Islamic State terrorist organisation claimed responsibility for the incident, claiming it was retaliation for India's persecution of Kashmiri Muslims in a statement. According to the research, numerous minority Jewish, Hindu, and Sikh people of Afghanistan have deserted the nation since the Taliban reclaimed control. According to the report, many members of other religious minorities, including Ahmadiyya Muslims, Baha'is, and Christian converts, pray in secret for fear of persecution.



WESMUN 2022

Many religious minorities departed Afghanistan because of fear of what may happen under the Taliban, rather than in response to specific Taliban actions or edicts.

Some Sikhs continue to live and worship in Kabul, according to the article, and Taliban leaders visited a Sikh gurdwara or place of worship to reassure them of their safety. However, according to the article, many Sikhs and Hindus have moved to India "due to a lack of safety and security." Both in 1996 and 2021, when the Taliban attempted to consolidate control of the government, considerable numbers of Afghans wanted to flee the nation, including many members of religious minorities. In 1996, many Hindus and Sikhs left, reducing the population from 250,000 to a few hundred people now.

Hindus and Sikhs who stayed were required to wear yellow tags to indicate their non-Muslim identity and pay jizya, a tax levied on non-Muslims in some places by the Taliban. Due to persecution and continuous threats from terrorist organization's, both Hindus and Sikhs have increasingly moved to India and Pakistan. Those who stayed were compelled to forsake their places of worship, sacred sites, and burial grounds.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of targeted violence against these communities, such as the 2018 suicide bombing in Jalalabad, which killed 17 Hindus and Sikhs, and the 2020 terror attack on the Gurdwara Har Rai Sahib Sikh temple in Kabul, which killed 25 Sikhs, including women and children. Furthermore, Sikhs and Hindus face intimidation, physical attacks, kidnapping, land grabbing, looting, and conversion pressure.



WESMUN 2022

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