

Forum:*Advisory Panel*

Issue: *The Crisis in Afghanistan – Humanitarian Aspect*
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1. **Introduction**

 In 1978 a coup by the communists occurred in Afghanistan prompting the country to be in a state of war and crisis. This conflict has been dubbed one of the most lethal conflicts of present-day, and the situation is constantly evolving and changing. This has resulted in unrest in the country, as well as a humanitarian crisis. In summary, the crisis first began with the successful military coup led by the Communist Party that was supported by the Soviets. This resulted in the involvement of the United States, Pakistan, many Arab countries, and others. Eventually in the 1990s, Afghan warlords split up the country and the Taliban had a large influence. After the 9/11 attacks, the US increased their influence in the already unstable country.

 The situation has resulted in many humanitarian issues such as a refugee crisis, with an estimated number of 2.6 million Afghan refugees, making it the second-largest refugee population in the world. This is primarily due to the unsafe political conditions in the country over the last forty-two years. However, other issues such as malnutrition and poverty also contribute to this problem. Afghan citizens have been kicked out of their homes and neighborhoods or forced to flee due to violence in order to protect themselves and their families. Moreover, it is estimated that 1.9 million Afghanis are internally displaced. It is not only the conflict that results in such a high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), but the number is in part due to the high numbers of natural disasters in Afghanistan such as flash-floods. Additionally, Afghanistan has one of the highest numbers of civilian casualties with over 10 thousand recorded casualties in 2019 alone.

 As previously mentioned, malnutrition rates are high with the rate of severe acute malnutrition being 9.5%. Furthermore, around 3.7 million children are not in school, and around a third of the Afghan population does not have access to proper healthcare within two hours of where they reside. These humanitarian catastrophes are present throughout Afghanistan and the root cause of them all is the political crisis.

1. **Definition of Key Terms**

Foreign Intervention

It is when a foreign country or power interferes with another country. It can be done by interfering in their political, economic or social affairs. The purpose can be to manipulate and influence the country, or to try and improve and help it.

Humanitarian Aid

It is the aid that is provided to certain communities or countries typically due to a humanitarian crisis such as war. It is usually meant to be short term until the local government can cover it.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

A person who had to escape their own homes or cities, but still remain within their country.

Severe Acute Malnutrition

Malnutrition occurs when somebody is not obtaining enough proper nutrition for the body to function. Severe acute malnutrition is a term often used by the World Health Organization, referring to when somebody’s weight is very low in proportion to their height.

Refugee

A person who is forced to flee their country for their own safety, typically as a result of war, conflict, or natural disaster.

1. **General Overview – Background information**

**A history of instability**

For years Afghanistan has had a reputation as an unstable country, with a long history of wars and invasions. In 1921, the British were defeated in the Third British-Afghan War and Afghanistan became its own independent country. In 1926, Amir Amanullah Khan declares that Afghanistan is now a Monarchy with the name of the Kingdom of Afghanistan, and he is the king. His policies restrict the power of the Loya Jirga, which is the National Council. The people are not being given a voice and critique the king. This results in his abdication of his throne. In 1933, Zahir Shah becomes the king with his cousin, Mahmoud Daoud Khan as the prime minister in 1952. Daoud is very pro-Soviet, and reaches out to the Soviet Union asking for assistance economically and militarily. In 1956, the USSR agrees and the countries become close allies. In 1965, the Afghan communist Party is formed in secret, led by Babrak Karmal and Nur Mohammad Taraki.

A coup d’état is staged led by Daoud, removing the king from power. The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan becomes the ruling power and Afghanistan is now known as the Republic of Afghanistan. Daoud cracks down on any party or person that opposes him, creating an atmosphere of violence. Thus, another coup d’etat occurs in what is known as the Saur Revolution on April 28th, 2078. The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan is supported by the Soviets to create a more communist Afghanistan. Taraki becomes the new president and it is declared that Afghanistan will be ruled based on Islamic principles. Revolts break out all across the country as the people and rebel groups oppose the new ruling, one of the main groups of revolutionaries are known as the Mujahideen. It is during this year that many say the crisis officially began, as foreign powers begin to interfere and a pattern of instability, mistrust, and fear is formed.

**Foreign intervention**

The Soviets interfere to support the government, while other countries such as Pakistan, the United States, and Saudi Arabia interfere to oppose the government. This is achieved by training and aiding the Mujahideen. By 1982, it is estimated that 4.2 million people left Afghanistan. The situation was extremely dangerous for everyday people, and people often felt like they never knew who they could trust. In April 1988, the Geneva Accord is signed and the foreign powers begin to remove their influence. The situation gets worse in September 1988 when Al Qaeda is formed, led by Osama bin Laden. In April 1992, Najibullah is removed from power. The warlords that made up the Mujahideen split up the country. Many of these warlords are still alive today with influence in the country, creating the atmosphere of fear and being one of the main causes of the humanitarian crisis. The situation worsens when the Taliban interferes in 1996. They arrive appearing as liberators, although they soon commit countless human rights violations and terrorize innocent civilians and government officials.

**American-Afghan relations worsen**

In 1998, Al Qaeda bombs two American embassies, one in Tanzania and the other in Kenya. This instantly worsens tensions and President Clinton orders missile attacks on Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Additionally, in 2000 the United States insists that bin Laden should be extradited and taken to trial. Although it is suspected that he was hiding in Afghanistan, his location is never confirmed, resulting in the United Nations placing sanctions on the country. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan the Taliban try to create an Islamic state and stop the spread and practice of other religions such as Christianity and Buddhism. For example, a group of international aid workers were arrested and put in multiple Afghan prisons for spreading Christianity. This is deemed as a crime and the Taliban deem such a crime punishable by death.

On September 11th, 2001, Al Qaeda carries out the attacks on 9/11, led by Osama bin Laden. Four airplanes are hijacked and crashed, resulting in thousands of deaths. Not only did this create fear amongst Americans and the international community, but relations between them and the United States worsened greatly. The United States invaded Afghanistan. They work with the United Nations to try and improve the political situation by making Hamid Karzai the leader. Moreover, NATO gets involved to try and secure the country. In 2001, the Taliban announces that they are removing their influences. After this, the UNHCR started bringing back Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

However, while the United States was in Afghanistan they were accused of their own humanitarian violations. Between 2002 and 2004, Human Rights Watch estimated that the United States had arrested around one thousand Afghans, with evidence proving that many of such people were innocent with no relation to the hostilities. Additionally, there had been cases of the US bombing certain Afghan cities, thus increasing the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as they have been forced to flee their homes. There were also cases where warehouses were struck making it more difficult for civilians to receive the food and supplies they needed.

In 2009, President Obama declared an increase in American troops in order to try to control Taliban influence and attacks. This resulted in the number of troops increasing to over 100 thousand, which did help the situation. Eventually in 2014, NATO decided to leave Afghanistan and the United States decreased the numbers of the troops. However, tensions between the nations and between the Taliban are still high.

**The humanitarian crisis today**

The humanitarian crisis is still very evident in Afghanistan today. According to the UNHCR, 4.2 million people in Afghanistan are in need of humanitarian assistance. This is largely in part due to the ongoing crisis in the country.

One of the most prominent aspects of this crisis is the high numbers of refugees. It is estimated that currently there are 2.6 million Afghan refugees, most of them finding refuge in the neighboring countries of Pakistan and Iran. This makes Afghanistan the second-greatest refugee crisis in the world today. There are millions of people living in refugee camps, many of whom are lacking access to basic needs. The numbers of refugees though are estimated to be much higher, seeing as there are many undocumented refugees. There are also roughly 1.9 million internally displaced persons in Afghanistan today, forced to flee their homes due to violence. Although some refugees have been able to return home, with the number being around 600 thousand as of 2018, they return to Afghanistan with next to no resources and need humanitarian assistance to restart their lives and get them back on track.

The numbers of civilian casualties due to the conflict in Afghanistan is extremely high. According to the United Nations assistant Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), there were 10,392 civilian casualties in 2019 in Afghanistan. 47% of these casualties were as a result of the Taliban’s actions.

People in Afghanistan are also being robbed of the human right to an education, as 3.7 million children are unable to attend school. People also lack readily available medical care, as almost a third of the population lives in an area that is at least two hours away from a health care center. Furthermore, many people living in Afghanistan are facing food insecurity or are malnourished as a result of the crisis as well as environmental impacts such as drought.

Although there have been efforts by both the international community and the United Nations to tackle the humanitarian crisis, more needs to be done to effectively solve this problem.

1. **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

The Taliban

 The Taliban is an extremist, Islamic group with influences in Afghanistan. They ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. The Taliban ruled very strictly and committed countless human rights violations, from not letting girls attend schools and attacking their opposition. They still have a lot of influence in Afghanistan, carrying out many attacks against both civilians and opposition, and further creating an atmosphere of fear. They’ve also made it more difficult for everyone, not just girls, to attend schools. They have also continued to treat women and girls unjustly, where they have been abused and assaulted.

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is another terrorist group present in Afghanistan claiming to represent Islamic values. Their influence today is not as prominent as it was in the late 1990s and early 2000s. They have committed countless crimes and killed many people such as during their attacks on American embassies and most infamously, the attacks on 9/11. It was originally led by Osama bin Laden until he was killed by the United States in 2011. After the US invasion of Afghanistan, Al Qaeda “franchised” and expanded to different branches and continued to spread their influences and recruit members. However, after the murder of Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda’s influences in Afghanistan have decreased with the Taliban becoming the more prominent group.

The United States of America

The United States of America first interfered in the crisis in Afghanistan in 1981 by training the Mujahideen. Although they removed heir influences initially, they invaded once again in 2001 after the attacks on 9/11. Although they did generally help improve security, and they were able to provide aid to many citizens, there have been cases of them committing human rights violations in the country. In 2014, they started removing their troops from Afghanistan after NATO removed their influences. Currently they are still trying to negotiate a peace deal with the Taliban and help find solutions to this crisis.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

It is a branch of the United Nations dedicated to refugees. They have worked on providing resources to the Afghan refugees. However, their main job thus far has been Afghan refugees figure out how they can return to Afghanistan by working with authorities in Afghanistan, and Pakistan and Iran, the two countries that have taken the highest number of Afghan refugees. They also work to keep the refugees safe and protected.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

UNAMA was founded March 28th, 2002 and works to achieve stability and peace in Afghanistan. They try to improve relations between Afghanistan and the rest of the world, and improve human rights, just law, and ensuring that services are available to Afghan citizens to improve their lives, such as through medical care and providing them with enough food. They also try to keep track of the humanitarian violations in Afghanistan in order to find solutions to the issue.

Afghanistan

The Afghan government has strained relations with the Taliban and the United States. They are opposed to foreign interference and want the capability to rule themselves and their people. The government is split into three branches: executive, legislative, and judiciary. The current president of Afghanistan is President Ashraf Ghani. They have tried to achieve a democracy and voting for their leaders.

1. **Timeline of Events**

**1921:** Afghanistan becomes an independent nation after defeating the British in the Third British Afghan War (1919-1921)

**1926:** Amir Amanullah Khan declares himself king and Afghanistan a monarchy, making it the Kingdom of Afghanistan.

**1929:** The king abdicates after being heavily critiqued for his new modernization policies.

**1933:** A new king is announced, Zahir Shah.

**1947:** This is the year that most historians agree the Cold War began between the United States and the Soviet Union.

**1952:** The king’s cousin, Mohammed Daoud Khan, becomes the prime minister of Afghanistan.

**1955:** Daoud is very pro-Soviet and thus reaches out to the USSR for military assistance and to negotiate an alliance.

**1956:** The Soviet Union and Afghanistan become close allies.

**July 17th, 1973:** Daoud stages a coup and seizes power from the king and becomes the president. The People’s Democratic Part of Afghanistan takes power, and the country is no longer a monarchy but becomes the Republic of Afghanistan.

**1975:** Daoud starts to crack down on opposing political parties and outlaws them creating general unrest in the country.

**April 28th, 1978:** The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan leads a coup d’état in what is known as the Saur Revolution, and they are supported by the Soviet Union. Daoud and many of his family members are killed.

**1978:** Nur Mohammad Taraki becomes the president. He was one of the founding members of the Communist Party of Afghanistan. The deputy prime minister is Babrak Karmal. Afghanistan becomes less reliant on the Soviet Union and it is announced that it is going to be based on Islamic principles. Citizens of Afghanistan then start protesting against the communist government, and attempted revolts occur.

**June 1978:** The Mujahideen, a guerilla movement that opposed the Soviet influence, is formed.

**December 24th, 1979:** The Soviet Union interferes to support the communist government, though they are still met with protests from citizens.

**1981:** The United States, Pakistan, and other Arab countries start an operation to continue to oppose the communist influence. They train, support, and provide weaponry to the Mujahideen. The Mujahideen continue to fight using the foreign support.

**1982:** Due to the unstable conditions of the country, roughly 4.3 million Afghans flee to neighboring countries, primarily Pakistan and Iran.

**April 14th, 1988:** The Geneva Accords are signed.

**May 1988:** the Soviets begin to withdraw from Afghanistan, and the Americans soon follow.

**September 1988:** Al-Qaeda is formed by Osama bin Laden and fifteen others. Their main goal is to have an Afghan Islamic nation.

**December 3rd, 1989:** The Cold War officially ends.

**April 1992:** Many rebel groups, including the Mujahideen, remove Najibullah from power. The Afghan warlords then begin to fight over how to split up the country.

**1996:** The Taliban, an extremist group that promised to rule with Islamic values, rises to power and arrive in Kabul. They describe themselves as liberators to the general public. During this time the number of Afghan refugees increase as they flee to safety.

**1998:** Al-Qaeda bombs two American embassies one in Tanzania and the other in Kenya. US missile attacks are sent to Bin Laden’s training camps.

**2000:** Sanctions are placed in Afghanistan by the United Nations after the Taliban refuse to extradite bin Laden to the US to go to trial for the bombings.

**March – September 2001:** The Taliban continue to work to stop the spread of other religions such as Buddhism and Christianity in Afghanistan.

**September 11th, 2001:** The infamous 9/11 attacks are carried out by Al Qaeda where four commercial airplanes in America are hijacked and crashed, resulting in thousands of casualties and an atmosphere of fear.

**October 7th, 2001:** British and American forces attack Afghanistan and all Al Qaeda bases.

**December 7th, 2001:** The Taliban declares that they are removing their influence in Afghanistan

**December 22nd, 2001:** The UN sponsors a conference to decide who the interim leader of Afghanistan will be and Hamid Karzai is selected. He is supported by the United States.

**March 28th, 2002:** United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is established.

**June 2002:** The grand Council called the Loya Jirga elects Karzai as an interim leader until 2004 when elections are schedules to be held.

**2003:** NATO interferes and attempts to improve security and stability in the country.

**October 2004:** Karzai is elected as president with 55% of the vote.

**2006:** Fighting and tensions between Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters and Afghan forces increases, and continues to do so.

**2009:** American President Barack Obama announces a “surge” in troops, increasing the number of American soldiers present in the country to over 100 thousand.

**April 2010:** Karzai announces that he will try to make peace with the Taliban by meeting with their leader, Mullah Omar, but was unsuccessful in his attempts to see him. The US continued to pressure Karzai resulting in him saying that he would join the Taliban if the US did not stop interfering in Afghanistan.

**May 2nd 2011:** Osama bin Laden is killed by US forces.

**2012:** Tensions between the Western countries, primarily the US, and the Afghan government worsen. This is mainly in part to a US soldier killing 16 Afghan innocent civilians.

**2013:** The Afghan army begins to take over the security forces from NATO as a result of the worsening tensions.

**September 2014:** Ashraf Ghani is elected as president of Afghanistan.

**December 2014:** NATO ends its work in Afghanistan.

**2014:** This is the year many say the American-Afghan War ended, although there is still American presence in Afghanistan.

**February 2020:** The US and the Taliban sign an agreement saying they are working for peace.

**Present day:** There are still many human rights violations and the Taliban, and other warlords have continued to terrorize civilians. Peace deals and solutions are still being negotiated with hopes of finding a solution to this crisis.

1. UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events:
* The Geneva Accord was signed on 14 April 1988. They were signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan with the US and USSR as guarantors. It allowed the voluntary return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan to Afghanistan.
* The Situation in Afghanistan, 28 March 2002, (S/RES/1401). In this resolution The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established to provide aid in Afghanistan and help tackle humanitarian issues.
* The Situation in Afghanistan, 27 November 2019, (document A/74/L.13). In this draft resolution the Taliban was called upon to negotiate peacefully with the Afghan government. Additionally, it aimed to work on achieving peace and address religion-based violence.
* 10 March 2020, Resolution 2513 (2020), was adopted by the Security Council to establish conferences within Afghanistan to start negotiations and improve the rights of Afghan citizens.
1. Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

 The Geneva Accord was signed in 1988, and did allow for many refugees to return to Afghanistan. It also resulted in the US and the USSR decreasing and removing their influences in Afghanistan. This allowed for the rise of Al Qaeda and the Taliban, with an increase of in human rights violations.

 The establishment of UNAMA was crucial to the improvement of the situation of Afghanistan and monitoring the different human rights violations in order to help find solutions. It also has helped provide Afghans with resources, yet more work needs to be done to improve that.

 Since then, many of the resolutions passed by the United Nations in regards to Afghanistan have similar goals: to improve humanitarian aid, start peaceful negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government, and continue to fund UNAMA. Seeing as many of the resolutions passed by the Security Council in order to address these issues discuss the same idea, it shows the importance of finding new solutions and specifying action plans in order to carry out such potential solutions.

1. Possible Solutions

In order to solve the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, many different aspects need to be tackled and addressed. Both the root causes of the humanitarian crisis, as well as the impacts of it, need to be addressed in order to provide solutions that can work and help improve the situation. Moreover, both long-term and short-term solutions are needed to address the impacts of the crisis as quickly as possible, and find ways to prevent it from worsening and find way to improve the situation over time, as it will not be fixed immediately.

An example of a solution to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is establishing a better system needs in order to provide Afghan citizens with the resources they need for survival, all of which are basic human rights. Such resources include medical care, food, clean water, and sanitation. As well as improving their access to education. Currently many citizens to not have access to such resources, or are constantly at the risk of losing them as a result of the conflict worsening or something happening in their region. The international community needs to outline a way to obtain resources, such as partnering with the private sector to access enough medical supplies and food. Then a system needs to be established to deliver the supplies throughout Afghanistan to the people that need them. In order to highlight the regions and areas of people who need such resources the most, researchers from UNAMA can collect data to figure this out. UNAMA needs to then ensure that people suited for this job are recruited, and ensure that the aid is actually being delivered to people. The plan also needs to be constantly readjusted to suit the developing situation.

Another example of a solution to this humanitarian crisis would be to find a way to improve communications between the Taliban and Afghan government with the primary goal of improving human rights and the justice system in Afghanistan which is very discriminatory. Although this has been an element of many Security Council resolutions, it is yet to happen as no framework has been established to attempt to achieve that. This needs to be done as without at least attempting to have the two sides communicate, there is no hope that the crisis will end. As long as the general crisis in Afghanistan occurs, there will be a humanitarian crisis. Beginning negotiations between the leaders would set up the country for improvement and towards a more equal future that can provide for all citizens.

1. Guiding Questions
2. What is your country’s perspective on the crisis in Afghanistan?
3. Does your country have a history of providing humanitarian aid in areas of conflict, specifically Afghanistan?
4. What are the humanitarian impacts of the crisis in Afghanistan?
5. Is your country affected by the Afghan refugee crisis? If so, how is it involved?
6. How has the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan affect the social and economic crises?
7. How have previous humanitarian crises been solved? Can any of those solutions be implemented to this issue?
8. What has the United Nations done to help address this issue?
9. What can your country do to help address the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan?
10. What are some of the reasons why the humanitarian crisis been solved?
11. How has foreign intervention in Afghanistan affected the crisis?
12. Appendices and useful links
13. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan>
14. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyp7a_RI-oU>
15. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2020-december-2019>
16. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2018/9/5b9148b14/afghanistan-un-refugee-relief-chiefs-call-urgent-increase-international.html>
17. <http://www.fao.org/NEWS/GLOBAL/gw0105-e.htm>
18. <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/4505#_ga=2.135647857.1930648661.1588818116-1940581213.1585651132>
19. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/three-things-you-need-know-about-humanitarian-crisis-afghanistan>
20. <https://unama.unmissions.org/key-documents-and-reports>
21. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/afghanistan/>
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