

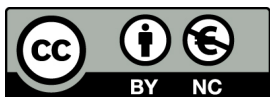
# Afghanistan: COI Repository



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The COI Repository should be used as a tool to help identify relevant COI and the COI referred to can be considered by decision makers in assessing asylum applications and appeals. This document should not be submitted in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals. However, legal representatives are welcome to submit the COI referred to in this document to decision makers (including judges) to assist in the accurate determination of an asylum claim or appeal. The COI referred to in this document is not exhaustive and should always be complemented by case specific COI research.



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#### Purpose of this document

This document is a collection of Country of Origin Information (COI) jointly compiled by Asylos and Clifford Chance law firm, quality reviewed by ARC Foundation and Asylos. Its purpose is to pre-empt COI needs that will arise as Afghans who have fled the current situation will make claims for international protection.

This is a living document intended to collect a) information on sources that are (still) reporting on the situation in Afghanistan and b) to collect relevant source excerpts. As we compile this document, the situation in Afghanistan changes rapidly. We will publish an updated version of this document on a weekly basis from September 2021 onwards.

Research themes for this report are devised in consultation with UK asylum lawyers and with regards to relevant UK Home Office guidance on similar situations (notably Somalia and Al-Shabab).

## SECTION 1 - COI RESEARCH COLLECTION

*This section is a collection of relevant COI excerpts, organised by research topic.*

### Control of Territory

*What territory in Afghanistan do the Taliban control?*

RUSI, [Afghanistan: A Safe Haven for Global Jihadism Once More?](#), 20 September 2021

“The Taliban’s leadership still seems to want to proceed with its policy of confining foreign jihadists in ‘reserves’ where their movements can be controlled. Taliban sources in Badakhshan say that just days ago the Central Asian jihadists clustered near Jurm were told to get ready to be transferred to their assigned areas and registered. The possibility of taking away their weapons was also raised, to their dismay.

Still, the pro-jihadist lobby has fairly good hopes of prevailing in Kabul. The Haqqani network has a powerful presence in the cabinet, with four ministerial posts – including the minister of the interior – and has obvious influence on government activities due to its control over Kabul. In any case, Al-Qa’ida is not trusting its fate to the uncertain outcome of power struggles in Kabul and has been preparing back-up options in case its allies within the Taliban lose out. In recent months it has encouraged the TTP to move to the Loya Paktia region, under the protection of the Haqqani network. Now old members of Al-Qa’ida are moving from Waziristan to the Afghan province of Paktia, local sources say, a further sign that it might be seeking to turn the area into its new safe haven.”

TOLO News, [Taliban Says Panjshir is Captured, Resistance Claims War Not Over](#), 10 September 2021

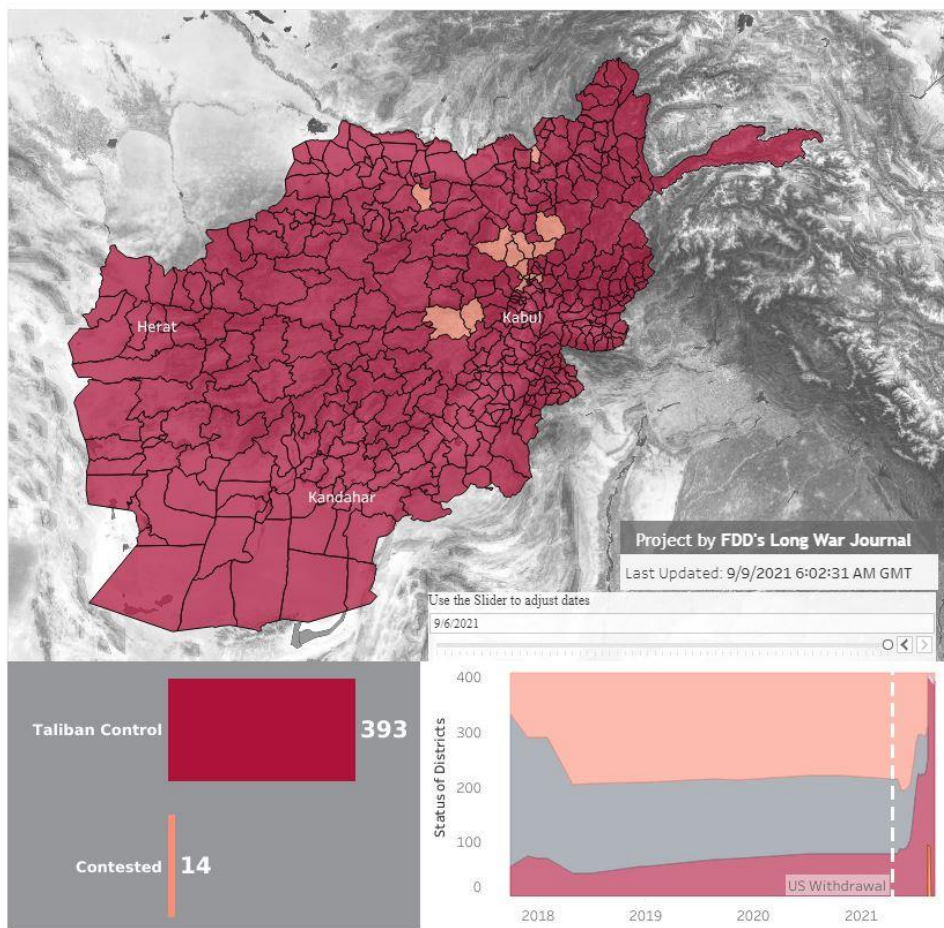
“The Taliban said they are in control of Panjshir and the resistance forces are hiding in “valleys and caves.” Five days after all districts of Panjshir and the provincial center were captured by the Taliban, a commander of the Resistance Front on Friday in a recorded video message said the Taliban’s presence in Panjshir does not mean the end of the war.”

FDD’s Long War Journal, [Taliban completes conquest of Afghanistan after seizing Panjshir | FDD's Long War Journal](#), 6 September 2021

“The Taliban completed its military conquest of Afghanistan and took control of the mountainous province of Panjshir after seven days of heavy fighting. The fall of Panjshir puts the Taliban in full control of the country and eliminates the final vestige of organized resistance to its rule.”

FDD’s Long War Journal, [Mapping Taliban Control in Afghanistan | FDD's Long War Journal](#), 9 September 2021





UNAMA, [Report of the Secretary-General: The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security](#), 8 September 2021

"The situation in Afghanistan remained highly fluid, after a Taliban military offensive took control of provincial capitals and Kabul. The departure of President Ghani and entry of Taliban forces into the capital on 15 August saw the de facto disintegration of the Government.

[...]

4. The Taliban extensively expanded its territorial control in a military campaign in which it seized 33 out of 34 of the provincial capitals within a 10-day period in August. Following the Taliban forces' entry into Kabul on 15 August, President Ghani left the country, stating via social media that his aim had been to prevent bloodshed. On 15 August, Taliban deputy leader and head of the Political Commission, Mullah Baradar, issued a video announcing the group's "unexpected" victory.

[...]

16. Insecurity in Afghanistan steadily increased during the reporting period as the Taliban initiated a large-scale offensive amid the withdrawal of the remaining international military forces. As at 18 August, they controlled all of Afghanistan, except Panjshir Province."

Danish Immigration Service, [Afghanistan Recent developments in the security situation, impact on civilians and targeted individuals](#), 8 September 2021

[The Danish Immigration Service lists the National Resistance Front (NRF), Al-Qaeda, Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) as actors in Afghanistan besides the Taliban.]

“Although these rapid developments in the conflict have put the Taliban in control of all of Afghanistan but the Panjshir Valley and other small pockets of resistance, it should be noted that the Taliban does not constitute the only actor in the country.”

FDD’s Long War Journal, [National Resistance Front repels multi-day Taliban assault on Panjshir](#), 2 September 2021

“After weeks of fruitless negotiations between the Taliban’s political leadership and senior leaders of the National Resistance Front in Panjshir, the Taliban launched a multi-pronged attack on the Panjshir Valley beginning on Aug. 31. The Taliban timed the assault on Panjshir for immediately after the U.S. military pulled out of Kabul airport and ended efforts to evacuate American citizens and Afghan allies.

To this point, the National Resistance Front has mostly successfully warded off the Taliban by virtue of easily defended positions in the mountainous region, inflicting heavy Taliban casualties along the way.”

#### *General security situation*

Council of the European Union, [Afghanistan: Council conclusions set out the EU's position and next steps](#), 21 September 2021

“The Council today [21 September] approved conclusions on Afghanistan emphasising the EU's commitment to peace and stability in the country and to supporting the Afghan people. The conclusions also set out the EU's line of action for the near future. The EU recognises that the situation in Afghanistan is a major challenge for the international community as a whole, and stresses the need for strong coordination in engaging with relevant international partners, notably the UN. The EU and its member states' operational engagement will be carefully calibrated to the policy and actions of the Taliban-appointed caretaker cabinet, will not bestow any legitimacy on it, and will be assessed against the five benchmarks agreed on by EU ministers of foreign affairs at their informal meeting in Slovenia on 3 September 2021. In this context, the rights of women and girls are of particular concern. A minimal EU presence on the ground in Kabul, dependent on the security situation, would facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and monitoring of the humanitarian situation, and could also coordinate and support the safe, secure and orderly departure of all foreign nationals, and Afghans who wish to leave the country.

As a matter of high priority, the EU will initiate a regional political platform of cooperation with Afghan direct neighbours to help prevent the negative spill-over effects in the region, and support the economic resilience and regional economic cooperation, as well as humanitarian and protection needs. The Council will revert to the matter at its next meeting in October.”

[The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) published on 16th September 2021 a [Brief compilation on recent developments and key actors in Afghanistan](#), which you may wish to consult. The compilation covers: *Developments in 2021, The Taliban, Taliban-associated groups (Haqqani Network; Al Qaeda); Islamic State - Khorasan Province; National Resistance Front (NRF)*]

Lawfare, [Thinking Long Term About the Future of Afghanistan](#), 19 September 2021

“With good relations between al-Qaeda and the Taliban, the latter may successfully convince the former to focus on local and regional issues, helping the Taliban to shore up and extend their influence throughout South Asia over time. That still leaves IS-K, a group previously [linked](#) to an international terrorist plot against U.S. and NATO bases in Germany, as a significant threat. There are serious doubts about whether the Taliban, [overwhelmed](#) and stretched thin by the challenge of attempting to govern a war-ravaged nation, will be able to prevent IS-K or other rogue groups from operating on Afghan soil.”

Reuters, [U.N. Afghanistan mission extended, Afghan envoy asks to keep seat](#), 17 September 2021

“The United Nations Security Council extended a U.N. political mission in Afghanistan on Friday [17 September] for six months to allow for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to work out what changes might be needed after the Taliban seized control of the country.”



Afghanistan Analysts Network, [The Focus of the Taliban's New Government: Internal cohesion, external dominance](#), 12 September 2021

"It has been very difficult to follow what is happening. There has been almost no independent reporting, since communications were and the road into the Panjshir closed. The information vacuum has been filled by pro-Taliban and pro-resistance social media accounts and media appearances, often making unverifiable and conflicting claims in an attempt to dominate the narrative. (See, for an example, this [Tolo News report](#) from 2 September in which the Taliban claimed to have captured Shutul district centre and 11 outposts, killing 34, while the National Resistant Front denied the loss of the district and claimed to have killed at least 350 Taliban fighters in the various clashes.) It has been even more difficult to get a handle on reports of possible atrocities, in Panjshir and Andarab, or of the rounding up of young Panjshiri men in neighbourhoods like Khairkhana in Kabul. The online clamour by diaspora pro-resistance supporters that there is both an ongoing genocide and a Pakistani invasion going on in Panjshir – generally without much details or 'supported' by footage that is either old, from other places, and in one case even from a computer game – threatened to drown out the gathering of corroborated reporting.

On the other hand, the Taliban's apparent determination to completely root out Panjshir's armed resistance, coupled with an almost complete information black-out and emerging anecdotal detail, does suggest that the onslaught in Panjshir is likely to have been brutal. This impression is only strengthened by the fact that 'news' from Panjshir has so far been very carefully managed, with only friendly journalists or those with minders having been allowed in.

Ahmad Massud and other members of the National Resistant Front have reiterated that the struggle continues, whether armed or not, and have tried to link their stand in Panjshir to other recent expressions of dissent – with some success."

ACLED, [Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan, 31 July - 3 September 2021](#), 9 September 2021

"Meanwhile, an anti-Taliban resistance, known as National Resistance Front (NRF), began to form in the Panjshir valley in northeastern Afghanistan following the Kabul takeover. The valley had previously hosted Northern Alliance Forces, a military alliance against the Soviet and then Taliban invasion, in the 1980s and 1990s (BBC News, 3 September 2021). Led by the son of a late Northern Alliance leader, the group consists of local militia and former members of Afghan security forces. It is also supported by former Vice President Amrullah Saleh and former Acting Defense Minister Bismillah Mohammadi (Washington Post, 18 August 2021). From 18 August to 3 September, ACLED records over 20 clashes between the NRF and Taliban forces around Panjshir valley and in the neighboring Baghlan and Parwan provinces. Since then, the Taliban claim to have entered the Panjshir valley, although it remains uncertain whether they have taken complete control over all remaining NRF territory (CNBC, 7 September 2021)."

OCHA, Afghanistan, [Weekly Humanitarian Update \(30 August – 5 September 2021\)](#), 13 September 2021

"In the reporting period, the overall security situation in the south remained relatively calm. Civilians including women and children reportedly continued to be affected by roadside Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detonations and gunfire."

## **Taliban's reach i.e. to track individuals of interest**

*What are the Taliban's capabilities to track individuals?*

UNAMA, [Report of the Secretary-General: The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security](#), 8 September 2021

"20. After seizing Kabul, Taliban fighters erected checkpoints throughout the capital and increased patrols, without uniforms. Reports also suggested that some people had been shot after having crossed checkpoints without approval. While statements by the Taliban included instructions not to enter anyone's house without permission and that "life, property and honour" would be protected, numerous reports emerged of the Taliban conducting house-to-house searches for government personnel, weapons and property, and in some cases confiscation of the

latter. Some reports indicated that the Taliban were allegedly searching for people who had “worked with foreigners” and at times, beating them.”

Danish Immigration Service, [Afghanistan Recent developments in the security situation, impact on civilians and targeted individuals](#), 8 September 2021

“During the course of the Taliban offensive, as well as after the conquest of Kabul, there have been reports of the Taliban targeting members of the civilian population and the Afghan military as well their families. According to SER [Sune Engel Rasmussen, Danish journalist] members of Taliban have been going door to door and arresting or threatening family members of targeted individuals. He explained how members of the Taliban came to the house in Kabul of a colleague of his knocking on the door. Being a journalist, he was hiding inside his house with his family and the Taliban left. He had been warned over the telephone by his neighbour and he immediately thereafter moved to a hotel, knowing that the Taliban knew his address.”

Emrys Schoemaker\* (The Guardian), [The Taliban are showing us the dangers of personal data falling into the wrong hands](#), 7 September 2021

“The [Taliban](#) have openly talked about using US-made digital identity technology to hunt down Afghans who have worked with the international coalition – posing a huge threat to everyone recorded in the system. In addition, the extremists now also have access to – and control over – the digital identification systems and technologies built through international aid support.

These include the e-Tazkira, a biometric identity card used by Afghanistan’s National Statistics and Information Authority, which includes fingerprints, iris scans and a photograph, as well as voter registration databases. It also includes the Afghan personnel and pay system, used by the interior and defence ministries to pay the army and police.

For Afghans, and for the wider community working on digital identification for development, this means that the Taliban have sensitive personal information that they have said will be used to target those they consider enemies or threats. While some Afghans are frantically trying to erase any trace of digital activity, on official databases, user deletion is not an option.”

\*Emrys Schoemaker is a researcher and strategist at Caribou Digital, where his work focuses on the interaction between digital technologies and social, political and economic change.

Irwyn Loy\* (The New Humanitarian), [Biometric data and the Taliban: What are the risks?](#), 2 September 2021

“Data protection experts warn that aid groups must quickly review and safeguard sensitive information on Afghans who have received emergency relief and other services. Humanitarian agencies are among those that have tracked, stored, and shared data linked to millions of Afghans – including precise biometric data like fingerprints or iris scans. Crucially, some of this data has been collected by the now-deposed Afghan government – raising concern that the Taliban have inherited databases and technology that could be used to identify people linked to previous regimes or international forces, or members of persecuted groups who have received aid.”

\*Irwyn Loy is the Asia Editor at The New Humanitarian, an independent, non-profit newsroom covering conflicts, disasters, and other crises

## Coercion / Forced Recruitment to join Taliban

*What instances of forced recruitment and use of children are there under the Taliban?*

Human Rights Watch, '[This is our opportunity to end the Taliban's use of child soldiers](#)', 20 September 2021

"For more than two decades, the Taliban have put children on the front lines of Afghanistan's armed conflicts. They have used children [as fighters](#), to plant and detonate improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and as suicide bombers. Thousands of children may [remain in their ranks](#) today."

"The Taliban have [denied](#) that they use children in "jihadic operations" and their [code of conduct](#) states that "boys without beards" are not allowed in military centers. Nevertheless, the U.N. has verified hundreds of individual cases in which the Taliban have recruited and used children in recent years, including a [sharp spike](#) in 2020, and warned that the true figures are likely much higher."

## Leaving and 'defecting' from Taliban

*How many defectors are there?*

*What may be reasons for leaving?*

Aljazeera, [The threat of ISKP in Afghanistan has been underestimated](#), 27 August 2021

"ISIL was formed by defectors from al-Qaeda in 2014 in Syria who then attacked their parent organisation and its Syrian affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra. ISKP was formed primarily by defectors from the Taliban in both Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2015, who then went on to attack the Afghan branch. In both cases, the defectors considered their former organisations not extreme enough or not committed enough to attack fellow Sunnis, who they considered deviants, or Shia Muslims."

*What legal prosecution is there for defectors?*

*How are defectors treated by the Taliban?*

*How are they treated by society?*

## Justice, Law and Order in Taliban-controlled Territory

*How is governance, law and order regulated under the Taliban?*

AP News, [Taliban name deputy ministers, double down on all-male team](#), 21 September 2021

"The Taliban expanded their interim Cabinet by naming more ministers and deputies on Tuesday [21 September], but failed to appoint any women, doubling down on a hard-line course despite the international outcry that followed their initial presentation of an all-male government lineup earlier this month."

Aljazeera, [Rights groups accuse Taliban of rolling back civil liberties](#), 20 September 2021

"Rights groups have accused the Taliban of "steadily dismantling" human rights in Afghanistan since the group captured power last month. In a briefing released on Tuesday, Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) accused the Taliban of a number of rights violations including limits on the freedom of the press, restrictions on women and targeted killing of civilians and former government officials."

Jurist.org [legal news commentary in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh], [Afghanistan dispatches: "Now there are no clients for lawyers..."](#) 20 September 2021

"Currently, there is no judicial and prosecution system active and running in the country. All criminal, civil, and commercial cases are stopped. With the limited capacity that the Taliban have, re-start of this system will take a long period of time."

"Now there are no clients for lawyers – not even local clients – because all the matters they had before the courts are either closed and/or will take at least a year or two for them to be resumed. All law firms face the same situation in Afghanistan right now."

Afghanistan Analysts Network, [The Focus of the Taleban's New Government: Internal cohesion, external dominance](#), 12 September 2021

"As the twentieth anniversary of al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks that brought the US to Afghanistan to topple the Taleban's emirate came round, it was the Taleban who were back in power. This week, they announced their new interim administration. It is all-male, almost all-Pashtun, almost all clerical and all-Taleban. Set alongside their sustained military campaign in the Panjshir, the only province that held out against the Taleban takeover, and their violent response to protests across the country, it seems the movement's priorities have coalesced – internal cohesion, monopolisation of power, silencing of open dissent and dividing the 'spoils of war', in terms of government posts, between themselves. Also noticeable, reports AAN's Martine van Bijlert (with input from Kate Clark and Thomas Ruttig), is the absence, still, of Taleban supreme leader, Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada." [...]

The list of ministers and other senior officials is almost exclusively Pashtun, with just two Tajiks and one Uzbek, and no Hazaras, Shia Muslims or members of Afghanistan's smaller minorities. The list is further all-male and made up mostly of clerics, either mullahs or mawlawis (who have a higher Islamic madrassa education). All are from within the Taleban's own ranks and many are old-timers – familiar faces from the 1990s.

The one possible exception is the minister of public health. No new acting minister was announced for this post and the Republican-era incumbent, Dr Wahid Majruh, has been pictured in office since the Taleban took power on 15 August. [...]

The most senior position announced, that of prime minister (*rais-e wuzera*), was given to Mullah Muhammad Hassan Akhundzada. [...]

Many of the Taleban government's newly appointed senior officials are on the United States and/or United Nations sanctions list and two of them have an FBI bounty on their heads. [4] Many have long held leadership positions and have been implicated in terror attacks or atrocities. [...]

Having so many officially appointed leaders who are on international sanctions lists hugely complicates the new government's chances of receiving international aid and interacting with other governments."

TOLO News, [Uniformed Police to be Stationed in Kabul](#), 12 September 2021

"The current Taliban forces who are stationed in Kabul will soon be replaced with police forces of the former government and Taliban forces and all will have uniforms, the Taliban said on Sunday.

Anaamullah Samangani, a member of the Taliban's cultural commission, told TOLONews that the current Taliban forces, who do not have uniforms, will be transferred from Kabul to military posts in the provinces.

Samangani, however, did not say how many police and Taliban forces will be deployed in Kabul.

"Police and uniformed forces who have received training and gained skills in their specific fields should soon take charge of maintaining Kabul security and start their jobs. After that, the Mujahideen who are stationed in different police departments and who do not have uniforms will be stationed in police headquarters and army corps (in the provinces)," Samangani said.

A number of Kabul residents, meanwhile, said uniformed forces should be deployed to the city to maintain security and to prevent criminal activity by gunmen identifying as Taliban."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Afghan Women At Forefront Of Nonviolent Resistance To Taliban](#), 10 September 2021

"The Taliban formed a new, all-male government on September 7 that is made up exclusively of senior militants. It did not include any women, even in secondary roles. The Taliban said women were not suited to serve in the cabinet.

The militants also abolished the Women's Affairs Ministry and reestablished the feared Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice.

In the 1990s, that ministry was responsible for enforcing the Taliban's morality laws, including its strict dress code and gender segregation in society. The ministry's dreaded police were notorious for publicly beating offenders, including women.

United States Institute of Peace, [Five Questions on the Taliban's Caretaker Government](#), 9 September 2021

"As part of the Taliban's bid to re-establish the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," the militant group announced the line up for its caretaker government on Tuesday. Despite several leading Taliban figures saying the movement would govern in a more moderate and inclusive fashion, the acting appointments made this week were mostly old guard members who played similar roles when the group ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s. USIP's Andrew Watkins discusses who the key players are, what it signals about the Taliban's commitment to inclusivity, the key challenges the government will face and how the West and regional countries should engage."

International Crisis Group, [Who Will Run the Taliban Government?](#), 9 September 2021

"The Taliban announced an "interim" cabinet on 7 September, their first step since taking power on 15 August toward forming a government and signalling how they intend to rule. The cabinet is filled with long-time key Taliban figures from their days as a government and later an insurgency, and it bears a strong resemblance to their former regime of the 1990s. The appointments will reassure the Taliban's rank and file that their leadership remains unified and has not succumbed to pressure to show a more moderate face, but it will not be appreciated by many others. The roster does not reflect Afghan diversity, and it offers no olive branches to a wary international community."

FDD's Long War Journal, [Taliban's government includes designated terrorists, ex-Guantanamo detainees](#), 8 September 2021

"The Taliban has announced the formation of an "interim government" to rule over Afghanistan. The Taliban's regime will be known as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. This is entirely unsurprising. The first emirate was toppled during the U.S.-led invasion in late 2001. The jihadis, members of both the Taliban and al Qaeda, waged jihad for the next two decades in order to resurrect it. The Taliban was clear about its political goal all along.

Many of the newly appointed leaders in the Islamic Emirate are actually old Taliban leaders. More than a dozen of them were first sanctioned by the U.N. Security Council in early 2001. Some new faces have joined them.

Brief profiles for 22 of the Taliban men who will govern under the emirate are offered below. This list does not include all of the figures appointed to lead. FDD's Long War Journal will likely add to this list in the future. Many of the Taliban leaders discussed below have either current or historical ties to al Qaeda. Indeed, some of them worked closely with al Qaeda throughout their careers. Some of them are U.S.-designated terrorists."

Five of the newly-appointed Taliban leaders were once held at the detention facility in Guantánamo, but exchanged for Bowe Bergdahl in 2014. They are discussed at the end of this analysis."

The Guardian, [Taliban name all-male Afghan cabinet including minister wanted by FBI](#), 7 September 2021

"The **Taliban** have announced an all-male caretaker government including an interior minister wanted by the FBI, on a day when at least two people were killed by violent policing of street protests against the new authorities.

The leadership unveiled on Tuesday is drawn entirely from Taliban ranks, despite promises of an inclusive cabinet, and many of its senior figures are on UN sanctions lists, which is likely to complicate the group's search for international recognition."

"Afghanistan will once more be officially known as an Islamic emirate, as it was under Taliban rule in the 1990s, and its chief, Hibatullah Akhundzada, will be supreme leader."

"The prime minister will be Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, one of the founding members of the group who was close to its original leader, one-eyed **Mullah Mohammed Omar**."



“Mullah Omar’s son Mullah Yaqqob will be defence minister, and the acting interior minister is Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is on the FBI wanted list with a \$5m (£3.6m) bounty on his head.”

“The new cabinet is also heavily dominated by the Pashtun ethnic group that formed the Taliban’s original power base but which makes up only about 40% of Afghanistan’s population. Just three appointees appeared to be from other ethnic groups.”

*How is Sharia law interpreted and applied?*

Financial Times, [Afghanistan’s young Talibs: ‘No compromise with the enemy of our martyrs’](#), 18 September 2021

“There is a generation “more radical than the mainstream Taliban”, said Graeme Smith at the International Crisis Group. The new Taliban rulers are “going to have their hands full”.”

The Guardian, [Taliban ban girls from secondary education in Afghanistan](#), 17 September 2021

“In a further sign that the recently announced Taliban government is tightening restrictions on women, the former ministry of women’s affairs building in Kabul has been handed over to the newly re-established ministry for the prevention of vice and promotion of virtue.

This was the group’s feared enforcer in the 1990s, charged with beating women who violated bars on everything from going out in public without a male guardian to an obsessively prescriptive dress code that even forbade high heels.”

TOLO News, [Afghan Education Ministry to Modify Curriculum](#), 13 September 2021

“The Ministry of Higher Education announced on Sunday that some subjects which contrast with Islam’s Sharia will be dropped from the higher education curriculum.

It comes as private universities and other higher education institutions reopened about a week ago in which classes were divided by gender.

Acting Minister of Higher Education Shaikh Abdul Baqi Haqqani said on Sunday that mixed classes between girls and boys are not acceptable and some changes will be brought to the curriculum.

He said changes will be based on Islamic Sharia.

[...]

The ministry added that it will launch a program to send students abroad for higher education in the future.”

TOLO News, [Private Universities Reopen, Students Separated by Gender](#), 7 September 2021

“The Ministry of Higher Education announced that private universities and higher education institutions that are following the new gender format have reopened.

The acting Minister Abdul Baqi Haqqani told TOLONews that the male and female university students will be taught in separate classrooms, emphasizing that only female lecturers will be allowed to teach girls’ classes.

According to Haqqani, joint classes are not acceptable at universities. He said: “Some of the universities are able to use separate buildings for girls, to teach the girls separately. But a number of universities do not have buildings, they can change the time of classes.”

Meanwhile, officials from the private universities and institutions said they were willing to implement the new format required by the ministry. The officials are worried about the girls’ low attendance at the universities. [...]

The state universities are still closed in Afghanistan. Based on the ministry’s announcements, government universities will open as soon as the separation of classes take place.”

The Guardian, [Taliban name all-male Afghan cabinet including minister wanted by FBI](#), 7 September 2021

“The Taliban have also brought back the ministry for promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, a notorious enforcement body that was one of the most hated institutions when they last controlled Afghanistan. Its main function was to police the Taliban’s **extreme interpretation** of Islamic law.”

"In his first statement since the Taliban seized power last month, [supreme leader] Akhundzada said Afghanistan's new rulers were committed to all international laws, treaties and commitments not in conflict with Islamic law. "In the future, all matters of governance and life in Afghanistan will be regulated by the laws of the holy Sharia," he said."

*What is the Taliban's justice and dispute resolution system?*

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Gandhara Briefing: Return Of The Taliban Emirate](#), 10 September 2021

"The Taliban, as Afghans remember all too well, has its own brand of justice. The militants' shadow courts are set to become Afghanistan's official judicial system based on their strict interpretation of Islamic law. "Soon we will see floggings for adultery and public intoxication, and we will see them executing people for murder," predicted Haroun Rahimi, an exiled Afghan legal scholar."

## **Livelihood**

*Can cultural activities take place? What restrictions and guidelines does the Taliban place on them?*

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Fearing Taliban Crackdown, Afghan Musicians Are Already Falling Silent](#), 10 September 2021

"Habibullah Shabab found his calling as a singer -- but since the Taliban's return to power, he's given up performing and instead makes a living as a shopkeeper. The Taliban has not yet imposed a ban on music as it did in the 1990s, but Shabab and others fear such a policy is imminent, stripping many musicians of their livelihoods."

*How are taxes collected?*

*Availability of and access to food*

OCHA, Afghanistan, [Weekly Humanitarian Update \(30 August – 5 September 2021\)](#), 13 September 2021

"In the reporting period [...] The prices of food, medicine and other essential supplies in markets across the region reportedly increased by about 30 per cent."

*Availability of and access to water*

*Availability of and access to shelter*

*Availability of and access to employment*

BBC news, [Afghanistan, There's security but no money](#): Afghans settle into life under Taliban rule, 17th September 2021

"One teacher has already sold everything she can. "I became a shopkeeper in my own house and sold all my belongings..whatever I earned I am using to buy food now. Whenever I come here and see the condition of the people I go home and cry". Nonetheless, she says she's still turning up to work every day [...] Across the road is Mazar -i-Sharif's main hospital. It's now run by a Taliban official, but his deputy is continuing in the same position he held under the previous government. Staff haven't been paid since the Taliban takeover, with uncertainty over how the ministry of health will be funded, while the current reserve stock of medicine will only last for another month"

TOLO News, [UNDP Forecast: 97% of Afghans in Poverty by Mid-2022](#), 12 September 2021

“The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) warned that 97 percent of Afghans could fall below the poverty line by mid-2022 unless the country's political and economic challenges are addressed promptly. Based on a report UNDP released on September 9th, the latest developments and uncertainties have severely affected the lives of Afghans and an economic crisis is emerging in the country.”

OCHA, Afghanistan, [Weekly Humanitarian Update \(30 August – 5 September 2021\)](#), 13 September 2021  
“In the reporting period [...] A rise in unemployment has been observed along with increasing criminality.”

## Medical Care

*What treatment for mental health conditions is available?*

The Guardian, [UN frees funds to prevent Afghan health system collapse](#), 22 September 2021,  
“The UN released emergency funds on Wednesday to help prevent Afghanistan’s battered healthcare system from collapsing, with the WHO chief warning of an imminent catastrophe.”

OCHA, Afghanistan, [Weekly Humanitarian Update \(30 August – 5 September 2021\)](#), 13 September 2021  
“South: Limited health services in Uruzgan province

Most public health facilities and hospitals are reportedly running short of medication and other basic supplies. The situation in Uruzgan province is reportedly particularly dire with medical staff including doctors who have not been paid for months quitting. Currently, other health facilities supported by NGOs such as the Mirwais hospital in Kandahar province and Bost hospital in Lashkargah city in Hilmand province continue to function but are overstretched and facing an increasing number of patients from rural areas.”

The New Humanitarian, [Healthcare, aid, and the Taliban: A Q&A with Afghanistan’s health minister](#), 8 September 2021

“International aid donors must find a way to fund Afghanistan’s crumbling health system, or risk an even greater humanitarian catastrophe.

This is the warning from the country’s acting health minister, Dr. Wahid Majrooh, who now oversees a sector he says is on the verge of collapse due to donor funding freezes.”

The New Humanitarian, [Afghan healthcare under threat from international aid freeze](#), 6 September 2021  
“International aid suspensions could shutter most of Afghanistan’s public health facilities, essentially leaving the country without a working healthcare system, officials and aid groups say.

Some 2,000 donor-funded clinics and other health facilities could shut their doors within days, stripping access to primary or secondary healthcare from millions of people. The closures, amounting to 90 percent of clinics funded by a World Bank-administered donor pot, would also leave only a fraction of Afghanistan’s COVID-19 isolation beds still operating, the World Health Organization said.”

*How are people with mental health conditions treated by the Taliban?*

*How are people with mental health conditions treated by society?*

*Are there any challenges to access medical services?*

*What are the challenges for persons with disabilities to access health services?*

## **Women**

For more information about women in governance positions, please refer to the section [Justice, Law and Order in Taliban-controlled Territory](#) in this report. For more information on women and Sharia law please refer to the section [How is Sharia law interpreted and applied?](#)

*What is the Taliban's position regarding women in the labour force?*

Tolo news, [Kabul restaurants owned, staffed by women now closed](#), 22 September 2021

"In order to feed their families, women are seeking ways to work and earn money, Tabasom said.

"Women are the breadwinners for some families, so these families are facing economic and financial problems," she added. The café's employees said that each of them is leading a family. Opportunities for work must be found for women. Qadira said: "They should consider our demands. When they don't pay attention, how will the Taliban start governance?" Sabrina Sultani said: "I was earning my livelihood by working at the café for two years. I helped my family." Afghan businesswomen lost millions of Afs as the Taliban took Afghanistan in mid-August. Noor-ul-Haq Omari, head of the Union of Kabul Workers, said: "Investments led by women have unfortunately stopped. They lost their jobs and funds. In some cases, the women have sold their company's expensive things at a very low price." Dozens of Afghan businesswomen had begun to invest in various fields across the country over the past few years, and now this has stopped."

Reuters, [Taliban replaces women's ministry with ministry of virtue and vice](#), 17 September 2021

"Female employees said they had been trying to come to work for several weeks only to be told to return to their homes, according to videos filmed outside the building seen by Reuters."

"A senior Taliban leader said earlier this week that women would not be allowed to work in government ministries with men."

BBC news, [Afghanistan: Life under Taliban rule one month on](#), 16 September 2021

"She's concerned that the Taliban may not let women work - something the group has denied. For the moment, though, women in Afghanistan are being told to stay at home for their own safety, unless they are teachers or medics."

TOLO News, [Kabul Airport Employees, Including Women, Return to Work](#), 13 September 2021

"Lida, one of the 100 female security employees at the airport, said she is happy to return to her job after more than two weeks of staying at home.

"We were about to get a salary but then the Taliban came and we did not receive our salaries. Now we are working for free," she said.

"We are happy that they asked us to resume our work. We want the government to pay us a salary from now on," said Zahra Amiri, an employee at the airport."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Not Keeping Its Word: Afghan Woman Quits Job After Pressure From Taliban](#), 11 September 2021

"A young Afghan woman has quit her job at a private foreign-language center in Kabul after what she described as intimidation and harassment by Taliban fighters stationed outside her workplace. [...]"

"I put on Islamic clothing and went to work, but the moment I arrived there I faced insults and shouting from Taliban fighters standing at the entrance."

The teacher said armed Taliban militants were guarding the commercial building that houses several companies and offices in a crowded neighborhood in downtown Kabul.

"When I tried to enter my office, one of them asked me, 'Where are you going?' I told them that I work here. He said: 'Who told you to come? Go back home, fast,'" the woman told RFE/RL on September 10.

The language instructor said she was particularly concerned when the fighters called her an "infidel." [...]

The teacher said three other women in her circle experienced similar assaults by Taliban fighters when they tried to go to work. They all quit their jobs rather than face the harassment, she said."

TOLO News, [Afghan Women Seek Right to Return to Govt Jobs](#), 10 September 2021

"Despite their willingness to work, women in government jobs say they have been prevented by the Taliban from returning to work.

Speaking to TOLONews, they urged the Taliban to pave the way for women employees to return to work.

Shugufa Najibi, who has her master's degree in law from India, worked in Afghanistan's parliament for around ten years and said: "When I went to the office, they stopped me. I asked 'Why? Your officials say women can work?' When I left, they told me through my colleagues to not come anymore."

Based on the numbers of the Special Inspector for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), more than 5,000 women were working in the military sector in Afghanistan. [...]

The Taliban have only allowed women in the health and education sectors to restart work."

UNHCR REGIONAL BUREAU FOR ASIA AND PACIFIC (RBAP), [FLASH EXTERNAL UPDATE: AFGHANISTAN SITUATION #5 As of 08 September 2021](#)

"Female humanitarian colleagues, however, have only been permitted to work in specific sectors in some provinces, largely in the areas of health and education. Female humanitarians are reportedly not currently permitted to work in several of Afghanistan's provinces."

Human Rights Watch, [How the International Community Can Protect Afghan Women and Girls](#), 2 September 2021

"Access to Employment

"They are going to be working with us, shoulder to shoulder with us," Zabihullah Mujahid said of women on August 17. But on August 24, he urged women to stay home from work, citing security concerns related to misconduct by the Taliban's own forces. This followed incidents of the Taliban forcing women out of work in banks and the media."

*What is the Taliban's position regarding women studying?*

*For more information about girls in primary and secondary education, please refer to the section [Access to Education](#) in this report. For more information about the interpretation of Sharia law in educational institutions, please refer to the chapter [How is Sharia law interpreted and applied?](#)*

BBC, [Afghanistan life under Taliban rule one month on](#), 16th September 2021

"Private universities like hers are open, but those run by the government remain shut for now. Under the new Taliban rule, male and female students who are studying in the same classroom must be separated by a curtain."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Taliban Sets Out Restrictions For Women To Study At Universities In Afghanistan](#), 12 September 2021

"Women in Afghanistan will only be allowed to study in universities in gender-segregated classrooms and Islamic dress will be compulsory, a member of the new Taliban government has said.

Abdul Baqi Haqqani laid out the new policies at a news conference in Kabul on September 12, several days after Afghanistan's new rulers formed an all-male government.



The world has been watching closely to see to what extent the Taliban might act differently from its first time in power, in the late 1990s. During that era, girls and women were denied an education, and were excluded from public life.

The Taliban insurgents have suggested they have changed, including in their attitudes toward women. Haqqani, in charge of education, said the Taliban did not want to turn the clock back 20 years. "We will start building on what exists today," he said.

However, female university students will face restrictions under the Taliban, including a compulsory dress code. Haqqani said hijabs will be mandatory but did not specify if this meant compulsory head scarves or also compulsory face coverings.

Gender segregation will also be enforced, Haqqani said. "We will not allow boys and girls to study together," he said. Haqqani said that where no women teachers were available, special measures would be adopted to ensure separation.

"When there is really a need, men can also teach [women] but in accordance with Shari'a, they should observe the veil," he said. Classrooms will be curtained off to divide male and female students where necessary, and teaching could also be done through streaming or closed-circuit TV.

Classrooms divided by curtains have already been seen in many places since the Western-backed government collapsed and the Taliban seized Kabul last month.

Haqqani told reporters that subjects being taught in universities would also be reviewed but did not elaborate. The Taliban, who subscribe to a harsh interpretation of Islam, have banned music and art during their previous time in power.

Women in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan have protested in large and small groups against Taliban rule and efforts to curtail their rights. In some cases, the Taliban has responded with force, wielding whips, beating women with batons, pointing guns and firing weapons into the air."

BBC, [Afghanistan: Taliban accused of killing pregnant police officer](#), 5 September 2021

"The Taliban on Sunday gave more details of how segregation of the sexes will be enacted in universities.

In an extensive document, the new authorities said men and women must be separated, if necessary by a curtain.

Ideally, women will be taught by women but if none are available then "old men" of good character can step in, AFP reports. Female students must wear an abaya, or robe, and niqab, or face veil."

*What is the Taliban's position regarding women in public?*

United Nations, [Afghanistan: 'Palpable' fear of 'brutal and systemic repression' of women grows](#), 21 September 2021

"Michelle Bachelet informed a high-level event on safeguarding 20 years of international engagement in Afghanistan, that women have been "progressively excluded from the public sphere", prohibited from appearing without a male guardian and face increasing restrictions on their right to work."

For further details, please see: [76th session of the United Nations General Assembly](#)

[Side event - Safeguarding the achievements of 20 years of international engagement in Afghanistan: how to continue supporting the future of Afghan women and girls and their access to education](#)

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Not Keeping Its Word: Afghan Woman Quits Job After Pressure From Taliban](#), 11 September 2021

"In some provinces, the Taliban has reportedly banned women from leaving home unless accompanied by a male relative.

No such demand was made publicly yet for women in Kabul. But the English teacher [whose name is being withheld for protection] said Taliban fighters shouted at her, "What the hell are you doing walking alone outside your home?"

"

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Afghan Women At Forefront Of Nonviolent Resistance To Taliban](#), 10 September 2021

"The Taliban has advised women to largely remain indoors for their own safety. The militants have also ordered tens of thousands of former female government workers not to return to work even as their male colleagues went back."

UNAMA, [Report of the Secretary-General: The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security](#), 8 September 2021

"5. In a press conference on 17 August in Kabul, the Taliban, inter alia, emphasized that it had entered Kabul to prevent a security vacuum and "to ensure security of lives and property of the people". [...] It assured women of their rights "within the framework of Sharia law", adding that "no discrimination and violence will be committed against women";

[...]

6. On 17 August, women marching through Kabul called upon the Taliban to respect their rights to education, work and political participation.

[...]

41. The Taliban taking control of districts had been followed by allegations of regression in the enjoyment by Afghan women and girls of their fundamental rights and freedoms, specifically access to education, access to health clinics, the right to work and freedom of movement, owing to the directive that women were to be accompanied by a male family chaperone when leaving the home and the reinstitution of strict dress code. In several locations, the Taliban had reportedly threatened that violation of those rules would result in harsh punishments. There were reports of women having been flogged and beaten in public because they had breached the prescribed rules. In one case in Balkh Province, on 3 August, a women's rights activist was shot and killed for breaching the rules."

Human Rights Watch, [Afghan Women Protest Against Taliban Restrictions](#), 7 September 2021

" "We decided to protest to demand our basic rights: the right to education, to work, and political participation. We want the Taliban to know that they cannot eliminate us from society."

Those were the words of Arezo, a young woman from Kabul who took to the streets after the Taliban's announcement that women would not be allowed to hold senior positions in Afghanistan's new government.

"The Taliban have told women that they have no place in the new order," another protester said. "We told them that we want to continue working, but they say only female nurses and teachers are allowed to work. We are engineers and lawyers and we want to work in our professions, but they say we cannot and should stay at home instead."

Protests by Afghan women against Taliban restrictions that began in Herat on September 2 have spread to Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif. On September 4, around 100 women gathered in front of the presidential palace – now the Taliban's command center in Kabul – carrying banners and chanting slogans for an equal society.

Taliban security forces reacted violently to these protests. In Kabul they stopped the women and beat at least 10 of them. Nargis was among those beaten. She told me: "When I saw that they are badly beating one of the participants, I went to help but the Taliban soldier hit me with a metal object, and I fainted. All I remember is that there were two other women on the ground, and they were still being beaten." Taliban officials said they detained four of their men who beat the protesters."

BBC, [Afghanistan: Taliban accused of killing pregnant police officer](#), 5 September 2021

"Taliban militants in Afghanistan have shot dead a policewoman in a provincial city, witnesses have told the BBC.

The woman, named in local media as Banu Negar, was killed at the family home in front of relatives in Firozkoh, the capital of central Ghor province.

The killing comes amid increasing reports of escalating repression of women in Afghanistan.

The Taliban told the BBC they had no involvement in Negar's death and are investigating the incident"

BBC, [Life in Kabul under Taliban: Where is your male escort?](#), 4 September 2021

" "Why are you travelling without a mahram?" the Taliban guard asks a young Afghan woman about her missing male escort.

She sits on her own in the back of a beat-up Kabul yellow taxi as it pulls up to the checkpoint marked, like all the others, by the white Taliban flag with black script.

What is allowed now in Kabul, and what is not?

The turbaned Talib, rifle slung over shoulder, tells her to call her husband. When she explains she doesn't have a phone, he instructs another taxi driver to take her home to get her husband and bring them back. Once completed, all is resolved."

*What is the Taliban's position regarding women participating in sports?*

The Guardian, [Dozens more female footballers and family members escape Afghanistan](#), 15 September 2021

"Last week, the Taliban announced that women would be banned from participating in all sports. In an interview with the Australian broadcaster SBS the deputy head of the Taliban's cultural commission, Ahmadullah Wasiq, said it was "not necessary" for women to be involved in sport and that "Islam and the Islamic Emirate [Afghanistan] do not allow women to play cricket or play cricket or play the kind of sports where they get exposed."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Afghan Cricket Board Says Women's Team Could Still Play](#), 11 September 2021

"The head of the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) has told an Australian broadcaster that the Afghan national women's team could still be allowed to play cricket.

ACB Chairman Azizullah Fazli told SBS Radio Pashto late on September 10 that the governing body would outline "very soon" how women would be allowed to play -- a development that, if true, would mark a reversal of the Taliban's hard-line stance on the issue."

BBC, [Afghanistan women's cricket team: Players hiding in Kabul fear Taliban rule](#), 1 September 2021

"Asel and many of her international team-mates are in hiding. Asel isn't her real name. In Kabul members of the Taliban have already come looking for Afghanistan's women's cricket team.

"Every woman playing cricket or other sports is not safe right now," she says. "The situation is very bad in Kabul. "We have a group on WhatsApp and every night we are talking about our problems and sharing plans about what we should do. We are all hopeless."

Asel has barely stepped outside her home since the Taliban entered Kabul in mid-August and has locked her cricket kit away. She explains how one of her team-mates was targeted in the city.

"The village where they play cricket, some people who knew them are working with the Taliban. When the Taliban came here and took Kabul they threatened them, saying, 'We may come and kill you if you try to play cricket again,'" Asel says.

Taqwa, who is also using a pseudonym, was involved in Afghan women's cricket for many years. She managed to flee the country after Kabul fell. In the week before she got out, she moved from house to house to avoid being detected. The Taliban called her father, but he said he had not been in contact with her."

*What is the position for lone women (i.e. widows, divorcee) without a male support network?*

*What is the position for unmarried/single women without a male support network?*

*What is the position for single mothers without a male support network?*

The Guardian, [‘They came for my daughter’: Afghan single mothers face losing children under Taliban](#), 8 September 2021

“The day after Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital of Balkh province, fell to the Taliban on 14 August, gunmen came for Raihana’s\* six-year-old daughter.

Widowed when her husband was murdered by Taliban forces in 2020, Raihana had been raising her child as a single mother. After her husband’s death she had fought her in-laws for custody of her daughter and won, thanks to the rights she had under Afghan civil law – which state that single women can keep their children if they can provide for them financially.

Now, with her city in Taliban hands, Raihana was alone.

“The day after the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif, my brother in-law showed up at my father’s house, where I lived, with Taliban fighters demanding to give them my daughter,” Raihana told the Guardian.

Raihana was lucky. She and her daughter were not at home when the armed men arrived. As soon as she heard, she took her child and fled Mazar-i-Sharif for Kabul.”

## **Children**

### *Access to Education*

*For more information about the interpretation of Sharia law in educational institutions, please refer to the chapter [How is Sharia law interpreted and applied?](#)*

Aljazeera, [Girls to return to secondary schools ‘soon as possible’: Taliban](#), 21 September 2021

“Girls will have to wait longer to return to secondary school in Afghanistan, according to Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, as concerns grow over the fate of women’s education under the new government. Speaking at a press conference in the capital Kabul on Tuesday, Mujahid said the group was “finalising things” and that secondary school girls will return to the classroom “as soon as possible.”

Reuters, [Some Afghan girls return to school, others face anxious wait](#), 18 September 2021

“Some Afghan girls returned to primary schools with gender-segregated classes on Saturday, but older girls faced an anxious wait with no clarity over if and when they would be able to resume their studies at the secondary school level.”

“Taliban officials say they will not return to the fundamentalist policies - including a ban on girls receiving an education - when they last ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.”

The Guardian, [Taliban ban girls from secondary education in Afghanistan](#), 17 September 2021

“The Taliban have effectively banned girls from secondary education in **Afghanistan**, by ordering high schools to re-open only for boys.

Girls were not mentioned in Friday’s announcement, which means boys will be back at their desks next week after a one-month hiatus, while their sisters will still be stuck at home.

The **Taliban** education ministry said secondary school classes for boys in grades seven to 12 would resume on Saturday, the start of the Afghan week. “All male teachers and students should attend their educational institutions,” the statement said. The future of girls and female teachers, stuck at home since the Taliban took control, was not addressed.

The edict makes Afghanistan the only country on earth to bar half its population from getting a secondary education.

[...] The Taliban appeared somewhat more open to women's education when they ordered all primary school students back to class, and **said women could study for degrees**, albeit in a strictly gender-segregated system that will dramatically lower the range and quality of women's options.

But if the high schools do not reopen for girls, the commitments to allow university education would become meaningless once the current cohort of students graduated."

Human Rights Watch, [How the International Community Can Protect Afghan Women and Girls](#), 2 September 2021

#### "Access to Education

In recent years, in areas under their control, Taliban policies varied but often included permitting girls to attend school only up to the sixth grade. Even when local Taliban policy permitted at least some girls to study, there have sometimes been efforts to discourage girls and women from attending.

Since gaining control of the country, the Taliban have said they support education for girls and women. At the initial news conference, Mujahid said, "They can have activities in different sectors and different areas on the basis of our rules and regulations: educational, health and other areas." Another spokesperson, Suhail Shaheen, on August 23 tweeted a clip of girls entering a school, writing, "Back to School in a New Afghanistan."

The status of girls' access to secondary education, which the Taliban have typically not permitted in recent years in areas under their control, is unclear. On August 29, the acting minister of higher education announced that girls and women may participate in higher education but may not study with boys and men. The Taliban previously issued a similar order to universities in the western city of Herat, adding that female students could only receive instruction from female or "virtuous" elderly male professors.

A lack of female teachers, especially in higher education, is likely to mean that such rules amount to a de facto denial of access to education for many girls and women. Afghan government statistics from 2019 indicate that across the country's 166 universities, 27 percent of students were female, but only 14 percent of professors. Even in government teacher training institutions, only about 13 percent of the teachers were women that year although 57 percent of the students were women."

#### *Violence and Abuse*

UNAMA, [Report of the Secretary-General: The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security](#), 8 September 2021

"37. During the second quarter of 2021, the country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict verified 1,179 grave A/75/1010 S/2021/759 21-11922 9/14 violations against 1,112 children (673 boys, 420 girls, 19 sex unknown) during the reporting period, including 1,085 children killed or maimed (309 killed and 776 maimed) (647 boys, 419 girls, 19 sex unknown).

[...]

38. The country task force verified the recruitment and use of 26 children (all boys) aged between 12 and 17 years by the Taliban (16), Afghan National Police (6) and pro-government militias (4)."

#### *Children separated from their families*

UNICEF, [Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore on unaccompanied and separated children evacuated from Afghanistan](#), 7 September 2021

"“Since 14 August, hundreds of children have been separated from their families amidst chaotic conditions, including large-scale evacuations, in and around the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul.

[...]

In Afghanistan, more than 550,000 people have been displaced by conflict, the majority in recent weeks, and 10 million children are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. We are very worried about the safety and wellbeing of unaccompanied and separated children inside the country."



## **Persons with disabilities (stigma, discrimination, harassment, violence)**

International Disability Alliance (IDA), [IDA Statement on the Situation in Afghanistan](#), September 2021

“Due to communication barriers and security concerns, adequate information on the situation of Afghans with disabilities during the current crisis is not available. It is evident however that due to the unsafe situation, many Afghans have been forced to leave their homes in search of safety and dignity. Persons with disabilities face additional risks during the displacement journey including being left behind in the first place or being forced to withdraw from the journey due to a lack of assistive devices or disruption of support networks. When reaching displacement or refugee camps, or other temporary residence, persons with disabilities face additional barriers accessing the very basic rights such as water, sanitation, hygiene, food or shelter.

Those left behind are at risk of violence and abuse, disruption of support services and isolation. In case the situation turns to internal armed conflict, persons with disabilities are more likely to lose their lives than others, and face risk of being abused as human shields, sexual slaves or trafficking.”

The Guardian, [Disabled Afghans in special jeopardy, warns exiled campaigner](#), 6 September 2021

“Benafsha Yaqoobi, a commissioner at the [Afghanistan](#) Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), said she fears the Taliban will neglect and discriminate against people with disabilities due to the belief, held by many in the country, that disability is a punishment from God for the sins of parents.”

The Nation, [The Taliban Is Targeting Disability Rights Activists](#), 2 September 2021

“With the fall of the Ashraf Ghani-led government, the provision of these services is almost certain to become more difficult. According to the Asia Foundation, Afghanistan has one of the highest rates of disability per capita in the world, with nearly 80 percent of Afghan adults disabled, mostly because of more than 40 years of war. Despite this staggering number, that disabled Afghans are largely left behind is the result of a lack of accessible infrastructure and systemic ableism. This problem especially impacts women and girls; according to a 2020 report by Human Rights Watch, 80 percent of Afghan girls with disabilities aren’t enrolled in school. [...]

She and M are also concerned that disabled victims of war will lose their monthly stipend provided by the administration under former President Ghani, which helps them pay for food and other necessities, and that rehabilitation centers will shut down, withdrawing critical medical support for Afghans with disabilities. Small businesses owned by people with disabilities are also shutting down, making them extra vulnerable in an economy already in free fall.”

## **Freedom of Movement**

*What is the Taliban’s position regarding citizens leaving the country?*

Reuters, [Plane carrying Afghans, U.S. and European citizens from Kabul arrives in Doha](#), 17 September 2021

“The third chartered flight bringing civilians from Afghanistan to Qatar since U.S. forces withdrew last month landed on Friday with around 170 passengers on board, including U.S. and European citizens as well as Afghans, a Qatari official said.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, [Pakistan's PIA To Restart Islamabad-Kabul Commercial Flights](#), 11 September 2021

“A spokesman for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) says the airline plans to resume special charter flights to and from Kabul next week in order to help evacuate people who want to leave Afghanistan.

PIA spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan told the AFP news agency on September 11 that the airline had received “all technical clearances for flight operations” to resume.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, [Gandhara Briefing: Return Of The Taliban Emirate](#), 10 September 2021

"On September 9, the first civilian flight since the Taliban took over Kabul airport, mainly evacuating people with foreign passports to Qatar, raised hopes that the Taliban would allow the evacuation of foreigners and vulnerable Afghans to proceed. Western governments have been pushing for such flights since the Taliban refused to let chartered planes take hundreds stranded in Mazar-e Sharif."

Human Rights Watch, [What's Next for Afghans Fleeing the Taliban?](#), 9 September 2021

"2. Are Afghans entitled to leave the country?

[...]

Taliban authorities have been quoted saying they do not want Afghans to leave the country. They have provided assurances that Afghan citizens with foreign travel authorization will be allowed to depart, however setting this requirement violates the right to freedom of movement.

On August 30 the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution that expressed the expectation that "the Taliban will adhere to their commitments," and referenced Taliban promises that:

Afghans will be able to travel abroad, may leave Afghanistan anytime they want to, and may exit Afghanistan via any border crossing, both air and ground, including at the reopened and secured Kabul airport, with no one preventing them from traveling, including regarding the safe, secure, and orderly departure from Afghanistan of Afghans and all foreign nationals.

It remains to be seen if the Taliban will adhere to these commitments."

Tolo News, [Taliban Preventing Planes From Leaving: US Rep. McCaul](#), 6 September 2021

"Michael McCaul, a US representative for Texas and the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the Taliban was preventing six airplanes from taking off from Mazar-e-Sharif airport in the northern province of Balkh.

McCaul says there are six airplanes at the Mazar-e-Sharif airport with American citizens on board, along with their Afghan interpreters, and the Taliban are "holding them hostage," AP reported.

The Taliban, however, rejected the claim, saying anyone holding travel documents is allowed to travel out of the country."

OCHA, Afghanistan, [Weekly Humanitarian Update \(30 August – 5 September 2021\)](#), 13 September 2021

"On 5 September, Kandahar airfield resumed daily flights from Kabul and Hirat provinces. The Spin Boldak border crossing remained open to Pakistani identification card holders, Afghans with Pakistani visas and commercial truck movements."

*What is the Taliban's position regarding unsuccessful asylum applicants returning to Afghanistan? What happens to individuals who have left Afghanistan and return?*

*What are the challenges to moving freely within the country?*

*How do Taliban checkpoints affect free movement?*

## **Situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

*How many IDPs are there in Afghanistan?*

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, [No Afghan refugee exodus yet but 'massive displacement' possible - U.N. refugee agency](#), 10 September 2021

"Half a million people had been displaced within Afghanistan in recent months, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said, a number which would grow if health services, schools and the economy break down.

"In reality we have not seen at this point large movements of Afghan people towards the borders of the country," Grandi told Reuters. "What we continue to see is a very dramatic phenomenon of internal displacement." "

International Organisation for Migration, [Displacement Tracking Matrix Afghanistan — Emergency Event Tracking \(1 - 7 September 2021\)](#), 10 September 2021

“Key Informants in Helmand, Baghlan and Kabul most frequently reported an increase of IDP arrivals in their communities. Communities in Baghlan and Kabul, in addition to Kapisa, also reportedly experienced an increase in departures more frequently than communities assessed in other provinces.”

ACAPS, [Afghanistan - Conflict-Driven Displacement](#), 3 September 2021

“Since 16 August, fighting between the Taliban and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in villages of Khanabad district along the Kunduz-Khanabad highway, Imam Sahib district, and Kunduz city, all in Kunduz province (OCHA 27/08/2020), displaced approximately 64,000 people within these areas; approximately 28,000 were identified in assessments as requiring immediate lifesaving assistance. [...] Assessments from mid-August indicated that a high proportion of IDPs did not want to return to their areas of origin, fearing continued fighting (OCHA 25/08/2020). However close to 13,000 of the IDPs have returned to their homes in Khanabad district, where their needs will be assessed. Returnees are exposed to violence, IEDs, and mines on their return journeys”

International Crisis Group, [Afghanistan’s Growing Humanitarian Crisis](#), 2 September 2021

“Violence, Displacement, Food Insecurity and Deteriorating Essential Services

Unprecedented numbers of civilians were killed and injured in the early months of 2021 and at least 560,000 people were displaced, including nearly 120,000 fleeing to Kabul as they sought refuge from Taliban advances. Those numbers represent the worst-ever period in what for some years has been the world’s deadliest conflict. The count of displaced people in Afghanistan over the last seven months was twice the monthly average in the last five years, and the figures are expected to grow as aid agencies’ accounting catches up with the scale of the crisis. Some 80 per cent of those fleeing violence since the end of May have been women and children. Thousands of displaced people in Kabul have been sleeping in the open air, and only a minuscule portion of them escaped during the international airlift that ended on 30 August.”

*What is the housing situation for IDPs?*

ACAPS, [Afghanistan - Conflict-Driven Displacement](#), 3 September 2021

“Sectoral needs

Shelter and NFIs

IDPs in Kunduz are residing with relatives or friends, sheltering in schools, or have put up makeshift shelters, all of which are inadequate (OCHA 25/08/2020). NGO assessments have identified that IDPs need shelter aid, though warned against establishing camps-style settlements that may encourage the spread of COVID-19 (OCHA 27/08/2020).”

*What is the food situation for IDPs?*

ACAPS, [Afghanistan - Conflict-Driven Displacement](#), 3 September 2021

“Food

IDPs need food aid (OCHA 27/08/2020). People in Kunduz province face Stressed (IPC-2) food security conditions as of August-September, and 14.2% of children under five face some form of malnutrition in the province (Nutrition Cluster 2019). People are projected to face these levels into next year, which will likely make recovery difficult (FEWS Net 08/2020).”

*Do IDPs have access to livelihood opportunities?*

OCHA, Afghanistan, [Weekly Humanitarian Update \(30 August – 5 September 2021\)](#), 13 September 2021

“KEY FIGURES

IDPs IN 2021 (AS OF 5 SEPTEMBER)

592,531 People displaced by conflict (verified)

280,244 Received assistance”

ACAPS, [Afghanistan - Conflict-Driven Displacement](#), 3 September 2021

“WASH

IDPs need clean water, as well as sanitation and hygiene aid (OCHA 27/08/2020).

Health

Although Kunduz houses one of Afghanistan’s only high-level trauma health facility, resources are restricted; there are 75 public health facilities in the province, however they often lack human resources to address trauma injuries or some basic health care and are controlled or influenced by the Taliban (The Johanniter 11/2019). IDPs’ movement will likely encourage the spread of COVID-19 as there is a severe lack of soap and clean water sources to maintain appropriate hygiene (OCHA 27/08/2020). Cramped camp conditions and their movement back home are likely to also contribute to COVID-19 spread. Health aid is currently being provided, including psychosocial support.”

## Documentation

*How do people obtain ID, birth registrations and/or passports under the Taliban?*

TOLO News, [Afghan People Call for Govt Offices to Open](#), 12 September 2021

“Even though the Taliban announced a 33-member caretaker cabinet last week, most government offices have not resumed services, residents complained on Sunday.

Speaking to TOLONews, the residents called on the Taliban to immediately provide services so citizens' problems can be addressed.

Noor Agha, who is from Herat province, along with several others is waiting for the passport office to be opened. He intends to leave for Pakistan to receive medical treatment.

Noor Agha told TOLONews: “The department is closed. They do not distribute passports. I am sick, I want to go Pakistan.” [...]

Officials from the passport department said they are waiting to receive directions from the Ministry of Interior.

The problem not only applies to the capital city of Kabul. Kunduz residents are encountering the same challenges. The residents are waiting for the reopening of the banks in the province.”

## Targeted Groups

*Individuals who are critical or in opposition of the Taliban (e.g. peaceful protesters)*

OHCHR, [Press briefing notes on Afghanistan](#), 10 September 2021

“Peaceful protesters across various provinces in Afghanistan over the past four weeks have faced an increasingly violent response by the Taliban, including the use of live ammunition, batons and whips. On Wednesday, 8 September, the Taliban issued an instruction prohibiting unauthorized assemblies. Yesterday, Thursday, they ordered telecommunications companies to switch off internet on mobile phones in specific areas of Kabul.

[...] From 15 to 19 August, people gathered in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces to mark national flag-raising ceremonies. According to credible reports, during these three days when protests took place, the Taliban reportedly killed a man and a boy, and injured eight others, when firing in an apparent attempt to disperse the crowds. On Tuesday this week (7 September), during a protest in Herat, the Taliban reportedly shot and killed two men and wounded seven more. That same day in Kabul, credible reports indicate that the Taliban beat and detained protesters, including several women and up to 15 journalists.

On Wednesday, 8 September, reports emerged that as a largely female group of demonstrators gathered in the Dashti-Barchi area of Kabul, at least five journalists were arrested and two severely beaten for several hours. There were also reports that during a demonstration in Faizabad city in Badakhshan province held by several women, including activists and human rights defenders, the Taliban fired in the air and allegedly beat several of the protesters. A small group of women who had gathered to protest elsewhere in Kabul were violently dispersed, as

the Taliban fired shots into the air over their heads. That same day, women were violently dispersed during protests in Kapisa and Takhar provinces, and several women's rights activists in Kapisa were detained."

Amnesty International, [Afghanistan: Suppression of protests at odds with Taliban's claims on human rights](#), 8 September 2021

"Responding to widespread reports that the Taliban are using unlawful force against peaceful protesters and journalists at gatherings across Afghanistan, including using gunfire to disperse crowds and cables to lash protesters, Samira Hamidi, Amnesty International's South Asia Campaigner said [...]

According to media reports, peaceful protests in Kabul, Badakhshan and Herat over the past two days have been dispersed by Taliban fighters firing rifles into the air, while some female protesters have reportedly been lashed with cables. Amnesty International has independently verified videos of Taliban fighters firing guns into the air to disperse protests in Kabul, and also verified videos of violence against women protesters between 4 and 7 September in Kabul committed by the Taliban.

Journalists and cameramen from Afghan media outlets Ariana, Tolo and Etilaat-e- Roz have said that they were beaten up and detained by Taliban fighters while trying to cover protests, before having their equipment confiscated or their footage destroyed."

#### *Individuals (formerly) affiliated with the Afghan government and international organisations*

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, [Afghan pilots start leaving Uzbekistan for UAE, despite Taliban pressure-source](#), 12 September 2021

"Afghanistan's new rulers have said they will invite former military personnel to join the country's revamped security forces and that they will come to no harm.

That offer rings hollow to Afghan pilots who spoke with Reuters. Even before the Taliban takeover, the U.S.-trained, English-speaking pilots had become their prime targets. Taliban fighters tracked them down and assassinated some pilots."

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, [Brother of Afghan opposition figure executed by Taliban, family says](#), 10 September 2021

"The Taliban have executed the brother of Amrullah Saleh, the former Afghan vice president who became one of the leaders of anti-Taliban opposition forces in the Panjshir valley, his nephew said on Friday."

TOLO News, [Taliban Closes Bank Accounts of Officials From Former Govt](#), 10 September 2021

"Bank accounts of some former government officials who fled the country have been closed by the Taliban.

Anaamullah Samangani, a member of the Taliban Cultural Commission, said on Thursday that the Taliban has closed some bank accounts of officials who worked in the previous government, but he did not mention names. [...]

At the same time, a letter posted on social media by the Afghanistan Central Bank (Da Afghanistan Bank ) said that accounts of some ministers, deputy ministers, governors, deputy governors, members of parliament, members of provincial councils, mayors and other VIPs should be closed in other internal banks, and be reported to Central Bank. Officials from Afghanistan Central Bank have not commented to the media over the issue."

UNOCHA, [Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot \(August 2021\)](#), 9 September 2021  
Violence/ Threat Against Humanitarian Personnel/ Assets/ Facilities

In August, the HAG logged 124 incidents of violence/threats against humanitarians and their assets and facilities - the highest number of such incidents on HAG record. The majority of incidents related to intimidations, thefts, occupation of facilities or assets, and hijacking of vehicles and were authored by individuals identifying as Taliban. Most incidents were recorded in Kabul, Herat, Bamyan, Balkh and Nangarhar and had a very chilling effect on humanitarian operations. The notable increase in violent incidents can be attributed to the Taliban's rapid advancement into Kabul and other major cities, where Taliban fighters occupied many humanitarian buildings, in addition to government installations. In the early stages, humanitarian buildings were used as hideouts and as



fighting positions against ANDSF. On 4 August 2021, Lashkar Gha City, Taliban members occupied an NGO compound and took position on the rooftop from where they started firing towards the Governor's compound. Once the cities came under full Taliban control, Taliban members, often identifying as members of the intelligence unit, conducted searches of humanitarian offices, seized humanitarian vehicles and asked NGO staff about project details as well as staff and asset lists. In some cases, provincial Taliban NGO Commissioners were successful in getting previously seized vehicles back and in convincing the occupiers to vacate the humanitarian facilities. However, in many cases, seized items remain missing and facilities remain occupied. In at least 18 incidents, ACG members falsely identified as Taliban to get access to humanitarian compounds and looted assets and vehicles from NGOs' offices and private residences. In at least 35 instances Taliban members threatened and intimidated UN and NGO staff through phone calls, letters as well as during house searches and accused them of spying for foreign intelligence entities. The current environment creates a lot of insecurity and concerns among the humanitarian community and highlights the need to have a functioning problem-solving mechanism with Taliban interlocutors at provincial and national level to quickly resolve issues of occupation and seized assets.

UNAMA, [Report of the Secretary-General: The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security](#), 8 September 2021

"23. High-profile attacks by anti-Government elements occurred countrywide prior to the Taliban takeover of major cities. Between 16 May and 31 July, 18 suicide attacks were documented, compared with 11 in the prior period, including 16 suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices primarily targeting Afghan National Defence and Security Forces positions. In addition, there were 68 attacks using magnetic improvised explosive devices, including 14 in Kabul. Targeted and usually unclaimed assassinations occurred countrywide, with victims including, among others, the Policy and Planning Director of the Ministry of Urban Development and Land, killed in Kabul on 30 May; the deputy of the Ulema Shura, killed in Herat on 3 June; an appeals court provincial prosecutor and a pro-government religious scholar, killed in Logar on 7 and 12 June, respectively; and the Head of the Government Media and Information Centre, killed on 6 August. On 4 August, the Taliban claimed responsibility for an attack in Kabul on the residence of the acting Minister of Defence."

BBC, [Life in Kabul under Taliban: Where is your male escort?](#), 4 September 2021

"In some neighbourhoods, Taliban fighters go house-to-house. There's a knock on the door, a demand to hand over government phones and cars, anything of value from their old job. Sometimes even private cars are seized by Taliban who doubt it could have been afforded without some kind of corruption"

*"Westernised" young men*

*(Former) prosecutors, judges and lawyers*

*(Former) Journalists, human rights defenders, NGO representatives*

TOLO News, [153 Afghan Media Outlets Cease Operating in Less Than 1 Month](#), 13 September 2021

"Organizations supporting free media in Afghanistan said on Monday that since the fall of the former government in mid-August, 153 media outlets have stopped activity in 20 provinces.

According to officials at the organizations, these outlets include radio, print and TV channels, and both economic problems and restrictions are reportedly the main reasons.

The officials said that if the media's financial crisis is not solved and restrictions against them are not addressed, more outlets are likely to cease operating in the country."

TOLO News, [Woman Activist in Kandahar Says Family Members Beaten](#), 12 September 2021

"Fahima Rahmati, a civil society activist and the head of a charity in southern Kandahar province, claimed on Sunday that an "armed group related to the Taliban," had entered her house and beat some of her family members last night.

Miss Rahmati, who leads a charity naming Heela, (wish) said she has received death threats and her family has also been threatened.

She added that she has never worked with the government before. "Is this their general amnesty--that the Taliban are coming to my house, and beating my family members? Is governance like this?"

A man also claimed that his wife was recently killed in a Taliban shooting in Kabul. Her husband, Abdul Khaleq said: "Is this in Islam? Can someone, in Islam, kill a woman who is outside her house?"

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, [Taliban response to Afghan protests increasingly violent, UN says](#), 10 September 2021

"The U.N. rights office on Friday said that the Taliban response to peaceful marches in Afghanistan has been increasingly violent, with authorities using live ammunition, batons and whips and causing the deaths of at least four protesters. [...]

She added that the United Nations had also received reports of house-to-house searches for those who participated in the protests. Journalists covering the protests have also been intimidated.

"In one case, one journalist was reported to have been told, as he was being kicked in the head, 'You are lucky you haven't been beheaded'," Shamdasani said. "Really there has been lots of intimidation of journalists simply trying to do their job." "

BBC News, [Afghanistan: Journalists tell of beatings by Taliban](#), 10 September 2021

"Journalists in Afghanistan say that they have been beaten, detained and flogged by the Taliban when attempting to cover protests.

Photos circulating online show two journalists from Etilaatroz newspaper with welts and bruises after their arrest in the capital Kabul.

One of them, Taqi Daryabi, told the BBC he had been taken to a district police station where he was kicked and beaten." [...]

"Afghanistan's Tolo news agency reported that its cameraman had been arrested and held by the Taliban for nearly three hours.

The CPJ, an international non-governmental organisation, said at least 14 journalists had been detained and then released over the past two days."

UNOCHA, [Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot \(August 2021\)](#), 9 September 2021

"Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities

In August, the HAG recorded 32 interferences compared to 11 in July. Taliban members initiated 31 interferences, while ANSF members authored one incident. In at least 19 instances, armed Taliban members visited NGO offices with the aim to search and investigate about the NGO's activities, asking for staff and assets lists. In some instances, NGOs were asked to register their programs, or to stop female staff from attending offices and field work. On 31 August 2021, in Farah, the Provincial NGO Commissioner asked all humanitarian partners to submit their project proposals along with all related documents; further emphasizing that women were not allowed to resume their work until further notice. In five incidents, Taliban members attempted to interfere in health programs by demanding additional services and supplies, suspending health services and trying to replace some of their key staff. The absence of a clear Taliban policy on humanitarian activities, makes it challenging for provincial NGO Commissioners to make decisions which creates a certain limbo with lots of confusion among humanitarian partners which results insignificant delays in resuming humanitarian programs."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Live Rounds, Batons, Whips: Taliban Violence Against Protesters, Journalists Rising](#), 9 September 2021

"Since the Taliban issued an order banning protests "under any circumstances" earlier this week, protesters have also been beaten and detained, according to the UN's human rights spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani, while Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said "incidents involving media personnel have been on the rise in both Kabul and provincial cities," with Afghan journalists being "harassed by the Taliban, arrested, and beaten with cables." "

UNAMA, [Report of the Secretary-General: The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security](#), 8 September 2021

“On 18 August, in several provinces, including in Nangarhar and Kunar, residents celebrated the national day of Afghanistan, taking down newly raised Taliban flags. In Jalalabad, the Taliban reportedly dispersed protests by firing into crowds, resulting in the death of at least one person. Reports indicated that Taliban members had physically assaulted two local journalists taking footage of the rally. Similar incidents were reported in Kunar and Khost Provinces.

[...]

42. Human rights defenders and media workers continued to be targeted. UNAMA recorded the killing of a civil society activist and his wife by the Taliban in Helmand Province; the killing of a civil society activist in Kabul Province; the killing of an international photojournalist in Kandahar Province; and the killing of a female journalist, claimed by ISIL-K, in Kabul Province. In addition, a private radio worker was injured in an armed attack by unknown perpetrators in Ghazni Province; a journalist, a female non-governmental organization employee and a female civil society activist were threatened by unknown perpetrators in Daikundi and Herat Provinces; and a female journalist reportedly escaped an attack by ISIL-K in Nangarhar Province. In Parwan Province, Radio Barea stopped broadcasting after one of its female staff was assaulted by unknown perpetrators.

43. Reports emerged during the reporting period of media entities temporarily ceasing their activities in districts in Baghlan, Zabul, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Nuristan and Paktia Provinces after they had been overtaken by the Taliban. On 26 July, in Kandahar, the National Directorate of Security arrested four journalists after their return from a reporting trip in Spin Boldak.

Danish Immigration Service, [Afghanistan Recent developments in the security situation, impact on civilians and targeted individuals](#), 8 September 2021

“There have also been reports of Taliban fighters going house-to-house searching for journalists. [...]

The private news outlet Tolo News, have been allowed to continue their reporting with female anchors, while the Taliban has barred female anchors at Radio Television Afghanistan from returning to work. [...]

SER advised that Taliban perceive human rights defenders as an extension of the American presence in the country because they find that the idea of human rights undermine the principles of Islam.”

Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Beat Journalists](#), 8 September 2021

“Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have been detaining and assaulting journalists and imposing new restrictions on media work, Human Rights Watch said today. [...]

On September 7, 2021, Taliban security forces detained Taqi Daryabi and Nemat Naqdi, journalists from the Kabul-based media outlet Etilaat-e Roz. The reporters had been covering protests by women in Kabul demanding an end to Taliban violations of the rights of women and girls. Etilaat-e Roz reported that Taliban authorities took the two men to a police station in Kabul, placed them in separate cells, and severely beat them with cables. Both men were released on September 8 and received medical care at a hospital for injuries to their backs and faces. [...]

The Taliban authorities also detained a Tolonews photojournalist, Wahid Ahmadi, on September 7, and released him the same day. They confiscated his camera and prevented other journalists from filming the protest. [...]

Taliban commanders and fighters have long engaged in a pattern of threats, intimidation, and violence against members of the media, and have been responsible for targeted killings of journalists”

TOLO News, [Well-Known Journalist Fahim Dashti Killed in Panjshir](#), 6 September 2021

“Fahim Dashti, a well-known journalist and spokesperson for the Resistance Front, was killed during a clash in Panjshir province on Monday night.

The National Resistance Front officials said that he was targeted by Pakistan Air Force drones in Anaba district of the province.

This claim was denied by the Taliban.

Fahim Dashti held various jobs over his career including media adviser, a member of the Afghanistan Journalist Federation, managing director of Subh-e-Kabul weekly magazine, and as head of the Afghanistan National Journalists Union.

He was currently working as spokesperson for the resistance front in Panjshir province.”

OCHCHR, [Afghanistan: Journalists at risk of persecution need urgent protection – UN experts](#), 3 September 2021

“A group of UN human rights experts\* today called on all States to provide urgent protection to Afghan journalists and media workers who fear for their lives and are seeking safety abroad.

“Journalists and media workers, in particular women, are facing heightened risks since the Taliban’s political takeover of Afghanistan,” the experts said. [...]

Recalling the various resolutions on the safety of journalists adopted by the Human Rights Council in recent years, the UN experts called on the Council to uphold its own commitment and do more to address the growing threat to the safety of journalists in the country.

“Reports of targeted killings of journalists and their family members, home raids, threats and intimidation in areas controlled by the Taliban have sharply increased in recent months. This is taking place in a context where Afghanistan is already considered one of the most dangerous countries for journalists,” the experts said. [...]

“We are deeply worried about the threats and systematic human rights violations faced by female journalists, as they may be targeted for working in the media or simply being a woman in public life,” the UN experts added. [...]

The experts: Ms. Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression; Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism; Clément Voule, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; and the Working Group on discrimination against women: Ms. Melissa Upreti (Chair), Ms. Dorothy Estrada-Tanck (Vice Chair), Ms. Elizabeth Broderick, Ms. Ivana Radačić, and Ms. Meskerem Geset Techane.

#### *Ethnic minorities (e.g. Hazaras)*

Naomi Conrad & Birgitta Schuelke-Gill & Samad Sharif, Qantara.de, [Shia minority in a Sunni state: Afghanistan's repressed Hazaras face a hostile Taliban](#), 7 September 2021

“To assuage fears of a return to their brutal rule, the Taliban have put on a show of moderation. Spokesmen have repeatedly vowed to refrain from retributions and to respect the rights of women and minorities.

They even made a point of sending representatives across the country to secure Afghanistan's Ashura processions last month. The annual mourning ritual is undertaken by Shias every year to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. Hard-line Sunni groups view the practice as heresy.

Many Hazaras believe the group's self-professed inclusiveness is little more than propaganda aimed at the international community, whose development aid is a lifeline to prop up an economy teetering on the edge of collapse.

None of the Hazara men and women still in Afghanistan that we spoke to believed the assurances. Mahdi Raskih, a Hazara parliamentarian until the Taliban captured the capital, said that Hazaras face "ethnic and religious persecution" by the militant group. They were, he added, "in mortal danger."

Massacres and a harrowing message

Amnesty International's latest findings seem to prove their worst fears. On-the-ground researchers documented brutal killings of nine Hazara men in Ghazni province in central Afghanistan, which took place in early July. Six of the men, according to the report, were shot; three were tortured to death by Taliban fighters.

[...]

Habiba Sarabi, a Hazara political leader, admitted she had proof of more atrocities, but could not share the details, as it might endanger surviving eyewitnesses. Sarabi was the first female governor of Afghanistan and one of four women representing Afghanistan in the negotiations with the Taliban in Doha. When we spoke to her, she was still reeling from the Taliban's takeover. She was, she said, "in shock."

Soon after the interview, Sarabi sent a link to a short, grainy video, which showed two Taliban fighters. Speaking into the camera, one of them says they are waiting for permission from their leaders to "eliminate" all Hazaras living in Afghanistan. While we were unable to verify the video, it has nevertheless been shared widely among Hazaras to whom it sends a chilling message.

"I'm numb," said one Hazara after watching it. It had taken her breath away, she said.

The looming resurgence of Islamic State-Khorasan (ISI-K) following the withdrawal of U.S. forces and de facto collapse of the Afghan army represents yet another threat. Many fear that once the attention of the international community and media has shifted elsewhere, the Taliban will start a campaign against those who might lead a Hazara resistance.

[...]

Many Hazaras are fleeing, among them most of the well-educated, and that exodus would, Ibrahimi said, result in the Hazaras losing their voice in Afghanistan.”

Danish Immigration Service, [Afghanistan Recent developments in the security situation, impact on civilians and targeted individuals](#), 8 September 2021, p 18

“There have also been [reports](#) of Taliban targeting ethnic and religious minorities during their conquest of Afghanistan, notably Afghanistan’s Hazara population. SER [Sune Engel Rasmussen, Danish journalist] assessed that Hazaras in country would face discrimination going forward as the Taliban views them as infidels.”

BBC, [Life in Kabul under Taliban: Where is your male escort?](#), 4 September 2021

“In western Kabul, in neighbourhoods like Dasht-e-Barchi, populated largely by members of the minority Hazara community, residents whisper of house searches, of men being taken away.”

*Religious minorities (e.g. Shi’a Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Jews)*

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, [Last Afghan Jew Leaves Amid Minority Exodus In Fear Of Taliban](#), 10 September 2021

“Zablon Simintov, Afghanistan’s last Jew, has left the country after the Taliban takeover. [...]

Simintov is not the only one leaving his homeland, which in the mid-1900s boasted a 40,000-strong Jewish community.

Afghanistan’s Hindu and Sikh minorities have also shrunk from more than 200,000 in the 1980s to just a few hundred families today.

Most members of those communities in Afghanistan have already left while others plan to join exiled members of their community in India. Militant attacks have targeted their temples and leaders, killing scores, while criminals kidnap community members for ransom.

There is a risk that some of Afghanistan’s non-Muslim minorities, many of whose members fled during the tumultuous decades following the 1978 communist coup, could vanish completely now that the Taliban has returned to power.

For its part, the Taliban has attempted to assuage the fears of non-Muslim Afghans. The militants have visited Sikh temples to try and assure the remaining members of the community of their commitment to their safety and well-being.

“The Islamic Emirate will take serious and effective steps to grant human rights, rights of the minorities and the marginalized communities within the framework of the holy religion of Islam,” a September 7 statement by the Taliban government said.

But members of minority communities find it difficult to trust such statements.”

*LGBTQI+ people, including hijras*

India Today, [We’ll be killed: Afghanistan’s LGBTQ+ community forced to live in hiding under Taliban regime](#) 18 September 2021

“After the return of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, members of the LGBTQ+ community are forced to live in hiding in fear of their lives. They urged human rights advocates outside the country to help them escape the Taliban regime.”

*Disability rights activists*

The Nation, [The Taliban Is Targeting Disability Rights Activists](#), 2 September 2021

“The day the Taliban seized control of Kabul, they lobbed a grenade into A’s yard, and he promptly left home to seek refuge. A lower-limb amputee and prominent disability rights activist, he’s at risk because of his disability rights organization’s association with the United States. [...]”

As of Monday, the Taliban has shown up at A’s house three times. They also visited the office of the organization, where they asked security guards for A’s whereabouts. A is moving from house to house to evade capture. At least 50 disability rights activists like A and their families are imperiled, says Isabel Hodge, the executive director of the United States International Council on Disabilities (USICD).”

## SECTION 2 - COI SOURCES

*This section is a list of potentially relevant COI sources that we scanned systematically for this report. The list is non-exhaustive and will be regularly reviewed and updated. The date in brackets shows the last time a researcher consulted this source.*

### International Organisations

- [International Organization for Migration \(IOM \(Afghanistan\)\)](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021] - most recent report 21.09.2021
- [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan \(UNAMA\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [United Nations Children’s Fund \(UNICEF\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner \(UNOHCHR\) \(Afghanistan news\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(UNOCHA\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [Humanitarian Response \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) (Afghanistan)
  - [Afghanistan Situation Page](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [Operational Data Portal](#) [22.09.2021]
- [United Nations Secretary-General reports](#) [22.09.2021]

### Intergovernmental Sources

- [European Asylum Support Office \(EASO\) COI Portal](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [COI Report September 2021](#)

### Government sources

- [Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)
  - [Country Information reports](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Danish Immigration Service](#)
  - [Country Reports](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)
  - [ambtsbericht](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service](#)
  - [landenrapporten](#), specifically on the [situation in Afghanistan](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada](#)
  - [Responses to Information Requests](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [National Documentation Packages](#) [22.09.2021]



- US State Department, [US Visa: Reciprocity and Civil Documents by Country](#) [22.09.2021]
- The [Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Landinfo](#)
  - [Afghan publications page](#) [22.09.2021]
- [French Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)
  - [dossiers pays](#) [22.09.2021]

**NGOS and think tanks** [Note: This list focuses on local and national organisations as well as those international organisations with a local presence]

- [Assessment Capacities Project \(ACAPS\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Afghanistan Analysts Network \(AAN\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission \(AIHRC\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit \(AREU\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Amnesty International \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project \(ACLED\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Brookings \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [Lawfare \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Care International \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Chatham House \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Center for Strategic & International Studies \(CSIS\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Congressional Research Service](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Council on Foreign Relations \(CFR\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [Global Conflict Tracker \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Danish Refugee Council \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Global Shelter Cluster \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Heinrich Boll Stiftung \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Human Rights Watch \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [International Crisis Group \(ICG\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [CrisisWatch Database](#) [22.09.2021]
- [International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [International Federation for Human Rights \(FIDH\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [International Institute for Strategic Studies \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [International NGO Safety Organisation \(INSO\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [International Rescue Committee \(IRC\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Jamestown Foundation \(Central Asia\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Long War Journal](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Medecin Sans Frontieres \(MSF\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Norwegian Refugee Council \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Refugees International \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Royal United Services Institute \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Samuel Hall \(South and Central Asia\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Save the Children \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
  - [Blog \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction \(SIGAR\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Swedish Committee for Afghanistan](#) [22.09.2021]
- [United States Institute of Peace \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]

**Media** [Additional media sources such as BBC, Reuters, France24 may be included in this report but have not been systematically checked on a weekly basis]

- [Afghan Islamic Press](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Afghan Voice Agency \(AVA\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Al Jazeera \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Ariana News](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Deutsche Welle \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Kabul Now](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Khaama Press \(Afghan News Agency\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Pajhwok Afghan News \(Afghan News Agency\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Qantara.de](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara](#) [22.09.2021]
- [The New Humanitarian](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Thomson Reuters Foundation News \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [ToloNews](#) [22.09.2021]

**Contacts on the ground** [Listed here are sources that may not report regularly on Afghanistan, but who might be willing to be contacted as they have a presence in Afghanistan]

- [ACTED \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Afghan Aid](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Afghan Women's Education Centre](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Afghanistan Institute for Civil Society \(AICS\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Agha Khan Foundation \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Aschiana Foundation](#) [22.09.2021]
- [The Liaison Office](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Mercy Corps \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]
- [Oxfam \(Afghanistan\)](#) [22.09.2021]

Additional useful COI databases for case-specific country research (non-exhaustive):

- [\*Asylos's research notes \[Subscription only\]\*](#)
- [\*COI Forum \[Subscription only\]\*](#)
- [\*EASO COI Portal \[European Asylum Support Office's portal\]\*](#)
- [\*Electronic Immigration Network \[Subscription only\]\*](#)
- [\*ECOI.net \[European Country of Origin Information Network\]\*](#)
- [\*Refworld \[UNHCR's portal\]\*](#)
- [\*ReliefWeb\*](#)

For useful sources arranged by theme consult ARC Foundation's free [Thematic COI Sources toolkit](#).

For any case-specific research requests please get in touch with [Asylos](#).