

Aus Liebe zum Menschen.

Anfragebeantwortung zu Afghanistan: Humanitäre Lage [a-11758]

6. Dezember 2021



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1 Nahrungsmittelsicherheit, Wasserversorgung

1.1 Unzureichende Nahrungsversorgung und Unterernährung

Zahlreichen Quellen zufolge habe ein großer Teil der afghanischen Bevölkerung Schwierigkeiten, die tägliche Ernährung sicherzustellen (REACH, 3. Dezember 2021, S. 2; WFP, 17. November 2021, S. 1; Gandhara, 16. November 2021; HRW, 11. November 2021; WFP, 20. Oktober 2021, S. 1). Zwischen September 2021 und Oktober 2021 seien laut einem Bericht der Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 18,8 Millionen Menschen in Afghanistan, also 47 Prozent der Bevölkerung, einem hohen Maß an akuter Nahrungsmittelunsicherheit ausgesetzt gewesen. Im Vergleich zum selben Zeitraum des vorangegangenen Jahres stelle dies einen Anstieg von 30 Prozent dar. Diese Menschen seien demnach der IPC-Stufe 3, Menschen in der Krise („People in Crisis“), sowie der vierthöchsten IPC-Stufe, Menschen in Notsituation („People in Emergency“), zuzuordnen, während keine Menschen der höchsten Stufe der Klassifizierung, Stufe 5, Menschen in Katastrophensituation („People in Catastrophe“), zugeordnet worden seien. Zwischen November 2021 und März 2022 werde die Zahl der Menschen, die einem hohen Maß an akuter Nahrungsmittelunsicherheit ausgesetzt seien, auf 22,8 Millionen, also 55 Prozent der Bevölkerung, ansteigen, so die Prognose (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 1). Mit dieser prognostizierten Zahl wäre laut dem WFP die höchste Zahl von Menschen erreicht, die jemals in Afghanistan in akuter Ernährungsunsicherheit gelebt habe. Sie gehöre außerdem zu den höchsten Werten akuter Ernährungsunsicherheit weltweit (WFP, 17. November 2021, S. 1). Die Situation in Afghanistan stelle laut dem von BBC interviewten Geschäftsführer von WFP eine der schlimmsten humanitären Katastrophen weltweit dar, wenn nicht die schlimmste (BBC, 25. Oktober 2021).

Landesweit seien Menschen akut unterernährt (HRW, 11. November 2021) und die Zahl der schweren Fälle akuter Unterernährung steige (UNOCHA, 26. November 2021, S. 1). 3,2 Millionen Kinder im Alter von unter fünf Jahren und 700.000 schwangere und stillende Mütter seien von akuter Unterernährung bedroht (WFP, 17. November 2021, S. 1). Unterernährung habe sich bereits vor den jüngsten politischen Ereignissen als große Problematik abgezeichnet, so Ärzte ohne Grenzen (Médecin sans frontières - MSF) am 10. November 2021. Zwischen Mai und September 2021 sei die Zahl der Menschen, die im therapeutischen Ernährungszentrum von MSF in Herat aufgenommen worden sei, um 40 Prozent im Vergleich zum selben Zeitraum des Vorjahres gestiegen. Die Situation habe sich zunehmend verschlechtert. In den Wochen, die dem Bericht vorangingen, habe MSF mehr als 60 Patient·innen pro Woche aufgenommen, und auch die Zahl hospitalisierter Patient·innen sei gestiegen. Die Patient·innen und ihre Familien würden über 15 Kilometer weit anreisen, manche kämen aus über 100 Kilometer fernen Provinzen wie Badghis, Ghor und Farah (MSF, 10. November 2021). Erstmals sei die städtische Bevölkerung in einem ähnlichen Ausmaß von Nahrungsmittelunsicherheit betroffen wie die ländliche Bevölkerung (WFP, 17. November 2021, S. 1). Mitte November 2021 sei auch in einem Krankenhaus in Spin Boldak in der Provinz Kandahar ein Anstieg an schweren Fällen akuter Mangelernährung zu beobachten gewesen (UNOCHA, 26. November 2021). Zudem betreffe das Problem der Unterernährung Personen aller Bildungsschichten (WFP, 22. September 2021, S. 1).

1.2 Bewältigungsstrategien der Bevölkerung

Kaum jemand habe genug Geld, um Nahrungsmittel zu kaufen. Drei von vier Haushalte müssten die Größe der Essenrationen reduzieren, Erwachsene würden weniger zu sich nehmen, damit den Kindern mehr bliebe, und frauengeführte Haushalte würden auf Mahlzeiten verzichten und die Größe der Portionen noch stärker rationieren als männergeführte Haushalte (WFP, 20. Oktober 2021, S. 1). Frauen und Mädchen hätten es aufgrund der durch die Taliban auferlegten Beschränkungen, welche Frauen von den meisten Jobs ausschließen würden, unverhältnismäßig schwerer an Nahrungsmittel zu kommen (HRW, 11. November 2021). Drei von vier Haushalten müssten sich von günstigeren Lebensmitteln ernähren (74,5 Prozent) oder Lebensmittel ausborgen (76,7 Prozent) (WFP, 22. September 2021, S. 1). Mit Stand Ende September 2021 seien fünf von zehn Haushalten mindestens einmal in den vorangegangenen zwei Wochen die Lebensmittel ausgegangen und nur fünf Prozent der Afghan·innen hätten noch ausreichend zu essen gehabt. Im Vergleich zum Zeitraum vor dem 15. August 2021 sei die Anzahl der Afghan·innen, die nicht genug Nahrungsmittel einnehmen würden, mit Stand Mitte September 2021 um 15 Prozentpunkte auf 95 Prozent angestiegen. Der durchschnittliche Haushalt habe an sieben von sieben Tagen Getreide, an weniger als 2 Tagen Gemüse und an höchstens einem Tag Obst oder Hülsenfrüchte zu sich genommen. Milchprodukte seien im Durchschnitt an etwa 0,3 Tagen und tierische Proteine an 0,1 Tagen, also jeweils einmal alle paar Wochen, eingenommen worden (WFP, 22. September 2021, S. 1-2).

Laut einer Studie von REACH vom 3. Dezember¹ seien 98 Prozent der befragten Haushalte verschuldet gewesen, wobei der durchschnittliche Schuldenbetrag bei 21.112 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet zirka 198 Euro²) gelegen habe. 98 Prozent der Befragten hätten den Bedarf an Nahrungsmitteln als Grund für die Verschuldung genannt (REACH, 3. Dezember 2021, S. 1). Familien, denen es an Geld und Nahrung mangle, würden ihre Besitztümer verkaufen und versuchen, das Land zu verlassen. Es gebe zunehmend Medienberichte über Menschen, die ihre Kinder – in den meisten Fällen Mädchen – verkaufen würden, um Nahrungsmittel zu kaufen oder Schulden zurückzuzahlen (HRW, 11. November 2021). Im Westen Afghanistans seien einige Fälle dokumentiert worden, in denen Menschen ihre Nieren als Organtransplantate verkauft hätten, damit ihre Familien überleben können (Gandhara, 16. November 2021).

Die Hauptursachen für die akute Nahrungsmittelunsicherheit seien unter anderem die Dürre und deren Auswirkungen auf Kulturpflanzen und Nutztiere, der Zusammenbruch der öffentlichen Dienstleistungen, die COVID-19-Pandemie, eine schwerwiegende wirtschaftliche Krise, die mangelnde Liquidität und geschlossene Banken sowie steigende Lebensmittelpreise (Gandhara, 16. November 2021; MSF, 10. November 2021; IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 1).

¹ Basierend auf der Befragung von 279 Haushalten in den Provinzen Badachschan, Baghlan, Balch, Ghor, Dschuzdschan, Kandahar, Samangan, Sar-e-Pul und Tachar im Monat Oktober 2021.

² Alle Umrechnungen in dieser Anfragebeantwortung wurden mit folgendem Währungsrechner vorgenommen: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_de. Da der Afghani starken Wert Schwankungen ausgesetzt ist, stellt die Umrechnung der Preise in Euro in der vorliegenden Anfragebeantwortung lediglich eine grobe, zeitgebundene Orientierung dar.

1.3 Lebensmittelpreise

Eine Reihe von Quellen berichtete über den Anstieg von Lebensmittelpreisen (WFP, 15. November 2021; IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 2) in Folge der mit der Machtübernahme der Taliban am 15. August 2021 einhergehenden wirtschaftlichen Folgen (USIP, 17. November 2021; AAN, 6. September 2021). Während in der Regel der Zeitraum August bis September, welcher die Nacherntesaison darstelle, zu einer Reduktion der Preise für Weizen und Weizengrundmehl führe, sei der Preis für Weizengrundmehl 2021 zwischen Juni und September um 28 Prozent gestiegen (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 2). So sei der Preis für Weizengrundmehl im niedrigen Preissegment („Low price“) zwischen der letzten Juni- und der zweiten Novemberwoche 2021 um 32,1 Prozent und im hohen Preissegment („High price“) um 31,1 Prozent gestiegen. Der Weizenpreis sei in diesem Zeitraum um 25,8 Prozent gestiegen (WFP, 15. November 2021). Der Preis für Speiseöl sei verglichen zum selben Zeitraum des Jahres 2020 um 55 Prozent und um mehr als 80 Prozent im Vergleich zum letzten 5-Jahres-Durchschnitt gestiegen (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 2) sowie zwischen der letzten Juni- und der zweiten Novemberwoche 2021 um 25,2 Prozent (WFP, 15. November 2021).

Auch Bewohner Kabuls und anderer Orte hätten im September 2021 berichtet, dass der Preis zahlreicher Grundnahrungsmittel gestiegen sei. So sei der Preis für 49 Kilogramm Mehl von etwa 1.700 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet 15,90 Euro) auf etwa 1.900 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet 17,80 Euro) gestiegen, in ländlichen Gebieten auf 2.200 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet 20,59 Euro). Fünf Liter Öl würden nicht wie bisher 600 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet 5,61 Euro), sondern 750 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet 7,00 Euro) kosten. Der Preis für Reis sei stabil geblieben (AAN, 6. September 2021) mit einem Anstieg von 4,8 Prozent bei hochwertigem bzw. 5 Prozent bei minderwertigem Reis zwischen der letzten Juni- und zweiten Novemberwoche 2021 (WFP, 15. November 2021). Der Preisanstieg betreffe besonders importierte Güter (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 2; WFP, 15. November 2021).

1.4 Importabhängigkeit

Afghanistan sei sehr importabhängig (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 131; UNAMA, 9. September 2021; AAN, 6. September 2021). Unter Bezugnahme auf eine Analyse der Weltbank, die dem Afghanistan Analyst Network (AAN) zur Verfügung gestellt worden sei, berichtete AAN, dass Importe 45 Prozent des afghanischen BIP ausmachen würden, was das Sechsfache der Exporte des Landes sei, die nur sieben Prozent des BIP ausmachen würden. Diese Differenz sei in der Vergangenheit durch ausländische Hilfsgelder ausgeglichen worden. Zu den importierten Gütern würden Düngemittel, Saatgut und Nahrungsmittel zählen, darunter auch Grundnahrungsmittel wie Weizen und Reis. Abhängig vom inländischen Ernteertrag würden 20 bis 40 Prozent des Weizens und 27 Prozent des im Inland konsumierten Reises importiert (AAN, 6. September 2021). Da es in den vergangenen Jahren zunehmend schwierig geworden sei, den heimischen Bedarf an wichtigem Getreide wie Weizen durch eigene Produktion zu decken, habe sich die ehemalige afghanische Regierung auf den Import dieser Güter, vornehmlich aus Kasachstan, Pakistan und Usbekistan, gestützt. Ende August 2021 habe Kasachstan verkündet, es sei wegen der Zahlungsunfähigkeit des Landes aufgrund des durch die USA eingefrorenen afghanischen Vermögens nicht gewillt, Weizen nach Afghanistan zu importieren (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 131).

1.5 Humanitäre Unterstützung im Bereich Nahrungsmittelsicherheit

Jene Organisationen, die die meiste humanitäre Unterstützung leisten würden, könnten nach wie vor im Land operieren. So sei es dem WFP vor und nach der Machtübernahme durch die Taliban möglich gewesen, alle Teile des Landes zu erreichen. Der Wintereinbruch würde humanitäre Hilfe in entlegenen Gebieten, von denen manche von harten Wintern gekennzeichnet seien, möglicherweise gerade dort erschweren, wo sie am dringendsten benötigt werde (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 2). Am 18. November 2021 berichtete der Standard, dass das WFP, das Rote Kreuz und der Rote Halbmond im Land Hilfe leisten würden. Unter anderem würden die Organisationen mit 240 Trucks im Land Essen ausliefern. Laut Rotem Kreuz und WFP würden die Taliban dabei keinerlei Probleme bereiten (Der Standard, 18. November 2021). Mit Stand September 2021 hätten humanitäre Organisationen afghanistanweit in diversen Bereichen Unterstützung geleistet, darunter auch in den Bereichen Nahrungsmittelsicherheit, Ernährung und Landwirtschaft (USAID, 30. September 2021, S. 2). UNOCHA berichtete von Einsätzen zur Erhöhung der Nahrungsmittelsicherheit, wie die Ausgabe von Lebensmittelpaketen, Bargeld, Düngemitteln, Saatgut oder Viehfutter, im Süden, Nord-Osten, Norden, Osten und Zentrum Afghanistans (UNOCHA, 26. November 2021, S. 2). Mit Stand 17. November 2021 habe das WFP 13,7 Millionen Menschen, also bereits über 4 Millionen Menschen mehr als im Jahr 2020, unterstützt, davon 5,5 Millionen im Oktober 2021 (WFP, 17. November 2021, S. 1). Im Vergleich zu den Vorjahren sei die humanitäre Hilfe bedeutend aufgestockt worden und beginnend mit Dezember 2021 sei geplant, die Hilfe weiter aufzustocken und neun Millionen Menschen zu erreichen. Mit Stand Oktober 2021 sei jedoch nur 40 Prozent der Finanzierung der geplanten Unterstützungsleistungen bestätigt gewesen und die mangelnde Finanzierung stelle das größte Hindernis für die Verstärkung der humanitären Hilfe dar (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 2). Laut dem WFP würden mit Stand September 2021 dringend 200 Millionen US-Dollar benötigt, um den Bedarf an humanitärer Unterstützung im Bereich Nahrungsmittelsicherheit bis Ende 2021 zu decken (WFP, 22. September 2021, S. 1).

1.6 Auswirkungen der Dürre

Am 2. Juni 2021 habe die afghanische Regierung offiziell erklärt, das Land befände sich in einer Dürrephase (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 131). Nach einer unterdurchschnittlichen Niederschlagsmenge und überdurchschnittlichen Temperaturen im Winter 2020-2021 in Zusammenhang mit dem Wetterereignis La Niña sei Afghanistan 2021 von einer schweren Dürre, insbesondere in westlichen, nördlichen und südlichen Regionen, betroffen gewesen. Die Folgen einer im Jahr 2018 vorangegangenen Dürre seien durch die COVID-19-Pandemie und die Konfliktsituation verstärkt worden. Es werde erwartet, dass die aktuelle zweite Dürre innerhalb von vier Jahren bedeutende Auswirkungen auf einen großen Teil des Landes haben werde (ACTED, September 2021, S. 1). Man gehe davon aus, dass diese Dürre den Zugang zu Nahrungsmitteln im Winter 2021 und Frühling 2022 weiter verschlechtern werde (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 1). In wichtigen landwirtschaftlichen Regionen regne es jährlich um bis zu 40 Prozent weniger als zuvor (Gandhara, 16. November 2021; Vox, 15. September 2021). Dies betreffe östliche, nördliche und zentrale Hochlandregionen im Frühjahr, wo die Kulturpflanzen, die hauptsächlich durch Regenfeldbau bewässert werden, das Wasser besonders dringend benötigen würden (Vox, 15. September 2021). 25 der 34 Provinzen seien von schwerer Dürre betroffen gewesen (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 1). Der reduzierte Niederschlag und geringere Schneeschmelze führe zu einem akuten Wassermangel und reduziere den Zugang zu sauberem

Trinkwasser (ACTED, September 2021, S. 3). Es werde aufgrund der Dürre mit einem starken Rückgang der Weizen-, Reis- und Gemüseerträge für das Jahr 2021 gerechnet (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 131).

Ein großer Teil der afghanischen Bevölkerung lebe zu einem Teil von der Landwirtschaft (Vox, 15. September 2021). 80 Prozent der afghanischen Bevölkerung lebe in ländlichen Gegenden und etwa 50 Prozent der afghanischen Haushalte würden einen Teil ihres Einkommens aus der Landwirtschaft beziehen. Diese biete gleichzeitig etwa 40 Prozent der Bevölkerung Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten (ACTED, September 2021, S. 1). Unter Bezugnahme auf das Seasonal Food Security Assessment (SFSA) des Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) für das Jahr 2021 berichtete IPC, dass die Dürre für 37 Prozent der ländlichen Bevölkerung einen schweren Schock bedeutet habe. Daneben hätten Ungezieferbefall und Erkrankungen der Kulturpflanzen sowie der mangelnde Zugang zu Düngemitteln und Saatgut Haushalten mit Zugang zu landwirtschaftlichem Grund Probleme bereitet. Nur 24 Prozent der Bauern hätten Zugang zu nicht zertifiziertem Saatgut und nur acht Prozent zu zertifiziertem Saatgut gehabt, während der Preis für Düngemittel im Vergleich zum Vorjahr um 25 bis 30 Prozent gestiegen sei. Ebenso hätten schlecht gewartete oder durch den Konflikt beschädigte Bewässerungssysteme die Nahrungsmittelproduktion beeinflusst. Die schlechte Ernte habe zu einem bedeutenden Rückgang der Lebensmittelreserven der Haushalte geführt. Im Vergleich zum letzten Jahr habe sich die Anzahl der Haushalte mit Getreidevorräten für weniger als drei Monate von 28 auf 57 Prozent verdoppelt, während die Anzahl der Haushalte mit Vorräten für weniger als einen Monat von sieben auf 19 Prozent gestiegen sei. Vom Viehbestand, der eine bedeutende Einnahme- und Nahrungsquelle für die ländliche Bevölkerung darstelle, seien laut Aussagen des Präsidialamtes vom Juni 2021 drei Millionen Tiere in Gefahr (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 2). Die Dürre bringe besonders für die ärmsten und vulnerabelsten Kleinbauern, die vom Anbau regenbewässerten Getreides abhängig seien, gravierende Folgen mit sich. Die Fläche des im Jahr 2021 im Regenfeldbau angebauten Weizens habe sich im Jahr 2021 um 62 Prozent gegenüber dem Vorjahr reduziert, was einen um 47 Prozent niedrigeren Ertrag im Vergleich zum Vorjahr zur Folge gehabt habe (ACTED, September 2021, S. 3).

1.7 Trinkwasserversorgung

Laut REACH hätten 34 Prozent der von REACH im Oktober 2021 befragten Haushalte berichtet, auf Wasser aus bedenklichen Wasserquellen („unimproved water source“) angewiesen zu sein, während 23 Prozent der Haushalte berichtet hätten, nicht genug Wasser für den Haushaltsgebrauch, also zum Trinken, Kochen und Baden, zur Verfügung zu haben. Die primäre Wasserquelle von 25 Prozent der Haushalte sei weiter als 500 Meter von der Unterkunft entfernt gewesen, und 12 Prozent der Haushalte hätten keine Möglichkeit gehabt, sich die Hände zu waschen (REACH, 3. Dezember 2021, S. 2). UNOCHA berichtete im November 2021 von Wassertrucks, die in die Provinzen Balch, Badghis, Kandahar, Helmand und Wardak ausgesandt worden seien. Wassertransporte seien ein letztes Mittel, um Vertreibung in Gebieten zu vermeiden, in denen die Menschen auf Regenwasser angewiesen seien, weil kein Trinkwasser zur Verfügung stehe oder das Grundwasser einen hohen Salzgehalt aufweise (UNOCHA, 3. November 2021, S. 8).

Während Gesundheitseinrichtungen in Teilen Afghanistans geschlossen hätten, würden sie in der Hauptstadt ohne Wasserversorgung weiterbetrieben (UNHCR, 8. November 2021). Einem

Krankenhaus in Spin Boldak in der Provinz Kandahar fehle es unter anderem an Wasser (UNOCHA, 26. November 2021, S. 1). Zudem wurde berichtet, dass aufgrund eines Ausbruches der akuten, wässrigen Diarrhöe diverse Maßnahmen in Kabul und 16 Provinzen getroffen worden seien, um eine Kontamination der Wasserversorgung zu verhindern (UNOCHA, 3. November 2021, S. 8).

2 Gesundheitssystem, Medikamente

Bereits im September 2021 warnte die Weltgesundheitsorganisation (World Health Organisation, WHO) vor dem Zusammenbruch des afghanischen Gesundheitssystems. Auf Basis einer Delegationsreise und Gesprächen mit der Taliban-Führung, UN-Partnerorganisationen, Gesundheitspersonal, Patient·innen und WHO-Mitarbeiter·innen habe die WHO festgestellt, dass dem Land eine humanitäre Katastrophe drohe, wenn nicht umgehend Maßnahmen ergriffen würden (WHO, 22. September 2021). Mehreren Berichten von Medien, NGOs und internationalen Organisationen zufolge hätten die Nicht-Ausbezahlung von Hilfsgeldern, das Einfrieren von Geldreserven der Vorgängerregierung sowie die US-Sanktionen seit der Machtergreifung der Taliban im August 2021 das afghanische Gesundheitssystem vor enorme Herausforderungen gestellt (AAN, 11. November 2021; siehe auch Al Jazeera, 29. November 2021; ICR, 24. November 2021; ICRC, 22. November 2021; WHO, 22. September 2021).

Die WHO berichtete weiters, dass nur 17 Prozent aller zu „Sehatmandi“ (dem größten von ausländischen Geldern unterstützten Gesundheitsprojekt des Landes) gehörende Gesundheitseinrichtungen mit Stand September 2021 voll funktionsfähig gewesen seien. Der Zusammenbruch des Gesundheitswesens schränke die Verfügbarkeit grundlegender und wichtiger medizinischer Versorgung und Notfallmaßnahmen ein und wirke sich negativ auf die Ausrottung der Kinderlähmung aus. Neun von 37 COVID-19-Krankenhäuser seien zudem bereits geschlossen. Alle Aspekte der COVID-19-Bekämpfung, einschließlich Überwachung, Tests und Impfungen, seien heruntergefahren worden. (WHO, 22. September 2021)

Am 22. November erklärte das International Komitee vom Roten Kreuz (International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC), dass es glücklicherweise gelungen sei, 18 Regional- und Provinzkrankenhäusern und den dort tätigen 5.100 Mitarbeiter·innen Unterstützung zukommen zu lassen. So solle ein völliger Stillstand des öffentlichen Gesundheitssystems in Afghanistan verhindert werden. Diese Unterstützung sei auf sechs Monate ausgelegt und umfasse die Finanzierung der laufenden Kosten und der medizinischen Versorgung. (ICRC, 22. November 2021)

2.1 Medizinische Infrastruktur und Personal

Anfang November 2021 teilte UNHCR mit, dass Gesundheitseinrichtungen in mehreren Teilen Afghanistans geschlossen und Krankenhäuser in der Hauptstadt teilweise weder Strom- noch Wasserversorgung hätten. Nach Angaben des Roten Kreuzes hätten seit der Machtübernahme durch die Taliban mehr als 2.000 Gesundheitseinrichtungen geschlossen werden müssen (UNHCR, 8. November 2021). In jenen Gesundheitseinrichtungen, die nach wie vor Patient·innen betreuen würden, hätten viele Bedienstete seit Monaten keine Gehälter erhalten (UNHCR, 8. November 2021; siehe auch Al Jazeera, 29. November 2021; AAN, 11. November 2021; Gandhara, 3. November 2021; WHO, 22. September 2021). In einer am 21. November veröffentlichten Reportage des britischen Guardian wird die Situation in einem Krankenhaus

im ländlichen Helmand beleuchtet. Zwar seien die Straßen zu den Krankenhäusern nun frei von Bomben und es gebe keine Schießereien, was zuvor viele Menschen in den Dörfern von Helmand daran gehindert habe, medizinische Versorgung zu erhalten, jedoch seien nun die Krankenhäuser und Kliniken nicht mehr richtig funktionsfähig. Auch im Gereshk-Krankenhaus in Helmand habe das Personal monatelang keine Gehälter bekommen. Weil dem Krankenhaus auch das Geld gefehlt habe, um Treibstoff für den Stromgenerator zu bezahlen, habe man den Operationssaal dicht machen müssen. Patient·innen, die lebensnotwendige Operationen benötigen würden, müssten seither per Taxi in das Stunden entfernte, von Ärzte ohne Grenzen (Médecins Sans Frontières, MSF) betreute Krankenhaus in Laschkar Gah gebracht werden. Das Krankenhaus in Laschkar Gah sei das einzige voll funktionsfähige medizinische Zentrum für mindestens 1,5 Millionen Menschen in der Provinz und inoffiziell für Hunderttausende weitere in den Nachbarprovinzen. An manchen Tagen würden sich mehr als 700 Patient·innen in der Notaufnahme, die für kaum mehr als die Hälfte dieser Zahl ausgelegt sei, drängen. Es sei vielleicht schwer, sich ein kollabierendes Gesundheitssystem vorzustellen, aber man könne die menschlichen Kosten der fehlenden Finanzierung im Krankenhaus in Helmand an den geschwächten Körpern der Kinder sehen, die von Krankheit und Unterernährung gezeichnet seien oder in die Leichenhalle gerollt werden müssten, so der Projektkoordinator von Ärzte ohne Grenzen in Helmand gegenüber dem Guardian (The Guardian, 21. November 2021). Die Schließungen bzw. Einschränkung des Betriebs im Gesundheitsbereich hätten zur Folge, dass das Gesundheitspersonal schwerwiegende Entscheidungen darüber treffen müsse, welche Patient·innen gerettet würden und welche sterben müssten (WHO, 22. September 2021; The Guardian, 21. November 2021).

2.2 Medizinbedarf und Medikamente

Doch nicht nur an den Gehältern des Personals, sondern auch an Medizinbedarf mangle es (WHO, 22. September 2021; siehe auch Al Jazeera, 29. November 2021; The New York Times, 27. November 2021; The Guardian, 21. November 2021). Teilweise seien Krankenhäuser nicht in der Lage sich essentielles Versorgungsmaterial zu leisten (Al Jazeera, 29. November 2021), mancherorts fehle es an Handschuhen (The Guardian, 21. November 2021), Kochsalzlösung oder Verbandsmaterial (The Washington Post, 28. November 2021). Die Beeinträchtigungen des Handels hätten außerdem zu Engpässen bei Medikamenten geführt, während der Zusammenbruch der Finanzdienstleistungen die Händler, die für ihre Importe auf US-Dollar und Bankkredite angewiesen seien, in den Ruin getrieben habe (The New York Times, 27. November 2021). Bezugnehmend auf Informationen von Beamten und Bewohner·innen Kabuls berichtet auch die afghanische Onlinezeitung TOLO News Ende November 2021, dass es in Kabuls Apotheken an Medikamenten mangle, da viele pharmazeutische Unternehmen ihre Tätigkeiten eingestellt hätten und die Einfuhr von Medikamenten schwierig sei. Der Vorsitzende der Afghan Medicine Service Union habe angegeben, dass es zu wenig Rohstoffe für die Produktion gebe und die Bestände an benötigten Medikamenten am Markt zurückgehen würden. Aufgrund des Importstopps von Medikamenten würden zudem die Medikamentenpreise in die Höhe schnellen (TOLO News, 30. November 2021). UNHCR konstatierte bereits Anfang November, dass Patient·innen gezwungen seien, ihre Medikamente selbst zu kaufen, was inmitten einer Wirtschaftskrise kein leichtes Unterfangen darstelle (UNHCR, 8. November 2021, S. 2; siehe auch The New York Times, 27. November 2021).

Einem weiteren Artikel von TOLO News zufolge seien die Sterblichkeitsrate unterernährter Kinder sowie die Anzahl der Kinder, die in Krankenhäuser eingeliefert würden, aufgrund des schwerwiegenden Mangels an Medizinbedarf rasant gestiegen. (TOLO News, 26. November 2021). Die internationale Hilfsorganisation IRC führte Ende November 2021 an, dass 60 Prozent der von IRC untersuchten Gesundheitseinrichtungen nicht in der Lage seien, lebenswichtige Ernährungsprogramme bereitzustellen (IRC, 24. November 2021).

2.3 Medizinische Versorgung unter der Herrschaft der Taliban

Einem am 20. September 2021 veröffentlichten Bericht der BBC zufolge wirke sich die Machtergreifung der Taliban auch auf bestehende Regeln innerhalb der Krankenhäuser aus. So sei es einem männlichen Arzt nun nicht mehr gestattet, eine Patientin (alleine) zu behandeln. Zudem sei es vorgesehen, dass Frauen nur in Begleitung eines Mannes außer Haus gehen. Dies würde auch Arztbesuche miteinschließen. Eine Hebamme habe gegenüber der BBC erklärt, dass die Notwendigkeit einer männlichen Aufsichtsperson bedeute, dass viele Frauen nicht zu wichtigen Untersuchungen und viele weibliche Beschäftigte im Gesundheitswesen nicht zur Arbeit gehen könnten. (BBC News, 20. September 2021)

Am 3. November wurde zudem berichtet, dass ein Anschlag auf ein Kabuler Krankenhaus 25 Menschenleben gefordert und mehr als 50 weitere Personen mit Verletzungen zurückgelassen habe. Die Explosionen hätten auf den Eingang des 400-Betten-Krankenhauses Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan abgezielt und sei von der Gruppe ISKP (Islamischer Staat in der Provinz Khorasan) verübt worden. (Reuters, 3. November 2021)

Eine Sammlung weiterer Quellen zur aktuellen Situation des medizinischen Versorgungssystems finden sich in folgendem Dokument:

- Asylos / ARC – Asylum Research Centre / Clifford Chance: Afghanistan: COI Repository [1st September - 24th November 2021], 25. November 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2064528/afghanistancoirepository1september-24november2021.pdf>

3 Banken- und Finanzsystem nach Machtübernahme der Taliban

3.1 Informationen zur kritischen Wirtschaftslage

Wie von einer Vielzahl an Quellen seit September 2021 berichtet, befindet sich die afghanische Wirtschaft seit der neuerlichen Machtübernahme der Taliban im August 2021 im freien Fall (HRW, 4. November 2021; SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021; IPS, 29. Oktober 2021; AAN, 6. September 2021). Gründe hierfür seien weit verbreitete Einkommensverluste, steigende Lebensmittelkosten, die Abkoppelung von globalen Finanzsystemen sowie eine extreme Bargeldknappheit (HRW, 4. November 2021; IPS, 29. Oktober 2021). Die abrupte Einstellung der Entwicklungshilfe, die vor der Machtergreifung der Taliban 75 Prozent des afghanischen Budgets ausgemacht habe, habe sich außerdem enorm auf die Wirtschaft (The New York Times, 27. November 2021; IPS, 29. Oktober 2021; siehe auch AAN, 6. September 2021) und öffentliche Dienstleistungen ausgewirkt (NRC, 19. Oktober 2021). Während bei mehreren westlichen Staaten noch eine „wait and see“-Stimmung vorgeherrscht habe und man weitere Geldflüsse an Bedingungen und das konkrete Verhalten der Taliban-Regierung knüpfen habe

wollen (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 122), riefen das Entwicklungsprogramm der Vereinten Nationen (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP) sowie mehrere Menschenrechtorganisationen die Weltgemeinschaft Ende November 2021 dringend zu raschem Handeln auf (UNDP, 22. November 2021; AI, 23. November 2021; NRC, 19. Oktober 2021). Die Kombination aus der Suspendierung ausländischer Hilfe, dem Einfrieren von Vermögenswerten der afghanischen Regierung und internationalen Sanktionen gegen die Taliban habe das Land, das bereits unter großer Armut gelitten habe, in eine schwerwiegende Wirtschaftskrise gestürzt (AI, 23. November 2021).

3.2 Informationen zum Banken- und Finanzsystem und zum Bargeldmangel

Insbesondere der drohende Kollaps des afghanischen Banken- und Finanzsystems und die bestehende Liquiditätskrise würden die afghanische Bevölkerung, aber auch vor Ort agierende Hilfsorganisationen, vor enorme Probleme stellen (The Washington Post, 28. November 2021; UNDP, 22. November 2021; siehe auch HRW, 11. November 2021; AAN, 11. November 2021; NRC, 19. Oktober 2021).

In einem am 22. November 2021 veröffentlichten Kurzbericht beschrieb das UNDP, dass sich das afghanische Banken- und Finanzsystem in Unordnung befindet („in disarray“), das System sei beinahe zum Stillstand gekommen (UNDP, 22. November 2021). Human Rights Watch (HRW) habe von zahlreichen Bankangestellten und Mitarbeiter:innen humanitärer Organisationen vor Ort erfahren, dass die meisten afghanischen Banken Geldbeziehungen durch Privatpersonen und Hilfsorganisationen nicht durchführen könnten. Selbst wenn die Gelder elektronisch an die Banken übermittelt worden seien, sei das Geld aufgrund des Bargeldmangels nicht physisch verfügbar und könnte daher nicht in die stark Bargeld-basierte (SIGAR, 30. Oktober, S. 123; AAN, 6. September 2021) Wirtschaft des Landes fließen (HRW, 11. November 2021). Aufgrund der UN-Sanktionen und der bilateralen Sanktionen der USA und anderer Länder hätten sich internationale Regierungen und internationale Bankinstitute dazu entschlossen, keine direkten Geschäfte mit der afghanischen Zentralbank zu tätigen. Dies habe die Liquiditätsprobleme der afghanischen Banken verschärft und zu Versorgungsengpässen bei US-Dollar und bei der afghanischen Währung Afghani geführt (HRW, 11. November 2021; siehe auch AAN, 11. November 2021). Bereits im September habe die afghanische Währung durch die Liquiditätskrise an Wert verloren und die Preise für Mehl, Medikamente und Strom im ganzen Land angehoben (AAN, 6. September 2021).

Der Vertreter des UNDP in Afghanistan betonte, dass das Bankwesen eine zentrale Verbindung des Landes zur Außenwelt sei und dass ohne den Bankensektor auch keine humanitäre Lösung für Afghanistan gefunden werden könne (UNDP, 22. November 2021). Der Generalsekretär des NRC bekräftigte in einem Essay vom 19. Oktober 2021, dass die Bürger:innen Afghanistans ohne funktionierende Banken und Liquidität von ihren Ersparnissen abgeschnitten seien und keine Möglichkeit zu überleben hätten (NRC, 19. Oktober 2021).

Die ersten Wochen nach der Machtübernahme der Taliban seien die Banken größtenteils geschlossen gewesen. Erst nach und nach sei es der Bevölkerung wieder möglich gewesen, Geld zu beziehen, wenn auch zunächst mit einem wöchentlichen Limit von 20.000 Afghani (umgerechnet ca. 184 Euro). Berichten zufolge hätten sich lange Schlangen vor geöffneten Banken und Bankomaten gebildet (SIGAR, 30. Oktober, S. 123; siehe auch Reuters, 1. September 2021, The New York Times, 27. November 2021). Anfang September hätten auch

Unternehmen wie Western Union und MoneyGram, die von Auslandsafghan·innen für den Geldtransfer nach Afghanistan genutzt werden, ihre Transaktionen wieder aufgenommen (AAN, 6. September 2021). Anfang November habe die Taliban-Regierung jegliche ausländischen Währungen verboten (BBC News, 3. November 2021; siehe auch: AP, 19. November 2021). Ebenfalls im November 2021 habe die afghanische Zentralbank die Beschränkungen für Bankabhebungen etwas gelockert und den Höchstbetrag von 20.000 Afghani auf 30.000 Afghani bzw. im Fall von Dollar-Konten von 200 auf 400 Dollar pro Woche angehoben. Diese Änderung seien inmitten einer wachsenden wirtschaftlichen Notlage erfolgt, die Millionen Afghan·innen ohne Arbeit dem Hunger überlasse. Selbst diejenigen, die über Ersparnisse verfügen würden, hätten aufgrund der strikten Abhebungsbeschränkungen, die eingeführt worden seien, um einen Ansturm auf die Banken zu verhindern, Schwierigkeiten, Lebensmittel und Haushaltsbedarf zu bezahlen, so der afghanische Nachrichtensender Ariana News (Ariana News, 4. November 2021).

Eine Reportage der New York Times vom 27. November 2021 schilderte, wie sich Menschen vor den wenigen noch in Betrieb befindlichen Banken drängen würden; darunter auch eine Person, die Geld benötige, um lebensnotwendige Medikamente zu kaufen. Menschen, die eigentlich über Geld auf ihren Konten verfügen, hätten keinerlei Zugang zum Geld, da den Banken immer wieder das Bargeld ausgehe. Afghanistan stehe vor einer katastrophalen Bargeldknappheit, die Banken und Unternehmen lahmlege, die Preise für Lebensmittel und Treibstoff in die Höhe schnellen lasse und eine verheerende Hungerkrise ausgelöst habe. In der Hauptstadt würden verzweifelte Familien Möbel am Straßenrand im Tausch gegen Lebensmittel verkaufen. In anderen Großstädten fehle öffentlichen Krankenhäusern das Geld, um dringend benötigte medizinische Hilfsmittel zu kaufen oder Ärzte und Krankenschwestern zu bezahlen. Die Kliniken auf dem Land seien überfüllt mit kranken Kindern, deren Eltern sich kein Essen leisten könnten (The New York Times, 27. November 2021). Immer häufiger würden Medien berichten, dass Familien, um Nahrung zum Überleben zu haben oder um Schulden zurückzuzahlen, gezwungen seien, ihre Kinder zu verkaufen. Dies würde vor allem Mädchen betreffen, die verheiratet würden, selbst wenn sie noch sehr jung seien (HRW, 4. November 2021; siehe auch The Independent, 25. November 2021; DW, 17. November 2021).

3.3 Informationen zur Auszahlung von Gehältern und zur öffentlichen Versorgung

Mehreren Medien- und NGO-Berichten zufolge sei die Taliban-Regierung aufgrund der Wirtschaftssituation seit Monaten nicht in der Lage öffentliche Bedienstete, wie Lehrer·innen und Krankenhauspersonal, zu bezahlen (The New York Times, 27. November 2021; BBC News, 25. Oktober 2021; AP, 19. November 2021; NRC, 19. Oktober 2021). Das Afghanistan Analyst Network (AAN) berichtete am 11. November, dass ein Taliban-Sprecher erklärt habe, dass Lehrer·innen für den Monat Asad (21. Juli bis 20. August) ausgezahlt worden seien und man davon ausgehe, dass tatsächlich einige Lehrkräfte und Beamte ihren Lohn erhalten hätten. Dies würde aber regional stark variieren (AAN, 11. November 2021). Laut einem Bericht der New York Times würden humanitäre Organisation anprangern, dass die im September von der Biden-Regierung verabschiedeten Ausnahmeregelungen der Afghanistan-Sanktionen nicht für die Bezahlung öffentlicher Bediensteter gelte. So riskiere man den Zusammenbruch der öffentlichen Dienstleistungen und die Abwanderung weiterer Fachkräfte ins Ausland, so die

Befürchtung (The New York Times, 27. November 2021; siehe auch AAN, 6. September 2021; AP, 19. November 2021). Bereits im November 2021 berichtete Associated Press, dass es seit der Machtübernahme durch die Taliban für internationale Hilfsorganisationen nicht mehr möglich sei, Zahlungen auf Konten in Afghanistan zu überweisen, da internationale Währungen vom Bankennetz im Land nicht in die Landeswährung gewechselt werden könnten. Der Leiter des Internationalen Komitees vom Roten Kreuz (International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC), Peter Maurer, habe darauf hingewiesen, dass Hilfsorganisationen daher teilweise keine Möglichkeiten hätten, die Gehälter von Ärzt·innen und Pflegepersonal zu bezahlen. Der Leiter des ICRC habe weiters betont, dass das dringendste Problem, mit dem sich die Bevölkerung Afghanistans aktuell konfrontiert sehe, nicht der Hunger, sondern der akute Bargeldmangel sei. Wenn sich die Wirtschaft nicht erhole, Gehälter nicht bezahlt und die Grundversorgung nicht aufrechterhalten werden könne, drohe eine humanitäre Katastrophe, so Maurer (AP, 19. November 2021). In ähnlicher Weise würden auch Vertreter der UNO und ausländischer Regierungen warnen, dass der wirtschaftliche Zusammenbruch die akute Unterernährung der afghanischen Bevölkerung verschlimmern werde und zu einer regelrechten Hungersnot führen könnte (HRW, 4. November 2021).

Ein am 28. November veröffentlichter Bericht der Washington Post zitierte den stellvertretenden US-Botschafter bei den Vereinten Nationen: man sei zutiefst besorgt über die Liquiditätsknappheit und suche derzeit nach Lösungen, die Probleme in Afghanistan auf eine Art und Weise zu lindern, die den Taliban und den sanktionierten Personen keine unrechtmäßigen Vorteile verschafft, so der US-Vertreter. Die Washington Post führte in ihrem Bericht weiters an, dass über die Freigabe der etwa 10 Milliarden Dollar an afghanischen Regierungsreserven, die hauptsächlich in den Vereinigten Staaten gehalten werden, bisher nicht diskutiert werde. Der größte einzelne Topf ausländischer Gelder werde vom Treuhandfonds für den Wiederaufbau Afghanistans der Weltbank gehalten, dessen Kassenbestand Ende September mehr als 1,5 Milliarden Dollar betragen habe. Die Auszahlung dieses Geldes sei nun ausgesetzt, da die Taliban-Regierung von den Mitgliedsstaaten nicht anerkannt werde. Von Seiten der Vereinten Nationen hoffe man, dass zumindest ein Teil dieser Mittel in einen neuen, von den Vereinten Nationen verwalteten Fonds fließen könne, der über die humanitäre Nahrungsmittel- und Arzneimittelhilfe für Afghanistan hinaus zur Aufrechterhaltung der Grundversorgung und zur Zahlung von Löhnen und Gehältern dienen würde. Dem Bericht zufolge werde erwartet, dass die stimmberechtigten Mitglieder der Bank Anfang Dezember 2021 über die Bedingungen für die Freigabe einiger Gelder beraten werden. Dabei liege ihr Fokus darauf, sicherzustellen, dass ihre Forderungen, insbesondere in Bezug auf die Bildung von Mädchen, berücksichtigt und die Geldflüsse angemessen überwacht würden. Internationale Entwicklungshilfeorganisationen würden jedoch betonen, dass die Zeit dränge und das Leben von Millionen Menschen in Gefahr sei. Der Generalsekretär des Norwegischen Flüchtlingsrats, eine der größten nichtstaatlichen Hilfsorganisationen, die noch vor Ort tätig sind, schilderte gegenüber der Washington Post: „Ich habe Mütter in Zelten gefragt: Wie werden Sie jetzt behandelt? Werden Sie diskriminiert? Sind Ihre Kinder in der Schule? Sie starren mich nur an und sagten: ,Wir haben nur eine Sorge - diesen Winter nicht zu erfrieren und zu verhungern.“ (The Washington Post, 28. November 2021)

Der erwähnte Bericht des Entwicklungsprogrammes der Vereinten Nationen findet sich hier:

- UNDP – UN Development Programme: Policy Brief: The Afghan Banking and Financial System Situation Report, 22. November 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2064534/SITUATION+REPORT+Afghan+Banking+and+Financial+Systems.pdf>

Weiterführende Hintergrundinformationen zur Krise des afghanischen Wirtschafts- und Finanzsystems finden sich in folgenden Dokumenten:

- ICG – International Crisis Group: Thinking Through the Dilemmas of Aid to Afghanistan, 7. Oktober 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2062199.html>
- AAN – Afghanistan Analysts Network: Afghanistan's looming economic catastrophe: What next for the Taliban and the donors? (Autorinnen: Kate Clark & Hannah Duncan), 6. September 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2060879.html>
- AAN – Afghanistan Analysts Network: Killing the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg: Afghanistan's economic distress post-15 August (Autorin: Kate Clark), 11. November 2021
<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/economy-development-environment/killing-the-goose-that-laid-the-golden-egg-afghanistans-economic-distress-post-15-august/>
- Jurist.org: Afghanistan dispatches: 'The commercial banks are unable to preserve their liquidity and that is leading them to failure.', 27. Oktober 2021
<https://www.jurist.org/news/2021/10/afghanistan-dispatches-the-commercial-banks-are-unable-to-preserve-their-liquidity-and-that-is-leading-them-to-failure/>
- Jurist.org: Afghanistan dispatches: inflation worries loom as local currency depreciates rapidly, 15. November 2021
<https://www.jurist.org/news/2021/11/afghanistan-dispatches-inflation-worries-loom-as-local-currency-depreciates-rapidly/>

4 Energieversorgung (Elektrizität; Brennstoffe)

4.1 Stromimporte und inländische Stromerzeugung

Afghanistan importiere laut dem Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) neben anderen Gütern des Grundbedarfs Brennstoffe und 77 Prozent des Stromes (AAN, 6. September 2021). Andere Quellen sprechen davon, dass 78 Prozent des Stroms (Al Jazeera, 6. Oktober 2021) beziehungsweise 50 Prozent des heimischen Stromverbrauchs (WSJ, 3. Oktober 2021) aus Nachbarländern wie Usbekistan und Tadschikistan (USIP, 17. November 2021; Al Jazeera, 6. Oktober 2021; WSJ, 3. Oktober 2021), Turkmenistan oder dem Iran importiert würden (Al Jazeera, 6. Oktober 2021; WSJ, 3. Oktober 2021). Das stark importabhängige Land werde aufgrund der Liquiditätskrise nicht imstande sein, Importe, etwa von Brennstoffen und Strom, zu finanzieren, schrieb die Unterstützungsmission der Vereinten Nationen in Afghanistan (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA) Anfang September 2021 (UNAMA, 9. September 2021). Unter Bezugnahme auf Daten einer afghanischen inter-ministeriellen Kommission für Energie von Ende 2020 berichtete der Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), die afghanische Stromproduktion könne etwa 699 Megawatt (MW) abdecken, davon

280,5 MW durch Wasserkraft, 353,5 MW durch Wärme- oder Ölkraftwerke und 65 MW durch erneuerbare Energien. Demgegenüber habe das Land laut dem ehemaligen afghanischen Ministerium für Wasser und Strom einen Bedarf an 2000 MW Strom. Die Einschränkung der Energieproduktion durch Wasserkraft aufgrund der derzeitigen Dürre im Land vergrößere das Problem weiter (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 122-123; siehe auch WSJ, 3. Oktober 2021;).

Die Taliban-Regierung habe Rechnungen für den Strom, der aus Nachbarländern importiert werde, mit Stand Oktober 2021 nicht beglichen und auch die Zahlung der Stromrechnungen durch Privathaushalte nicht eingefordert. Die vertraglichen Vereinbarungen würden es den Nachbarländern ermöglichen, die Stromexporte nach Afghanistan einzustellen, wenn Rechnungen unbeglichen blieben (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 123; siehe auch WSJ, 3. Oktober 2021)

Stromzulieferungsverträge zwischen unabhängigen Stromerzeugern (IPP) in Afghanistan und dem staatlichen Stromversorgungsunternehmen Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) hätten DABS dazu verpflichtet, den gesamten von IPPs produzierten Strom einzukaufen. Aufgrund der großen Abhängigkeit der ehemaligen afghanischen Regierung von internationalen Hilfsgeldern, sei das finanzielle Überleben („financial viability“) von DABS von Hilfsgeldern oder von der Fähigkeit der Regierung, weitaus höhere inländische Einnahmen zu erzielen, abhängig gewesen. IPPs hätten davor gewarnt, dass unbeglichene Rechnungen in der Vergangenheit zu Problemen beim Betrieb von Kraftwerken geführt hätten. Die Taliban-Regierung sei nicht nur mit einem möglichen Mangel an ausgebildetem Personal konfrontiert, wodurch es zu Problemen bei der Verwaltung der Infrastruktur kommen könne, sie habe auch damit zu kämpfen, die Stromversorgung, sowohl aus dem Inland als auch aus dem Ausland, aufrechtzuerhalten. Die Funktionsfähigkeit von DABS werde weiters dadurch eingeschränkt, dass die afghanische Gesellschaft zunehmend verarme, was es Haushalten erschwere, ihre Stromrechnungen zu begleichen (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 122-123). In einem Artikel des Wall Street Journal (WSJ) von Anfang Oktober 2021 schilderten zwei Einwohner Kabuls, wie schwierig es geworden sei, die Stromrechnungen zu bezahlen. Ein Straßenverkäufer erzählte, er habe seine Stromrechnungen seit zwei Monaten nicht bezahlt, da die Preise für Nahrung seit der Machtübernahme durch die Taliban gestiegen seien. Ihm bliebe nicht genug Geld übrig, um die Stromrechnung zu bezahlen. Für eine achtköpfige Familie belaufe sich die Stromrechnung auf sechs bis zwölf US-Dollar. Ein Plastikschmuckverkäufer berichtete, dass seine siebenköpfige Familie Mahlzeiten auslassen müsste, um Geld für die Stromrechnung zu sparen, mit deren Zahlung er bereits einen Monat im Verzug sei (WSJ, 3. Oktober 2021). Laut einem Artikel des Afghanistan Analyst Network (AAN) sei der Strompreis gestiegen (AAN, 6. September 2021).

Die afghanische Regierung zahle üblicherweise monatlich etwa 20 bis 25 Millionen Dollar für Stromlieferungen an Usbekistan, Tadschikistan, Turkmenistan und den Iran. Anfang Oktober habe sich die Höhe der unbezahlten Stromrechnungen laut DABS auf 62 Millionen Dollar belaufen und werde bis Mitte Oktober bei etwa 85 Millionen Dollar liegen. Um diese Rechnungen für Strom aus den Nachbarländern zu bezahlen, habe das Unternehmen bei UNAMA um 90 Millionen Dollar Unterstützungsgelder aus humanitären Töpfen gebeten, Anfang Oktober jedoch noch keine Antwort erhalten. Ein Sprecher der Taliban habe mitgeteilt, die Taliban-Regierung suche nach Möglichkeiten, die Rechnungen zu bezahlen. Die Taliban stünden in gutem Kontakt zu den Nachbarländern und würden nicht mit einem Abbruch der Stromimporte rechnen, so der Taliban-Sprecher laut Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, 6. Oktober 2021).

Am 11. November 2021 berichtete TOLO News, die Taliban hätten eine Vereinbarung mit dem Iran über die Lieferung von 100 MW Strom nach Afghanistan unterzeichnet. Dieser Strom solle in die Provinzen Herat, Farah und Nimroz fließen, wo es einen Strommangel gebe. Auch in Kabul und anderen Provinzen seien Einwohner·innen besorgt über einen Strommangel, insbesondere im Winter (TOLO News, 11. November 2021).

4.2 Verfügbarkeit von Strom

Unter Bezugnahme auf Aussagen von DABS berichtete Al Jazeera Anfang Oktober 2021, es gebe in Afghanistan keine größeren Stromausfälle. Die DABS-Leitung habe gleichzeitig erwähnt, dass afghanistanweit nur 38 Prozent der 38 Millionen Menschen Zugang zu Strom hätten (Al Jazeera, 6. Oktober 2021). Anfang Oktober 2021 berichtete auch das WSJ, dass derzeit mehr als ausreichend Strom in Kabul zur Verfügung stehe. Dies sei ein seltener und vorübergehender Zustand, der darauf zurückzuführen sei, dass die Taliban die aus Zentralasien kommenden Leitungen nicht mehr angreifen würden, die Industrie stillstehe sowie Militär- und Regierungseinrichtungen großteils inaktiv seien. Dadurch erreiche viel mehr Strom die Privathaushalte und es gebe keine Stromabschaltungen mehr, was zuvor üblich gewesen sei. Ein abruptes Ende dieser Lage sei jedoch wahrscheinlich, sollten die zentralasiatischen Stromzulieferer wegen der offenen Rechnungen ihre Stromlieferungen einstellen. Insbesondere Tadschikistan komme hier in Frage, dessen Beziehung zu den Taliban sich rapide verschlechtere (WSJ, 3. Oktober 2021).

Anfang November berichtete das Flüchtlingshochkommissariat der Vereinten Nationen (UNHCR), dass Krankenhäuser in Kabul ohne Strom arbeiten würden (UNHCR, 8. November 2021, S. 2). Nach einer Mission am 16. November 2021 zu einem Krankenhaus in Spin Boldak in der Provinz Kandahar informierte UNOCHA, dass eine stabile Stromzufuhr für das Heizen angesichts des nahenden Wintereinbruchs zu den unmittelbaren Bedürfnissen des Krankenhauses zähle (UNOCHA, 26. November 2021, S. 1).

4.3 Brennstoffpreise

Mehreren Quellen zufolge sei der Preis für Brennstoffe gestiegen (TOLO News, 22. November 2021; WFP, 15. November 2021, S. 1; TOLO News, 4. November 2021; UNAMA, 9. September 2021; DW, 21. September 2021). Zwischen der letzten Juni- und der zweiten Novemberwoche 2021 sei der Preis für Diesel um 34 Prozent gestiegen (WFP, 15. November 2021, S. 1). Benzin- und Dieselleferungen seien durch die plötzliche Machtergreifung der Taliban im August 2021 unterbrochen worden (DW, 21. September 2021).

Die Zahl der Menschen, die in Kabul Benzin auf den Straßen verkaufe, sei stark gestiegen. Die Verkäufer wüssten nicht, wie das Benzin, das ihren Angaben zufolge aus dem Iran komme, ins Land gelange. Das Benzin von der Straße koste 54 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet ca. 0,51 Euro) im Vergleich zu 70 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet ca. EUR 0,66 Euro) für Benzin von der Tankstelle (TOLO News, 21. September 2021).

Die Taliban würden einen Brennstoffmangel in Afghanistan verneinen. Die Taliban-Regierung habe eigenen Angaben zufolge Arrangements getroffen, um die Brennstoffreserven des Landes wieder aufzustocken. Sie habe laut einem Artikel vom 19. Oktober 2021 betont, es werde innerhalb von höchstens zehn Tagen einen Preisrückgang bei Brennstoffen geben. Wenige Tage vor Veröffentlichung des Artikels hätten mehr als 200 Lastwagen Brennstofflieferungen aus

Turkmenistan und dem Iran nach Afghanistan transportiert, so die Nachrichtenplattform World Is One News (WION) unter Bezugnahme auf Aussagen des Finanzministers der Taliban (WION, 19. Oktober 2021).

Der Brennstoffpreis sei zwischen August und Anfang November 2021 von 35 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet ca. 0,33 Euro) auf 76 Afghani (aktuell umgerechnet ca. 0,71 Euro) gestiegen (TOLO News, 4. November 2021). Die gestiegenen Brennstoffpreise seien laut dem Industrie- und Handelsminister der Taliban-Regierung nicht auf die Machtübernahme der Taliban zurückzuführen, sondern auf die COVID-19-Pandemie. Der Preis für einen Liter Brennstoff habe sich laut ihm von 40 Afghani im Vorjahr auf fast 80 Afghani verdoppelt, berichtete TOLO News am 22. November 2021 (TOLO News, 22. November 2021).

Am 25. November 2021 berichtete Al Jazeera, dass ein Kabuler Markt mit Tonnen von Kohle beliefert werde. Trotz steigender Kohlepreise und der Gesundheitsgefahr durch das Verbrennen würden viele Afghan·innen die Kohle aufgrund mangelnder Alternativen als Heizstoff verwenden. Unter den gegebenen ausweglosen Bedingungen sei Kohle immer noch günstiger als die Alternativen, zitierte Al Jazeera einen Marktbesucher. Einem befragten Verkäufer zufolge würden die Leute keine Kohle verwenden, wenn sie Strom und Gas zur Verfügung hätten (Al Jazeera, 25. November 2021).

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Anhang: Quellenbeschreibungen und Informationen aus ausgewählten Quellen

Nahrungsmittelsicherheit, Wasserversorgung

Das Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) ist eine regierungsunabhängige, gemeinnützige Forschungsorganisation mit Hauptsitz in Kabul, die Analysen zu politischen Themen in Afghanistan und der umliegenden Region erstellt.

- AAN – Afghanistan Analysts Network: Afghanistan's looming economic catastrophe: What next for the Taliban and the donors? (Autorinnen: Kate Clark & Hannah Duncan), 6. September 2021

<https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2060879.html>

„According to a World Bank analysis shared with AAN by an international aid agency on 24 August, Afghanistan's imports add up to 45 per cent of its GDP [Gross Domestic Product] – more than six times greater than its exports, which represent only seven per cent of GDP. In the past, the difference was made up by foreign aid money. Moreover, Afghanistan imports pretty well everything – 77 per cent of its electricity, along with fuel, clothing, medicine, household goods, fertilisers and seeds and food, including staples: 20 to 40 per cent of the wheat needed to bake bread (the amount varies depending on Afghanistan's own harvest) and 27 per cent of rice consumed in the country, are imported. [...]

The liquidity crisis is already causing harm, pushing the afghani to depreciate and prices of flour, medicine, electricity and other basic goods to rise across the country. If inflation does take hold, many Afghans will be pushed over the edge.“ (AAN, 6. September 2021)

„Residents of Kabul and other places also report that the prices of many essential items have risen: flour is up from 1,700 afghanis for 49 kilogrammes (7 seers) before the fall of Kabul to about 1,900 (about 21 to 24 USD) and even higher – 2,200 (27 USD) – in the countryside. Cooking oil has gone up from 600 afghanis for five litres to 750 (seven to nine USD). There were a few exceptions to the general trend; residents reported that the price of fuel had dropped slightly since the border with Iran had opened, while the price of rice was, so far, stable. Given that the value of the afghani is also depreciating [...] this equivalent value in dollars is rough and time-bound.“ (AAN, 6. September 2021)

ACTED ist gemäß Selbstbeschreibung eine unabhängige, private, nicht-gewinnorientierte Organisation, die Programme zur Unterstützung besonders vulnerabler, von Konflikten, Naturkatastrophen oder wirtschaftlichen Krisensituationen betroffener Bevölkerungsgruppen entwickelt und umsetzt.

- ACTED: Afghanistan drought emergency appeal, Situation analysis and proposed responses, September 2021

<https://www.acted.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/202109-drought-appeal-afghanistan.pdf>

„Following significantly lower than average precipitation and higher than average temperature over the 2020-2021 winter in Afghanistan, associated with the La Niña

weather event, severe drought conditions have been experienced throughout 2021, especially in the western, northern and southern regions. As the country slowly recovered from the severe drought in 2018 and lingering effects that remained, and were aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict, this second drought in four years is expected to have a significant impact across a large part of the country. The drought conditions are anticipated to have an impact on both rain-fed and irrigated agricultural crop production, especially cereal production during the main growing and cultivation season (May to September), and on pasture conditions and livestock health. Overall, the country faces severe food insecurity, malnutrition and lack of economic opportunities, with 93% of the population (35 million people) living on less than 2 USD a day and in need of a social safety net and 18.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. With 80% of the population living in rural areas, approximately 50% of Afghan households derive part of their income from agriculture, which employs around 40% of the country's workforce and accounts for 90% of the country's manufacturing, as well as making up for around 25% of the country's GDP." (ACTED, September 2021, S. 1)

„The impact of the drought is, and will be, very severe for the poorest and most vulnerable small-holder farmers reliant on rain-fed wheat production, as the area of rain-fed wheat planted in 2021 has decreased by 62% from the 2020 level, with the resulting yield also down 47% against the prior year. In addition, the effects of the drought are depleting many already poor and vulnerable household's financial and asset reserves as they struggle and resort to extremely negative coping strategies, with the poorest and most vulnerable households incurring catastrophic levels of debt.

Many households continue to rely on negative coping mechanisms to survive, including child labour, early and forced marriage, and risky irregular migration, and are therefore taking on heightened protection risks as a result. 80% of the working population in Afghanistan relies on the informal labour sector for income, including especially unskilled and casual labour associated with agricultural production. Thus, decreased agricultural production and market shocks reduce income and livelihoods opportunities, and along with reduced purchasing power are causing acute food consumption gaps and severe food insecurity, and exacerbate other multi-sectoral needs. Moreover, reductions in snowmelt and rainfall are causing acute water scarcity and significantly decreasing access to safe drinking water.

Unfortunately, long-term forecasts indicate that the drought will continue into 2022, and the next main lean season (late January to late April 2022) is expected to be more intense and arrive earlier, leading to a further deterioration in the food security situation across the country.“ (ACTED, September 2021, S. 3)

- BBC News: Afghanistan facing desperate food crisis, UN warns, 25. Oktober 2021
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-59011501?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA

„More than half the population - about 22.8 million people - face acute food insecurity, while 3.2 million children under five could suffer acute malnutrition, the WFP said.

,Afghanistan is now among the world's worst humanitarian crises, if not the worst,' said David Beasley, the executive director of the WFP. ,We are on a countdown to catastrophe.'

Many Afghans are now selling their possessions to buy food." (BBC, 25. Oktober 2021)

Der Standard ist eine österreichische Tageszeitung.

- Der Standard: Afghanistan auf dem Weg zur „größten humanitären Krise der Welt“, 18. November 2021

<https://www.derstandard.at/consent/tcf/story/2000131228934/afghanistan-auf-dem-weg-zur-groessten-humanitaeren-krise-der-welt?ref=rss>

„Fast 23 Millionen der rund 40 Millionen Menschen im Land leiden derzeit Hunger, sagt Martin Rentsch vom UN-Welternährungsprogramm (WFP). 8,7 Millionen, so der Sprecher des auch für Österreich zuständigen Berliner WFP-Büros, hungern auf Notfallniveau: ,Das heißt, sie wissen nicht, was sie ihrer Familie abends auf den Tisch stellen sollen.' [...]

Dass es in Afghanistan diesbezüglich kriselt, ist nicht neu – doch wurde nun eine neue Dimension erreicht. ,Anfang des Jahres hungerten 14 Millionen, jetzt sind es fast 23 Millionen. Und es betrifft nicht mehr wie früher nur die Landbevölkerung, sondern das ganze Land.' [...], wie Rentsch sagt.

Das WFP ist mit mehr als 400 Mitarbeitern und Mitarbeiterinnen vor Ort, mit 240 Trucks liefert es Essen. Für das Rote Kreuz und den Roten Halbmond leisten mehrere Tausend Menschen im Land Hilfe. Die Taliban bereiten dabei keine Probleme, sagen das Rote Kreuz und WFP.“ (Der Standard, 18. November 2021)

Gandhara ist ein regionaler Dienst des vom US-Kongress finanzierten Rundfunkveranstalters Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).

- Gandhara: ‘No Water And Nothing To Eat’: Afghans Suffer Extreme Shocks From Global Climate Change, 16. November 2021

<https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-hunger-climate-change/31564617.html>

„Average temperatures in Afghanistan rose 1.8 degrees Celsius from 1950 to 2010, about twice the global average. [...] Rainfall in Afghanistan has varied for decades, with most of the country being dry and hot for much of the year. But climate experts say rainfall patterns increasingly appear to be shifting there. They expect worsening droughts to wreak havoc on the 85 percent of Afghans who rely on agriculture to survive. Climatologists have measured 40 percent less annual rainfall in vital farming regions in Afghanistan. They warn that global climate change also means there will be brief spells of heavier rains in some parts of the country during the spring when the soil is less able to absorb it. [...]

Combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, war, and an economic crisis that has struck Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover, severe weather has contributed to pushing millions of Afghans to the brink of starvation.

Farhan Haq, the deputy spokesman for United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, warned in early November that an estimated 23 million Afghans are already in crisis or will experience “emergency levels of food insecurity between November 2021 and March 2022 [...]”

Among them is Mohammad, a 25-year-old farmer in the western province of Farah. ‘Drought has greatly affected my wheat crop and livestock,’ he tells Radio Azadi. ‘My wheat harvest greatly decreased this year compared to the past. [My cattle] have nothing to eat. So, we have had to sell livestock at a low price.’ ‘This drought is worse than previous years,’ Mohammad adds. ‘Our annual rainfall is decreasing. Many people have dug wells that are hundreds of meters deep. But the well-water table is going down now, day by day.’ [...]

Radio Azadi has documented several cases in which impoverished residents of western Afghanistan have sold one of their kidneys as an organ transplant to help their family survive. ‘Thank God, it hasn’t affected us to the extent that we’ve had to sell off our organs, like our kidneys, as others have had to do,’ Mohammad says.” (Gandhara, 16. November 2021)

Human Rights Watch ist eine internationale Nichtregierungsorganisation mit Sitz in New York City, die sich für den weltweiten Schutz der Menschenrechte einsetzt.

- HRW – Human Rights Watch: Afghanistan Facing Famine, 11. November 2021
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/11/11/afghanistan-facing-famine>

‘The UN World Food Program has issued multiple warnings of worsening food insecurity and the risk of large-scale deaths from hunger throughout Afghanistan in coming months. The media have reported that families lacking money and food are selling their possessions and seeking to flee the country overland. [...]’

‘Afghanistan’s economy and social services are collapsing, with Afghans throughout the country already suffering acute malnutrition,’ said John Sifton, Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. [...]

The financial crisis has especially affected women and girls, who face disproportionately greater obstacles to obtaining food, health care, and financial resources. The Taliban bans that are keeping women from most paid jobs have hit households in which women were the main earners the hardest. Even in areas in which women are still allowed to work – such as education and health care – they may be unable to comply with Taliban requirements for a male family member to escort women to and from work. The media have increasingly reported of families selling their children – almost always girls – ostensibly for marriage, to obtain food or repay debts.” (HRW, 11. November 2021)

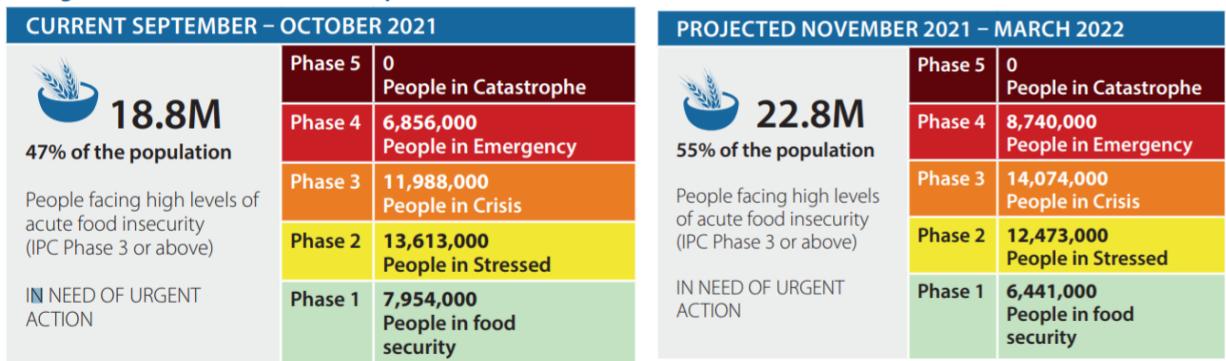
Die Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) ist eine Initiative mehrerer Partner zur Unterstützung der Analyse und Entscheidungsfindung in den Bereichen Ernährungssicherheit und Ernährung und zur Bestimmung des Schweregrades und Ausmaßes akuter und chronischer

Ernährungsunsicherheit sowie akuter Unterernährung von Ländern nach international anerkannten wissenschaftlichen Standards.

- IPC – Integrated Food Security Phase Classification: Afghanistan, IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis September 2021 - March 2022, Oktober 2021

https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Afghanistan_AcuteFood-insec_2021Oct2022Mar_report.pdf

„Afghanistan's food crisis reaches unprecedented levels as nearly 19 million people are highly food insecure due to prolonged drought, conflict and economic collapse [...]“



In September and October 2021 (the post-harvest season), nearly 19 million people in Afghanistan experienced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), an almost 30% increase from the same season last year (14.5 million people). The main drivers of acute food insecurity include drought and its impacts on crops and livestock, the collapse of public services, a severe economic crisis and increasing food prices. An estimated 6.8 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 11.9 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) require urgent action to save their lives, reduce food gaps and protect their livelihoods.

Between November 2021 and March 2022 (the winter lean season), a further deterioration in food security is expected, with the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above increasing to 22.8 million, a nearly 35% increase from the same season last year (16.9m). Out of 22.8 million people, 14 million will likely be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 8.7 million in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The number of areas in Emergency is expected to significantly increase in the projection analysis period from 21 to 32 analytical domains. It is likely that household food access between the end of winter and the following spring season will further deteriorate due to: the continuing La Niña climatic episode bringing below-average winter precipitation for the second consecutive year, the impact of high food prices, sanctions on the de facto authorities, growing unemployment and possibly increased displacement. [...]

Drought: Twenty-five out of 34 provinces were affected by a severe drought. Below average cumulative precipitation during the wet season (Oct. 2020 – May 2021) resulted in reduced snowfall reducing water for cultivation.“ (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 1)

„The 2021 Seasonal Food Security Assessment (SFSA), undertaken by the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC), revealed that drought represented a major shock for about 37% of rural households. Aside from drought, rural households with access to land reported crop pests and diseases and the inability to obtain fertiliser and seed. Poorly maintained and/or conflict-damaged irrigation systems were another impediment to food production.

Casual agricultural labour opportunities in drought-affected areas were reduced due to lower areas under production and reduced harvests.

The post-harvest SFSA shows that household food reserves dropped dramatically during 2021. Compared to last year, the number of households reporting cereal stock of less than three months doubled from 28% to 57%, and those reporting cereal stocks of less than one month increased from 7% last year to 19%, an almost three-fold increase. Besides the impact of drought, low access to agricultural inputs (seeds and fertilisers in particular) created major constraints for farmers. Only 24% of farmers had access to sufficient noncertified seeds during the last wheat cultivation season, and only 8% certified seeds. For the upcoming wheat cultivation season, only 31% and 8%, respectively, said they had access to the same type of seeds. The price of fertiliser increased by 25 -30% compared to the same period last year. Livestock, a major source of food and income for rural communities, have been affected. According to a statement by the Office of the President in June 2021, almost 3 million animals are at risk. As per SFSA, 41.6% of those who own livestock reported that the number of their livestock decreased compared to last year. Sixty-four percent of the livestock owners reported that they had faced problems raising animals in the past six months, out of which 20% reported lack of water and 43% reported lack of pasture as the first major shock. Considering the poor harvest and the early winter lean season, household food security is dire. [...]

The period between August to September corresponds to the post-harvest season when wheat and wheat flour prices usually decrease slightly following seasonal trends. However, in 2021, there has been a dramatic and sudden price increase for wheat flour (+28% from June to September) and other food commodities. In addition, cooking oil prices increased by 55% compared to the same period last year and more than 80% above the previous 5-year average, contributing to increasing food and non-food prices. Moreover, the political transition also led to a freeze of US\$ 9.5 billion in government assets, further deteriorating the economy and resulting in a 12.5% currency devaluation, which in turn contributed to increasing prices of food and non-food items, especially for imported ones. These higher food prices are negatively impacting the purchasing power of lower-income groups across the country, reducing their access to food. The impact of high prices is not only limited to poor households, with other household income groups unable to access cash due to banking restrictions on cash withdrawals (currently limited to USD200/household/week).“ (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 2)

„The Impact of Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA): In anticipation of the drought and with the continued COVID-19 impacts, humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan has been significantly scaled up in comparison with previous years. For the current period, the IPC analysis considered figures shared by humanitarian partners covering the beneficiaries assisted in September, which corresponds to the period of data collection. Based on the figures shared, two areas were found to have received significant assistance, as per the definition in IPC Protocols (more than 25% of households received at least 50% of their kilocalorie needs) - Badakhshan and Faryab urban. In total, around four million people received emergency assistance from WFP in September, with food rations covering half of the households' kilocalorie needs. However, these assistance levels are lower than the

figures planned for the same period and included in the March 2021 round of IPC analysis (around 5.5 million). This decrease may have contributed, among other aggravating factors, to the worsening food insecurity observed in the current round of analysis. Before and after the political transition, WFP was able to reach all parts of the country. The essential providers of humanitarian assistance remain operational in the country. For the projection period, given the anticipation of a worsening crisis and the early start of the lean seasons, plans are in place for a significant scale-up of assistance to nine million people starting in December 2021. However, at the time of the analysis, funding was confirmed for only 40% of the planned assistance, and the targeted beneficiary figures were adjusted accordingly. Issues of access in the projection period are critical, as some hard-to-reach areas are characterised by harsh winters which may continue to impede humanitarian interventions where they are most critically needed. Lack of funding remains the primary constraint to scaling up the response. It is noted that beyond the scale-up of assistance, the timeliness of delivery is critical.“ (IPC, Oktober 2021, S. 3)

Ärzte ohne Grenzen (Médecins Sans Frontières, MSF) ist eine internationale Organisation für medizinische Nothilfe.

- MSF – Médecin sans frontiers: Malnutrition soars in Herat as healthcare reaches breaking point, 10. November 2021
<https://www.msf.org/malnutrition-soars-healthcare-afghanistan-breaking-point>

„Our indicators show that malnutrition is indeed a major issue. I'd probably define it as a looming crisis, which had started well before the recent events. Between May and September 2021, we observed nearly a 40 per cent increase in the number of admissions to our ITFC [Inpatient Therapeutic Feeding Centre], compared to the same months in 2020.

The malnutrition peak this year exceeded its usual levels, in terms of both intensity and duration: we expected a decrease in September, whereas we actually observed a further increase in the number of cases.

Lately, the situation has become even worse. Our ITFC has been extremely busy, with over 60 new admissions each week and the number of hospitalised patients reaching more than double our maximum capacity. This prompted the decision to increase the number of beds.
[...]

Many of our patients and their families travel more than 15 kilometres to seek medical care, while some come from as far away as Badghis, Ghor and Farah provinces, well over 100 kilometres away.

There are probably several reasons for the increase of malnutrition in the area, most likely indicative of the broader situation in Afghanistan: a lack of functioning health facilities in the area; the economic downturn (with up to 30 per cent inflation rate for food items); the lack of liquidity and closing of banks; and a drought that is expected to persist throughout 2021.“ (MSF, 10. November 2021)

REACH ist eine Initiative der humanitären NGOs IMPACT und ACTED sowie des operativen UN-Satellitenanwendungsprogramm UNOSAT.

- REACH: Household Emergency Assessment Tool (HEAT) Afghanistan, ERM 11 - October 2021, 3. December 2021

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/AFG_REACH_HEAT_Factsheet_October2021.pdf

„% of households that reported using an unimproved water source³ at the time of the interview

34% Using unimproved water source for domestic use“

% of households that reported not having enough water for domestic use at the time of the interview

23% Households reporting not having enough water for drinking, cooking or bathing“

25% of households reported their main water source to be further than 500 metres away.

12% of households reported not having hand washing facilities available [...]

25% of households reported using an unimproved latrine type, or open defecation⁴.“
(REACH, 3. Dezember 2021, S. 2)

„98% of Households that reported being in debt, with an overall average debt of 21,112 AFN per household

Most frequently reported reasons for contracted debt⁵:

98% Food, 66% Rent, 54% Healthcare“ (REACH, 3. Dezember 2021, S. 1)

„Food Security:

% of households by Food Consumption Score (FCS) category⁶

96% Poor [...]

³ “Households were asked to report their main source of water for domestic use. Improved water sources include: hand pump/bore well, piped water, protected spring, or purchased water. Unimproved sources include: dug well, stream/river, kandas, unprotected spring, pond/lake, or other” (REACH, 3. December 2021, S. 3).

⁴ “Households were asked to report the type of latrine they had access to. Improved latrine types include family latrine, family Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine. Unimproved latrine types include community latrine, no latrine, or other” (REACH, 3. December 2021, S. 3).

⁵ Mehrfachnennungen möglich

⁶ “The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is calculated using the frequency of a household’s consumption of different food groups during the 7 days before the survey” (REACH, 3. December 2021, S. 3).

% of households by reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) score category⁷

91% High [...]

% of households by Livelihood Coping Strategies Index (LCSI) score category⁸:

31% Emergency; 48% Crisis; 20% Stress; 1% None" (REACH, 3. Dezember 2021, S. 2)

SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction) ist die Aufsichtsbehörde der US-Regierung für den Wiederaufbau Afghanistans.

- SIGAR - Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction: Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30. Oktober 2021

<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2063773/2021-10-30qr.pdf>

„On June 22, 2021, the Afghan government officially declared a drought. With less snow and rainfall through the winter months of 2020–2021, many farmers are feeling its impact. A lack of snowmelt from the Hindu Kush mountains, for instance, led to low water levels in the Panjshir River, so that it no longer provided adequate irrigation for crops in Parwan Province. In other parts of the country, the absence of late-winter rains hurt the wheat harvest, driving up wheat prices in some areas by as much as one-third. Wheat production is expected to drop by as much as 31% in 2021 as compared to the previous year’s harvest with a 62% reduction in areas under cultivation; Afghanistan is facing a shortfall of 2.46 million metric tons of wheat as a result of poor harvests. Additionally, rice crops have fallen by 20%, vegetable yields are down 25–30%, and fruit production is expected to drop as much as 80% in some areas.

Drought and lack of irrigation are depleting vulnerable households’ financial and asset reserves, with many shouldering ‚catastrophic levels of debt.’ Forecasts have warned that drought conditions are likely to persist and even worsen into 2022, further deteriorating food security among Afghans. In late August, Kazakhstan reported that it was unwilling to export its wheat to Afghanistan given the country’s inability to pay following the suspension of Afghan financial assets by the U.S. government. In recent years, Afghanistan’s domestic agricultural production has been increasingly unable to meet the rising domestic demand for key crops, such as wheat. To meet this shortfall, the former Afghan government relied on agricultural imports. In 2018, for example, Afghanistan imported \$477 million of wheat, primarily from Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. The potential inability to finance the importation of crops to address food shortages increases the risk of famine within Afghanistan. (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 131)

⁷ “The reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) is based on the number of days on which households relied on negative coping strategies to deal with a lack of food in the 7 days prior to data collection” (REACH, 3. December 2021, S. 3).

⁸ “The Livelihoods Coping Strategy Index (LCSI) score is a measure of reliance on livelihood-based coping mechanisms to cope with lack of food or income to buy food in the 30 days prior to data collection” (REACH, 3. December 2021, S. 3).

UNAMA ist die Unterstützungsmission der Vereinten Nationen in Afghanistan (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA).

- UNAMA - United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: Briefing by special representative Deborah Lyons to the Security Council, 9. September 2021
<https://unama.unmissions.org/briefing-special-representative-deborah-lyons-security-council-5>

„Secondly, there is an additional, looming crisis to which I must draw your attention. Billions of assets and donor funds have been frozen by members of the international community. The understandable purpose is to deny these funds to the de facto Taliban administration. Inevitable effect, however, will be a severe economic downturn that could throw many more millions into poverty and hunger, may generate a massive wave of refugees from Afghanistan, and indeed set Afghanistan back for generations. As well, as the Afghan currency plummeted, prices of fuel and food have skyrocketed. Private banks no longer have cash to distribute, meaning even Afghans with assets cannot access them. Salaries cannot be paid. Afghanistan, heavily import-dependent, will be unable to finance its imports of food and medicine, as well as fuel, electricity, and other essential items.“
(UNAMA, 9. September 2021)

Das Büro des Hohen Flüchtlingskommissars der Vereinten Nationen (UNHCR) ist eine Behörde der Vereinten Nationen mit dem Mandat zum Schutz und zur Unterstützung von Flüchtlingen und zur Hilfestellung bei freiwilliger Rückkehr, lokaler Integration und Neuansiedelung in einem Drittland.

- UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Situation Update; Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran; 8 November 2021, 8. November 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2063731/UNHCR+Iran++Afghanistan+Situation+Update+10+.pdf>

„Health facilities in parts of Afghanistan have shut down and, in the capital, hospitals are functioning without electricity or water supply.“ (UNHCR, 8. November 2021, S. 2)

UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) ist das Amt der Vereinten Nationen für die Koordinierung humanitärer Angelegenheiten.

- UNOCHA – UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: Afghanistan: ICCT Real-Time Response Overview; Situation Report; 3 November 2021, 3. November 2021
https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2064375/icct_real-time_response_overview_3_november_final.pdf

„During the reporting period, WASH Cluster partners assisted 198,656 drought-affected people across Balkh, Badghis, Kandahar, Helmand and Wardak province with water trucking to avoid displacement. Water trucking is a last resort option to avoid displacements in areas where people rely on rainwater due to unavailability of potable water or due to high salinity groundwater.

Over 340,073 people were reached with WASH assistance including through hygiene promotion and hygiene kits between 1 September and 31 October. 3,814 wells across 16 provinces have been shock chlorinated by WASH Cluster partners as part of a mass response to the acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) outbreak, benefitting up to 2 million people. 6,128 people were reached with durable solutions, including solar pipe water supply systems. 1 million chlorine tablets for household water treatment have been delivered to the Ministry of Public Health to target 33,300 affected people in Kabul in response to the AWD outbreak. 3,350 kg of chlorine bleaching powder has been distributed to UWASS-SoC (Urban Water Supply and Sewerage State Owned Corporation) to prevent contamination of the urban water network in Kabul.” (UNOCHA, 3. November 2021, S. 8)

- UNOCHA – UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: Afghanistan: Weekly Humanitarian Update (15 – 21 November 2021), 26. November 2021
https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2064469/afghanistan_humanitarian_weekly_21_november_2021.pdf

„South: Over 55,000 people in need of winter support [...]

Since July 2021, 882,628 people received food assistance including wheat flour, pulses, oil and Salt under WFP seasonal support programme across the South. Wheat seed and fertilizer distribution for 17,400 farmers affected by drought will be provided in the coming days.

On 16 November, a mission was conducted to Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province to assess the current capacity and needs of the Spin Boldak District Hospital which is a recipient of Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). A significant increase in patient caseloads have been reported at the hospital in the last three months due to lack of access to basic health services in other districts. Increases in number of cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition were also reported. Other immediate needs are the need for water, sanitation and hygiene supplies as the entire hospital has no ground water; additional space needed for mass casualty incidents; stable electricity for heating especially with winter approaching;” (UNOCHA, 26. November 2021, S. 1)

„North-east: 248,000 people receive food assistance

A total of 30,989 vulnerable and food insecure people were identified to receive humanitarian aid in Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz and Takhar provinces. Some 35,399 vulnerable families (approximately 247,793 people) received food as part of WFP’s seasonal assistance programme in Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz and Takhar provinces. [...]

North: 355,000 people receive food assistance

Need assessment teams have identified 987 people in Maymana City, Faryab Province who were displaced by conflict in August 2021 and are in need of assistance. A total of 2,352 people received cash assistance in Jawzjan, Faryab and Sar-e-Pul provinces. In addition, 355,089 vulnerable people received one-month food assistance under WFP seasonal support programme across the North. [...]

East: 138,000 people receive humanitarian assistance [...]

A total of 44,870 vulnerable people among host communities were identified to receive food aid as part of WFP's seasonal support programme and winter support in Nuristan, Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. Furthermore, 138,243 people received humanitarian assistance including 114,114 vulnerable and food insecure people under WFP's seasonal support programme while 12,600 farmers received improved seeds, fertilizer and animal feed as part of agricultural support aid. In Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman and Nuristan provinces 6,832 IDPs received humanitarian assistance and additional 4,697 IDPs received winterization assistance [...]

Centre: 2,800 people receive humanitarian assistance in Daykundi

On 17 November, a magnetic IED attached to a civilian minibus detonated and reportedly resulted in the death of four people and injured eight others. Also on 17 November, another magnetic IED attached to a minibus detonated in Kabul City, Police District 3, Charahi Saheed area, and resulted in six injuries. Food packages were provided to 2,636 IDPs who were displaced in August in Kabul, Kapisa and Panjsher provinces. In addition, 2,856 IDPs received emergency relief items, winterization and cash for transport in Daykundi Province. A total of 1,820 people received heaters/fuel and cash assistance for winter in Ghazni City. Needs assessments and response are ongoing across the central part of the country." (UNOCHA, 26. November 2021, S. 2)

Die United States Agency for International Development (USAID) ist eine US-Behörde für Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.

- USAID – United States Agency for international Development, Afghanistan – Complex Emergency, 30. September 2021
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2021_09_30%20USG%20Afghanistan%20Complex%20Emergency%20Fact%20Sheet%20%238.pdf

„During September, humanitarian organizations continued to deliver multi-sector assistance to populations across Afghanistan, including education, food security and agriculture, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) support.“ (USAID, 30. September 2021, S. 2)

Das United States Institute of Peace (USIP), eine parteienunabhängige US-Bundeseinrichtung mit Sitz in Washington, D.C., die sich mit der Erstellung von Analysen zu Konflikten weltweit befasst.

- USIP – United States Institute of Peace: Key to Afghan Relief Efforts: Financial Engineering for Private Sector, Economy, 17 November 2021
<https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/11/key-afghan-relief-efforts-financial-engineering-private-sector-economy>

„Nothing can fully offset the economic shock from the Taliban takeover, the evaporation of some \$8 billion a year in aid (equal to 40 percent of GDP), sanctions (which criminalize moving funds to the Taliban, Haqqani network and designated leaders) and the freezing of

some \$9 billion of Afghan foreign exchange reserves. The country is already facing a double-digit decline in GDP, rising prices of food and other necessities, and increasing unemployment, poverty, hunger and potential starvation." (USIP, 17. November 2021)

Vox ist eine 2014 von Vox Media gegründete, internetbasierte US-amerikanische Medienplattform.

- Vox: How inaction on climate change can worsen the crisis in Afghanistan, 15. September 2021

<https://www.vox.com/22650188/taliban-climate-change-drought-flood-afghanistan>

„But for millions of Afghans, human-induced climate change has only magnified the strife. Most of Afghanistan is dry and hot for much of the year, and from 1950 to 2010, the landlocked country warmed 1.8 degrees Celsius — about twice the global average, but it is only responsible for a tiny fraction of greenhouse gas emissions. The combined impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, war, and prolonged drought threaten millions of Afghans with food insecurity. Although rainfall in Afghanistan has long varied, certain farming regions in the east, north, and central highlands are seeing up to 40 percent less rain during the spring, when the largely rain-fed crops will need water most. A majority of Afghans earn some income from farming.“ (Vox, 15. September 2021)

Das World Food Programme (WFP) ist das Welternährungsprogramm der Vereinten Nationen.

- WFP – World Food Programme: WFP Afghanistan: Afghanistan Food Security Update #2, 22. September 2021

<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000131998/download/>

„The food security situation is deteriorating. In the past month:

95% of households do not have enough to eat

Seven in ten households have been forced to limit portions, resort to cheaper food and to borrowing food

Five in ten households have run out of food at least once in the last two weeks

US\$ 200 million urgently needed to cover needs until the end of the year. [...]

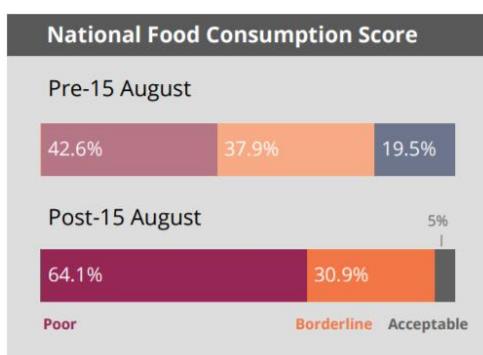
Food security is deteriorating sharply in Afghanistan. Only 5 percent of Afghans now have enough to eat.

As of mid-September, 95 percent of Afghans have insufficient food consumption. This is an alarming increase of 15 percentage points compared with before 15 August. The vast majority report having insufficient money and means to buy food. [...]

– Roughly three out of four households now limit portion sizes (almost double that prior to 15 August); many adults are eating less so their children can eat more.

- Households headed by women, on top of all they are going through, are skipping meals, and reducing their portions far more than those headed by men.
- Three out of four households are also borrowing food (76.7 percent up from 60 percent) or consuming cheaper food (74.5 percent up from 56 percent).
- Furthermore, the number of households employing three or more distress coping mechanisms also doubled from 32 percent to 65 percent.

Hunger is cutting across educational and urban-rural divides. While 96.7 percent of households headed by less educated members are experiencing insufficient food consumption, a high number (88.4 percent) of households headed by a member with postsecondary school education are also experiencing the same. Both urban and rural families are facing insufficient food consumption (95.3 and 94.7 percent, respectively). This trend is likely to continue in the weeks to come as more jobs are lost, salaries go unpaid, and the cash liquidity crisis bites harder.” (WFP, 22. September 2021, S. 1)



(WFP, 22. September 2021, S. 1)

„Diets continue to deteriorate; the average consumption of pulses, vegetables and fruit has dropped, and is now limited to less than twice a week. Afghans consumed animal protein and dairy less than one day per week prior to 15 August; but now they would be lucky to access animal protein or dairy products once every few weeks.

Half of all households reported running out of food at least once in the past two weeks, up from 43 percent. Lack of money was the reason 95 percent of respondents said their food stocks ran out, as jobs are lost and food prices rise.” (WFP, 22. September 2021, S. 2)



(WFP, 22. September 2021, S. 2)

- WFP – World Food Programme: WFP Afghanistan: Situation Report 20 October 2021, 20. Oktober 2021

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Afghanistan_External_Sitrep_2110_20.pdf

„Almost no one has enough money to buy food.

o Three out of four households now limit portion sizes; adults are eating less so their children can eat more.

o Households headed by women are skipping meals, and reducing their portions far more than those headed by men.“ (WFP, 20. Oktober 2021, S. 1)

- WFP - – World Food Programme: Afghanistan, Countrywide Weekly Market Price Bulletin, 15. November 2021

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000133876.pdf>

„In the second week of November 2021, the prices of the food items were significantly higher than the last week of June (before the recent conflicts and political change). [...]

Increase in the exchange rate pushed the price of imported items and hitting 92.6 AFN per USD.“ (WFP, 15. November 2021, S. 1)

Main Food Commodities/Food Access indicators	Price/rate & Changes (%)			
	2nd Week of November 2021	Compared to last week of June 2021	Compared to the 1st week of November 2021	
WHEAT (Kg)	37.6	25.8% ▲	1.2% ►	
WHEAT FLOUR - High price (Kg)	44.1	31.1% ▲	0.2% ►	
WHEAT FLOUR - Low price (Kg)	40.4	32.1% ▲	0.6% ►	
RICE HIGH QUAILITY (Kg)	93.2	4.8% ►	0.4% ►	
RICE LOW QUAILITY (Kg)	52.5	5.0% ►	-0.1% ►	
COOKING OIL (Kg)	168.1	25.2% ▲	-0.5% ►	
PULSES (Kg)	99.5	6.7% ►	-0.3% ►	
SALT (Kg)	14.2	6.1% ►	1.0% ►	
SUGAR (Kg)	60.4	19.3% ▲	-0.2% ►	
DIESEL (LITER)	70.8	34.0% ▲	0.5% ►	
ONE YEAR ALIVE FEMALE SHEEP (HEAD)	7751	1.8% ►	0.4% ►	
LABOUR UNSKILLED/DAY	282	-8.4% ▼	0.0% ►	
LABOUR SKILLED/DAY	590	-8.2% ▼	0.0% ►	
# OF DAYS WORK AVAILABLE/WEEK	1.5	-39.6% ▼	-2.0% ►	
EXCHANGE RATE	92.6	16.0% ▲	1.8% ►	
CASUAL LABOUR/WHEAT	7.6	-26.9% ▼	-0.9% ►	
PASTORALIST TOT	206.6	-19.6% ▼	-0.9% ►	

(WFP, 15. November 2021, S. 1)

- WFP – World Food Programme: WFP Afghanistan: Situation Report 17. November 2021, 17. November 2021

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Afghanistan_External_Sitrep_2111_17.pdf

„22.8 million people – half of the population -- will face acute food insecurity from November 2021 including 8.7 million at risk of famine-like conditions

3.2 million children and 700,000 pregnant and lactating women at risk of acute malnutrition

All 34 provinces are facing crisis or emergency levels of acute food insecurity. [...]

WFP has assisted 13.7million people so far in 2021, which is already over 4 million more than in all of 2020. This includes 5.5 million people in October and 665,559 in the previous week

More than half of the population face crisis (IPC Phase 3) or emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity from November 2021 to March 2022, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report. This is the highest number of acutely food insecure people ever recorded in Afghanistan and is among the highest levels of acute food insecurity worldwide.

The situation for children is especially alarming, with half of all children under five (3.2 million) expected to suffer from acute malnutrition. Acute malnutrition is above emergency thresholds in 27 of 34 provinces and is rapidly worsening.

For the first time, urban residents are suffering from food insecurity at similar rates to rural communities, marking the shifting face of hunger in the country. Rising fuel and food prices are further exacerbating the situation.“ (WFP, 17. November 2021, S. 1)

Gesundheitssystem, Medikamente

Das Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) ist eine regierungsunabhängige, gemeinnützige Forschungsorganisation mit Hauptsitz in Kabul, die Analysen zu politischen Themen in Afghanistan und der umliegenden Region erstellt.

- AAN – Afghanistan Analysts Network: Killing the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg: Afghanistan's economic distress post-15 August (Autorin: Kate Clark), 11. November 2021
<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/economy-development-environment/killing-the-goose-that-laid-the-golden-egg-afghanistans-economic-distress-post-15-august/>

„Even as the Taliban celebrated their unprecedented victory on 15 August 2021, Afghanistan was transformed. It was poorer, more isolated and extremely fragile, economically. Most aid stopped, sanctions came into effect against the Taliban government and foreign reserves were frozen. Economic disaster came on top of the worst drought in years and the ill-effects of the only recently-ended conflict.[...]

Beyond that, moving cash around a country that no longer has a functioning banking system is problematic – how to get salaries to health staff or those distributing food aid, for example. The lack of liquidity is proving a major obstacle for the UN and NGOs.“ (AAN, 11. November 2021)

Al Jazeera ist ein in Qatar ansässige arabische Nachrichtensender.

- Al Jazeera: Are US-led sanctions worsening Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis?, 29. November 2021

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/29/holdaresanctions-to-blame-for-afghanistans-humanitarian-crisis>

„International aid organisations and experts say the US-led sanctions on the Taliban government are hurting the Afghan people, and called for ‘explicit humanitarian exemptions’ for the delivery of aid to prevent a ‘catastrophe’. [...]

There have been alarming reports of public hospitals unable to afford essential medical supplies or to pay staff salaries, and families offering their young daughters for marriage in return for a brideprice to help them survive.” (Al Jazeera, 29. November 2021)

- BBC News: Giving birth under the Taliban, 20. September 2021

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58585323>

„But of greater concern are reports that hospitals and clinics are being ordered to allow only female staff to attend to female patients. One midwife, who wishes to remain anonymous, told the BBC that a male doctor had been beaten up by the Taliban because he attended to a woman alone.

She says that, at her medical centre in the country's east, ‘if a woman cannot be seen by a female doctor, the male doctor can only see the patient where two or more other people are present’.

Women have also been ordered not to leave their homes without a ‘mahram’, or male relative.

‘My husband is a poor man who works to feed our children so why should I ask him to go to the health centre with me?’ says Zarmina, who is five months pregnant, in Nangarhar province.

Abida says the requirement of a male chaperone means that, even with a midwife and under-resourced clinic, many women like Zarmina can't attend important check-ups. Likewise, many female healthcare workers can't go to work.” (BBC News, 20. September 2021)

Gandhara ist ein regionaler Dienst des vom US-Kongress finanzierten Rundfunkveranstalters Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).

- Gandhara: Afghanistan's Health-Care System In 'Free Fall' As Punishing Winter Looms, 3. November 2021

<https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghan-health-care-brink-of-collapse/31544273.html>

„A punishing winter looms for many Afghans who are already dealing with the effects of a devastating humanitarian crisis and an economic crunch brought on by the Taliban takeover, the withdrawal of foreign forces, and suspension of international funding.

The state health-care system, propped up by foreign aid for two decades, was hurting even before the Taliban seized power in mid-August, with many health-care workers going unpaid for months. Now the system is trying to stave off total collapse.

‘The situation is dire,’ Khan, a resident of the eastern province of Kunar, told RFE/RL’s Radio Azadi. ‘We are on the eve of winter and disease is spreading.’

Like many both at home and abroad, Khan called on foreign countries and aid groups not to abandon the country.

The main problem affecting Afghanistan’s health-care sector is the loss of financial aid, according to Patricia Gossman, associate director for Human Rights Watch’s Asia Division.” (Gandhara, 3. November 2021)

Das International Komitee vom Roten Kreuz (International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC) ist eine humanitäre Organisation mit Sitz in Genf.

- ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross: Afghanistan: An infuriating, man-made catastrophe points toward massive suffering for Afghan families, 22. November 2021
<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/catastrophe-toward-suffering-afghan>

„The following is a statement from Dominik Stillhart, the director of operations for the International Committee of the Red Cross, at the end of a six-day visit to Afghanistan:

I am livid. Pictures viewed from afar of bone-thin children rightly elicit gasps of horror. When you’re standing in the pediatric ward in Kandahar’s largest hospital, looking into the empty eyes of hungry children and the anguished faces of desperate parents, the situation is absolutely infuriating.

It's so infuriating because this suffering is man-made. Economic sanctions meant to punish those in power in Kabul are instead freezing millions of people across Afghanistan out of the basics they need to survive. The international community is turning its back as the country teeters on the precipice of man-made catastrophe.

Sanctions on banking services are sending the economy into free-fall and holding up bilateral aid. Municipal workers, teachers, and health staff haven’t been paid in five months. They walk up to two hours to work instead of taking public transportation. They have no money to buy food; their children go hungry, get dangerously thin, and then die.

At the paediatric intensive care unit the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) supports at Mirwais Regional Hospital in Kandahar, the number of children suffering from malnutrition, pneumonia and dehydration more than doubled from mid-August to September. [...]

Amid a sea of heartache is one small silver lining: The ICRC on Monday began supporting 18 regional and provincial hospitals and the 5,100 staff who work in them to help prevent total collapse of the public health system in Afghanistan. This support, slated to last six months, includes funding for running costs and medical supplies, and will ensure the

continuity of nearly half a million medical consultations per month.” (ICRC, 22. November 2021)

Das International Rescue Committee (IRC) ist eine internationale Hilfsorganisation für Flüchtlinge und Kriegsopfer mit Sitz in New York City.

- IRC - International Rescue Committee: What next for Afghanistan? A hunger crisis, 24. November 2021

<https://www.rescue.org/article/what-next-afghanistan-hunger-crisis>

„The suspension of aid infusions to the government budget, the freezing of assets, and the uncertainty about sanctions have combined to send the economy into a tailspin,” says David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee (IRC). ‘The result is a predictable and preventable humanitarian catastrophe.’ [...]

In all, some 22.8 million people — more than half Afghanistan’s population — could face acute food insecurity this winter according to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Of these, 9 million people are projected to face emergency levels of food insecurity, on the brink of famine.

At the same time, public health services are drying up—a result of the pause in international development financing. Sixty percent of Afghan health clinics the IRC assessed do not have the capacity to deliver vital nutrition programs.” (IRC, 24. November 2021)

- Reuters: Dozens killed and wounded as blasts and gunfire hit Kabul hospital, 3. November 2021

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/blast-gunfire-heard-afghan-capital-kabul-witness-2021-11-02/>

„At least 25 people were killed and more than 50 wounded when gunmen attacked Afghanistan’s biggest military hospital after two heavy explosions at the site in central Kabul, officials said.

The explosions hit the entrance of the 400-bed Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan hospital and were followed with an assault by a group of Islamic State gunmen, all of whom were killed within 15 minutes, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.” (Reuters, 3. November 2021)

- The Guardian: On Helmand’s bleak wards, dying children pay the price as western aid to Afghanistan is switched off, 21. November 2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/21/helmand-afghanistan-children-dying-in-hospitals-as-western-aid-switched-off>

„Shirin has paid heavily for both Afghanistan’s conflict, and its abrupt end in Taliban victory. Three years ago her husband lost his leg when a roadside bomb hit his bus. Then in the summer the militants’ victory brought peace to her corner of Helmand, but a halt to the foreign aid funds that paid her salary as a hospital cleaner and kept the family afloat.

They fell behind on rent, were evicted from their home and began running out of food. Three weeks ago, worn down by cold, hunger and disruption, Mohammad Omar died from wounds that had never fully healed, leaving her a single mother to their four children.

'He died because of a lack of money. No one would even give us a loan,' said Shirin, 50. 'We are suffering too much, but if we just got our salaries, everything would be solved.'

But even when she wasn't being paid, she kept coming to the Gereshk district hospital to work at the maternity unit. 'We are needed here,' she said, as a newborn girl was rushed off for oxygen and she prepared to move the mother into a recovery room and sterilise her bed for the next patient.

The wards need a cleaner in order to remain as safe as possible for new mothers, even in a hospital starved of cash and slowly grinding to a halt, like this one. Last month the operating theatre had to shut down, because there was no money for fuel for the generator – there is no grid power in this rural corner of Helmand near former Camp Bastion – or any gas to sterilise their equipment.

So women whose lives depended on having a caesarean, a car accident victim who needed open chest surgery, and people with inflamed appendixes all had to be sent off in taxis with a prayer that they would survive the hour's drive to Lashkar Gah, where the Boost hospital supported by charity Médecins Sans Frontières still had power and supplies.

The roads may have been clear of the bombs and gunfights that prevented so many people in Helmand's villages from reaching medical care, but the hospitals and clinics were no longer functioning properly.

'I could tell you about many cases,' said surgeon Karim Walid. 'There was a woman who needed a caesarean because of the baby's position. She had no money so we went round collecting a few thousand Afghans for a car to take her to Boost.'

The lab ran out of test equipment, for diseases from malaria to HIV, for blood counts or blood sugar levels. 'All we had left were pregnancy and TB tests,' said lab manager Bashir Ahmad Majar.

Eventually, even gloves ran out for midwives on the labour ward. 'We asked those who could afford them to buy their own,' said Malalai, a midwife who worked with Shirin. For the others, the hospital went into debt. 'I get calls every day from the shopkeepers, asking me why aren't you giving us the money you owe us,' said Haji Mohammad Barak, director of the Gereshk hospital until early November, now provincial manager for a healthcare programme. [...]

It is the lives of ordinary Afghans that are on the line. Tedros warned that the abrupt halt in international funding had left health providers to make terrible decisions about 'who to save and who to let die'. The reality in Gereshk was even worse.

With the hospital barely functioning, they could only tell patients in serious need to head to the Boost hospital. It was the only fully functioning medical centre for at least 1.5 million people in the province, and unofficially for hundreds of thousands more in neighbouring provinces. On some days more than 700 patients crammed into an emergency room designed for little more than half that number.

‘The health system of Afghanistan was very donor dependent, and the donors withdrew their support,’ said Emmerson Gono, project coordinator for MSF in Helmand. The implications of that cut-off are tragic, and felt immediately.

‘We are getting overwhelmed with the workload, people are coming from all over the province and even other provinces,’ he said. ‘We go far beyond our capacity, because we will not turn away someone we see is critically ill.’

It is perhaps hard to picture a healthcare system ‘in collapse’, but you can see the human cost of the funding cuts at Boost hospital, in the fragile bodies of children racked with disease and malnutrition, or being wheeled to the morgue.” (The Guardian, 21. November 2021)

- The New York Times: Afghan Economy Nears Collapse as Pressure Builds to Ease U.S. Sanctions, 27. November 2021

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/27/world/asia/afghanistan-economy-collapse-sanctions.html>

„Racing down the cratered highways at dawn, Mohammad Rasool knew his 9-year-old daughter was running out of time

She had been battling pneumonia for two weeks and he had run out of cash to buy her medicine after the bank in his rural town closed. So he used his last few dollars on a taxi to Mazar-i-Sharif, a city in Afghanistan’s north, and joined an unruly mob of men clambering to get inside the last functioning bank for hundreds of miles.

Then at 3 p.m., a teller yelled at the crowd to go home: There was no cash left at the bank.

‘I have the money in my account, it’s right there,’ said Mr. Rasool, 56. ‘What will I do now?’
[...]

Afghanistan has long been dependent on imports for basic foods, fuel and manufactured goods, a lifeline that was severed after neighboring countries closed their borders during the Taliban’s military campaign this summer. Trade disruptions have since caused shortages of crucial goods, like medicine, while the collapse of financial services has strangled traders who rely on U.S. dollars and bank loans for imports.” (The New York Times, 27. September 2021)

- The Washington Post: As Afghanistan's economy collapses, international community looks for innovative ways to avoid humanitarian disaster, 28. November 2021
https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/afghanistan-humanitarian-disaster-aid/2021/11/27/5d2f859a-4ee4-11ec-a1b9-9f12bd39487a_story.html

„CHARASIA, Afghanistan — At this town's district hospital, an hour's drive south of Kabul, midwives resorted to using mobile phone flashlights to deliver babies during power cuts, when foreign aid was halted and they could no longer pay for generator fuel.

When critical supplies such as saline solution and dressings ran out, many patients were turned away and told they would have to purchase such materials themselves.

'It was terrible,' hospital director Sharifa Noor said of the first time in her 17 years working here that she had to tell patients she was unable to care for them.

Early this month, a United Nations program gave the hospital a reprieve, with an influx of supplies and, equally important, cash to pay the salaries of its staff for the first time in months. Doctors working under Noor received about \$150.

The lifeline was temporary, part of an experiment cobbled together by U.N. agencies with outside funds to prove to the international community that money could be distributed in Afghanistan without falling into the hands of the Taliban." (The Washington Post, 28. November 2021)

TOLO News ist eine afghanische Onlinezeitung.

- TOLO News: Afghan Pharmacies Running Out of Medicine, 30. November 2021
<https://tolonews.com/health-175691>

„Officials and residents of Kabul on Tuesday complained about the lack of medicine in Kabul's pharmacies, saying many pharmaceutical companies have recently stopped operating, and importing medicine is difficult.

The head of the Afghanistan Medicine Service Union, Assadullah Kakar, said that companies have stopped operating due to a lack of raw materials for producing medicine. 'Some companies stopped, there are no raw materials, the stock of required medicine is declining in the bazaar, more companies will be closed if the ongoing situation continues,' Kakar said.

'I could not find the medicine that I need for my patient, I went to many pharmacies. If it is available, its price is too high,' said Mohammad Ismail, a resident of Kabul.

Meanwhile, the owners of pharmacies stated that following the halt of imports, medicine prices are on the rise in the capital. 'since medicine is a necessity, people need it and are asking for it, flights from India and Pakistan to Afghanistan are stopped, this has affected the problem,' said Hashmat, owner of a pharmacy in Kabul.

Based to the Ministry of Public Health, Afghanistan imports over 90% of its medicine from Pakistan, India, Turkey and Bangladesh.

Following the collapse of Ashraf Ghani's government, Afghanistan's health sector is on the brink of collapse, a situation that international organizations have confirmed." (TOLO News, 30. November 2021)

- TOLO News: Malnourished Afghan Children Flooding Hospitals: Doctors, 26. November 2021
<https://tolonews.com/health-175631>

„The death rate of children affected with malnutrition, and level of children patients being brought to hospitals, has surged as the health sector faces severe shortages of medical supplies, officials said.

Officials at the Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital said that the number of malnourished children has recently jumped by 50 percent.

‘The number of patients has increased recently. Our work is being affected as the number of patients is overwhelming, and the death rate among the children has also increased. If it there is no solution found for the problem, we will face a complete shortage of equipment,’ said Farid Ahmad Andishmand, a doctor.

The head of Indira Gandhi Children Hospital, Mohammad Latif Bahir, expressed concern over the suspension of aid to the health sector.” (TOLO News, 26. November 2021)

Das Büro des Hohen Flüchtlingskommissars der Vereinten Nationen (UNHCR) ist eine Behörde der Vereinten Nationen mit dem Mandat zum Schutz und zur Unterstützung von Flüchtlingen und zur Hilfestellung bei freiwilliger Rückkehr, lokaler Integration und Neuansiedelung in einem Drittland.

- UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Situation Update; Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran; 8 November 2021, 8 November 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2063731/UNHCR+Iran++Afghanistan+Situation+Update+10+.pdf>

„Health facilities in parts of Afghanistan have shut down and, in the capital, hospitals are functioning without electricity or water supply. More than 2,000 health facilities have been forced to close since the Taliban takeover, according to the Red Cross, and in those hospitals that are still accepting patients, most staff have not been paid their salaries for months and patients are forced to buy their own medication, a difficult prospect during an economic crisis. That said, according to the Taliban's Acting Public Health Minister, Dr Qalandar Ebad, the new government has agreed to launch a four-day polio vaccination programme. Vaccination teams have been unable to work in parts of the country for much of the past three years, meaning that since 2018, an estimated 3.3 million children have missed out on a polio vaccination. It is estimated that 10 million Afghan children aged under five will be targeted by this programme, which appears to be aimed at showing the de facto authorities can cooperate with international agencies.” (UNHCR, 8. November 2021, S. 2)

Die Weltgesundheitsorganisation (WHO) ist eine Behörde der Vereinten Nationen mit dem Mandat zur Förderung der globalen Gesundheitsagenda.

- WHO – World Health Organization: Acute health needs in Afghanistan must be urgently addressed and health gains protected, 22. September 2021
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1100652>

„Statement by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, and Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean on their visit to Kabul

We recently completed a high level mission to Kabul, Afghanistan, where we met with senior members of the Taliban leadership, UN partners, health care workers and patients, and WHO staff.

Afghanistan's health system is on the brink of collapse. Unless urgent action is taken, the country faces an imminent humanitarian catastrophe. Our visit allowed us to witness the immediate needs of the Afghan people firsthand and meet with stakeholders to define ways to urgently scale up our health response.

Acting on the UN principles of neutrality and independence, we engaged in constructive dialogue to address differences and find solutions that will allow us to continue our life-saving work for millions of innocent Afghans affected by decades of conflict.

Throughout our visit, we focused on a number of priority health issues that need immediate attention, as well as the need to invest in achieving longer-term development goals.

Cuts in donor support to the country's largest health project, Sehatmandi, has left thousands of health facilities without funding for medical supplies and salaries for health staff. Many of these facilities have now reduced operations or shut down, forcing health providers to make hard decisions on who to save and who to let die.

Only 17% of all Sehatmandi health facilities are now fully functional. This breakdown in health services is having a rippling effect on the availability of basic and essential health care, as well as on emergency response, polio eradication, and COVID-19 vaccination efforts.

Nine of 37 COVID-19 hospitals have already closed, and all aspects of the COVID-19 response have dropped, including surveillance, testing, and vaccination. Prior to August this year, 2.2 million people had been vaccinated against COVID-19. In recent weeks, vaccination rates have decreased rapidly while 1.8 million COVID-19 vaccine doses in country remain unused. Swift action is needed to use these doses in the coming weeks and work towards reaching the goal of vaccinating at least 20% of the population by the end of the year based on national targets.” (WHO, 22. September 2021)

Banken- und Finanzsystem nach Machtübernahme der Taliban

Das Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) ist eine regierungsunabhängige, gemeinnützige Forschungsorganisation mit Hauptsitz in Kabul, die Analysen zu politischen Themen in Afghanistan und der umliegenden Region erstellt.

- AAN – Afghanistan Analysts Network: Afghanistan's looming economic catastrophe: What next for the Taliban and the donors? (Autorinnen: Kate Clark & Hannah Duncan), 6. September 2021

<https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2060879.html>

„The Taliban's seizure of power – without a prior political settlement or official handover – has ruptured Afghanistan's relationship with its international backers. The US government put a hard stop to the country's usual cash supplies, donors have frozen aid and the World Bank and IMF halted planned transfers of funds.

The banking sector is in crisis, with cash reserves extremely low and international sanctions regimes restricting international transactions. Commercial banks are still, for the most part, closed as they have no money to give out to their depositors. This crisis is pushing the afghani to depreciate and prices of flour, medicine, electricity and other basic goods to rise across the country.

The effects of the banking sector crisis will be far-reaching. Afghanistan's financial system has been the beating heart of its economy, upon which vital formal institutions which fuel and supply much of the rest of the informal, cash-based economy rely. Afghanistan already faced a humanitarian emergency – over half of Afghanistan's entire population are in need of assistance, one-third malnourished and half of all children under five are severely malnourished. [...]

The banking sector crisis and sudden cuts to aid – especially for development and security – mean the Afghan economy is now in free fall. Economic contraction will cause major layoffs, dramatic drops in access to services and a steep decline in people's incomes and will hit cities and towns particularly hard. The number of Afghans living in poverty will increase.“ (AAN, 6. September 2021)

„The banking crisis

The unconstitutional change of government in Kabul saw the US government put a hard stop to the country's usual cash supplies, donors froze aid and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) halted planned transfers of funds. Among the funds frozen when the Taliban captured Kabul were nine billion USD of Afghanistan's own foreign reserves held in the New York Federal Reserve. This hard stop on foreign currency inflows, combined with various sanctions regimes, has caused the banking sector to almost completely seize up.

Afghanistan's cash reserves were usually flown into the country by the US government as needed to resupply the central bank. Cash volumes were kept relatively low and were

tightly monitored. With this resupply channel frozen, the central bank faces a liquidity crisis, as evidenced by the long lines at cash machines (ATMs) in Kabul and restrictions on the amount of cash that can be withdrawn. The exact severity of the cash crunch is unknown, but it seems likely there was not much held in the central bank in Kabul for the Taliban to inherit. In May, AAN was told, 300 million USD in reserves was held locally. In the lead-up to the fall of Kabul, the US, concerned about the situation, stopped sending money, while the central bank sold dollars and bought afghanis to try to prop up the fast depreciating national currency. (For some detail, see this 18 August Twitter thread from the former head of the central bank, Ajmal Ahmady.) There was also undoubtedly cash held off the books by different government officials, although in whose hands it is now is not known.

Even if the Taliban do have access to more cash than is known about, it is highly questionable whether they would push it back into the banking system or spend it on public services – or simply take it for themselves. In 2001, after the Taliban had taken most of the cash from the central bank when they fled Kabul, the briefly-in-power Burhanuddin Rabbani took what was left and, as he told one of the authors, used it to pay off his commanders.

What is certain is that the now Taliban-controlled central bank lacks dollars. That means commercial banks are still for the most part closed because they have no money to give out to their depositors. Some are allowing minimal withdrawals of afghanis, including from dollar accounts and there are long queues of people waiting to do this.

The various sanctions regimes applied to the Taliban further paralyse the banking sector as they affect access to international accounts and payments. International transactions are all but frozen as commercial traders await clarity on the extent to which sanctions regimes might apply to international commerce.

Even though Afghanistan's economy is largely cash-based and only ten per cent of Afghan households have bank accounts, the effects of the banking sector crisis are far-reaching. Afghanistan's financial system has been the beating heart of its economy, pumping money into and around the country to enable the delivery of core services and fuelling the private sector, including telecommunications providers, energy providers, exporters and importers of vital goods and services. According to a 2020 World Bank report, two-thirds of formal enterprises have a bank account, alongside government departments and NGOs. It is these formal institutions which fuel and supply much of the rest of the informal, cash-based economy.

With the supply of US dollars turned off and a frozen banking sector, the problems mount up, starting with imports. According to a World Bank analysis shared with AAN by an international aid agency on 24 August, Afghanistan's imports add up to 45 per cent of its GDP – more than six times greater than its exports, which represent only seven per cent of GDP. In the past, the difference was made up by foreign aid money. Moreover, Afghanistan imports pretty well everything – 77 per cent of its electricity, along with fuel, clothing, medicine, household goods, fertilisers and seeds and food, including staples: 20 to 40 per

cent of the wheat needed to bake bread (the amount varies depending on Afghanistan's own harvest) and 27 per cent of rice consumed in the country, are imported. The waves of harm ripple out, touching what seem unlikely sectors. For example, Afghanistan's Covid-19 vaccination plan is conditional upon a cold storage chain that was being set up across the country, which needs imported fuel and electricity – just as Afghanistan's purchasing power dives.

The liquidity crisis is already causing harm, pushing the afghani to depreciate and prices of flour, medicine, electricity and other basic goods to rise across the country. If inflation does take hold, many Afghans will be pushed over the edge.

All currency exchange was initially frozen, but the dearth of dollars pushed its value up and will have sucked in hard currency from neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan. Individual money changers are now starting to exchange money and the major money changers (hawaladars) of Serai Shazada, who buttress Afghanistan's formal and semi-formal financial sector, re-opened yesterday on 4 August [...]. The Serai Shazada is a key part of any Afghan government's regulation of the currency.

Money transfer companies like Western Union and MoneyGram, which Afghans abroad use to send money home, also resumed transactions on 2 September [...]. This should ease the crunch, at least for some people. However, money changers and transfer companies are no substitute for the formal banking system and the shift from an economy largely reliant on a banking system to access aid flows and pay for imports to only informal networks would still carry dramatic losses in trade, jobs and incomes. Afghanistan's economy would eventually adjust, but it would be painful." (AAN, 6. September 2021)

- AAN – Afghanistan Analysts Network: Killing the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg: Afghanistan's economic distress post-15 August (Autorin: Kate Clark), 11. November 2021
<https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/economy-development-environment/killing-the-goose-that-laid-the-golden-egg-afghanistans-economic-distress-post-15-august/>

„The Taliban government has taken some small steps to deal with the crisis. It has started sometimes uneasy working relationships with NGOs and UN agencies. The computerised customs system is back up and running, which should help with collection. It has also banned banks from sending money abroad in a bid to stop capital flight, with exceptions for the purchase of food and other necessities. Banks are now allowing some small withdrawals of dollars and afghanis, although the banking system remains stymied. It has transpired that there is a shortage not only of dollars and other hard currency, but also afghanis, because these were printed abroad. This dual shortage may have helped support the afghani whose value has been surprisingly stable this year, until the end of October.” (AAN, 11. November 2021)

„What revenue the Taliban had appeared to be going, at least initially, on paying their fighters, continuing their practice when in opposition. On 10 November, Hasht-e Subh tweeted an announcement by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed that teachers' salaries had been paid for the month of Asad (21 July to 20 August) and they

were working on Sunbula (21 August to 20 September). AAN research suggests some teachers and some civil servants have been paid, but this varies across the provinces, and some civil servants have been laid off." (AAN, 11. November 2021)

„There are two major problems with the current aid strategy. Firstly, with the banking system operating so minimally because of sanctions, getting cash into the country is difficult and burdensome. Risk averse international banks worry more about the consequences of being found in breach of US sanctions than they are attracted by the relatively small benefits of facilitating international transfers into Afghanistan, even if the funds are for humanitarian purposes. Beyond that, moving cash around a country that no longer has a functioning banking system is problematic – how to get salaries to health staff or those distributing food aid, for example. The lack of liquidity is proving a major obstacle for the UN and NGOs." (AAN, 11. November 2021)

Amnesty International (AI) ist eine internationale regierungsunabhängige Menschenrechtsorganisation mit Hauptsitz in London.

- AI – Amnesty International: Afghanistan: Country must have access to funds to avoid humanitarian disaster, 23. November 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2064491.html>

„The international community must urgently ease existing financial restrictions on Afghanistan that are blocking the provision of healthcare, food and other essential services, and expedite delivery of scaled-up humanitarian assistance to avert a mounting crisis that threatens the lives of tens of millions of people, said Amnesty International.

A combination of a suspension of foreign aid, the freezing of Afghan government assets, and international sanctions on the Taliban, have plunged a country already suffering from high poverty levels into a full-blown economic crisis." (AI, 23. November 2021)

- AP – Associated Press: Key aid group says Afghanistan's most pressing need is cash, 19. November 2021
<https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-business-united-arab-emirates-economy-taliban-f8b62e5f2bcfa16813a3f2f4c3dde084>

„Afghanistan is facing a looming humanitarian crisis as aid organizations struggle with ways to pay doctors, nurses and others on the ground because there is currently no way to transfer salaries to bank accounts there, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

ICRC President Peter Maurer's comments echo those of the U.N.'s special representative for Afghanistan, who warned this week that the country is 'on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe' and that its collapsing economy is heightening the risk of extremism. The country's economy is estimated to have contracted by 40% since the Taliban took control in August.

The Geneva-based ICRC, which has operated in Afghanistan for over 30 years, is temporarily carrying in bags of cash to the impoverished nation and converting dollars into

the local currency, the afghani, in order to pay some of its staffers. The ICRC has been able to do this with regulatory approval by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control. The ICRC also has an agreement with the Taliban-run Health Ministry that allows donor-funded payments to pass through the ICRC and bypass the Taliban, who have yet to be officially recognized by any nation.

'The main problem in Afghanistan is not hunger. The main problem is the lack of cash to pay salaries to deliver social services which have existed before,' Maurer told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday during a visit to Dubai. [...]

Afghanistan's aid-reliant economy was thrown into deep turmoil following the Taliban takeover of the capital, Kabul, in August and the collapse of the U.S.-backed Afghan government just weeks before the U.S. withdrew its last troops.

The Taliban leadership, which recently banned all foreign currency transactions, has urged the U.S. Congress to ease sanctions and release Afghanistan's overseas assets in order for the government to be able to pay teachers, doctors and other public sector employees. After the Taliban takeover, the U.S. froze nearly \$9.5 billion in assets belonging to the Afghan Central Bank and stopped shipments of cash.

Since the Taliban's ascension to power this past summer, it's not been possible for international aid organizations to wire transfer payments to accounts in Afghanistan as currently international currency cannot be changed into local currency by a network of banks in the country.

Maurer said humanitarian organizations cannot 'fix an implosion of a whole country.' He said what's needed is an agreement on a sufficient injection of liquidity — something he believes is possible without formally recognizing the Taliban. The ICRC's budget until mid-2022 has increased from \$95 million to roughly \$163 million to address Afghanistan's increasingly urgent needs. [...]

Maurer said the country could slide into a hunger crisis if drought impacts food production and if the disruption of the economy continues, but he stressed the immediate crisis facing Afghanistan remains paying salaries to keep basic services functioning." (AP, 19. November 2021)

Ariana News ist eine vom privaten, in Kabul ansässigen Fernsehsender Ariana Television Network betriebene Nachrichtenwebsite.

- Ariana News: Afghanistan central bank raises limit on bank withdrawals to \$400 a week, 4. November 2021
<https://ariananews.af/afghanistan-central-bank-raises-limit-on-bank-withdrawals-to-400-a-week/>

„Afghanistan's central bank has eased restrictions on bank withdrawals, lifting the maximum to \$400 from dollar-denominated accounts or 30,000 Afghanis a week from the previous limit of \$200 or 20,000 Afghanis, the central bank said on Wednesday.

The change, which sets a monthly limit on withdrawals of \$1,200 or 100,000 Afghani, came amid growing economic hardship that has left millions in Afghanistan without work and facing hunger.

Even those with savings have struggled to pay for food and household necessities because of the strict limits on withdrawals that were brought in to prevent a run on banks." (Ariana News, 4. November 2021)

- BBC News: Afghanistan facing desperate food crisis, UN warns, 25. Oktober 2021

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-59011501?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA

„The takeover weakened an already fragile economy that was heavily dependent on foreign aid. Western powers suspended aid and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund also halted payments.

A nation is considered aid-dependent when 10% or more of its gross domestic product comes from foreign aid; in Afghanistan's case, about 40% of GDP was international aid, according to the World Bank.

Many Afghans are now selling their possessions to buy food. The new Taliban administration has been blocked from accessing overseas assets, as nations assess how to deal with the hardline group, meaning wages to civil servants and other workers have been withheld.

‘It has been more than five months that I have received my wages,’ a teacher in Herat told the BBC. ‘Life is tough. I am selling whatever we have at home. We are selling our animals, cutting our trees to sell the wood.’” (BBC News, 25. Oktober 2021)

- BBC News: Taliban bans foreign currencies in Afghanistan, 3. November 2021

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59129470>

„The Taliban has banned the use of foreign currencies in Afghanistan, a move that could further disrupt an economy on the brink of collapse. ‘The economic situation and national interests in the country require that all Afghans use Afghani currency in their every trade,’ the Taliban said. The economy is struggling due to the withdrawal of international financial support after the Taliban took control. [...]

The Taliban has called for the release of Afghanistan's assets that are being held overseas as the nation faces a severe cash crunch. Afghanistan has also been hit by the exodus of foreign aid. Grants from overseas previously financed three quarters of its public spending.

Earlier this year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Afghanistan will no longer be able to access its resources, while the World Bank also halted funding for projects in the country. Last month, the IMF warned that the country's economy could shrink by 30% this year, pushing millions into poverty and causing a humanitarian crisis.” (BBC News, 3. November 2021)

Die Deutsche Welle (DW) ist der deutsche Auslandsrundfunksender.

- DW – Deutsche Welle: Desperate Afghans forced to sell children, 17. November 2021
<https://www.dw.com/en/desperate-afghans-forced-to-sell-children/a-59845125>

„The situation in Afghanistan, which has been in turmoil since the Taliban takeover, is deteriorating even further as the country suffers a drought, forcing families to sell everything, including their own children. [...]

Mohammad Ibrahim, a resident of Kabul, told DW that he had no other option than to offer his 7-year-old daughter, Jamila, for the debt his family owed. ‘A person came and told me to either pay the debt or ‘I will burn your home to ashes,’’ Ibrahim said. But he was offered the chance to ‘give up his daughter,’ in order to pay his debt. ‘The man was a rich person,’ he said. ‘And I had no other option and I accepted to offer my child in return for 65,000 Afghanis (nearly €620/\$700) of debt.’” (DW, 17. November 2021)

Human Rights Watch ist eine internationale Nichtregierungsorganisation mit Sitz in New York City, die sich für den weltweiten Schutz der Menschenrechte einsetzt.

- HRW – Human Rights Watch: Afghanistan: Taliban Blocking Female Aid Workers, 4. November 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2063579.html>

„The country’s economy faces collapse, set off by widespread lost income, cash shortages, rising food costs, separation from global financial systems, and an abrupt halt to the development assistance that made up at least 75 percent of the previous government’s budget. A growing number of media reports have said that families are being forced to sell their children – almost always girls – ostensibly for marriage, even at very young ages, to have food to survive or to repay debts.

Officials with the UN and several foreign governments have warned that economic collapse will exacerbate acute malnutrition and could lead to outright famine. Surveys by the World Food Programme (WFP) reveal that over 9 in 10 Afghan families have insufficient food for daily consumption, with half saying that they ran out of food at least once in the previous two weeks. One in three Afghans is already acutely hungry.” (HRW, 4. November 2021)

- HRW – Human Rights Watch: Afghanistan: Afghanistan Facing Famine, 11. November 2021
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/11/11/afghanistan-facing-famine>

„Afghanistan’s dire economic situation has been exacerbated by decisions by governments and international banking institutions not to deal directly with the Central Bank of Afghanistan because of UN and bilateral sanctions by the US and other countries. This has increased liquidity problems for all banks and shortages of currency in US dollars and Afghanistan’s currency, afghanis.

Numerous banking officials and humanitarian agency staffers told Human Rights Watch that most Afghan banks cannot cover withdrawals by private actors and aid organizations.

Even when funds are transmitted electronically into banks, the lack of cash means that money is not physically available and therefore cannot flow into the country's economy.”
(HRW, 11. November 2021)

Die Nachrichtenagentur Inter Press Service (IPS) ist eine weltweit agierende Non-Profit- und Nicht-Regierungsorganisation mit Fokus auf Entwicklungsarbeit, Globalisierung, Menschenrechte und Umweltthemen.

- IPS – Inter Press Service - News Agency: From Taliban to Taliban: Cycle of Hope, Despair on Women’s Rights, 29. Oktober 2021
http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/10/taliban-taliban-cycle-hope-despair-womens-rights/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=taliban-taliban-cycle-hope-despair-womens-rights

„Afghanistan’s economy is in free fall, set off by widespread lost income, cash shortages, rising food costs, being severed from global financial systems, and an abrupt halt to the development assistance that made up 75 percent of the previous government’s budget.”
(IPS, 29. Oktober 2021)

Der Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) ist eine humanitäre Nichtregierungsorganisation mit Hauptsitz in Oslo, die in Afghanistan vor Ort tätig ist.

- NRC – Norwegian Refugee Council: Afghanistan is facing a total economic meltdown, 19. Oktober 2021
<https://www.nrc.no/opinions-all/afghanistan-is-facing-a-total-economic-meltdown/>

„The desperation is everywhere. Mothers I sat down with in makeshift tents told me their families have no income and no reserves, and they’re worried that their children will starve and freeze to death this winter.

I met teachers, health workers and water engineers who have not been paid since May. They can no longer support their extended families or keep vital public services afloat. Without functioning banks and liquidity, ordinary Afghans are cut off from their life savings and have no way of surviving.

When the Taliban toppled Afghanistan’s government in August, the country suddenly lost access to more than \$9 billion in central bank reserves, frozen by the Biden administration. This sent shock waves through the banking system and prompted capital control measures by the new Taliban leaders, triggering a lethal domino effect that closed banks and paralyzed economic life. [...]

Our organization, the Norwegian Refugee Council, is one of many trying to provide assistance in this new and challenging environment. We have been unable to securely move aid money into the country to buy emergency supplies for families who face homelessness and hunger this winter. The banking crisis has left several Afghan banks closed and others operating at limited capacity. This has left us struggling to pay our staff and suppliers in Afghanistan. Instead, we are forced to purchase tents, blankets and food in neighbouring Pakistan.

Now imagine this dilemma multiplied for every employer across Afghanistan.

In addition to the liquidity emergency, a donor funding freeze has contributed to crippling public services. Some 75 percent of Afghanistan's public expenditure had in recent years been funded by foreign aid. This lifeline has been largely cut off because the international community is grappling with how to work with a Taliban-run government — including ministers on international sanctions lists.

New mechanisms need to be urgently launched to directly pay hundreds of thousands of municipal and state public servants by channeling the frozen World Bank money through United Nations agencies. This is what I raised in a letter to the heads of the United Nations and the World Bank urging action — suggesting that U.N.-administered trust funds be set up to pay public workers directly." (NRC, 19. Oktober 2021)

SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction) ist die Aufsichtsbehörde der US-Regierung für den Wiederaufbau Afghanistans.

- SIGAR – Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction: Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30. Oktober 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2063773/2021-10-30qr.pdf>

„AFGHANISTAN'S GROWING CRISES

Following the August 15 collapse of the former Afghan government and the full withdrawal of U.S. forces on August 30, the United States suspended development activities in Afghanistan. Other foreign governments and international organizations have likewise halted efforts to strengthen the country's economic growth, public health, and educational sector following the Taliban takeover, though they have continued humanitarian aid, such as food and other short-term emergency assistance, to Afghans. Coupled with Taliban dictates that threaten progress made over the preceding two decades in areas such as education (especially for women) and public health, Afghanistan faces a worsening economic and humanitarian crisis. In early September, a spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warned that basic public services in Afghanistan were on the verge of collapsing with the formal economy coming to a virtual stop. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said the economic impact of lost foreign assistance in the wake of the Taliban takeover has Afghanistan facing the prospect of 'near universal poverty' by mid-2022 and a humanitarian crisis exacerbated by drought and the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ As a result, millions of Afghan are threatened by food insecurity. The executive director of the World Food Programme, David Beasley, warned, 'Fourteen million people, one out of three, are marching to the brink of starvation. They don't know where their next meal is.'" (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 117-118)

„THE TALIBAN AND AFGHANISTAN'S ECONOMIC CRISIS

One of the primary questions facing the Taliban now that they have seized power is whether they are able to manage the existing bureaucracy and keep the Afghan economy

from collapse. As Princeton economist Atif Mian noted, ‘Afghanistan is experiencing the mother of all ‘sudden stops.’’ Shortly after the U.S. government froze Afghan government assets in U.S. financial institutions, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) similarly suspended Afghanistan’s access to its financial resources due to ‘lack of clarity within the international community’ regarding recognizing the Taliban controlled government. Over \$370 million in IMF funds were scheduled to be transferred to Afghanistan on August 23 as part of loans to mitigate the current economic crisis. Days later, the World Bank also suspended funding for its projects in Afghanistan, including disbursements from the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. A World Bank spokesperson cited concerns over the repercussions of the Taliban takeover on ‘the country’s development prospects, especially for women.’ Even before the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan faced numerous economic challenges with the former Afghan government relying heavily on international assistance. The former Afghan government consistently faced insufficient domestic revenues to cover government expenditures, offsetting deficits with international grants. [...] In Afghanistan, approximately 90% of the economy is informal and thus largely escapes taxation, hindering the former Afghan government’s financial self-sufficiency. For revenue derived from trade, such as customs, more than half of the total value of goods crossing the international border flows to the informal economy. This served as a substantial source of income for anti-state insurgents, other nongovernment groups, and corrupt officials, resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue for the former Afghan government. As the Taliban expanded their territorial control over the spring and summer, one of their most crucial gains came when they seized border crossings. The challenge of insufficient domestic revenues only worsened in recent years as domestic revenues stagnated while government expenditures steadily increased. Donor grants totaling at least \$8.6 billion per year financed over half of the government budget. That proportion climbed to almost 80% of Afghanistan’s \$11 billion in total public expenditures when off-budget (U.S.-managed) assistance was counted along with on-budget (Afghan-managed) aid. Increased government service provision, an economy fueled by donor funds, and artificially inflated demand produced by the large international presence rapidly improved many of Afghanistan’s development outcomes until the 2014 drawdown of most international troops. After the Afghan government assumed responsibility for fighting the Taliban insurgency, licit annual GDP growth of just under 10% dropped to low-single-digit rates. The Taliban inherited these challenges and, in many instances, exacerbated many of them after their military takeover prompted donors to suspend most support to the Afghan government. As a result, the Taliban have limited revenue to run the government’s bureaucracy and provide public services, which could lead to a huge contraction of the government and its expenditures. It also has limited foreign currency to finance the country’s large trade deficit, as Afghanistan’s currency, the afghani, is not accepted for cross-border trade. The suspension of international funds and revenue shortfalls could have a variety of economic effects on the Afghan economy. Ultimately, fear of international sanctions against the Taliban-controlled government, as well as reluctance to operate under the Taliban, may inhibit foreign investment, trade, and other economic engagement with Afghanistan, especially as the Taliban cabinet includes hardline figures like Sirajuddin Haqqani, who has a \$10 million U.S. bounty offered for information leading to his arrest. For internationally backed development, Western governments are taking a ‘wait and see’

approach regarding the Taliban's actions. On September 7, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, 'There is no rush to recognition. ... It is really going to be dependent on what steps the Taliban takes. The world will be watching—the United States included—and they will be watching whether they allow for American citizens and citizens of other countries to depart, whether they allow individuals who want to leave the country to leave, whether they allow for humanitarian assistance to travel, how they treat women and girls around the country.' Similarly, Germany has laid down various conditions before it would restart development aid and reestablish its diplomatic presence in Kabul, such as respect for human rights, including rights for women." (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 119-122)

„Financial Sector Challenges

Afghanistan's largely cash-based economy also has struggled with an acute cash shortage, which has limited day-to-day economic activities. While banks have remained largely closed, there have been media reports of periodic openings. However, banks have instituted a 20,000 afghani (around \$200) weekly limit on cash withdrawals to conserve their cash balances, combined with a limited number of open ATMs that are often depleted. Media reports have shown lengthy lines at banks as Afghans waited hours for a chance to withdraw what money they could. In late August, a public servant in Herat stated, 'Banks are still closed. Only two ATM machines are working in the entire city, you have to line up for hours. But when your turn arrives, they run out of money or an electricity cut happens.' Additionally, as of mid-September 2021, government workers were reportedly last paid in July, with the Ministry of Finance attributing the delay to 'technical problems.' It was estimated that the former Afghan government employed over 800,000 people in the civilian and military sectors, so their unpaid salaries contribute to the decline in day-to-day economic activity. Adding to the stress, prices for food, fuel, and other essentials have skyrocketed by as much as 75%. Afghans resorted to selling their housewares to help feed their families, though some reported weak demand and ended up selling their goods at a loss. The devaluation of the afghani (AFN) also impacts the Afghan economy, which could further diminish Afghan households' ability to purchase food and other necessities. Since the collapse of the former Afghan government, the AFN has depreciated against the U.S. dollar, dropping from approximately 77 AFN to the dollar to around 90 as of October 8, 2021. Adding further pressure to the country's limited cash reserves, Afghanistan does not have the technical capabilities to print its own currency. In January 2020, the former government contracted a Polish company, Polish Security Printing Works, to print 10 billion afghanis worth of new bills. On September 2, 2021, Western Union, the world's largest money-transfer firm, announced it was resuming services in Afghanistan, a move enabled by the reopening of banks. Services will be limited to only a handful of locations, largely in Kabul, and money transfers out of the country are still suspended. Western Union had originally suspended its operations on August 18, 2021, due to bank closures, insecurity, and other constraints on its employees' ability to conduct business. Another money-transfer firm, MoneyGram International, also suspended its services in August due to the security situation but resumed services in early September." (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 123-124)

„BANKING UPDATE: FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN'S BANKS UNCERTAIN

On August 23, 2021, the Afghan-American Chamber of Commerce warned, ‘Afghanistan and its banking sector are at an ‘existential flash point’ where the collapse of the banking sector is at hand.’ Prior to the Taliban takeover, Afghan banks had weathered the COVID-19 pandemic, in part due to their small loan portfolios helping to minimize losses, and had seen some modest improvements. While banks’ deposits initially declined and nonperforming loans increased because of the pandemic, the World Bank found that bank deposits grew by the end of 2020 as international grants and government expenditures fueled private-sector activities, and individuals and firms sought to reduce their cash holdings amid increasing political uncertainty and insecurity. In late 2020, bank deposits reached 292.6 billion AFN (equivalent to 19.9% of GDP), an increase from 263.8 billion AFN (equivalent to 18% of GDP) at the end of 2019; the loan to deposit ratio fell from 15.8% in 2019 to 13.8% in 2020. With the collapse of the Afghan government on August 15, banks closed for around 10 days before slowly starting to reopen. Given the central banks’ sudden halt in access to foreign assets and resulting cash shortage, commercial banks announced they were suspending all services until Afghanistan’s central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), could confirm liquidity and security arrangements. Even before the Taliban takeover, liquidity was an issue for the banking sector as many customers withdrew cash from the banks as security quickly deteriorated. In the weeks leading up to the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul, DAB reportedly had already depleted most of its U.S. currency reserves, exacerbating the current economic crisis. In mid-September, Afghan companies stated that all financial transactions had stopped due to the disruption between Afghanistan and international banks over the previous month. Businessmen also complained that companies are subject to the banks’ weekly limit on cash withdrawals. One member of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment said, ‘The plan that allows people to withdraw \$200 USD [U.S. dollars] each week may work for ordinary people, but businessmen cannot do business with \$200 USD each week.’ As a result, many companies are facing serious financial shortages with many laborers remaining unpaid as businesses are unable to withdraw enough funds to pay them. There are a number of questions and uncertainties regarding the Taliban’s ability to manage the banking sector. The Taliban appointed Haji Mohammad Idris as the acting head of DAB. Idris has served as the head of the group’s finance section, but possesses no formal financial training or university education. The banking sector is also concerned that if the Taliban bars female employment, banks will lose a significant portion of their trained staff, making it even more difficult to operate. There also is much uncertainty about the future structure of Afghanistan’s banking system, including what kind of approach the Taliban will implement for Islamic banking and finance given their commitment to restructure the government according to their interpretation of sharia or religious law. Before Afghanistan’s current banking crisis, the private sector’s reliance on bank-sourced credit was already weak, with private-sector credit largely directed towards the trade (41%) and services (27%) sectors. According to the Asian Development Bank, Afghan banks provided a line of credit to only around 5% of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, with the remainder seeking financing largely from informal sources. Afghanistan’s small banking sector was severely limited in its ability to finance private investment and support economic growth. Instead, the Afghan economy is heavily informal with 85% of Afghan adults lacking access to formal financial services. Prior to the collapse of the Afghan government, DAB estimated

that only 3.9% of businesses rely on banks to finance capital expenses, with only 0.8% using banks to finance investments due to both demand and supply constraints. Those constraints included high interest rates and collateral requirements, lack of expertise, and limited access in rural areas. As the Afghan economy has struggled to find areas of sustainable economic growth in recent years, the country has increasingly relied on remittances from Afghans working abroad, especially in neighboring Iran. By 2019, remittances accounted for the equivalent of 4.3% of Afghanistan's annual GDP, an increase from 1.2% in 2014, according to World Bank data. However, officials from the UN's International Organization for Migration estimated this figure could be as high as 15–20%, given that many remittances are sent through the informal hawala money-transfer system. In 2020, remittances to Afghanistan dropped by 10%, according to the World Bank. Afghans in Iran, for instance, struggled to find work due to COVID19 and economic sanctions, forcing many to return to Afghanistan where they faced rising levels of unemployment, poverty, and insecurity." (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 124-125)

- Reuters: EXCLUSIVE Taliban launch charm offensive with Afghan banks amid funding fears, 1. September 2021

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/exclusive-taliban-launch-charm-offensive-with-afghan-banks-amid-funding-fears-2021-09-01/>

„Banks have mainly re-opened this week, but are operating with limited services, including \$200 weekly limits on withdrawals and few wire transfers amid liquidity worries and correspondent banks cutting ties, say bankers.” (Reuters, 1. September 2021)

- The Independent: Afghans ‘selling off babies’ as child marriage booms amid starvation and economic collapse, 25. November 2021

<https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/afghanistan-child-marriages-food-crisis-b1963454.html>

„Debt and starvation are forcing Afghanistan’s citizens to marry off their young daughters in exchange for dowry. Since the Taliban took over the country on 15 August, the economy has collapsed, leading to a sharp increase in the number of destitute parents who are forced to sell off their daughters and, in some cases, offer up their baby girls for future marriages.” (The Independent, 25. November 2021)

- The New York Times: Afghan Economy Nears Collapse as Pressure Builds to Ease U.S. Sanctions, 27. November 2021

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/27/world/asia/afghanistan-economy-collapse-sanctions.html>

„Racing down the cratered highways at dawn, Mohammad Rasool knew his 9-year-old daughter was running out of time.

She had been battling pneumonia for two weeks and he had run out of cash to buy her medicine after the bank in his rural town closed. So he used his last few dollars on a taxi to Mazar-i-Sharif, a city in Afghanistan’s north, and joined an unruly mob of men clambering to get inside the last functioning bank for hundreds of miles.

Then at 3 p.m., a teller yelled at the crowd to go home: There was no cash left at the bank.

‘I have the money in my account, it’s right there,’ said Mr. Rasool, 56. ‘What will I do now?’

Three months into the Taliban’s rule, Afghanistan’s economy has all but collapsed, plunging the country into one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises. Millions of dollars of aid that once propped up the previous government has vanished, billions in state assets are frozen and economic sanctions have isolated the new government from the global banking system.

Now, Afghanistan faces a dire cash shortage that has crippled banks and businesses, sent food and fuel prices soaring, and triggered a devastating hunger crisis. Earlier this month, the World Health Organization warned that around 3.2 million children were likely to suffer from acute malnutrition in Afghanistan by the end of the year — one million of whom at risk of dying as temperatures drop.

No corner of Afghanistan has been left untouched.

In the capital, desperate families have hawked furniture on the side of the road in exchange for food. Across other major cities, public hospitals do not have the money to buy badly needed medical supplies or to pay doctors and nurses, some of who have left their posts. Rural clinics are overrun with feeble children, whose parents cannot afford food. Economic migrants have flocked to the Iranian and Pakistani borders.

As the country edges to the brink of collapse, the international community is scrambling to resolve a politically and legally fraught dilemma: How can it meet its humanitarian obligations without bolstering the new regime or putting money directly into the Taliban’s hands?

In recent weeks, the United States and the European Union have pledged to provide \$1.29 billion more in aid to Afghanistan and to Afghan refugees in neighboring countries. But aid can do only so much to fend off a humanitarian catastrophe if the economy continues to crumble, economists and aid organizations warn.

‘No humanitarian crisis can be managed by humanitarian support only,’ said Abdallah Al Dardari, the United Nations Development Program’s resident representative in Afghanistan. ‘If we lose these systems in the next few months, it will not be easy to rebuild them to serve the essential needs of the country. We are witnessing a rapid deterioration to the point of no return.’

Under the previous government, foreign aid accounted for around 45 percent of the country’s G.D.P. and funded 75 percent of the government’s budget, including health and education services.

But after the Taliban seized power, the Biden administration froze the country’s \$9.5 billion in foreign reserves and stopped sending the shipments of U.S. dollars upon which Afghanistan’s central bank relied.

The scale and speed of the collapse amounts to one of the largest economic shocks any country has experienced in recent history, economists say. Last month, the International Monetary Fund warned that the economy is set to contract up to 30 percent this year. [...]

To avoid a complete currency collapse, the Taliban limited bank withdrawals to first \$200 and then \$400 a week and have appealed to China, Pakistan, Qatar and Turkey to fill its budget hole, which is billions of dollars large. So far, none have offered the financial backstop that Western donors provided to the former government.

The Taliban have also pressed the United States to release its chokehold on the country's finances or risk a famine, as well as Afghan migrants flooding into Europe in search of work.

'The humanitarian crisis we have now is the result of those frozen assets. Our people are suffering,' Ahmad Wali Haqmal, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Finance, said in an interview.

In late September, the Biden administration issued two sanctions exemptions for humanitarian organizations to ease the flow of aid, and it is considering additional adjustments, according to humanitarian officials involved in those negotiations. But those exemptions do not apply to paying employees like teachers in government-run schools and doctors in state hospitals, and the decision not to include them risks the collapse of public services and a further exodus of educated professionals from the country, humanitarians say." (The New York Times, 27. November 2021)

- The Washington Post: As Afghanistan's economy collapses, international community looks for innovative ways to avoid humanitarian disaster, 28. November 2021
https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/afghanistan-humanitarian-disaster-aid/2021/11/27/5d2f859a-4ee4-11ec-a1b9-9f12bd39487a_story.html

„We are also deeply concerned by the ongoing liquidity shortage, inflation and other economic factors,“ Jeffrey De Laurentis, deputy U.S. ambassador to the United Nations told the U.N. Security Council last week. ‘We welcome creative solutions from the international community to help mitigate’ these problems ‘in a way that limits undue benefits to the Taliban and sanctioned individuals.’

None of the discussions so far involves releasing about \$10 billion in Afghan government reserves, held primarily in the United States.

The largest single pot of foreign money is held by the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, whose cash balance at the end of September stood at more than \$1.5 billion. In the past, it has funded programs as diverse as providing grants for small businesses, supplying farmers with seeds and financing for short-term agricultural labor, and building and improving roads and irrigation systems.

Its distributions have now been frozen by the bank's member states, none of which recognizes the Taliban government. The hope at the United Nations is that at least some of those funds can be released into a new U.N.-administered fund that would go beyond

humanitarian food and medicine aid to Afghanistan to maintain basic services and pay salaries and wages. The fund is also asking countries with bilateral development aid programs in Afghanistan to repurpose that money — now also frozen — and come up with new donations.

Bank voting members are expected to meet next week to discuss the terms for allowing the release of some funds while ensuring that their demands are addressed — particularly on girls' education — and adequate monitoring is in place.

But international humanitarian and development agencies are insisting, in increasingly dire terms, that time is running out and the lives of millions are at risk.

With virtually no money circulating, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other major aid operators have warned that more than half of Afghanistan's population of 40 million is well on its way to 'acute food insufficiency,' their term for starvation.

'You really have to go there and meet with people inside Afghanistan . . . to understand the depths of this crisis,' said Jan Egeland, secretary general of the Norwegian Refugee Council, one of the largest nongovernmental aid agencies still operating on the ground.

During a recent visit to the country, Egeland said in an interview, 'I asked mothers in tents — how are you treated now? Are you discriminated against? Are your children in school?'

'They just stared at me and said 'We have only one concern — not to freeze and starve to death this winter.' (The Washington Post, 28. November 2021)

Das Entwicklungsprogramm der Vereinten Nationen (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP) ist das globale Entwicklungsnetzwerk der UNO.

- UNDP – United Nations Development Programme: Afghanistan banking in disarray, says new UNDP situation report, 22. November 2021
<https://www.af.undp.org/content/afghanistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2021/Afghanistan-banking-system.html>

„A new situation report released today by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) says Afghanistan's financial and bank payment systems are 'in disarray.'

The situation report details the state of the banking and financial system prior to the political transition on 15 August 2021, as well as the current situation in the three months since.

It describes a system at a near-standstill, with humanitarian interventions thwarted by the country's liquidity crisis, deepened by a lack of confidence on the part of depositors and international markets. IMF projections cited in the report predict a contraction of up to 30 per cent in the Afghan economy for 2021-2022.

‘Prompt and decisive action is urgently needed, with delays in decision-making expected to increase the cost of a banking system collapse – a grim predicament,’ the report says. [...]

Abdallah Al Dardari, UNDP Resident Representative in Afghanistan, notes that while the collapse of the financial system is exacerbating fast diminishing economic activity, banking is also one of the most important connectors of the country to the outside world.

‘Without the banking sector, there’s no humanitarian solution for Afghanistan,’ he says. ‘Do we really want to see Afghans completely isolated?’” (UNDP, 22. November 2021)

Energieversorgung (Elektrizität; Brennstoffe)

Das Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) ist eine regierungsunabhängige, gemeinnützige Forschungsorganisation mit Hauptsitz in Kabul, die Analysen zu politischen Themen in Afghanistan und der umliegenden Region erstellt.

- AAN – Afghanistan Analysts Network: Afghanistan’s looming economic catastrophe: What next for the Taliban and the donors? (Autorinnen: Kate Clark & Hannah Duncan), 6. September 2021

<https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2060879.html>

„Moreover, Afghanistan imports pretty well everything – 77 per cent of its electricity, along with fuel, clothing, medicine, household goods, fertilisers and seeds and food, including staples: [...] The waves of harm ripple out, touching what seem unlikely sectors. For example, Afghanistan’s Covid-19 vaccination plan is conditional upon a cold storage chain that was being set up across the country, which needs imported fuel and electricity – just as Afghanistan’s purchasing power dives.

The liquidity crisis is already causing harm, pushing the afghani to depreciate and prices of flour, medicine, electricity and other basic goods to rise across the country. If inflation does take hold, many Afghans will be pushed over the edge.“ (AAN, 6. September 2021)

Al Jazeera ist ein in Qatar ansässige arabische Nachrichtensender.

- Al Jazeera: Afghanistan could go dark as power bills remain unpaid, 6. Oktober 2021
<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/10/6/afghanistan-stares-at-power-outage-as-bills-remain-unpaid>

„Afghanistan’s state power company has appealed to a United Nations-led mission to give \$90 million to settle unpaid bills to Central Asian suppliers before electricity gets cut off for the country given that the three-month deadline for payments has passed.

Since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan from mid-August, electricity bills haven’t been paid to neighboring countries that supply about 78% of its power needs. [...]

Afghanistan usually pays \$20 million to \$25 million a month in total to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Iran and now unpaid bills stand at \$62 million, Safiullah Ahmadzai, the acting CEO of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, said on Wednesday. [...]

'We've asked the UNAMA in Kabul to assist the people of Afghanistan to pay the country's power suppliers as part of their humanitarian aid,' Ahmadzai said by phone, referring to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. He said some \$90 million was requested from the mission as the unpaid bills will jump to about \$85 million in a week.

The UN mission hasn't responded to that request yet, Ahmadzai said.

Currently, there's no significant power cuts now in Kabul or elsewhere in Afghanistan. Ahmadzai said just 38% of Afghanistan's 38 million people currently have access to electricity.

The Taliban government is looking to pay the electricity bills and has called on neighboring countries to avoid cutting off the power supply, Bilal Karimi, a spokesman for the group said by phone. 'We have a good relationship with them and we don't expect them to stop providing us power,' he added. (Al Jazeera, 6. Oktober 2021)

- Al Jazeera, Afghans rely on coal to keep warm as winter cold sets in, 25. November 2021
<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2021/11/25/photos-climate-crisis-afghanistancoal-an-unavoidable-pollutant-in-the-harsh-afghan-winter>

„At a Kabul market, coal is arriving by the tonnes as the winter cold sets in. Even as prices rise, Afghans have few options but to burn it for heat, creating some of the world's most dangerous air.

'Pollution causes serious respiratory diseases ... All Afghans know what coal does,' customer Amanullah Daudzai [...] tells the AFP news agency. [...] In such desperate conditions, Daudzai says coal is still cheaper than the alternatives.

'If we had electricity and gas, people wouldn't use coal,' says one of the market traders, Abdullah Rahimi." (Al Jazeera, 25. November 2021)

Die Deutsche Welle (DW) ist der deutsche Auslandsrundfunksender.

- DW – Deutsche Welle: Soaring fuel prices in Afghanistan a threat, 21. September 2021
<https://www.dw.com/en/soaring-fuel-prices-in-afghanistan-a-threat/av-59245274>

„Afghanistan is seeing a surge in fuel prices, adding more pain to an economy already on the brink of a meltdown. Supplies of gasoline and diesel were disrupted by the Taliban's unexpected seizure of power in August." (DW, 21. September 2021)

SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction) ist die Aufsichtsbehörde der US-Regierung für den Wiederaufbau Afghanistans.

- SIGAR - Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction: Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30. Oktober 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2063773/2021-10-30qr.pdf>

„By late 2020, according to data provided by Afghanistan Inter-Ministerial Commission for Energy, Afghanistan's total installed capacity for domestic power production is approximately 699 MW, versus the 2000 MW the Afghan Ministry of Water and Energy estimated the country needs. Domestic generating capacity consists of 280.5 MW of hydroelectric power, 353.5 MW of thermal/oil plants, and 65 MW from renewable energy. This limited access to reliable, grid-based power has been an obstacle to economic growth. Moreover, the expansion of Afghanistan's energy supply was tied to power-purchase agreements between independent power producers (IPPs) and Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), Afghanistan's national power utility, which obligated DABS to purchase all IPP-produced electricity. Given the former Afghan government's heavy reliance on international donor assistance, DABS's financial viability was tied to either continued donor support or the government's ability to generate far greater levels of domestic revenue. IPPs warned that unpaid invoices from DABS for generated electricity in the past contributed to cash-flow problems that put power plant operations at risk. Not only does the Taliban-controlled government face potential technical and personnel difficulties in managing the country's power infrastructure, particularly as trained personnel leave the country, it now faces severe revenue shortages that inhibit its ability to provide both domestically and externally generated electricity to the power grid. DABS's operations will be further impacted by the rising levels of poverty that inhibit households' ability to pay their electric bills. In early October, it was reported that the Taliban-controlled government had not paid for electricity imports from neighboring countries or resumed bill collections from electricity consumers. Central Asian countries can suspend their electricity exports under the existing contracts due to nonpayment. The current drought is adding to these problems as it inhibits hydroelectric production in Afghanistan.“ (SIGAR, 30. Oktober 2021, S. 122-123)

TOLO News ist eine afghanische Onlinezeitung.

- TOLO News, DABS to Import 100 Megawatts of Electricity from Iran, 11. November 2021
<https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-175401>

„Officials from Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) said they have signed an agreement with Iran to import 100 megawatts of electricity to Afghanistan. According to the officials, the imported electricity will be distributed in Herat, Farah and Nimroz provinces and it is aimed to solve the electricity shortage problem the people face in these provinces. ‘We buy 100 megawatts of electricity from Iran, which reaches Herat, Farah and Nimroz provinces,’ said DABS spokesman Hekmatullah Noorzai. A number of residents said they are concerned about the lack of electricity in the capital and provinces, especially during the winter. According to them, they face electricity outages in the winter and urged DABS to address the problem.“ (TOLO News, 11. November 2021)

- TOLO News, Sales of Cheap, Low-Quality Fuel Increase on Kabul Streets, 21. September 2021
<https://tolonews.com/business-174743>

„In recent weeks, the number of people selling petrol on Kabul streets has increased dramatically. The price of each liter of petrol is cheaper by 10 Afs than fuel sold at regular stations. The sellers say it is Iranian petrol, and they do not know how the petrol enters Afghanistan. The price of each liter of petrol on the streets is around 54 Afs, while each liter of petrol at a Kabul station sells for 70 Afs.“ (TOLO News, 21. September 2021)

- TOLO News, Kabul Residents Turn to Bicycles as Fuel Prices Spike, 4. November 2021
<https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-175297>

„A number of residents of Kabul said due to the increase of fuel prices and the resulting increase in taxi fare, they are using bicycles. Reports indicate that currently one liter of fuel costs 76 Afghanis at Kabul fuel stations, where previously it was around 35 Afghanis. It has increased in the last two to three months. ‘I cannot afford to pay taxi fare. I often use a bicycle and sometimes walk instead of using a taxi,’ said Abdul Qadir, a Kabul resident. ‘Using bicycles are cheap and it is also good for the environment because it does not have any emissions,’ said Mukhtar Ahmad, Kabul resident. Residents said taxi fare has been increasing in the capital amid the increase in fuel prices, and due to economic problems they are unable to pay the high taxi fare every day.“ (TOLO News, 4. November 2021)

- TOLO News, Price of Food, Basic Goods in Afghanistan Rising, 22. November 2021
<https://tolonews.com/business-175536>

„A number of Kabul residents and businessmen said the prices of some primary items, mainly food and fuel, have increased by almost 100 percent compared to last year. [...]“

‘The arrival of the Islamic Emirate did not cause the prices to rise. Prices have risen in the whole world. Last year, one liter fuel was 40 Afs, but due to COVID-19, now it is almost doubled to 80Afs,’ said Nooruddin Azizi, the acting minister of industry and commerce. [...]“

Meanwhile, a number of taxi drivers said that fuel prices have increased more than two times since last year. They said one liter of fuel is sold for more than 75 Afs in the market, while last year it was 35 Afs.“ (TOLO News, 22. November 2021)

UNAMA ist die Unterstützungsmission der Vereinten Nationen in Afghanistan (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA).

- UNAMA - United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: Briefing by special representative Deborah Lyons to the Security Council, 9. September 2021
<https://unama.unmissions.org/briefing-special-representative-deborah-lyons-security-council-5>

„As well, as the Afghan currency plummeted, prices of fuel and food have skyrocketed. Private banks no longer have cash to distribute, meaning even Afghans with assets cannot access them. Salaries cannot be paid. Afghanistan, heavily import-dependent, will be

unable to finance its imports of food and medicine, as well as fuel, electricity, and other essential items.“ (UNAMA, 9. September 2021)

Das Büro des Hohen Flüchtlingskommissars der Vereinten Nationen (UNHCR) ist eine Behörde der Vereinten Nationen mit dem Mandat zum Schutz und zur Unterstützung von Flüchtlingen und zur Hilfestellung bei freiwilliger Rückkehr, lokaler Integration und Neuansiedelung in einem Drittland.

- UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Situation Update; Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 8. November 2021
<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2063731/UNHCR+Iran++Afghanistan+Situation+Update+10+.pdf>

„Health facilities in parts of Afghanistan have shut down and, in the capital, hospitals are functioning without electricity or water supply.“ (UNHCR, 8. November 2021, S. 2)

UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) ist das Amt der Vereinten Nationen für die Koordinierung humanitärer Angelegenheiten.

- UNOCHA – UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: Afghanistan: Weekly Humanitarian Update (15 – 21 November 2021), 26. November 2021
https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2064469/afghanistan_humanitarian_weekly_21_november_2021.pdf

„On 16 November, a mission was conducted to Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province to assess the current capacity and needs of the Spin Boldak District Hospital which is a recipient of Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). A significant increase in patient caseloads have been reported at the hospital in the last three months due to lack of access to basic health services in other districts. Increases in number of cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition were also reported. Other immediate needs are the need for water, sanitation and hygiene supplies as the entire hospital has no ground water; additional space needed for mass casualty incidents; stable electricity for heating especially with winter approaching;“ (UNOCHA, 26. November 2021, S. 1)

Das United States Institute of Peace (USIP), eine parteienunabhängige US-Bundeseinrichtung mit Sitz in Washington, D.C., die sich mit der Erstellung von Analysen zu Konflikten weltweit befasst.

- USIP – United States Institute of Peace: Key to Afghan Relief Efforts: Financial Engineering for Private Sector, Economy, 17. November 2021
<https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/11/key-afghan-relief-efforts-financial-engineering-private-sector-economy>

„Maintaining key infrastructure to facilitate humanitarian assistance [...] would include urban electricity supplies, which are dependent on electricity imports from neighboring countries, and a well-functioning mobile telecoms network. Electricity imports from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan will need to be continued. Funding options range from using a small portion of Afghanistan’s foreign exchange reserves to pay those countries for power

to a regional country supporting Afghan stability by making such payments, as well as continuing forbearance by the electricity-supplying countries which, however, would run into limits over an extended period of time." (USIP, 17. November 2021)

Das World Food Programme (WFP) ist das Welternährungsprogramm der Vereinten Nationen.

- WFP - – World Food Programme: Afghanistan, Countrywide Weekly Market Price Bulletin, 15. November 2021

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000133876.pdf>

Main Food Commodities/Food Access Indicators	Price/rate & Changes (%)		
	2nd Week of November 2021	Compared to last week of June 2021	Compared to the 1st week of November 2021
WHEAT (Kg)	37.6	25.8% ▲	1.2% ►
WHEAT FLOUR - High price (Kg)	44.1	31.1% ▲	0.2% ►
WHEAT FLOUR - Low price (Kg)	40.4	32.1% ▲	0.6% ►
RICE HIGH QUAILITY (Kg)	93.2	4.8% ►	0.4% ►
RICE LOW QUAILITY (Kg)	52.5	5.0% ►	-0.1% ►
COOKING OIL (Kg)	168.1	25.2% ▲	-0.5% ►
PULSES (Kg)	99.5	6.7% ►	-0.3% ►
SALT (Kg)	14.2	6.1% ►	1.0% ►
SUGAR (Kg)	60.4	19.3% ▲	-0.2% ►
DIESEL (LITER)	70.8	34.0% ▲	0.5% ►
ONE YEAR ALIVE FEMALE SHEEP (HEAD)	7751	1.8% ►	0.4% ►
LABOUR UNSKILLED/DAY	282	-8.4% ▼	0.0% ►
LABOUR SKILLED/DAY	590	-8.2% ▼	0.0% ►
# OF DAYS WORK AVAILABLE/WEEK	1.5	-39.6% ▼	-2.0% ►
EXCHANGE RATE	92.6	16.0% ▲	1.8% ►
CASUAL LABOUR/WHEAT	7.6	-26.9% ▼	-0.9% ►
PASTORALIST TOT	206.6	-19.6% ▼	-0.9% ►

(WFP, 15. November 2021, S. 1)

World is One News (WION) ist eine Online-Nachrichtenplattform mit Sitz in Neu-Delhi, die laut Selbstbeschreibung globale Themen tiefgehend analysiert und neutralen Journalismus betreibt.

- WION - World Is One News: Amid soaring fuel prices and dwindling cash reserves in Afghanistan, Taliban say 'all is well', 19. Oktober 2021

<https://www.wionews.com/south-asia/amid-soaring-fuel-prices-and-dwindling-cash-reserves-in-afghanistan-taliban-say-all-is-well-421995>

„Denying that there is no shortage of fuel in Afghanistan, the Taliban-led government on Tuesday told WION that they have made adequate arrangements to replenish their fuel supplies and stressed that there will be a drop in the prices in the coming days.

Speaking exclusively to WION, spokesperson of Taliban finance ministry, Ahmad Wali Haqmal, said, 'There is nothing we are short of. About two to three days ago over 200 trucks filled with fuel entered our soil from Turkmenistan and Iran, and soon it will reach every corner of Afghanistan. In the coming 5 to 10 days, we will also see a decrease in the rate of fuel.'“ (WION, 19. Oktober 2021)

Das Wall Street Journal (WSJ) ist eine in den USA herausgegebene Tageszeitung.

- WSJ – Wall Street Journal: Kabul Faces Blackout as Taliban Don't Pay Electricity Suppliers, 3. Oktober 2021
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/kabul-faces-blackout-as-taliban-dont-pay-electricity-suppliers-11633257932>

„Afghanistan's capital could be plunged into darkness as the winter sets in because the country's new Taliban rulers haven't paid Central Asian electricity suppliers or resumed collecting money from consumers.

Unless addressed, the situation could cause a humanitarian disaster, warned Daud Noorzai, who resigned as chief executive of the country's state power monopoly, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, nearly two weeks after the Taliban's takeover on Aug. 15.

‘The consequences would be countrywide, but especially in Kabul. There will be blackout and it would bring Afghanistan back to the Dark Ages when it comes to power and to telecommunications,’ said Mr. Noorzai, who remains in close contact with DABS's remaining management. ‘This would be a really dangerous situation.’

Electricity imports from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan account for half of Afghanistan's power consumption nationwide, with Iran providing additional supplies to the country's west. Domestic production, mostly at hydropower stations, has been affected by this year's drought. Afghanistan lacks a national power grid, and Kabul depends almost completely on imported power from Central Asia.

Currently, power is abundant in the Afghan capital, a rare—if transient—improvement since the Taliban takeover. In part, that is because the Taliban no longer attack the transmission lines from Central Asia. Another reason is that, with industry at a standstill and military and government facilities largely idle, a much bigger share of the power supply ends up with residential consumers, eliminating the rolling blackouts that used to be commonplace.

That, however, is likely to come to an abrupt end if the Central Asian suppliers—particularly Tajikistan, whose relationship with the Taliban is rapidly deteriorating—decide to cut off DABS for nonpayment. [...] ‘Our neighboring states now have the right to cut our power, under the contract,’ said Safiullah Ahmadzai, the DABS chief operating officer who stayed on after the Taliban takeover and served as acting CEO until being replaced by a Taliban cleric on Sunday. ‘We are convincing them not to do that and that they will get paid.’ [...]

Massoud, a 28-year-old who goes by only one name and sells fresh pomegranate juice from a cart on the streets of Kabul, said he hasn't paid his DABS bill for two months. The Taliban takeover caused food prices to rise, leaving him with not enough money to settle the bill, which runs between \$6 and \$12 for a family of eight [...].

Farooq Faqiri, a 32-year-old market-stall holder who sells plastic jewelry in Kabul, said that his family of seven used to be able to eat meat every day but now lives on potatoes. The

number of buyers of his jewelry is now a fifth of what it was. He said that they would have to skip even some of those meager meals to save enough to pay the electricity bill, which is a month in arrears. ‘The electricity comes from a corporation so they will not let us off the bill,’ said Mr. Faqiri. ‘If they cut us off, we will have to go back in time and use oil for light and heat in our rooms.’ DABS needs an urgent infusion of \$90 million to stave off a collapse, said Mr. Ahmadzai.” (WSJ, 3. Oktober 2021)